

# Postal Newsletter Press

AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION

NATIONAL POSTAL PRESS ASSOCIATION

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## 2023 Biennial PPA Conference July 20-22 • Madison, Wisconsin Pre-conference session July 19



Located one block from the state capitol building in Madison, Wisconsin is The Madison Concourse Hotel, site of the Biennial PPA Conference on July 20-22. Preceding the conference will be a full day of workshops on Wednesday, July 19. The guestroom rate is \$169.00 per night. Room reservations can be made through the PPA website [apwupostalpress.org](http://apwupostalpress.org) or by calling the hotel at 800-356-8293.

Learning about communication as a means to better represent the membership should be a part of every union representative's educational development. That's why this gathering is not only for the training of editors but also all APWU activists, as every unionist should possess good communication skills to help them be a more effective leader.

The four-day program consists of nine information-packed workshops that will be of value to all who attend; from novice to experienced, to local or state organizations desiring to establish or enhance a communications program for its membership. Additionally, recognizing the importance of external communication and outreach; the conference will include sessions on public speaking, working with the mainstream media, influencing public support and social justice unionism.

The PPA Conference is an opportunity to learn more about communication – a valuable activity that can influence not only the membership but also everyone the union needs to reach in order to promote and protect the interests of APWU members and their families. (See pages 4-6 for further details).



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**Statement of purpose:** Published by the American Postal Workers Union National Postal Press Association, the *PPA Newsletter* is an educational tool designed to assist PPA members with the performance of their duties as communicators and to help promote the goals and objectives of the APWU.

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



# Do your communication efforts generate membership loyalty?

By Tony Carobine, President

One of the biggest challenges facing unions today is maintaining a loyal membership.

A common denominator in maintaining a loyal membership is communication. However, communication involves a lot more than passing down information from union officials to members. Psychologists that study groups who work together over a long period say that in order to keep people motivated and interested they must be included. This means they must be made part of what's going on, be included in the group, and not be made to feel like an outsider.

Many things have evolved in our union over the years, with one of them being membership. Today, most workers are from families who have no prior history of unionism. As a result, most have no knowledge about unions or the purpose and necessity for them in the workplace. I recall years ago hearing coworkers say they didn't think twice about joining the union when they were hired at the post office due to a parent or relative expressing to them the importance and reasons for doing so. That's not heard of very often nowadays.

Given the lack of prior knowledge and exposure to unions, we must keep in mind that commitment to the union doesn't just happen today as was prevalent in the past.

Increasingly, union members loyal to the union throughout their work lives are reaching retirement age. Therefore, as union communicators we should take into account that our audience, in other words our readership, is evolving into a new generation of members who have different needs than their predecessors.

With these thoughts in mind, following are some points to consider when communicating with the new generation of union members:

- Does the union communicate with the membership on a regular basis so members are aware that the union is always working to protect their interests?

- Does the union periodically include labor or postal union history information in their communication with the membership?

- Are longtime members and retiree members periodically interviewed for a story about how pay and conditions were in the post office many years ago as compared to today because of the union?

- Are members kept abreast about developments on the workroom floor as opposed to getting their information through the "rumor mill?"

- Does the local recognize membership loyalty by honoring members in various ways for achieving union membership milestones; for example publicizing this achievement for 10, 15, 20, etc. years of union membership?

- Does the local use every opportunity to include the membership in their newsletter, website, or Facebook page; with, for example a "Members Speak Out" column whereby randomly selected members are asked their opinion on various issues?

- Do articles about grievance settlements include direct quotes from members affected by the union's efforts?

- Are members recognized by the union for their volunteer efforts in the community?

- Does the local use every opportunity in its communications to recognize members for their participation in various union activities? (People like to read about and look at photographs of people, themselves first and others second.)

The reasons to communicate extend beyond the need to inform the membership about the business of the union. As communicators we need to keep in mind that members are the lifeblood of the union and the union's strength depends on the loyalty of its members. Adopting a style of membership inclusion and education in our communications for the new generation of union members is a step towards building such a membership.

