

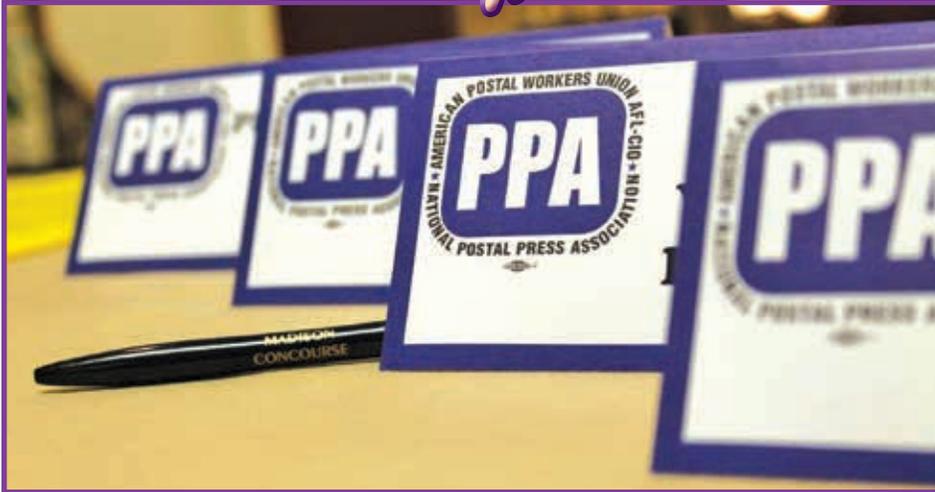
# Postal News Press

AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION

NATIONAL POSTAL PRESS ASSOCIATION

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Participant name cards stand ready for the 2023 Biennial PPA Conference on Thursday, July 20 through Saturday, July 22 at the Concourse Hotel & Governor's Club in Madison, Wisconsin. Preceding the conference will be an additional day of workshops on Wednesday, July 19. Room reservations can be made directly through the PPA website at [apwpostalpress.org](http://apwpostalpress.org) or by calling 1-800-356-8293. The guestroom rate is \$169.00 per night plus 15.5% tax. The hotel will provide free ground transportation from the airport and a reduced parking rate of \$12 per night.

## Plans progress for July PPA Conference

On July 20-22, APWU editors, associate editors and officers will meet in Madison, Wisconsin for the 2023 biennial conference of the APWU National Postal Press Association. Preceding the conference will be an additional day of workshops on Wednesday, July 19.

Established in 1967 and held every two years, the PPA Conference is not only for editors. It is an educational event specifically designed to help participants, whether novice or experienced sharpen their communication skills. Regardless of the office held in our union, learning about communication as a means to better represent the membership should be a part of every representative's educational development. This conference is also a must for local or state organizations that are interested in establishing (or re-establishing) a communications program for its membership.

Led by a group of talented instructors

from the Labor Movement, the intensive four-day program will cover a variety of communication-related topics. In addition to ten workshops, the gathering will include three general sessions, three networking events and an awards banquet.

The conference will be held at The Concourse Hotel & Governor's Club in Madison, Wisconsin with a guestroom rate of \$169.00 per night. Current tax rate is 15.5%. Room reservations can be made directly through the PPA website at [apwpostalpress.org](http://apwpostalpress.org) or by calling 1-800-356-8293 and specifying that you are attending the APWU National Postal Press Association Biennial Conference. The hotel will provide free ground transportation from the airport and a reduced parking rate of \$12 per night.

Further details about the conference, including workshop and registration information will be provided in the coming weeks.

## Keeping the membership informed

By Tony Carobine, President

Everything we do in our daily lives involves communication. From the moment we step out of bed, until our day ends (whatever time that may be) we employ communication in our lives. Whether it's picking up a mainstream media newspaper, turning on the television to watch the news, logging onto the internet, or social media; we rely on communication to find out what's going on in the world and around us. Additionally, we depend on communication to interact with family, friends, and co-workers.

We also communicate messages to others by our behavior. Children are especially susceptible as they learn from examples set by the way their parents communicate through their actions.

Communication has a big influence on us.

