

INSIDE

*Award-winning
entries!*

Postal Press Newsletter

AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION

NATIONAL POSTAL PRESS ASSOCIATION

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September-October, 2021

Workshops held, 2021 PPA awards announced

On August 4-5, members of the APWU National Postal Press Association (PPA) gathered via Zoom for two days of workshops to enhance and sharpen their communication skills. For over 50 years the PPA has held a three or four day biennial conference featuring communication-related instruction. Due to the ongoing pandemic, an abbreviated version was moved online.

In his remarks prior to the start of workshops, PPA President Tony Carobine talked about the importance of communication. "Our success as union activists and postal workers largely depends upon effective communication," he said. "We only need to look at recent concerns such as proposed changes to delivery standards, possible consolidations and plant closures and legislative initiatives to realize that each requires the use of communication both internally

and externally if we are to be successful in achieving our goals. Whether it's building public support or mobilizing our members we need to aggressively com-

union communicator; Using social media as a communications tool, Upgrading your website presence, Public speaking and working with the media, Planning a

work in writing, editing, and publishing. The first awards were presented in 1968 in Minneapolis.

In accordance with the PPA Constitution, the PPA Awards Committee is charged with the responsibility of formulating and administration of the Awards Program.

The procedure for judging entries was as follows. The chairperson of the awards committee organized the entries according to the proper category and sent the entries to the other members of the Awards Committee. Committee members independently reviewed and rated each entry using a point system. The results were tabulated by the chairperson to determine up to the top eight entries in each category. An outside judge then made the final selections from the finalists in each category.

Please see **Workshops held**, page 2

"Our success as union activists and postal workers largely depends upon effective communication."

municate. That is why the workshops being presented over the next two days are so appropriate and important."

The PPA, in partnership with the University Of Iowa Labor Center and the APWU Communications Department offered sessions covering a variety of communication methods; from written to verbal to use of social media. The schedule provided participants with the opportunity to attend up to four of the six workshops that included: *Writing for the*

public protest that communicates your message and Creating podcasts and member videos.

The two-day gathering ended with announcement of the 2021 PPA Awards. The Postal Press Association Awards Program was established 54 years ago at the 1967 PPA Conference in Cleveland. Originally called the Biennial Award of Merit Program, it was established for the purpose of recognizing editors and newsletter contributors for outstanding

Secretary-Treasurer Ed Brennan retires

Edward (Ed) Brennan retired in July after serving the membership of the APWU National Postal Press Association for the past 33 years as secretary-treasurer.

Ed was elected to the PPA Advisory Council in 1971 as advisor, mimeograph

A participant in the "Great Postal Strike of 1970," Ed made other notable contributions to the Labor Movement during his career.

In 1978, he and his family were strongly involved with opposing "Right to Work" legislation in the state of Missouri. Largely through Ed's efforts, a nationwide boycott of uniform manufacturer Brookfield Uniforms

and Unitog whose president supported Right to Work in Missouri was initiated. In recognition of his status as a union activist, his testimony was requested at a congressional hearing concerning union recognition by law.

Commenting on Ed's retirement and union career, PPA President Tony Carobine said, "I would like to publicly thank Ed for his many years of dedicated

service to the membership of the PPA. It has been an honor to work with Ed and have him by my side as secretary-treasurer for 33 years, and most of all I valued his friendship. Through his actions over many years of union involvement, he is an example of what being a union activist means. **Thank you Ed for your many contributions to the Labor Movement.**"



publications and served in that position until 1975. In 1979 he returned to the Council as an editor-at-large advisor and held that position until being appointed secretary-treasurer in 1988 by PPA President Tony Carobine.

A postal union member and staunch union activist for over 50 years, Ed also served in other union positions in addition to the PPA. He was instrumental in organizing the Saint Charles, Missouri Local, and served as its first president. On the state level he was elected as an area representative, legislative director and editor. He was also elected to the board of the American Postal Workers Accident Benefit Association as an area director and central region director.



Workshops held, 2021 PPA awards announced

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An additional note regarding the results of this year’s awards program: Awards Program rules prohibit a publication from receiving more than one first place and one honorable mention award. As a result there was no first place or honorable mention award given in two of the award categories.

Members of the Awards Committee included: Jenny Gust, Chairperson and editor of *The Ohio Postal Worker* and *Black Swamp Outrider*, Toledo, Ohio; James Krivonak, editor *The Virginia Postal Worker*, Mount Vernon, Virginia; Cathy Hanson, editor *The Northern Light* and *Minnesota Postal Worker*, Minneapolis, Minnesota; James Gabe, editor; *The Spectrum*, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Patricia Sartain, editor; *Newscaster*, Panorama City, California.

The outside judge was Shawn Ellis, Central Region Training Coordinator for the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. Remarking about the expe-

rience of judging the entries, Brother Ellis said: “Congratulations to all who entered for the incredible material! It was extremely hard to judge such quality editorial, images, and top-rated publications. Keep up the great work!”

JOURNALISM AWARDS

BEST EDITORIAL:

First Place: **“Thank veterans with more than just words,”** *The Hi-Lites*, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Chris Czuba-kowski, Local Business Agent

Honorable Mention: **“How Donald and DeJoy plan to Deny and De-Lay”** *The Newsroom*, Mentor, Ohio; Louise Balog, Editor

BEST HEADLINE:

First Place: **“To wear a mask or not to wear a mask...that is the question”** *Michigan Messenger*, Lansing, Michigan; John Greathouse, editor

Honorable Mention: **“D-Liver D-Mail D-Joy...It’s that Simple!”** *The Badger Bulletin*, Cecil, Wisconsin; John Durben, Editor

BEST CARTOON:

First Place: *Tour’s End*, Gainesville, Florida; Phillip Breunig, Editor

Honorable Mention: There were no eligible entries for Honorable Mention

BEST FEATURE STORY:

First Place: **“The Six Triple Eight – WW II morale boosters”** *The News-room*, Mentor, Ohio; Louise Balog, Editor

Honorable Mention: **“Listen Up: Standing beside our deaf brothers and sisters”** *Tampa Mailbag News*, Tampa, Florida; Michael Searle, President

BEST COMMUNITY SERVICE:

First Place: **“What we do for each other”** *Auxiliary Spirit*, Saint Charles, Missouri; Bridget Yurachek, Secretary-Treasurer Saint Charles Auxiliary

Honorable Mention: **“Auxiliary recognizes essential postal employees”** *Iowa Postal Worker*, Des Moines, Iowa; Janice Gillespie, Local & Nat’l Legislative Aide/Editor Auxiliary to the APWU

BEST PHOTO:

Honorable Mention: *The Union Mail*, New York, New York; Bernadette Evangelist, Graphic Designer

First Place Best Photo: There were no eligible entries.

BEST NEWS STORY:

First Place: **“Postal workers, retirees, and community allies rally to tell Grassley, Ernst to fund USPS!”** *DMI News & Views*, Des Moines Iowa; Mark Sarcone, Editor & Legislative Director

Honorable Mention: **“The effects of the Global Pandemic”** *The Auxiliary Spirit*, Saint Charles, Missouri; Tiffanie Schultz, Vice President Missouri APWU Auxiliary

BEST CREATIVE WRITING:

First Place: **“The perfect storm continues to pummel the Postal Service”** *The Badger Bulletin*, Cecil, Wisconsin; Paul Mckenna, President

Honorable Mention: **“The few things I learned this year,”** *Tour’s End*, Gainesville, Florida; Phillip Breunig, Editor

BEST NON-POSTAL LABOR STORY:

First Place: **“Women’s history: The uprising of the 20,000”** *The Union Mail*, New York, New York; Florence Summergrad, Editor

Honorable Mention: **“American Factory”** *The Hi-Lites*, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Larry Brown Jr., Vice President

BEST WEBSITE

BEST WEBSITE NON-PROFESSIONAL:

First Place: Central Michigan Area Local, Lansing, Michigan; Dustin Hume, Website Editor

Honorable Mention: Aurora Local, Aurora Colorado; Edward Seidler, Website Editor

OVERALL EXCELLENCE

BEST NON-PROFESSIONAL (A): Defined as a publication printed by a commercial printer from camera-ready copy; prepared by the APWU editor.

First Place: *Tampa Mailbag News*, Tampa, Florida; Mike Botts, Editor

Honorable Mention: *San Antonio Alamo Area Local Dispatch*, San Antonio, Texas; Carlos Barrios, Editor

BEST NON-PROFESSIONAL (B): Defined as a publication printed in-house by the APWU editor from camera-ready copy; prepared by the APWU editor.