## 2023 PPA Awards Program suspended

The PPA Awards Committee has made the decision to suspend the awards program for this year due to a lack of entries. Unfortunately, for the past several years participation has continued to decline reaching a point this year that could not sustain

the presentation of awards because of even fewer entries than two years ago. Only nine editors entered their publications while two entered their websites. The hope is that the PPA Awards Program, established in 1968, can return in 2025.



# Our allies . . .

By Cathy Hanson, Editor-at-Large

We editors are the people who keep our members informed. Labor education comes

of their struggles with the public and other union members. The Amazon Workers representative was happy to report the Governor

of Minnesota just signed a bill on safety for them and he called that bill one of the best in the nation. Workers telling their stories is just one way to get the public involved and aware of the issues. Amplifying their voices is the key. The representative from Starbucks is using the media to tell their side of the story because Starbucks puts out a lot of information that doesn't include them. They are sending their own press releases out instead of relying on Starbucks.

We are all in this together. I am so grateful to have had an established union to join. My retirement is one of the benefits I earned by working 39 years for the Post Office and Uncle Sam. My union is who secured that retirement for me. I remember when I asked my dad if I should join the union back when I started. He told me I owed them that membership – they were responsible for my pay, my benefits and my working conditions and I needed to sign up and pay my dues. He was right, of course. I have never regretted joining the APWU and I hope you feel the same way!



**Labor Leaders from SEIU Local 26, the Awood Center, Starbucks Workers United and the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers discuss how to build pro-worker media at a shared event presented by *In These Times* and *Workday Magazine*.**

in all forms to us – being involved in our communities and labor issues gives us a wealth of information about our allies trying to form unions.

Current postal employees are lucky not to have to go through what our brothers and sisters did back in the 70s when they went on strike for better wages and working conditions. Our union has protected us and supported us since it was formed.

I recently went to a relaunch celebration for *Workday Magazine*. They used to be called *Workday Minnesota* but have expanded their focus to the Midwest and renamed themselves. It was a discussion on how to build a media ecosystem that is pro-labor and serves the working class. The labor magazine *In These Times* and *Workday Magazine* collaborated with representatives from SEIU Local 26, the Awood Center (Amazon workers), Starbucks Workers United, and Minneapolis Federation of Teachers. *In These Times* offers any union member a free year subscription on their website and I encourage any union member to take advantage of that.

The panel was asked how they used media as a path to building power and their answers revealed the struggle to get those victories. *Workday Magazine* shared a lot

## Member comments about PPA Conferences:

*"...The conference was the most rewarding experience I've ever had in my 20 plus years as a union member. I want to thank you, your staff and all the teachers, editors and members who provided a wealth of learning. I hope to apply what I learned to make our newsletter an award winner at the next conference."*

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*"...I just wanted to say thank you for such a wonderful experience as the PPA Conference. ...I can think of no other words than: "It was great!" I made many new friends and got so many helpful ideas, that it is hard to know where to begin."*

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*"...I was most impressed with the professionalism of the instructors, their knowledge and ability to teach the varied and critical subject matter to not only the new or beginning editors, but to some of us "old timers" who have been around for a long time."*

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*"...I would like to commend you and your staff for an outstanding conference. It was my first time attending such an event and I really enjoyed it. I know such an event takes a lot of time to plan and organize. The conference was well organized and the classes were very educational. Keep up the good work!"*

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*"I have just returned from the APWU National Postal Press Association (PPA) Conference, where editors from all over the country gather every two years to attend training in the field of producing a quality newspaper. It is the best training in the field of union journalism anywhere; the PPA is the class act of the APWU. ..."*



# 2023 Biennial PPA Conference

The conference will take place on Thursday, July 20 through Saturday, July 22 at The Concourse Hotel & Governor's Club in Madison, Wisconsin. A pre-conference session is scheduled for Wednesday, July 19.