As union leaders we have the responsibility of looking out for the welfare of the members we serve. It is therefore incumbent upon us to do everything in our power to inform the membership about matters that affect them. As a result, we have an obligation to use communication as a means of reaching our members.

The job of an editor is quite an important and demanding one. Editors that make up the PPA's communications network continually strive to perform their duties in a sincere effort to inform and communicate information to the membership.

Considering the valuable service that editors provide, they deserve to be given adequate support. For example, funding for the editor to attend the biennial PPA Conference is an opportunity for the editor to learn more about communication thus enabling him or her to better serve the membership.

The editor is the messenger of the union.

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



# Keeping the membership informed

*Continued from page 1*

With communication being such an important and controlling part of our lives, support for the editor and support for communication in general should be among the first and foremost items a union considers.

It's difficult to understand the logic of not sending the union into the homes of members through a newsletter because it "costs too much." While each organization is responsible for spending their funds as they choose, it would seem that a primary place for investing financial resources should be the one vehicle that serves each and every member – the union publication. (So there is no misunderstanding, in addition to a publication, as many other forms of communication as possible should be employed as well.)

By not having a visible form of communication, we hinder the union's strength. Maintaining the union's visibility is an important way to keep members connected to their union. Without this connection they will unlikely become an active member and may eventually leave them wondering if they should retain their membership.

Without the membership being well informed, without a tangible form of com-

munication to provide direction, we are not fulfilling the responsibility we have to protect the livelihood of our members. If

*"As union leaders we have the responsibility of looking out for the welfare of the members we serve. It is therefore incumbent upon us to do everything in our power to inform the membership about matters that affect them."*

anything, our efforts to communicate should be increased; for if we are going to succeed, our members need to be informed.

Great emphasis is placed on educating union officers about contract administration, and rightfully so. However, it's equally important to educate our editors (and all activists for that matter) on ways to improve their communication skills. It's also imperative that we all recognize the vital role that editors perform.

After all, editors are the messengers of an important institution, an institution that is responsible for the livelihood of postal workers – our union!

## Convention season

# Report writing: speeches, meetings

When representatives from your organization attend a conference or convention, talk to them before they go, so they'll know what you need for the paper. If they just hand you a rousing minute-by-minute agenda of everything that happened from 8:30 a.m. on – starting with the flag salute – they'll put readers to sleep. Worse yet, they may come back with nothing – just a vague thanks to the members for having such a great time at their expense. What you really need is a story that shows readers what's in it for them – why it was worth their money to send someone to this meeting.

A report doesn't mean dutifully noting everything that happened. It means picking the highlights – the most exciting and meaningful happenings – and giving readers a feel for why they're important. Ask people to take notes on rousing speeches and classes, including facts and ideas that

particularly impressed them. Ask them to take down a few quotes, word-for-word, of clever statements that really hit the nail on the head, or that made the entire audience stand up and applaud.

Ask them to take pictures of people hard at work – not staring at the camera as they're shot. Ask them to bring back a program with speakers' names spelled right plus other handouts – many can be turned into great articles.

Ask people to think about how this experience will make them better activists and help them better serve the group, or how it applies to local problems.

Will you write such articles, or do you expect delegates to write their own? If it's the delegates' job, give them pointers on writing. Suggest they liven up the report by interviewing leaders and other delegates. If you do the write-up, tell delegates you'll interview them when they return.

# In the world of selfies, we also have the me me – take the spaces out and it's a 'meme'

By Lance Coles, Editor-at-Large

According to Wikipedia, an “internet meme” is a concept that spreads rapidly from person to person via the internet, largely through internet-based emailing, blogs, forums, image boards like 4chan, social networking sites like Facebook or Twitter, instant messaging, and video hosting services like YouTube.

In 2013 Richard Dawkins characterized an internet meme as one deliberately altered by human creativity, distinguished from Dawkins’s original idea involving mutation by random change and a form of Darwinian selection.

For the purpose of this article, a “meme” is a graphic cartoon or image board.

Meme’s are a great way to make use of a message through a picture, cartoon or just words.

You see them all the time on Facebook and tumbler, and they are really easy to make.

You can use PowerPoint, publisher or scan handmade images.