First Place: *Aurora Local News*, Aurora Colorado; Edward Seidler, Production Editor

Honorable Mention: *Auxiliary News & Views*, West Des Moines, Iowa; Janice Gillespie, Editor

BEST PROFESSIONAL: Defined as a publication printed by a commercial printer from camera-ready copy prepared by the printer.

First Place: *Iowa Postal Worker*, Des Moines, Iowa; Lance Coles, Editor

Honorable Mention: *Evergreen State Postal Worker*, Mount Lake Terrace, Washington; Robert Dyer Jr., Editor

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Secretary-Treasurer, other appointments made

With the approval of the PPA Advisory Council, Chairperson of the PPA Trustees Jenny Gust was appointed as interim secretary-treasurer replacing Ed Brennan who retired in July. Other appointments include; Advisory Council Member Cathy Hanson as Chairperson of the PPA Trustees and Iowa Postal Worker Editor Lance Coles, to the vacant editor-at-large position created by Jenny Gust’s appointment as secretary-treasurer.



BEST EDITORIAL

(First Place)

Thank veterans with more than just words

By Chris Czubakowski,
Local Business Agent
Milwaukee Area Local
The Hi-Lites
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

On Veterans Day every year, communities across the country hold parades and solemn remembrances of the men and women who served in the U.S. Military.

I'm a proud Desert Storm veteran and while I deeply appreciate the thanks that come from the general public, I expect more than verbal accolades from our elected officials. When they are making their legislative decisions, they need to remember that once veterans leave military service, we need to be able to take care of ourselves and our families with good paying jobs that have good benefits and provide job security for our futures.

As I neared the end of my service time, I was naturally concerned about making a living, buying a house, a car, and taking care of my family after being discharged. My dad, a Korean War veteran and retired mail carrier, recommended the United States Postal Service (USPS) as a good place to start looking as it had hiring preferences for

veterans. Thanks to being hired in 1996 as a postal clerk, I am fortunate enough to have a good union job with great benefits and can take care of my family. I made the right choice applying for a postal job as veterans' organizations routinely give the Postal Service top

marks for employing over 100,000 veterans, making the Postal Service the second largest employer of veterans in the country.

“When you’re thanking veterans for their service, let them know that you still also have their backs.”

marks for employing over 100,000 veterans, making the Postal Service the second largest employer of veterans in the country.

I thought my worries of employment were over. However, the Trump Administration is currently proposing to sell off the Postal Service to the highest bidder – to privatize it – based upon a House Office of Management and Budget report entitled, *Delivering Government Solutions in the 21st Century*. Big corporations, backed by Wall Street investors, are interested in purchasing it to make a profit. This would end post office employment opportunities for generations of veterans.

The employees who work at the Postal Service are not the only ones

who would be negatively impacted if this plan were enacted. Currently, a recent Pew Charitable Research poll indicated 88% of the population gives the Postal Service favorable marks. The Postal Service is enshrined in the U.S. Constitution itself. With its universal service mandate, the USPS delivers to an astonishing 157 million addresses six and now sometimes seven, days a week. Post offices are the anchor of so many communities.

If the public Postal Service became a corporate entity, all this would go out the window. Thousands of neighborhood post offices would close, daily services would disappear on the altar of private profit and costs would skyrocket. Seniors and Veterans who often rely on the Postal Service for their medicines would suffer and rural America would be left to fend for themselves.

Those who promote the sale of the Postal Service always refer to its financial shortcomings. However,

the cause is often conveniently left out. In 2006, Congress passed a law to require the Postal Service to fund future retiree health benefits 75 years into the future. That alone costs the Postal Service \$5.5 billion a year. No other private company or government agency is required to do this. Without this premeditated and unfair drain on resources, the Postal Service would be on sound financial footing today. Most importantly, the Postal Service doesn't use a dime of taxpayer dollars. All of its expenses are covered from the sale of postage and other products.

When you're thanking veterans for their service, let them know that you still also have their backs. Tell them that you will contact your members of Congress to ask them to protect and defend the U.S. Postal Service by co-sponsoring H. Res. 33 and S. Res. 99. These resolutions express the sense that Congress should take all appropriate measures to ensure that the U.S. Postal Service remains an independent establishment of the federal government and is not subject to privatization. Show your appreciation to veterans' commitment of service to America by making sure the Postal Service remains in the hands of the people of this country.

BEST CREATIVE WRITING

(First Place)

The perfect storm continues to pummel the Postal Service

By Paul McKenna, President
APWU of Wisconsin
The Badger Bulletin
Cecil, Wisconsin

As we all know, the Postal Service has been running most operations short staffed for way too long, and it caught up to them and us during the holiday peak season. It all came together to create the “perfect storm” in mail processing. The storm started a couple of years ago when management began short staffing the automated machines and only had enough employees to run with one person to a machine, instead of the required two people.

Then this past March, the storm intensified when COVID-19 started taking a toll on our workforce. More and more people were staying home because they had the symptoms of COVID. Postal Workers were not the only ones who were affected by COVID-19. The whole country and world were feeling the effects of this pandemic. As it spread everywhere, people stopped going out to stores and malls to do their shopping and began to order their needed items online. By mid-June, the mail volume started to get much heavier than normal.

Then at a time when the Postal Service started to need every piece of mail

processing equipment in its inventory, the new PMG started to remove more and more machines. He started to hold semi-trucks destined for far away cities until they were full. This caused mail to be delayed even more. At this point, the storm was really starting to wind up. American citizens were not getting their online packages and prescriptions. Mail was backing up more and more. They started to notice that something was not right with the USPS.

By late summer, most postal workers were working 12 hours a day, seven days a week. They were starting to get tired because there was no end in sight. COVID-19 was still around but it seemed to be easing a bit. Many thought we had the pandemic under control. Maybe the storm would not be so bad after all!

Early fall brought optimism. People were getting their lives back to normal. The trees were turning beautiful colors and football season was

starting. But then we realized the storm was still coming after us because the election was just a month away and the

country and we had more employees out on COVID leave. Because of COVID, more people were shopping online too, which started to back the packages up in the system. And now mail ballots starting to flood into the USPS facilities like we have never seen before. At this point, we all knew that the storm was heading straight for us all.

If it were any normal year, we would be getting busy right after Thanksgiving but this year was not normal. We had been buried since April. In mid-December, the storm finally hit us with a wallop when everyone decided, because of COVID to do our holiday shopping online. This year, a lot of Black Friday sales were done online, which buried us even more. Then three days later, we were hit again with Cyber Monday sales.

Between COVID, online sales at record amounts and mail-in ballots, it made for the perfect category 5 storm that none of us will ever forget.



BEST NEWS STORY *(First Place)*

Postal workers, retirees and community allies rally to tell Grassley, Ernst to fund USPS!

By Mark Sarcone,
Editor/Legislative Director
Des Moines, Iowa Area Local
DMI News & Views
Des Moines, Iowa

About 50 concerned postal workers, retirees and concerned community members gathered at the Federal Building in Des Moines on the late morning of August 25 to tell Senators Grassley and Ernst they have a duty to the American people to keep the public Postal Service thriving. Des Moines was one of about 300 actions nationwide to make it clear the Senate needs to pass \$25 billion in emergency COVID relief funding for the Postal Service and to permanently reverse the policies Postmaster General



DeJoy put into place that caused mail delays. In the midst of a pandemic that has cost the U.S. Postal Service \$2.2 billion in lost revenues in the third quarter of fiscal year 2020 and in the wake of the House of Representatives passing the “Delivering for America Act” (H.R. 8015) which would stop the Postal Service from making changes to operations or levels of service from those that were in effect on January 1, 2020; establish requirements for the processing of election mail and provide additional funding for the Postal Service, people have decided they don’t want their Postal Service to be politicized.

Unfortunately, that’s exactly what President Trump and his cronies, like Postmaster General DeJoy, Treasury Mnuchin and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell are apparently trying to do. “I’m not exaggerating. Republi-



cans are trying to dominate American politics by cheating and hoping the average American is too busy paying their bills to care about voting,” said Iowa State Senator, Claire Celsi, one of the guest speakers at the rally. “Mail in balloting is very popular with all voters – Republicans, Democrats, and Independents and will be even more popular during a pandemic when we’re trying to keep large amounts of people from going to the polls to vote so they can be safe,” she added.

The best the Trump administration has been willing to do, according to *The Washington Post*, is to loan the Postal Service \$10 billion in emergency relief funding in exchange for proprietary information about the Postal Service’s most lucrative private sector contracts.