The guestroom rate is \$169.00 per night. Current tax rate is 15.5%. Room reservations, can be made through the PPA's website, [apwupostalpress.org](http://apwupostalpress.org), or by calling 800-356-8293. The hotel will provide free ground transportation from the airport and a reduced parking rate of \$12 per night. Note: registered delegates will receive an informational letter with pertinent conference information, including ground transportation reservation details.

## Pre-conference Workshops Wednesday, July 19

### (A) Where do I Begin?

So you've been named editor of your union's publication. Now what? Come find out in this session that is primarily for individuals new to editing a union publication and for local or state organizations interested in establishing or re-establishing a publication for their members. Included will be an overview of the reasons an organization needs to communicate and the ABC's of how to get started. With an extensive record of involvement in labor communications, the workshop leaders will share their experiences with participants.

### (B) Building a 21st-Century Labor Movement through Social Justice Unionism

When daunting forces are arrayed against us, how can we build the power we need to shape a brighter future for workers? Along with many allies, postal workers are seeking and finding innovative new ways to build power and defend essential public services during challenging times. This workshop, developed exclusively for APWU members asks what values, strategies, alliances, and tactics are enabling workers to beat the odds in campaigns to reshape their jobs, unions, and communities – while standing up for the public good. We'll look at both historic and recent case studies of contract and issue campaign victories to extract key

lessons we can put to work in our own local communications and organizing.

### (C) Legal Issues, Who Pays for What I Say?

Who does a union publication belong to? Do libel and copyright laws affect your freedom of speech and freedom of the press? What are the benefits of establishing an editorial policy? How do union election laws apply to union communications? *Legal Issues: Who Pays for What I Say?* will address these questions and others with a presentation on the issues of editorial policies, responsible journalism, libel, copyright and union elections.

## Conference Workshops Thursday, July 20 through Saturday, July 22

### D) Communications for Member Involvement and Union Building

In today's multi-media environment, union editors have the opportunity to make their publications the centerpiece of a strategic communications system that builds a stronger union. This highly interactive workshop will walk through the steps of assessing your local's communications needs and capacity, analyzing what messages and media best motivate members, considering pros and cons of print, electronic, and face-to-face formats, developing a distribution/communications network that reaches all members, and integrating the newsletter into an overall communications plan.

### (E) Using Social Media as a Communications Tool

This session will teach you the do's and don'ts of social media for union communication. Discussed will be developing an overall strategy and why social media should be a part of your plan. Also covered; the best practices when using Facebook and Twitter, and how to integrate social media content with printed newsletters and other communication resources. No social media experience required, only a desire to learn about how to connect with

your online members. **Bringing a cell phone capable of recording videos is a requirement for this workshop! Laptop computers are also encouraged.**

### (F) Newsletter Production: Giving Your Paper a Makeover

The emphasis of this workshop will be to examine and evaluate overall design of your publication from nameplate to mailing block and everything in between. This unique design seminar will stimulate your creative skills and help you reinvent (or invent) a publication that your members notice. Through a publication review you'll be able to see and discuss successful new designs for various types of publications. **(Note: Participants should bring a copy of their publication to this workshop.)**

### (G) Influencing Public Support: Developing a Strategy for Getting Your Message Out

Public support can help an organization achieve its objectives. *Influencing Public Support: Developing a Strategy for Getting Your Message Out* will help you build a positive public image for your local or state union by looking at: how to publicize your union's contributions to the community; ideas for regularly making the union visible to the public and why seeking media coverage only to publicize the union's problems could be disastrous. Also discussed will be the preparation of press releases, developing media contacts, interviews, and other tactics to use for establishing and maintaining a positive and progressive public image.

### (H) Writing & Editing for the Union Communicator; aka How to Write More Gooder

Give your readers news they can use, features about people they know and stories on issues they care about. This valuable hands-on workshop will examine why we include local news and features in our communications and how they build credibility, readership, and member engagement. Through a host of exercises you will learn how to write timely, relevant news stories, eye-catching headlines, and high-interest features that help members connect their experiences to union priorities.