Why make a meme – because we live in a “mc society” – we want things fast, and we don’t tend to spend a lot of time with them.

A meme on social media, is your virtual billboard, your advertisement that you don’t have to pay for, and with some luck and a lot of friends, you can go viral and really get your message out.

When creating a meme – KISS – keep it simple!

Great images get their attention then they go for the verbiage – the message.

Remember we tend to read in a “Z” fashion. We start in the upper left and go across then down to the bottom right and then leave the page.

Build your meme with that flow in mind.

Keep the words – your message – short. Make your type as large as you can and readable. Keep it nice and clean, bold, and reverse the type if you can on dark backgrounds. Use as much color as you can.

When making your meme, look for quotes from someone and use them. You don’t need to use quotation marks, unless you want.

Where do you get the art work? Use your

own photos, ask local artists, or you can go to a place like “google images.” Be careful with taking things from this site. If you pay for them, then you have all the rights to use them. Most of what is on google images is open and free, but not all.

A suggestion when making a meme is you can create a story board, or a “Burma shave” story. Make one that starts a thought, and then follow with a second that continues that thought, and so on.



When you are building your meme, it is best to save them as a TIFF or JPEG. Social media accepts these better when you are posting them.

Don’t be afraid to repeat meme’s over a time. Facebook has a system where all you post is not sent to all your friends.

Meme’s also work great in your print publications or on your web page. They are easy, fun and effective.

Check out Canva to make easy memes.

## Living a positive life

It’s a simple philosophy, but one that can have vast repercussions. Research shows that most illnesses, including headaches, backaches, heart disease, and digestive ailments, can be caused or influenced by our feelings. A positive attitude will help you work better, too. Optimism gives you energy and enthusiasm.

Next time you’re ready to give in to the blues, try these tips.

Focus on someone who seems to make the best of any situation. This person can show you how he or she maintains that attitude.

**5. Learn to accept situations over which you have no control.** It can be frustrating to see a problem that needs fixing, but sometimes it is either inappropriate or simply impossible for you to help.

**6. Be satisfied with results once you’ve done your best.** You can’t do any better, so don’t focus on your limitations.

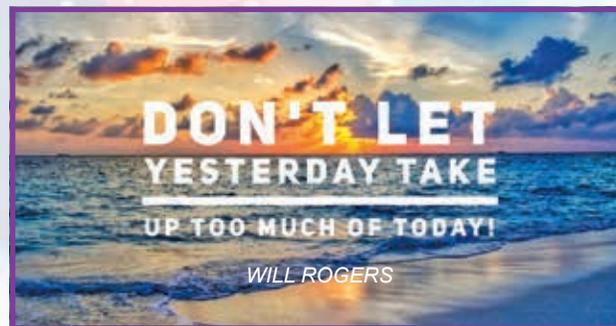
**7. Be part of the solution.** It’s more challenging and inspiring to try to fix problems than to just point them out and dwell on them.

**8. Take time to reward yourself.** You deserve appreciation, from yourself, as well as from others.

**9. Expect the best, not the worst both of people and situations.**

**10. Appreciate the good things that happen.** Stop focusing on what is lacking in your life. Count your blessings, not your troubles.

It’s not always easy to maintain a positive attitude. Like most things, it requires work. But the results are worth it!



**1. Don’t take everything so seriously.** There are few problems that have truly monumental consequences.

**2. Try to see the positive aspects of problems.** You can find a bright side in almost every situation – if you look hard enough.

**3. Smile.** It’s easier than frowning, which requires 78 muscles. A smile uses only 14.

**4. Use positive people as role models.**

# Take the initiative to compete for a PPA award

By Jenny L. Gust,  
Secretary-Treasurer

Soon, rules and instructions for entering the 2023 PPA 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 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 PROGRAM!** 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!

## Where did these clichés come from?

**1. Acid test.** When gold bullion and coins were in everyday use, applying nitric acid instantly revealed real from false items, because acid decomposed counterfeit pieces.

**2. Cold turkey.** Cold turkey once meant telling cold facts, unpleasant truths. Since the 1940s, it has referred specifically to withdrawal from drugs.