The Postal Service, subject to confidentiality restrictions, will provide Treasury copies of the 10 largest “negotiated service agreements,” or contracts with high-volume third party shippers such as Amazon, FedEx and UPS, and receive a crucial injection of cash that postal officials say will keep the debt-laden agency solvent for at least another year, according to a copy of the loan’s term sheet obtained by *The Washington Post*.

The goal of the rally was to: amplify the public’s appreciation of our local postal workers and their hard work for our communities. Show our elected of-



ficials there’s overwhelming support for emergency funding for the post office with \$25 billion and protecting everyone’s right to vote by mail; and to amplify the voices of postal workers affected by service cuts and the voices of our community members affected by mail delays and service cuts. I highly recommend you go to the website: us-mailnotforsale.org for more information.

As far as the delivery of absentee ballots to voters and back to county auditors, Charlie Wishman, President of the Iowa Federation of Labor said, “I trust you with my ballot! I’m going to vote by mail and I don’t have a single second thought about it whatsoever!”

Ayisha Al-Hassan, with the Iowa Poor People’s Campaign said, “We need to stand up for what’s right and stand up for the Postal Service. Where else can you go and get paid the same amount regardless of race or gender? Postal Service jobs lift people out of poverty.”

Mike Bates, Local 44 President, presided over the rally, said, “We will not stand by and let corruption take down the Postal Service. Postal Service jobs give opportunities to people to lift them out of poverty and into the middle class.



It allows them to have the means to send their children to college, which makes America a better place!” He added that we need a strong Postal Service that supports seniors, the disabled, small businesses, people relying on the post office for their medications, and at-risk voters.

Celsi was even more direct in her message to Grassley and Ernst: “Democrats see the freight train coming and we’re trying like hell to stop it. Republicans are desperately trying to avoid a blowout election or they will lose both the Senate and the White House. But, now they know we’re watching them.”

With the stalemate in Congress where the House is willing to fund the Postal Service, up to \$25 billion and the Senate basically offering zero, look for more rallies to pop up as we go along. Let’s get 100 people out there for the next one and make your voice be heard!



Don’t regret later what you could have done today.

Because information about the Postal Service has been turning on a dime lately, one of the best ways to keep abreast of the latest actions is to follow us on Facebook at [AWU Des Moines Iowa](https://www.facebook.com/AWUDesMoinesIowa) and on Twitter at [@DMIAPWU](https://twitter.com/DMIAPWU). We will post information on any actions as soon as it becomes available.

BEST NON-POSTAL LABOR STORY (Honorable Mention)

American Factory

By Larry Brown Jr., Vice President
Milwaukee Area Local
The Hi-Lites
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

“375 million people will need to find new work by the year 2030 because of automation...”

I am going to do something a little different here. I am starting my article off this month with a homework assignment for you. Everybody reading this should go and watch the movie *American Factory* currently airing on Netflix.

American Factory is about a Chinese billionaire, Cho Tak Wong that opens a glass making business, Fuyao Glass, in an old abandoned General Motors plant in Dayton Ohio. Chinese businesses buy American companies all the time so that is nothing to rave about. The reason this film is so good is because Wong and the Fuyao management team let filmmakers film everything. You get to see into the mind of a management team, this one specifically from China but with some American influence, tasked with getting the “overconfident” as they say in the film, Americans to be productive.

The term overconfident was used to describe Americans because as they explained in the movie, Americans have been told that we can accomplish anything since a young age. Because of this, they described Americans as being similar to donkeys. Donkeys like being touched in the direction their hair grows. If you try to brush them the opposite direction, they kick you. They believe us Americans have had our egos stroked since we were children to the point where we only want

the workers had to endure. One Chinese manager said the Americans are afraid of heat, while the film shows a worker cleaning inside a machine where it was 210 degrees. (*The worker said he spends about 10 minutes per hour in there.*)

You also get to hear from former General Motors workers stating how their wages went from \$29 per hour for their factory work down to \$12 per hour at the Fuyao plant. You witness a man that had never had an on the job injury in his life file his first claim once he started working at Fuyao Glass. Coincidence? Maybe but I don’t think so.

The film shows us Fuyao management’s attempt to thwart an organization effort. There is a scene in the documentary that shows a private meeting at the Fuyao Plant with Chairman Cho Tak Wong. The company leaders were concerned about a campaign to persuade Fuyao workers to approve a UAW-represented bargaining unit. Wong said he would close the plant if the workers created a bargaining unit. This in itself is a violation of the National Labor Relations Act; this violation, along with the numerous employees that were targeted and fired for supporting or assisting a unionization effort.

In December 2017, Fuyao Glass paid nearly 1 million dollars to an Oklahoma-based consulting firm that boasted of helping companies in the art of “union avoidance,” according to a document filed with the U.S. Department of Labor. American managers at Fuyao gave meetings and service talks to the workers explaining why they, the workers, should not want a union. They said it would be illegal for them to talk to management if they

to convince most of the younger workers at the plant to vote no to the union. Ultimately, it seems as if it worked, as the vote failed, 868 no to 444 yes. We hear Wong again, speaking on why he hired American managers in the first place. “We thought we could pay high salaries to the managers in exchange for their trust.” All of the American managers were soon fired and replaced with Chinese management. Later we hear from one of the fired managers, the same manager attempting to explain why the workers should not unionize, express his

dedication throughout the coronavirus outbreak. All non-high salaried positions in his company would get a bonus ranging from \$2,000 to \$9,000. One of Connor’s employees, a senior maintenance mechanic that has been with the company for 13 years said, “Family comes first. I love that about this place. They’ve always made me feel that they care not only about me but about my family’s health and well-being. That’s what keeps me here.”

One takeaway from the movie that should be spoken about is the workers

“Nothing has changed as far as people working hard in America. The only thing that has changed is the people at the top deciding to rewrite the rules, to take advantage of the hard-working people, to make things in their favor at your expense.”
— UAW representative

new thoughts of how, “They really need a union in that place.” Ironical?

I wrote an article, I believe in September of last year, where I referenced a bunch of news outlets speaking on businesses that had received a stimulus of sorts, by way of the tax cuts that were afforded to them by the Trump Administration’s tax reform bill. This tax reform bill lowered the top corporate income tax rate from 35 percent to 21 percent. Numerous businesses were asked if any of the newly acquired money would be used to give back to the workers, in the form of wage increases or bonuses. Nearly all of them said no. The money went to bonuses for their top executives and shareholders in the form of stock buybacks. Nothing for the people that actually do the work.

In a totally unrelated event, during the pandemic we are faced with now, a CEO named Larry Connor, the owner of a Miami real estate investment firm, The Connor Group, made a companywide announcement that he had made \$1.6 million on the stock market in the span of eight days. The best part about it was he then informed his employees that he would be paying out every dime of it in bonuses to them for their work and

did not want to be rich. They were happy with their \$2 an hour raise that was given to them after the failed organization attempt and at the request that they work harder for it, of course. The workers did not feel appreciated by the Chinese management team. They did feel appreciated by General Motors before they closed. **Feeling appreciated matters!** More hard work should not be its own reward.

Can management appreciate me going to work, head down, doing a repetitive job, over and over and over? One gentleman in the movie stated, “The working conditions are not favorable and doing the same thing over and over begins to weigh on your mind and your body. You start wondering if you have the stamina to do this every day.”

People need to feel appreciated and that is what management does not understand. Yes, I am talking about us now. Our superiors, our managers. Has anyone here in the plant attempted to put in a hardship or a change of schedule? How did management make you feel when you asked for that request? Like you were asking for the sun, the stars and the moon, just to trade an off day!

A newer supervisor was talking to me *Please see American Factory, page 6*

“We can’t manage them. When we try to manage them, they threaten to get help from the union.”
— Chairman Cho Tak Wong

to hear what we want; which makes it almost impossible to manage us.

Insert Union Avoidance Firm. You get to see an organizing attempt firsthand as the “lazy” American workers file safety complaints for unsafe working conditions. One example is the extreme heat

unionized, as if the manager/employee relationship was so great to begin with.

Meanwhile, the workers only talked of feeling disrespected and how they could never even just ask a simple question to their management counterparts. (Sound familiar?) The firm used scare tactics

BEST COMMUNITY SERVICE (First Place)

What we do for each other

By Bridget Yurachek,
Secretary/Treasurer
St. Charles APWU Auxiliary
The Auxiliary Spirit
Saint Charles, Missouri

I have a grandson who is 2 years old. He is filled with curiosity and wonder. He pretends to give me a latte with a cup of water. He giggles and dances with excitement when I give him a gift. When he was visiting recently, he saw green grapes in the fridge. He pulled out the bag of fruit and thanked me for buying grapes for him. Just being around him makes me smile.