# ence in Madison, Wisconsin

This workshop is a must for anyone that communicates with the membership through the written word. **(Note: The length of this workshop requires using two workshop choices. Therefore only make three workshop selections on the registration form if attending this workshop.)**

## (I) Upgrading Your Website Presence

This workshop is combined with workshop E, *Using Social Media as a Communications Tool*. **Therefore, only list Workshop E as one of your selections.**

## (J) Public Speaking: Becoming an Effective Spokesperson

Whether you are speaking at a union meeting, a rally, or in a media interview, the rules of effective public speaking are the same, you must have a focused message that relates your own lived experience to the topic, which will help you deliver your message in a believable way. In this fast-paced interactive workshop we will examine best practices for delivering an effective message and how to tailor the message to the type of media interview involved (television, radio, or print). Since most media interviews are now done on-line through a variety of platforms, participants will practice interviews over Zoom, with the interview recorded so that participants can watch the interview and get feedback to improve their skills as a spokesperson.

## Additional Sessions

The conference will also include three general sessions: Press Conference with APWU President Mark Dimondstein, Legislative Update with APWU Legislative and Political Director Judy Beard, and Unionism and Social Justice through Music presented by Solidarity Sing Along.

## Friday Night at the Movies

Networking is an important part of every conference. For conference attendees who like to continue stimulating discussion into the evening hours, this event is for you. At this session you will be invited to pull up a chair, grab a snack and watch a labor/social justice movie. Following will be a discussion about the film's subject matter.

## 2023 PPA Conference Registration Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Publication: \_\_\_\_\_

Local or State Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

**Registration Fee: (PPA Members): \$225.00**

**After June 20: \$275.00**

**Non-PPA Members: \$275.00**

The registration fee includes workshops, welcome reception/dinner, refreshment breaks, and Banquet. (Note: The registration fee is all-inclusive and must be paid in full prior to the close of registration)

## Pre-conference Session Wednesday, July 19

**Please select two of the three half-day workshops (A-C). Walk-ins are not permitted.**

\_\_\_\_ (A)      \_\_\_\_ (B)      \_\_\_\_ (C)

## Conference Workshops Thursday, July 20 – Saturday, July 22

You must register for these workshops in advance by selecting four of the workshops and your alternative choices by using the letter next to the workshop description (D-J). **Note: The length of Workshop H (Writing & Editing for the Union Communicator) requires using two workshop choices. Therefore only make three workshop selections if attending this workshop.** Assignments will be made on a first-registered-first-served basis. Class size is limited. Walk-ins are not permitted.

\_\_\_\_ First Choice    \_\_\_\_ Second Choice    \_\_\_\_ Third Choice    \_\_\_\_ Fourth Choice

\_\_\_\_ Alternative Choice 1    \_\_\_\_ Alternative Choice 2

Please make your check payable to **APWU National Postal Press Association** and mail it along with this registration form to:

**APWU National Postal Press Association  
PO Box 888  
Iron Mountain MI 49801**



# 2023 Biennial PPA Conference Schedule of Events

## Wednesday, July 19

**7:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. Registration.**

**9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. Pre-conference session:**

- A. Where do I Begin?
- B. Building a 21st-Century Labor Movement through Social Justice Unionism
- C. Legal Issues, Who Pays for What I Say?

**10:30 a.m. - 10:45 a.m. Break.**

**10:45 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. Pre-conference session (continued).**

**12:15 p.m. - 1:45 p.m. Lunch.**

**1:45 p.m. - 3:15 p.m. Pre-conference session:**

- A. Where do I Begin?
- B. Building a 21st-Century Labor Movement through Social Justice Unionism
- C. Legal Issues, Who Pays for What I Say?