**3. Across the board.** The term originally referred to the notice board that displays the odds of winning at a race track. From

the 1950s to the present, it has become a commonly used term in labor-management negotiations.

**4. Eager beaver.** The beaver has symbolized the extraordinarily hard worker since the 18th century, when its tree-felling, dam-building, and den-rigging capabilities were recognized. The adjective "eager" was added in the 20th century.

**5. Read between the lines.** One form of cryptography requires readers to read between the lines. Although the text makes sense to anyone reading line by line, the real message is secret and deciphered by reading every second line.

**6. Sell like hotcakes.** Hard to imagine pancakes being best sellers! But in the 19th century before competition from pizza, hot dogs, and hamburgers; hot cakes were popular fast foods, especially at fairs and carnivals.

**7. Burn the candle at both ends.** This image conveys the notion of squandering one's resources. The phrase was noted as early as 1730, but a more refined use appeared in *Two Years Ago* by Charles Kingsley in 1857: "By sitting up till two in the morning and rising again at six . . . Frank Headley burnt the candle of life at both ends."

**8. Stumped.** An American farmer attempting to plow a field, but finding that it was not completely cleared of tree stumps, probably created this catchword in the early 1800s.

**9. Too many irons in the fire.** Picture the blacksmith. With too many irons in the fire, he was liable to overheat his tools and spoil some of his work.



# Writing: remember your readers

Always remember when writing on any topic that your goal is to make it easy and enjoyable for your readers to understand. To do that you must put yourself in their position. What are they interested in? What do they want to learn more about? What knowledge do they already have? Your first sentences must catch their attention and tell them what reading this story or article will do for them.

The words used in the story and the logical sequence of thoughts have a lot to do with how easy it is to understand. In school, we may have been taught to use

long or complex words, technical explanations, and extensive footnotes when writing essays. In organizational communication it is almost the opposite. We must know all about the topic. Then our task is to pick out the most important facts and present them in simplest possible terms.

- Start with an outline. What do you want to say? What order makes the most sense?
- Write as you speak. Be as simple and direct as you would in conversation. Never use a long word when a short one will do.
- Keep sentences short. Try an average of 15 to 20 words per sentence. Studies have shown that ease of understanding is related both to sentence length and word length.
- Stick to the subject. If you find you are wandering, go back and rewrite. Some-

times the order can be improved. Occasionally you may find your final paragraph should be your lead.

- Weed out unnecessary words. Don't use several when one word will do.
- Write in the active voice. It is more effective to write, "A work accident injured two members," than "two members were injured in a work accident." Avoid the passive form. Try writing a story without using any forms of the verb "to be." It's hard work and forces you to identify the sources of the actions. When you write this way, you can see how active verbs propel the movement of the story.
- Use direct quotes. They provide color, pace, and emphasis.
- Above all, respect your readers.

## Listening: a key to problem solving

Successful people know that a key ingredient in effectively dealing with others is to be a good listener. Why? Because, to resolve a problem or anticipate one, you must first analyze it. And to do that, you must understand the persons involved.

Yet, most people listen with the intent to respond rather than to understand, experts say. They'll pretend to listen by repeating, "Uh huh," "Right," and "Sure," when what they're actually doing is planning their response. Here are a few pointers to improve your listening skills:

1. **Don't fake attention.** It usually fools no one, certainly not the speaker.
2. **Concentrate on listening.** It takes energy to truly focus on the speaker, but force yourself to do it. Note the speaker's facial expression and the words he or she is stressing.
3. **Avoid prejudgments.** Don't be affected by the speaker's accent, voice pitch, use of words, or anything that strikes a negative chord in you. Recognize your bias and keep an open mind.
4. **Control your emotional response.** Certain words may trigger a strong reaction from you – negative or positive. You can listen far more effectively and comprehend more if you keep your emotions in check.

5. **Don't be defensive or take things personally.** When you do, you're actually calculating your response to an assumed attack. You are not listening, but rather, planning a counterattack.

## Reminder

# Posting of member publications

In addition to the practice of exchanging publications among PPA members, a section is available on the PPA website for the posting of publications. The Member Publications section is reserved for PPA members who submit copies of their newsletters for posting in this section of the website located under Member Resources.