Sometimes I wish I could get back to the days of innocence and joy. But somebody has to be the grownup, and today it’s my turn. With all the chaos and fear right now, I have to be a source of strength, comfort, and encouragement to my family and others I come in contact with.

Every day I see examples of kindness and courage as we face this pandemic together; people reaching out to others in need of food, medication, and other essentials. Healthcare workers, firemen, police officers, trash services, and yes, postal workers, carrying on while we

stay safely in our home, risking their lives to save ours.

As this virus has spread and affected many, I asked myself, “What can I do?” What can we do? How can we be a part of the solution? What about our union/auxiliary brothers and sisters? Could they use some help?

- Mow their lawn.
- Walk their dogs.
- Pickup groceries or medication.
- Deliver meals or desserts to them and their families.
- Call them and make sure they are OK. Offer words of encouragement

or just let them vent.

- Do their gardening.
 - Send them a card or Hangry box (I didn’t know what that was either) A Hangry box is filled with various treats they would like to eat when they are stressed, angry, hungry, lonely, or just need a pick-me-up.
 - Visit them outside, 6 feet apart of course. My neighbors and my family sat out in our courtyard and brought our own food and drinks. We stayed apart but had a great time.
- We can be there for each other. It just takes a little imagination.

American Factory

Continued from page 5

about how she tries to tell all of her employees thank you after a day of work because she knows that no one else in management is saying it. That is disturbing. When our former plant manager would walk the floor and act as if he was too good to acknowledge any of the workers, that is disturbing. (...endless examples, but I'll stop...)

I am not saying that management has to give us \$10,000 bonuses but since I am the Automation Director, how about just giving us a partner? Stop attempting to make it look like I am a "lazy" worker when I file a grievance for working alone. Especially since the contract says normal staffing is two people. They do not see how disrespectful this practice is to you as a worker. This practice is not only disrespectful because they want you to do the work of two people and they get upset because the union won a grievance that says they have to pay you for doing the work of two people. It is disrespectful because it is an unsafe practice.

When we sent up the first of the one person grievances, we had letters in the file going back and forth between former PMG Patrick Donahoe and OSHA stating OSHA understands these machines are known to hurt people when they were slower, shorter and also one tiered. OSHA asked Donahoe since the new machines coming in were bigger and faster and the slower/smaller machines were known to cause injuries to the workforce, what precautions was the post office going to make to assure these machines did not injure even more people?

Donahoe's response was we will follow all safety precautions giving to us by the manufacturer and OSHA. Well, the first precaution given to the post office by the manufacturers and OSHA was to have at least two, if not more people on the machine whenever

it is running! What happened? A simple line from one of American managers in the movie, before they were fired, would better explain. "We would all say, at every level of the company, that we want to be safe. Unfortunately, safety doesn't pay the bills."

As it pertains to us in automation, it looks better for their BPI when you run the machine by yourself. One person doing the work of two people. That is what they care about. Not your safety because if safety were a concern it would not be as much of a fight as it is to get them to utilize two people. They would not use every excuse in the book to try and say that you are not working as hard as you can when you are by yourself. They would pay you in a timely manner when they did have to, as a result of you working alone. All of this goes hand in hand with that feeling of respect, but you cannot get this across to them because all they know is numbers. Numbers never lie, except when they do.

As much as I would love to harp on this one subject and hold on to my union bias because the last thing you want to do is sound like management, being a steward, we should care about those numbers also. The numbers going through the machines and those BPI numbers. The only "numbers" it seems we care about are the numbers of hours of overtime we get. Everybody has their eyes on the overtime call. Everybody wants to know why this person is getting overtime on this Tour, and why they weren't called for this and what's going on over here? Was I bypassed? This is your right to work overtime. I get it, we all care "so much" about our money. My question is how can you care "so much" about overtime but not "so much" about the place that you work for that enables you to have the overtime you value "so much?" (...What comes first, the chicken or the egg?)

There was a scene in the movie where the American managers take a field trip over to China to see how the plant out there operated. They were amazed at how harmonious the workers worked with each other. It was then we found out that all of the workers at the China plant had to be in the union. The union and management worked closely with each other.

Shimeng, who is chairman of the workers union at the China plant, stated that, "We need our workers to fight for Fuyao's success. We are all in the same boat. Keeping the boat safe means everyone is safe. If the boat sinks, we all lose our jobs. It's quite simple." We should not have to be on the brink of the boat sinking to actually care about the place that we work for. Do you know the number one question I get since the world has been closed because of this pandemic? (...besides questions about the 80 hours of leave because of the coronavirus...)

The question I have been getting the most is do you really think that we are going to run out of money and close down? It is quite funny because the last time people were concerned this much about us closing was when they actually wanted to close the Milwaukee Plant, back when they were consolidating P&DCs. Why can't we feel this way about our jobs all the time? Why aren't we concerned to keep it all the time? We would work a little harder and come to work a little more if the concern were there (...once again most of my cases are discipline cases for attendance...) but that disappears as soon as we feel we are in the clear from something happening again; we revert back to our old ways of only caring about ourselves, not thinking about the whole United Stated Postal Service and the big picture.

I don't have to speak on the new automation machines that probably will be coming to Milwaukee in the future. Most of you guys tell me about them. All the MDO's seem to have seen them in action. We don't have to speak on the new flat sorter machines that we don't have because they won't fit into this building. You know, the ones they claim don't require a single clerk to run them. What I can speak on is forcing the hand of someone making the decisions about profitability and productivity.

We all hear about how the people examining all of these numbers, that determine how many jobs we have, have never stepped a foot in this building. That is the reason we are having all of the new service talks about closing the gaps of idle time on the machines. Once again, we all work I know that but proving that to someone that doesn't know you, or even care to know you, is a different story. All they see is that a machine wasn't running at a particular time. If there were two employees on it, and the machine didn't have maintenance issues, why wasn't it running?

The movie ends with a subtitle that reads, "375 million people will need to find new work by the year 2030 because of automation." The Chairman, Wong is walking through the plant with his management team as they inform him of all the jobs they have eliminated with the use of robots. I think back to a conversation I had with Greg Preuss back when I had just a few years in. We were looking at the plans for the new building when it was first introduced. I was excited. A new building. What could be better? Greg told me, you never want to see that new building built, because when it is, a lot of jobs are going to be gone. (...P.S. our new Postmaster General is an expert Job Killer. Re-read that article...)

We just want the respect that we should be getting from our superiors that continuously make us do more with less. Maybe then we would be more concerned with acknowledging that we are all in the same boat. The union and management need to work together. When the union points something out to management, we shouldn't always have to hear management say Article 3. Listen to what we are attempting to share. The union's job is to ensure the contract is being followed and the union has shown management that we are willing to work with them on numerous occasions. That shows respect. We want it both ways. Sometimes, respect is worth more than money.

BEST PHOTOGRAPH (Honorable Mention)

Bernadette Evangelist,
Graphic Designer
The Union Mail
New York, New York

Whose Post Office? The People's Post Office!



BEST FEATURE STORY (*First Place*)

The Six-Triple Eight – WW II Morale Boosters

By Louise Balog, Editor
The Newsroom
Mentor, Ohio

This is a story about 855 remarkable women who played a vital role during WW II. In this era of social media, there are few who appreciate or engage in writing letters. During WW II, letter writing was the main means of staying in touch with loved ones overseas. Imagine how the soldiers overseas would feel if their mail dwindled down to fits and spurts. Well, it did. Service members noticed they weren't getting all their mail from home. Army officials realized the lack of receiving mail was hurting morale. As the war continued, the military had to put their efforts in maintaining the basics – food, equipment and supplies. They just did not have the manpower to maintain the delivery of the mail.

This is where these 855 women come in. These women were in the Women's Army Corps (WAC) and formed the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion – known as the Six Triple Eight. They comprised the only all – African American, all female unit sent overseas during WW II. Their mission, to keep the mail flowing for the Army, Navy, Army Air Corps, Red Cross and uniformed civilian specialists; seven million people in all, waiting for their mail.

There was a catch. First, they were ordered to clean up 17 million pieces of mail and packages that had been languishing in three warehouses for two years! Not only that, they were told by Army officials to take no more than 6 months to get it cleaned up. A daunting task to be sure. Remember, there was no mechanization to aid this endeavor.