**1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Registration.**

**3:15 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. Break.**

**3:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Pre-conference session (continued).**

**6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. Reception. (Dinner 6:30 - 8:00).**

## Thursday, July 20

**7:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. Registration.**

**9:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. Opening remarks, Business Session, Introductions.**

**9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. Legislative Update – APWU Legislative & Political Director Judy Beard.**

**11:00 a.m. - 11:15 a.m. Break/adjourn to workshops.**

**11:15 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Choice one of workshops:**

- D. Communications for Member Involvement and Union Building
- E. Using Social Media as a Communications Tool
- F. Newsletter Production: Giving Your Paper a Makeover
- G. Influencing Public Support: Developing a Strategy for Getting Your Message Out
- H. Writing and Editing for the Union Communicator; aka How to Write More Gooder

**I. Upgrading Your Website Presence (This workshop is combined with Workshop E.)**

**J. Public Speaking: Becoming an Effective Spokesperson**

**12:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. Lunch.**

**2:00 p.m. - 3:15 p.m. Choice one of workshops (continued).**

**3:15 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. Break.**

**3:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Choice one of workshops (continued).**

## Friday, July 21

**8:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. Choice two of workshops.**

**10:30 a.m. - 10:45 a.m. Break.**

**10:45 a.m. - 11:45 a.m. Choice two of workshops (continued).**

**12:00 p.m. - 12:45 p.m. Solidarity Sing Along – “Solidarity Tree” Capitol Grounds.**

**12:50 p.m. - 1:45 p.m. Lunch.**

**1:45 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. Choice three of workshops.**

**3:30 p.m. - 3:45 p.m. Break.**

**3:45 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. Choice three of workshops.**

**7:15 p.m. Friday Night at the Movies.**

## Saturday, July 22

**8:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. Choice four of workshops.**

**10:30 a.m. - 10:45 a.m. Break.**

**10:45 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. Choice four of workshops (continued).**

**12:15 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. Lunch.**

**1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. Press Conference – APWU President Mark Dimondstein.**

**3:00 p.m. - 3:15 p.m. Break.**

**3:15 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Solidarity Sing Along.**

**6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. Reception.**

**7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. Banquet.**



# Where is your sense of humor?

By Jenny Gust,  
Secretary-Treasurer

I have been a member of the Postal Press Association since May 1980! A long time I am sure you will agree. I am proud

*“A great cartoon can really pull people into reading your paper. They can’t wait to see what the cartoonist will come up with next.”*

that I am still here and publishing two newsletters. One for my local – the *Black Swamp Outrider* – Toledo Ohio Area Local, and one for my state, the *Ohio Postal Worker*.

Part of the enjoyment of being a member of the PPA is getting all the newsletters from around the country. In case you were

wondering whether anyone reads your paper – I do! Unfortunately the number of publications being mailed to fellow PPA members is down. Because of budget cuts in most cases (including my own local) members are not sending their papers out to all PPA members. When the cost is added up – number of papers printed and postage – it isn’t all that much. If you can’t mail every month to all PPA members perhaps you could rotate each month. That is what I am doing. Or, as an alternative no-cost solution, you can email your paper as a PDF for posting on the PPA’s website.

The one thing I truly miss out of the papers I do get is cartoons. Original cartoons are few and far between now. Years ago we had a good number of people who were quite good at cartoons. The people who are on the workroom floor day in and day out can tell you some funny stories about the post office. If a good cartoon is printed once and sent out you can be sure it will be copied (and hopefully credited) over

and over. A sense of humor is so important – especially in times like these.

I am wondering if perhaps we haven’t asked our members if there is anyone out there who can draw and add captions – either alone or with some help from a fellow member or members. A great cartoon can really pull people into reading your paper. They can’t wait to see what the cartoonist will come up with next. Everyone likes to laugh! While cartoons aren’t always necessarily funny – they can educate and help people see things in a different way from what they might normally.

I know things aren’t that great right now but we need to make the effort to not be gloom and doom all the time. That will turn members off. So try in each issue to have a cartoon, a joke or two, a funny story – just something to make our readers smile. We can’t solve all the problems of the post office but we can at least give them a laugh, a chuckle, a little ray of sunshine and maybe a little hope that tomorrow will be better.