By submitting a newsletter for posting, the editor is granting permission to fellow editors to reprint any article that originates in the paper as long as credit is given to the original source.

To submit a publication for posting, e-mail it as a pdf to [ppa@apwupostalpress.org](mailto:ppa@apwupostalpress.org). A publication will be posted for 30 days.



# Editor's toolbox: Helpful ideas for APWU communicators

## Ensuring readership

Whatever editors may do, they must above all else communicate...and communication is not simply issuing information. Communication implies someone on the receiving end as well as the sending.

This means that editors must make sure their newsletters are read, and, being read, that they have said what they meant them to say!

There are various devices to ensure readership. If one device doesn't work, perhaps another will.

What made you reach for a particular magazine the last time you were in the doctor's office? Why that special one? It could have been a pleasing cover, of course, which made you feel that this was your kind of magazine, or it could have been a headline that piqued your interest.

Appearance is important. An attractive-looking publication invites readership.

A headline tells enough – but not too much – to snare the reader into pursuing the matter further. Think back to the last time your eye strayed over a newspaper page. You looked at the headlines, didn't you, to decide what you were going to read?

Or perhaps a reader will select reading material according to the byline, or name of the writer who did the piece. Local union editors, it is true, will have a limited field from which to garner names that make their readers want to read the newsletter, but they must never overlook possibilities.

## Looking back

Everyone who retires has at least one zinger of a story worth telling. Whenever longtime members retire from the Postal Service, get them to share their best stories – to entertain and educate the reader and to spotlight the retirees at this important juncture of their lives.

## Try these suggestions on inside pages

- Try to include a picture or artwork on every inside page.

- Avoid the thrown-together look of inside pages. Plan each page.

- Try to include a dominate story on an inside page in order to provide a focal point for the page. Usually this story and photos will go at the top above the deepest columns available.

- As on page one, a headline should be wide enough to cover its entire story.

- Never “tombstone” or place two heads of similar size side by side.

- If possible, keep articles complete on one page. Jumps often are not read. Most jumped stories should be from page one

stimulate participation and bring about an increased awareness of the union.

Interviewing long time (or retired) members about how conditions were at the time they began working for the Postal Service compared to now is an excellent way to present such information. Also, most of these individuals have very fascinating stories to tell that will make good human-interest columns. Such a column demonstrates the importance of the union in the lives of members and illustrates that the union is made up of real people.

Members or potential members are more

## 30 Reasons to Thank Unions

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Weekends</li> <li>2. Breaks at Work (Including for Lunch!)</li> <li>3. Paid Vacation</li> <li>4. Sick Leave</li> <li>5. FMLA</li> <li>6. Holiday Pay</li> <li>7. Social Security</li> <li>8. Pensions</li> <li>9. Child Labor Laws</li> <li>10. Minimum Wage</li> <li>11. Overtime Pay</li> <li>12. Workers' Comp (Pay for Injured Workers)</li> <li>13. Collective Bargaining Rights</li> <li>14. Health Insurance Employers Help Pay For</li> <li>15. Unemployment Insurance</li> <li>16. Workplace Safety Standards and Regulations</li> <li>17. Wrongful Termination Laws</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>18. Civil Rights Act / Title VII (Prohibits Employer Discrimination)</li> <li>19. Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967</li> <li>20. Veteran's Employment and Training Services (VETS)</li> <li>21. Whistleblower Protection Laws</li> <li>22. Sexual Harassment Laws</li> <li>23. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)</li> <li>24. Employer Dental, Life, and Vision Insurance</li> <li>25. Privacy Rights</li> <li>26. Pregnancy and Parental Leave</li> <li>27. Military Leave</li> <li>28. Public Education for Children</li> <li>29. Equal Pay Acts of 1963 &amp; 2011 (Requires employers to pay men and women equally for the same work)</li> <li>30. Laws Ending Sweatshops</li> </ol>
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to inside, instead of from one inside page to the next.

- An editorial page or a special feature page inside should have a different look easily recognizable by the reader. Perhaps a different type size or column width for editorials.