The new WAC recruits underwent 4 to 6 weeks of basic training, including a physical training program at Fort Oglethorpe Georgia. This was followed by 4 to 12 weeks of specialized training. This was necessary because the Six Triple Eight was a self-contained unit, meaning they had to manage their own mess hall, motor pool, supply rooms, hair salon, recreation facilities and guard duty. All of these positions were staffed

by the women in the Six Triple Eight. The battalion was commanded by Major Charity Adams (Earley), the first African American woman to receive an Army commission. (She ended the war as a lieutenant colonel and as the highest ranking black woman in the Army.) Major Adams Earley was a well-educated



Inspection of troops – the 688th Battalion.

woman, who according to members of the battalion interviewed for a documentary on the Six Triple Eight, was no nonsense. She protected and stuck up for her troops when they were faced with hostility and racist behavior from other military officers and soldiers.

On February 3, 1945, the first contingent of the battalion sailed for Britain on the *Ile de France*, arriving in Glasgow, Scotland on February 14 and traveling by train to Birmingham, England. They arrived to warehouses filled to the ceiling with mail and packages. A number of Christmas care packages had been ravaged by rats as large as cats. Remember, this mail had been there for two years so it was quite the mess.

So in damp, poorly lit warehouses (due to blackout regulations) and with no heat, the women dug in. Wearing long johns, fatigues, coats, jackets and ski wear, they worked 3 rotating shifts of 8 hours each, seven days a week. They set up a system of Army Postal Office (APO) carts to separate and pitch the mail. As a number of pieces were addressed "Butch" or "Junior", the women had to piece together clues as to who the intended recipient was.

Another problem was common names. There were over 7,500 Robert Smiths. The women of the Six Triple Eight kept track of 7 million identification cards with serial numbers to help distinguish servicemen with the same names. They also had to constantly keep track as to the location of the servicemen.

Any mail marked "Undeliverable" was sent to them to be redirected properly. They also had the sad job of returning mail to families whose family member had died. With their system, they were able to process an average of 65,000 pieces of mail per shift. At this pace, they were able to clear the entire backlog in three months! Astounding!

The women of the 6888th had a motto that they adhered to: "No Mail, Low Morale." They sincerely felt their efforts were making a

difference in soldier morale, which was true. Private First Class Dorothy Turner of the 6888th said, "There was part of the history of these men in the files. You could see the last time that this man got mail and you were so determined to find him because you had this pile of mail (sometimes packages) that he should have gotten over the years."

Having faced racism and sexism back home, as well as in the service, the women of the 6888th felt the necessity to show the higher-ups they were up to the task. They felt the work they did would reflect on other African Americans. If they would fail, to them it would be like all African Americans would fail. They felt their role was about something so much bigger than themselves.

With their stunning success, the 6888th was asked to go to Rouen, France and then on to Paris to do the same thing – clean up the mail. In May, 1945, they were transferred to Rouen. The battalion arrived to see rubble from bomb destruc-

a tragedy. PFC Mary J. Barlow, PFC Mary H. Bankston, and Sgt. Dolores M. Browne were in a jeep accident. The two Mary's were killed instantly and Dolores died days later. The War Department did not provide funds for funerals. The women of the 6888th pooled their resources and money. Some had mortuary experience and prepared the bodies for burial. Other members, as well as some French citizens, paid for the caskets. Memorial services were organized and held for these three women. They are buried in the Normandy American Cemetery called Colleville-sur-Mer overlooking Omaha Beach. There are only four women total buried in this cemetery and three of them are from the 6888th.

In February 1946, the remainder of the unit was returned to the U.S. and disbanded at Fort Dix, New Jersey. There was no ceremony, no recognition, no public accolades. Since then there have been a few events recognizing members of the 6888th. They were awarded a Congressional Gold Medal and the Secretary of the Army awarded the unit a Meritorious Unit Commendation.

On November 30, 2018 a monument was dedicated at the Buffalo Soldier



Dedication of the monument to members of the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion. The monument is located at Fort Leavenworth Kansas and was dedicated November 30, 2018. Attending were five surviving members of the 688th: Pvt. Maybell Rutland Tanner Campbell, PFC Elizabeth Barker Johnson, Cpl. Lena Derriecott Bell King, Pvt. Anna Mae Wilson Robertson and PFC Deloris Ruddock.

tion everywhere. Mail there had been backed up 2-3 years. Again the order was the same – deliver the mail in 6 months. Again, the result was the same. They did it in 3 months.

In Paris, the battalion met additional challenges. Because the war was over, the battalion was reduced by nearly 300 women and 200 more were eligible for discharge in January 1946. The morale of the battalion suffered as the workload fluctuated and there were fewer women to handle the postal duties. As Parisians had done without during the war, the 6888th faced the challenge of theft of small packages or rifling items from packages. As a result, they had to systematically search local civilians with whom they worked.

While in Rouen, the 6888th suffered

Commemorative Area in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas for the 6888th. The memorial is inscribed with the names of the members and is topped with a bronze bust of Lt. Col. Charity Adams Earley who led the 6888th. (Lt. Col. Earley died in Dayton, Ohio on January 13, 2002.) Five surviving members attended the dedication ceremony: Pvt. Maybell Rutland Tanner Campbell, PFC Elizabeth Barker Johnson, Cpl. Lena Derriecott Bell King, Pvt. Anna Mae Wilson Robertson and PFC Deloris Ruddock. These women were significant participants in the documentary *Six Triple Eight* by Lincoln Penny Films. If you get the opportunity to see this documentary, I recommend you do so. It is testament to the dedication and fortitude of a remarkable group of women.



Women of the 688th Battalion working with French citizens to sort the mail. (Source U.S. Army Women's Museum, Fort Lee Virginia)

BEST NON-POSTAL LABOR STORY (First Place)

Women’s history: the uprising of the 20,000

By Flo Summergrad, Editor
The Union Mail
New York, New York

As 29-year-old Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez, the youngest woman ever elected to the U.S. Congress, carries out her promise of “speaking truth to power,” she will face attacks on her class, her ethnic background, her gender, and her politics. Of course, men also face hostility and insults from the anti-labor right wing. But particular to the attack on strong female leaders is that their very appearance, their clothes, their shoes, become objects of ridicule. Trump insulted the looks of women who opposed him. And Ocasio-Cortez is mocked and criticized for wearing stylish clothes and shoes.

Labor historian Einav Rabiovitch-Fox drew an historic parallel: “the attention to Ocasio-Cortez’s clothing as a way to criticize her politics is an all-too-familiar line of attack. . . . Clara Lemlich [was] a young radical socialist who used fashion as a form of empowerment while she fought for workers’ rights.”

In 1909, Clara Lemlich rebuked male union leaders for being too passive. The conservative leaders (all male) of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) saw women workers

as negligible. The 23-year-old Lemlich turned that around when she led the largest strike of female garment workers in the New York City needle trades. The mass strike from November into Febru-



Clara Lemlich

ary 1909, was dubbed, “The Uprising of the Twenty Thousand.”

The strikers fought “The Shirtwaist Kings,” the factory owners who forced 11-hour days, six days a week in dark and crowded conditions. They demanded shorter hours, higher wages, safer workrooms, an end to sexual harassment and places to hang up their

good clothes during the work day.

On strike, the women marched in the streets wearing their best clothes and nice hats. This was heavily criticized by the media and even by the male union leadership as being “frivolous.” Working women were supposed to be meek and shabby examples of “the deserving poor.” *Collier’s* magazine was shocked that striking women looked “attired for a festive occasion.” Just as reporters ridiculed Ocasio-Cortez’s clothes, *Collier’s* described strikers’ fashions in mocking detail, saying that puffed dresses and picture hats showed that the women did not have real grievances. The *New York Sun* sneered at “the unwonted leisure class-all dressed in holiday attire.”

Clearly, wanting more from life than basic survival was not acceptable from working women. Lemlich pointed out that spending 50 cents on a pretty hat meant going for weeks on dry lunches. But she said, “We like new hats as well as any other young women. Why shouldn’t we?” As historian Rabinovich-Fox explains, “Wearing a fancy dress or a hat signaled their economic independence and their respectability as ladies.” In *Ladies of Labor, Girls of Adventure*, Nan Enstad points out that fashion did not turn young working women into passive consumerists. “These women, in fact,

went on strike in very large numbers... proving themselves to be politically active, astute, and effective.” By not presenting themselves as helpless victims, the 20,000 forced the bosses, the union and the public to take them seriously.

The lengthy strike welded a disorganized workforce into a united, political force. The women were attacked by thugs hired by the manufacturers. The police arrested them and hostile judges sentenced them “for striking against God and nature.”