Pictured is PPA President Tony Carobine with two display boards of APWU, labor, and politically-related pins and buttons that will be raffled off at the July PPA Conference. Proceeds from the raffle will be given to the APWU National Auxiliary for the Sleep in Heavenly Peace organization that provides beds, bedding, and pillows for children 3-17 years that do not have a bed. Carobine, who is retiring this year after 46 years of APWU involvement, is donating the boards for the raffle.



# Libraries keep free speech in circulation

## *Facing threats from anti-free speech activists, libraries and librarians are fighting back*

By Jeff Hagan, Communications Director  
In The Public Interest

Public libraries have played a relatively uncontroversial role in American life since 1790, when Benjamin Franklin, in a gesture toward a Massachusetts town named after him, donated a collection of books – instead of the bell they had suggested – to establish the United States' first free public library. A century later, industrialist Andrew Carnegie began funding the building of nearly 1,800 public libraries in the U.S. Supporting libraries was for more than two centuries widely considered a matter of civic engagement that existed outside of partisan politics. Even Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas wrote in his memoir about studying at Savannah's Carnegie Library as a young man, and at the library's 2004 reopening, Thomas was the keynote speaker.

Libraries can no longer count on such support from conservatives, who have mounted an assault on public libraries on numerous fronts, including inflammatory speech and threats of violence against library buildings, workers, and patrons.

### BOOK BANS

The American Library Association (ALA) documented over 1,200 demands to censor library books and resources for last year, the highest number of such attempts in the two decades the ALA began compiling censorship data. The books coming in for censorship at libraries mostly deal with the experiences of people of color or those in the LGBTQ+ community. And it's often the same titles over and over.

"The record number of book challenges we're reporting today are not the result of a

parent filing authentic requests for reconsideration," said Deborah Caldwell-Stone, director of ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom. "Overwhelmingly, we're seeing groups and individuals at library board meetings demand the removal of long lists of books obtained from organized censorship groups who share these lists on social media."

In Llano County, Texas, a conservative group sought to ban 20 books from the library and an appointed member of the library's advisory board told a reporter she'd like to see over 200 more removed from the county's three libraries. "I'm in favor of closing the libraries temporarily until we find a solution to the pornographic filth we do have."

### DEFUNDING

In Missouri, a Republican State Representative and chair of the Budget Committee proposed zeroing out the \$4.5 million the state provides to libraries. A cost saving move? Nope: It was retaliation against the Missouri Library Association, which had joined the Missouri Association of School Libraries and the ACLU in a lawsuit contesting a state law limiting materials available in school libraries. The funding was restored by the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Last September, a county commissioner of Victoria County, Texas, threatened to evict the Victoria Public Library from the building the county owns over books – mostly relating to LGBTQ identities – that a group of residents wanted removed from library shelves. Victoria's mayor directed the library to revise its collection policy so no "pornographic or obscene materials" would be available for patrons under 18, or

risk having their budget for new material frozen.

Last summer, a group of Jamestown, Michigan residents calling themselves Jamestown Conservatives accused the Patmos Library of "grooming" children and promoting an LGBTQ "ideology," and accused staff members of pedophilia. In an August election, activists defeated the renewal levy that provides 85 percent of the library's annual public funding. When the **library went back again** for the funding renewal in November, it was again defeated.

### PRIVATIZATION

In Texas, the Huntsville City Council voted to outsource its public library operations after city officials had ordered library staff to remove a Pride Month display highlighting books with LGBTQ themes. That's only the latest privatization attempt, which we wrote about earlier this year. A private company, Library Systems & Services, continues to circle around libraries that have faltered in funding or in satisfying book banning activists. Its efforts include privatization or partial privatization of libraries in Escondido, California; Farmers Branch, Texas; and Sumter County, Florida, among others.

### FIGHTING BACK

Want to get more involved in the fight to defend libraries? Is your local library threatened by book bans, privatization, or defunding? Be sure to check out **EveryLibrary**, ([everylibrary.org](http://everylibrary.org)) an advocacy organization dedicated to building voter support for libraries (the very robust News and Updates section is worth bookmarking and revisiting often).

Every week of the year is free speech week. Our public libraries and the public servants who work at them help make sure of that.