- Make it obvious if stories are related. Organize material by content.

## Promoting the union

Many members (or potential members) are not aware of the importance of union membership, and therefore may not realize that the salary and benefits enjoyed today by postal workers were not generously provided by management but were achieved because of the union. Articles of this nature can

inclined to listen to people they perceive most like themselves. In other words, they will listen to their peers more than anyone else, especially when it involves promotion of the union. Every opportunity possible should be used to promote the union through the experiences of real members instead of solely relying upon union leaders.

## If you should ask me

Here's a very fine way to get more readers inside your publication. Ask a question of randomly selected members, get an answer, snap their photograph and put together your column. In each issue ask a pointed question on a topic of interest, and then compile short answers along with the member's photo in a column entitled “If you should ask me.”

# How privatization preys on the prison population

## *Contractors for phone, financial, health, and food services profit from mass incarceration*

By Donald Cohen, Executive Director  
In the Public Interest

Private prisons incarcerated nearly 100,000 people in 2020. While that's only eight percent of the total state and federal prison population, it represents a 14 percent increase from two decades before. It is 100,000 people too many.

It was good news that during his first week in office, President Biden, echoing a similar Obama-era policy, signed an executive order intended to phase out the Federal Government's "reliance on privately operated criminal detention facilities." (Unfortunately, it didn't include detention facilities managed on behalf of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement; almost 80 percent of the people in ICE custody are in privately owned or operated facilities). Biden's policy, coupled with activists' efforts to convince large lenders not to finance private prisons, may put a dent in the outlook for the future of private prisons.

And while some states are doubling down on their use of private prisons, others are turning away from them.

But even if the trend turns downward for private prisons, private companies continue to make inroads inside prison facilities.

Contracting for everything from telephone and video call service, to food service, to money transfer services, to healthcare, private companies are stepping in, promising savings to the public and the public officials with whom they contract. But this privatization creep offers dubious benefits to the public, and a bad deal for the incarcerated.

**The prison phone industry does over a billion dollars in business** every year, the vast majority of which is split between just two prison-telecommunications companies, clout allowed them to set outrageously inflated call rates – about ten times more than the average per-minute rate. President Biden recently signed a bill into law aimed at curbing those predatory fees.

"Meaningful communication and connection with loved ones helps promote rehabilitation, and it also reduces recidivism, which makes our communities safer," said Vanessa Chen, Special Assistant to the President for Criminal Justice and Guns Policy.

Still, the new law itself – which clarifies

the Federal Communications Commission's jurisdiction – doesn't actually cap the rates, which might be why the bill received bipartisan support. Instead, it ensures "just and reasonable charges." It's a step, even though small.

**JPay, owned by a private equity firm, provides financial services to prisons and jails.** In 2021, it was forced to pay \$4 million in consumer redress and \$2 million in penalties for violating the Consumer Financial Protection Act by charging recently-released inmates fees for accessing their own money. The company also violated the Electronic Fund Transfer Act by requiring consumers to sign up for a JPay debit card as a condition of receiving government benefits.

**Recently, Missouri awarded a \$45.7 million, five-year contract to Aramark** to provide food service to the state's 20 state-operated prisons.

It might have checked in with Michigan first.

In 2015, the state ditched its three-year prison food contract with Aramark 18 months early after the *Detroit Free Press* uncovered a litany of problems, including meal shortages, maggots in the kitchen, and Aramark employees smuggling drugs into the facilities and engaging in sex acts with prisoners.

"The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and then expecting a different result," said American Federation of State County and Municipal Employee's (AFSCME) Ed McNeil at the time. "This is a different company, but we

will get the same result – poor service for the money state taxpayers are spending."

In fact, Michigan contracted Trinity Services Group. Less than two years later, Michigan levied \$2 million against Trinity for inadequate staffing levels and other problems, including many of the same violations as Aramark.

**Over half of U.S. jails surveyed by Reuters report they had contracted with private companies for inmate healthcare.**

It found that, on balance, "death rates are higher when healthcare is in the hands of private industry." A November 2022 report from *The Private Equity Stakeholder Project* outlined a raft of problems with H.I.G. Capital, one of the largest healthcare companies serving U.S. prisons and jails, including facilities "characterized by poor intake and screening; difficulty accessing care; and inconsistent medication management practices." It also pointed out inadequate staffing that contributed to concerns about access to care, including to psychiatric staff.