These women who refused to “know their place” as second class citizens, forged an alliance with the upper-class women’s suffragists’ Women’s Trade Union League (WTUL) which organized mass rallies and gained public support.

Although the strike did not win all the demands, it achieved a shorter work week, four paid holidays, negotiation of wages, and many shop contracts. Most important, the ranks of ILGWU Local 125 had swelled from 100 to 10,000. It laid the groundwork for industrial unionism in the garment industry and forced the unions to accept women as legitimate union activists – even with their pretty hats!

In the same way, Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez will command respect as she fearlessly takes on the powers that be.

BEST CREATIVE WRITING (Honorable Mention)

The few things I learned this year

By Phillip Breunig, Editor
Tour’s End
Gainesville, Florida

1. People should wear their masks over their nose AND their mouth while walking through stores. Some wear it on their chins and that looks like they’re wearing a mini Jock Strap or Thong... and that is disconcerting.
2. Also, when wearing a mask, you don’t have to smile because nobody can

- see it. Just squint your eyes a little and save the rest of your facial muscles the work.
3. Masks are the new fashionable item of the year. In August the question “Is there a thing as a truly stylish face mask?” Twelve editors of *GQ Magazine* had to answer this question and it got me thinking...Did the Lone Ranger ever ask Tonto, “Does this mask bring out the blue in my eyes?” Did the Shadow ask Margo Lane, “Does this red sash clash with my black hat?” Did the Green

- Hornet ask Kato, “Is my mask the correct shade of green so it will match the rest of the cloths?”
4. When lying to a large group of people, so much so they will disregard any truths put before them, one must make it sound like your being absolutely honest with them, no matter how many actual facts are presented to them. This can be accomplished by using key words in the lie; such as: WONDERFUL, BEAUTIFUL and WINNING. These words are

- to be repeated several times for the believability factor to take hold.
5. I found the space between the edge of my recliner and the floor is quite a distance. When on the night of the election, as I was switching channels, I saw that Fox News had called Arizona for Joe Biden before all the other networks. That’s when I fell out of my recliner!
- To survive a pandemic, one only needs paper towels, eggs, and toilet paper. Lots and lots of toilet paper!

BEST HEADLINE (First Place)

By John Greathouse, Editor
Michigan Messenger
Lansing, Michigan

To Wear a Mask or Not to Wear A Mask . . . That Is The Question

BEST COMMUNITY SERVICE (*Honorable Mention*)

Auxiliary recognizes essential postal employees

By Janice Gillespie, Des Moines
Local & National Legislative Aide/
Editor, Auxiliary to the APWU
Iowa Postal Worker
Des Moines, Iowa

There's a lot of talk about essential workers these days and rightly so but seldom are postal employees mentioned. The DMI Local Auxiliary decided that we needed to find a way to show our admiration and appreciation to these dedicated workers. Our carriers deliver to over 200,000 addresses in the metro area. They can only do so because of the clerks who sort the mail to their routes. The clerks rely on the mail handlers to load and unload the trucks and bring the mail to them. There would be no trucks without the drivers in Motor Vehicle Service. Vehicle maintenance keeps the fleet in working order and maintenance personnel keep work and break areas

clean and sanitized, never an easy task, but extra harder now. They all depend on each other and the public depends on all of them.

The auxiliary consists of APWU members who are working in unprecedented conditions; their family members who see what they do every day; and retired members who have been there. We all felt the need to show our support and appreciation, but what to do? Karen Wolver, National Auxiliary District Three Coordinator, made a motion to provide snacks for the workforce. This suggestion was well received and planning began.

Janice Gillespie, National Legislative Aide/Editor, purchased USA union-made chips and she and Karen delivered them to all eleven stations. The main plant with three tours was going to be a bit more challenging. They solicited help from auxiliary members Mark Sarcone,

Barb Wilson and Mike Gillespie, who were able to distribute over 600 snacks to the MPO, VMS and MVS.

The smiles and thanks we received made this all worth it.

The snacks were just a small gesture but with a huge message. We value and



the food drive was postponed but the need is still there.

Auxiliaries to the APWU all over the country are helping their postal workers and their communities. Some are making and donating masks, sanitizers and cleaning supplies. Members are giving their time and talents wherever there is a need. This is what we do. We will get through this, together.



admire the postal workers who are on the front line during these trying times.

The DMI local auxiliary is also concerned with those in our communities. We unanimously passed a motion to donate \$2,000 to DMRAC. This local food pantry distributes food to needy families in the Des Moines area. They have, in the past, been the recipient for the "Stamp Out Hunger" food drive, usually held in May. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic,



BEST EDITORIAL (*Honorable Mention*)

How Donald and DeJoy plan to Deny and DeLay

By Louise Balog, Editor
The Newsroom
Mentor, Ohio

Back In August, Trump said he would be withholding monetary assistance for the Postal Service in order to make it harder to process mail-in ballots. When he was on the Maria Bartiromo show he stated, "if we don't make a deal, that means they (USPS) don't get the money. That means they can't have universal mail-in voting, they just can't have it."

At the same time, DeJoy said the changes he made would stay in place. He was referring to not restoring decommissioned sorting machines, not returning collection boxes that had been removed, or change his policies when mail can go out. When questioned during the House hearing, he repeatedly refused to answer who ordered the machines to be removed. He said it wasn't him but he didn't know who ordered it. As a result, the country has been swamped with mail delays across the board, which he did admit to.

Data collected by the Kaiser Family Foundation shows that Ohio residents rely on mail order prescription drugs

more per capita than residents of any other state. These delays are undermining the confidence that people have in the USPS system. Make no mistake, this is intentional. Donald, who is the great divider, has never denied he wants to privatize the Postal Service. By slowing the system down creating a situation of unreliability, by denying any financial relief to the USPS when the CARES Act paid out nearly 900 billion dollars to big corporations and small businesses, by verbally denigrating postal employees, by creating a story line that voting by mail is fraudulent, he is laying the groundwork so that the country is divided about wanting to have a Postal Service at all. I'm sure every one of us knows people who don't believe the Postal Service should be helped at all. I certainly know them. What you have is other people trying to decide what is best for you.

Besides the postal shenanigans Donald's election campaign is engaging in legal challenges in key states to challenge their voting procedures. He is concentrating these efforts in states where his support is decreasing. Iowa, Pennsylvania and Nevada are just a few of the states where he is attempting to challenge laws that might be unfavorable to his reelection. The United States Supreme Court rebuffed a recent Republican challenge in Rhode Island. In Rhode Island there was an agreement to allow residents to vote by mail through the November general election without getting signatures from two witnesses or a notary. The Republicans wanted the witnesses or notary to be required. The Supreme Court thought otherwise.

So to recap just a small portion of what is happening, we have the Associated Press that obtained memos that Postal Service leadership pushed to

eliminate overtime, halted late delivery trips that ensured mail arrives on time, cut hours at various post offices, and followed the dictates of DeJoy. In addition, the USPS issued a statement that if ballots did not have first class postage, deadlines concerning mail-in ballots could not be achieved concerning current USPS delivery standards. All of these job actions led Colorado Secretary of State Jena Griswold to say, "It was 'voter suppression' to undermine the safest method to vote during a pandemic, and force Americans to risk their lives to vote."

I could fill this newsletter with all the ways voter suppression has been enacted in the last 20 years. What you have is a group of people trying to dictate whose vote matters. This is why again, for the umpteenth time, you need to be proactive in defending your voting rights, your job, and the company you work for. This b.s. with you standing on the sideline and doing nothing is over. They're coming after you and they're coming after your job. If you don't wake up now you never will.