Private corrections companies say that they can "do it cheaper" but the higher profits for the contractors who score these lucrative contracts have come at a great cost to the incarcerated – worse conditions and care, and price gouging of vulnerable families. Those dollars would be better spent on adequate staffing, additional health and mental health services, better communication opportunities between the incarcerated and their families, and educational programs. That would turn "cheaper" into "better."

## Powerful anti-procrastination tools

Scores of people have found these two tips helpful in dealing with procrastination:

**Use the "five-minute plan."** Every task has a first step. Commit yourself to the five or ten minutes it takes to make that first step, perhaps writing a paragraph or making a phone call. When that's completed, consider committing to another five minutes for the next step ... and then another five. Once you start, momentum will keep you going.

**Lighten the pressure.** Before you begin, promise yourself that you will work on the project only within the time you have available that day. By being reasonable with yourself and your expectations, you stand a far better chance of starting, and that's usually the hardest part.

# Techniques for answering questions

- Don't wait for the right question to make your point. It may never come and your interviewer will completely control the agenda of the interview.

- Evade the question slightly – a favorite political ploy. Answer the proposed question briefly, then go on to your own prepared answer with a remark like: “The real issue here is...”

- Put the question in your own perspective or create a new perspective. (“Let me answer your question this way...” or “You're overlooking the most important fact, which is...”)

- Be positive. Approach each issue with a positive appeal. Make it seem that you are taking the initiative – even if you are on the defensive!

- Never repeat the negative in a question. Instead of “No, I don't think the labor movement is a thing of the past,” say “I think our union offers a perfect example of the vitality of the labor movement.”

- Don't be afraid not to answer a question. Phrase the response: “I don't want to misrepresent myself or my union. I'll be happy to do a bit of research and get back to you.” (But make sure you get back to that reporter!)

- During your interview, avoid jargon and abstract concepts. Use language everyone understands. Be brief, but be specific.

- Speak in complete sentences. (Avoid answering with a simple “yes” or “no.”)

- Short, to-the-point sentences are most powerful. Use succinct and graphic

“sound-bite” sentences that sum up your point of view. Draw anecdotes and analogies to illustrate your message.

- Remember that TV and radio “sound bites” usually run from 8-15 seconds in length. Try out your answers while looking at your watch.

- Assume an intelligent audience. A patronizing tone will alienate your audience.

- Build credibility. Share your credentials and accomplishments. Explain why you are the right person to address the issue.

- When answering a tough question, stay cool. Attack the issue, not the reporter.

# Ten ways to put together a publication that gets read

1. For maximum impact and readability, use a sans serif typeface for headlines and a serif typeface for body copy.

2. Avoid using all caps for headlines it hinders reading. Instead use initial caps.

3. Keep related words together when headlines run to two or more lines – and avoid breaking lines at awkward or misleading points.

4. Break up text with subheads to help readers scan material quickly and provide visual interest to your piece.

5. Sprinkle your articles with quotes from sources. If you don't have the time to interview, ask three questions in a memo and provide spaces for your interviewee to write answers (make sure to give a response due date) – this makes the information gathering and writing process easier for you. Plus you give readers information from a real person with a real voice.

6. Use captions to link photographs and

illustrations to a story, but avoid stating the obvious. For maximum readability, place captions below the artwork. Include photo credits in small type to show appreciation for photos contributed by fellow members.

7. When wrapping text around a graphic, edit out excessive hyphenation and unsightly, irregular spacing between words.

8. Want two ink colors in your publication, but your budget doesn't cover it? Pre-print a year's supply of your newsletter stock using your second color on the nameplate, headers and footers. Print the body copy for each issue in black.

9. When using graphics, keep in mind that a single, large illustration is generally more appealing than numerous, small illustrations placed randomly about the page.

10. Use verbs in the present tense, rather than in past or future, to give headlines a greater sense of immediacy and impact.