Yours in Union Solidarity
(Information from Linn's Associated Press, Senator Sherrod Brown's office)

"If we don't make a deal, that means they (USPS) don't get the money. That means they CAN'T have universal mail-in voting, they just CAN'T HAVE IT."
— Donald Trump

BEST HEADLINE (Honorable Mention)

By John Durben, Editor
The Badger Bulletin
Cecil, Wisconsin

D-Liver D-Mail D-Joy...It's That Simple

BEST NEWS STORY (Honorable Mention)

The effects of the global pandemic

By Tiffanie Schultz, Vice President
Missouri APWU Auxiliary
The Auxiliary Spirit
Saint Charles, Missouri

The global pandemic of COVID-19 has impacted our country in ways we never imagined. The pandemic is changing the way people are working, shopping, learning, and how they are interacting with one another. As states have ordered many stores and businesses to close, the Postal Service continues to serve the public who is

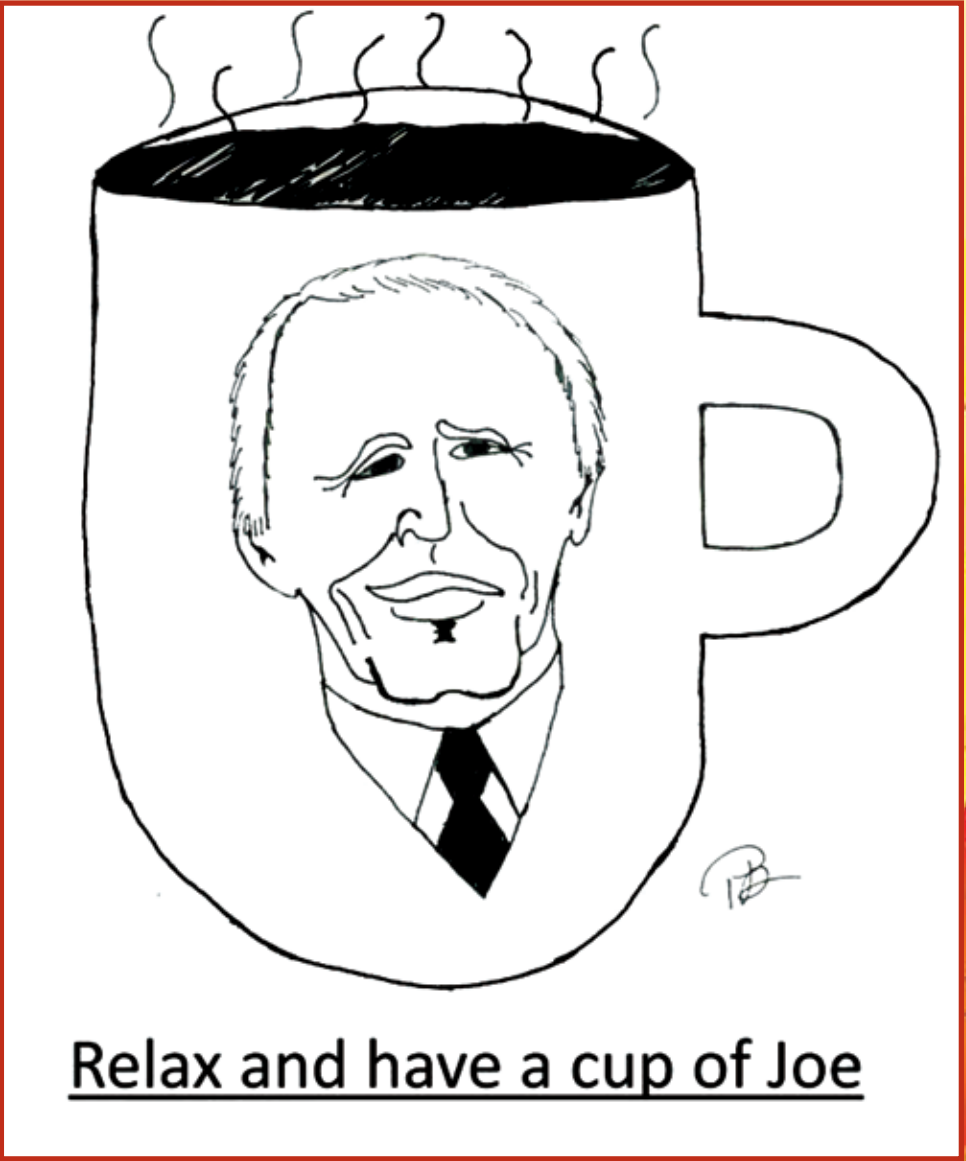
relying on it now more than ever. According to Vox, "14.5 million people in rural areas don't have broadband internet access, 18 percent of Americans still pay their bills by mail and more than half the people who get their medication delivered are over the age of 65." The daily routine of postal workers has changed in many ways due to the pandemic. The streets are empty and traffic is at an all-time low. This would be perfect, if it wasn't for the reason why everyone is inside. Once the schools were shut down, leave had

to be provided for workers who needed to take care of their kids at home. This caused a loss of about fifty percent of the country's workforce. Packages that used to be handed to the customer are now being set on the porch for contactless delivery. Also, requesting a customer's name has become the norm instead of requesting their signature. Another change is that the volume of packages has gone up. Normally springtime is the lighter season for packages but in terms of volume, it is now comparable to Christmas season, since more people are shopping online. Even though the volume of packages has gone up, the amount of first-class and marketing mail, which pays the agency's bills, has gone down. This decline in mail

could be as much as 60% by the end of the year. President Trump blocked potential emergency funding for USPS and claimed that it wouldn't be losing money if it charged more to Amazon and other internet companies for delivering their packages. However, the airlines were given a \$25 billion payout. With the country slowly opening back up, it is important to remember the essential workers who have taken on more work and pressure, so that the customers can have the essential items needed to keep going. A kind word or a smile can go a long way. Writing a thank you note to your local postal branch or delivery man/woman can go a long way. Remember to continue social distancing. Stay safe.

BEST CARTOON (First Place)

By Phillip Breunig, Editor
Tour's End
Gainesville, Florida



BEST FEATURE STORY (Honorable Mention)

Listen up: standing beside our deaf brothers and sisters

By Michael Searle, President
Tampa Area Local
Tampa Mailbag News
Tampa, Florida

In its basic form, sound is just a simple vibration, an assemblage of shock waves. Those waves of vibration enter our ears and through a complex and interconnected network of highly developed bones and nerves, we hear sound. Or most of us do but not all. It's hard for those of us who do hear to imagine a lifetime of silence, living in a world of vibrations which do not resonate as sound. At home, going to sleep, waking, driving, and on the job, life would be nothing but silence.

Before working for the Postal Service, I had only one opportunity to know a deaf person John Pringle. John was on my high school wrestling team. I'm only assuming he wasn't completely deaf as he could talk among us in broken words with exaggerated facial expressions that we could understand. There was a group of students at my high school who were deaf but we didn't share any classes. The deaf group of students seemed to be segregated to a particular area of the school. While I did see them in the halls sometimes, cutting up and laughing with each other like ordinary kids, we didn't share classes, not even physical education or study hall.

When I started working for the USPS in 1986, at least a dozen or more deaf employees worked at the Tampa P&DC. Most worked on the now obsolete Letter Sorting Machines (LSMs). A few could be found working in other areas too. I remember asking a manager once why there were so many deaf employees working for the Postal Service. I was told there was a special hiring program in the early 1970s and the USPS solicited deaf employees specifically to hire for work on the LSMs, but he didn't know why.

I was a city clerk, so I didn't have much of a chance to mingle with the deaf employees. I manually cased my scheme, keyed my zone on the LSM and only spent a small part of my workday in other operations. There was a deaf employee working as a manual clerk in city operations, Liz Austin but we never worked together. Liz had been working for the USPS back in the early 1970s probably hired in one of the special deaf recruiting events I'd heard about. I would later get to know her in my duties as an APWU steward.

Each night, some of the city clerks would get dumped off of the LSMs and sent to the manual letter's operation (030). It was there that I met a deaf employee named Jacob Walters.

I don't want to say I avoided any of the deaf employees, but I wasn't sure how to approach them. Usually, I said nothing when I worked with them other than a universal "hello" hand wave and smile with a nod of the head. I'm sure Jacob doesn't remember this but the first time he spoke to me he asked if I liked to go fishing. He was able to make sounds for some of the words and combined with a universal sign language that even a

dummy like me could understand, I was able to learn that he liked to fish, preferably in fresh water and that he thought I should try to do some fishing.

Jacob broke the ice with me and made me realize I shouldn't be uncomfortable trying to communicate with the deaf



Jacob Walters circa 1972.

community. Thanks to Jacob, when I became a shop steward, I wasn't uneasy about speaking with deaf employees. I learned a lot dealing with the deaf as their union steward. I grew to understand what situations they generally would prefer without a certified interpreter and when I needed to instruct management to provide one. I learned when you write notes back and forth with a deaf person that it is frustrating for them and that those notes between me and the deaf employee needed to be destroyed, just like a conversation among the hearing, so there would be no written record. I kept written notes of my own for their grievance on the side, knowing that the notes we passed back and forth would be torn up.

In the early 1990s, I had my first opportunity to work routinely with a deaf employee. His name was Dana. He was younger than me and as I remember had gone to school at the prestigious North Carolina School for the Deaf. While we were able to communicate well, I'm ashamed to admit I didn't make enough efforts to truly learn American Sign Language. I did pick up some signing skills but just simple stuff and a few curse words.

One day while working on the LSM, a large metal panel fell off the side of the machine landing flat on the floor. It made a noise like a bomb had gone off. Dana was sitting in front of me keying mail. He jumped from his seat, fell to the ground, then quickly got up and ran a few yards away before he turned around to see what had happened. The noise had startled us all, but Dana was badly shaken. Later I asked him why it had bothered him so much and he told me that he had not just felt it, but heard it. I guess if a noise was

loud enough even for Dana, it would somehow get through and when he heard the noise and felt the vibration, it scared the hell out of him. Seeing this happen to Dana made me consider for the first time how much silence the deaf community had to endure.

I can't imagine how lonely I would be living in a silent world. Even in the company of others, lacking the ability to communicate would leave most people feeling isolated, like walking around in a foreign country without speaking a word of the local language. Friendly nods of the head and a smile or wave can only go so far. Without an interpreter at their side 24/7, members of the deaf community rely solely on the written word and those who share their sign language skills. It has to be frustrating and a daily struggle.

A lot of hearing individuals don't know that American Sign Language is a completely separate language from the English language. So, technically, deaf people should be considered bilingual. Jacob Walters told me recently that in some cases there are even more localized versions of sign language, something his family referred to as "farm" sign language. He and his family could sign in that version, too.

We all know how challenging working for the USPS can be. Imagine doing so if you didn't speak the same language as management or your coworkers, or your union stewards. The USPS can sometimes be an equal opportunity offender where no worker is immune. Deaf employees are included in the everyday struggles of a USPS employee. When I was a steward on the workroom floor, management frequently resisted providing interpreters for meetings and talks. Some deaf employees seemed to care

over 54.5 million to end a decade-long class action alleging the agency did not provide reasonable accommodations to its deaf and hearing-impaired employees.

The deal guaranteed at least a \$10,000 reward to each of the 11 class representatives and also requires USPS to implement new technology and management structures to better accommodate its deaf and hearing-impaired employees.

Like everything at the post office, nothing works as planned or expected. Deaf employees should remain diligent in demanding due accommodation.

I asked around about those deaf employees who were hired in the early 1970s but even talking to retired employees who worked during that era, I found little information. Over and over, there were two answers that I did get though. One was that employees were hired from the deaf community to work on the LSMs because the USPS believed these machines were too loud and distracting for hearing individuals. The other answer was that deaf employees were hired because the USPS thought they would be better workers as they wouldn't talk while working. The latter is probably derived not from the fact that deaf employees wouldn't communicate with each other, but that many studies have shown that deaf people in general have a better ability to focus on work and other tasks.

With some help from the Smithsonian's Postal Museum I was able to locate this information on the hiring of deaf employees. It's the earliest reference I can find.

"Noise created by the machinery can also be a problem, especially where the concentration of the operator becomes an important element in the efficient use of the equipment. This is a problem which the Committee found created primarily by the Multi-Position Letter Sorting Machines (LSM). These semiautomatic, operator-controlled machines, capable of distributing letters at high speeds to more than 200 separations create a considerable clatter as the letters pass along metal rollers and electronic gates. In some cases, a solution has been sought by hiring deaf employees." --Prepared by the Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, United States Senate, Revised July 1975

Jacob Walters and his wife Kathy Skindel were kind enough to come down to the union hall to speak with me before I attempted to write this article. I was hoping Jacob would know more about the deaf employee hiring practices in the early 1970s and he did.

Jacob didn't know the name of the program, or any of the acronyms the USPS is famous for but he knew he had been hired in a special recruiting event reaching out to the deaf community. The deaf recruits were brought in for interviews and went through several months of specialized vocational training before entering the USPS workforce. The Civil Service Exam was waived on their behalf.

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less, while others were highly offended and should have been.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has determined that deaf and hard of hearing federal employees have the right to qualified sign language interpreters, as opposed to "signers," for all important communications, including discussions about training, work procedures, policies, assignments and disciplinary actions. In 2013 a Washington federal judge gave final approval to a settlement agreement requiring the U.S. Postal Service to fork

Listen up: standing beside our deaf brothers and sisters

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With the Smithsonian’s help, I also was able to find an article from 1968 describing the USPS hiring of deaf employees in the Midwest but in that program the deaf employees were trained to pass the Civil Service Exam. Here in Tampa, Jacob remembers specifically that the Civil Service Exam was waived. His memory is bolstered by the fact that he remembers some employees who were hired after the deaf group complained and filed grievances with the union.

There were only a few groups of all deaf employees hired in Tampa. Jacob had started work with the USPS early in 1972. His brother, also deaf, had been hired with the USPS in 1971, so we know there were at least a few waves of this special hiring event designed specifically for the deaf community. This distinct procedure to hire deaf individuals phased out shortly after Jacob was hired and there seems to be no record of it locally.

Another article calls a 1978 pilot program to hire deaf recruits the Post Office Placement Project. The Post Office Placement Project allowed managers to fill vacancies through “noncompetitive” procedures, which may be assumed to be a waiver of the Civil Service Exam.

Jacob started working on the work-room floor on a Monday (he remembers) in January of 1972. There were over a hundred deaf employees recruited through the program but very few made

it through the training. Jacob, Debbie Chapman and Pat Brown, all deaf, started work on that same Monday. Jacob guessed that about 16 deaf recruits made it through the vocational training.

I asked Jacob to try to describe work-



In American Sign Language, Clerk Jacob Walters displays the symbol for “love”. Jacob leaves the USPS this month after serving 48 years.

ing in a silent USPS. Those of us who can hear know the postal workplace is a cacophony of rackets from bumps, bangs, voices, humming of machines and tow motors with walkie-talkie radios always

screeching in the background. Jacob and the other deaf employees would hear none of it but would feel the vibrations. The deaf can even identify the vibrations down to squeaky wheels on equipment being rolled nearby.

Jacob goes out of his way to be friendly to the people he meets. If the deaf community at the Tampa USPS could elect an ambassador, surely it would be Jacob. If you’ve ever walked through the Tampa P&DC when he was there, he probably waved at you or said hello. His friendliness paid off and Jacob acquired many good friends on the job. That’s part of the reason he always said he would never retire. Jacob told me many people had gone out of their way to learn some sign language and he appreciated that very much. Two of his coworkers, Randy and Greg Porter became very fluent in American Sign Language. Randy served as an APWU steward for many years and was a great help to the union and the deaf employees. Greg and Jacob became very good friends and have been fishing buddies for many years. Jacob reports that Greg’s signing skills are excellent. Jacob also mentioned that Steward Yvonne Chamberlain is very good at sign language and her assistance to the deaf employees has been greatly appreciated. I had plans to research this article about a year ago but when I went looking for Jacob one day at work, I was told he was out sick dealing with kidney cancer. When I was finally able to speak with Jacob, he told me he had beaten the kidney cancer but with all of the probing around, the doctors had determined he also had prostate cancer. Jacob and his doctors made the good fight and he is now in remission from both ailments.

Even though Jacob said that he would never retire, cancer bouts, back to back (and his wife), have made him rethink that decision. After 48 years of service, Jacob has made plans to leave the USPS in January 2020.

The Smithsonian’s Postal Museum in Washington, D.C. was helpful during the research of this article. Several of

the papers I relied upon were found by the Museum. It doesn’t appear though, that the Postal Museum has any records or archives regarding the recruitment of deaf employees. How can that be? Deaf individuals were identified as desirable employees, recruited from the public with a special vocational program. High-level postal authorities waived the Civil Service Exam in some cases but you can’t find it at the Postal Museum. As postal employees this is an important part of our history that is being missed. I will work with the Museum to get that changed.

I encourage any postal worker reading this to not be afraid to communicate with your fellow deaf employees. Don’t add to their isolation by ignoring them because they cannot hear you. Like anyone, they will notice and appreciate you including them normally in your day. Ask a deaf employee to teach you some sign language. It’s a fun way to bond as people. Start off with some curse words, it’s shamefully entertaining.

Papers on this subject that were written in the 1970s often described deaf employees as “handicapped” and “severely disabled.” This way of thinking is antiquated and no longer considered appropriate or accurate. Giving some credit to these authors though, even forty years ago they recognized right away that, on average, deaf employees learned quicker. They worked mail twice as fast as many hearing employees in manual operations and ignored distractions that constantly caught the attention of hearing employees.

In Jose Lafitte’s article, *Deaf People in the Postal Service*, from a 1980 edition of the *American Rehabilitation* magazine I found the perfect quote I’d like to use to close this story.

“The deaf people are not different from hearing people, except for the hearing and communication losses. The communication problem is not theirs. It’s ours. We do not try to communicate with or understand them. They understand us!”

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