

Postal Press Newsletter

AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION

NATIONAL POSTAL PRESS ASSOCIATION

Volume 54, Issue 4

920-N

July-August, 2022

Communication – key factor in developing member commitment

By Tony Carobine, President

There was a story published long ago about a doctor whose telephone rang one night awakening him from fitful slumber. It was one of his regular patients, a young man in a wild state of alarm. "My wife, Doctor!" he shouted. "It's her appendix. You'd better come around quick!"

made and maintained over the years.

As actively involved union representatives, we shouldn't assume that all members or prospective members are aware of the value of the union and importance of union involvement. In fact, most workers that entered the workforce over the past several years came from families that have no prior

to become union educators – we must communicate! And, to be effective this must be a continuous effort. Studies have revealed that in order for a message to become memorable and effective, it must be repeated many times.

Given the lack of prior knowledge and exposure to unions by a growing number of members and prospective members, we must keep in mind that "automatic loyalty" and commitment to the union doesn't just happen. Furthermore, while union officers and activists generally have a firm attachment to the union this is not the case for most members. Building an attachment is an area that demands constant attention. Effective and persistent communication is the key.

A union's strength and vigor depends on the commitment and loyalty of members. An educated, committed, proud and supportive membership is the necessary foundation for success in everything the union does. As the late labor leader Eugene Debs said: "*What can labor do for itself? The answer is not difficult. Labor can organize, it can unify, it can consolidate its forces. This done, it can demand and command!*"

"I took her appendix out three years ago, and I never heard of anyone having two appendixes."

The doctor sighed and told the young man to go back to bed. "Give her some bicarbonate or ginger ale, and I'll look in tomorrow," he said. "She doesn't have appendicitis."

The husband became even wilder, insisting that she did too have appendicitis. "Well she can't have appendicitis!" the doctor shouted. "I took her appendix out three years ago, and I never heard of anyone having two appendixes."

"Ever hear of anybody having two wives?" the young man asked bitterly.

The doctor went around right away and it was a good thing he did, because the second wife did have appendicitis.

This story teaches us an important lesson about persistent communication. This is especially true in regard to union membership. Because you are a union activist, you are keenly aware that without the union we certainly would not have the standard of living we enjoy today, or the opportunity to provide a decent life for our families or ourselves. This is not to say that everything is perfect. No system or organization is. However, without the union we could never have achieved the gains that have been

history of unionism. As a result, they have no prior knowledge about unions or the purpose and necessity for them.

Indications are that a substantial number of people in the workforce mistakenly believe that by law they are guaranteed such benefits as paid holidays, vacation and sick leave among other benefits and protections. In reality, absent a union contract, workers aren't guaranteed anything but instead are classified as "at will" employees – serving at the will of their employer.

A look into the history of the labor movement reveals that most victories came about because of rank and file participation. The recipe for a strong, successful union is membership involvement. While we can single-handedly represent members in the grievance procedure, we cannot do so when it comes to other matters of importance to postal workers, such as privatization schemes, legislative initiatives, or electing individuals to public office who support working families. These activities, among others, require a collective effort by members and officers alike.

As a result of all this, we must strive

**Attend the 2023
PPA Conference**

July 19-22

Madison, Wisconsin

(See page 5 for details)

APWU National Postal Press Association

PO Box 888

Iron Mountain MI 49801

Phone/Fax: 906-774-9599

E-mail: ppa@apwupostalpress.org

Website: www.apwupostalpress.org

Advisory Council

Anthony "Tony" Carobine
President

PO Box 888
Iron Mountain MI 49801

Jenny Gust
Secretary-Treasurer
PO Box 587
Walbridge OH 43465

Cathy Hanson
Editor-at-Large
4620 Bloomington Avenue
Minneapolis MN 55407

Diane North
Editor-at-Large
3773 Woodbriar Drive
Orange Park FL 32073

Terry Danek
Editor-at-Large
4261 Knox Street
Lincoln NE 68504

Lance Coles
Editor-at-Large
PO Box 539
Des Moines IA 50302

Hank Greenberg
Honorary Member
2800 Black Oak Drive
Rocklin CA 95765

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.



Where's 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 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 benefit of being a member of the PPA is getting all the newsletters from around the country. In case you were wondering if anyone reads your paper - I DO! Unfortunately the number of publications being mailed to fellow PPA members is down. I am not sure why but I want to encourage you all to mail your paper to your fellow editors.

If you are interested in sending your publication to other editors all you need to do is call or email PPA President Tony Carobine. Tony will send you a copy of the list of all members of the APWU National

Postal Press Association. I hope you will put Tony, myself and the rest of the Advisory Council on your mailing list. The list is easy to work with and ready to print labels from. Check it out – give Tony a call or email for your copy!

The one thing I truly miss out of the papers I do get is cartoons. Original cartoons are few and far between now. A sense of humor is so important especially in times like these. While cartoons aren't always funny – they can educate and help people see things in a different way from what they might normally. Ask around your local and maybe you could find a person or even a couple of people who might want to give it a try; someone to draw it and maybe a couple of members to come up with a caption. 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 just a little hope that tomorrow will be better.

Union meetings

By Cathy Hanson, Editor-at-Large

When the anniversary of the postal strike rolled around this year, I asked if I could invite a labor historian to our meeting to talk about the postal strike. They thought it was a good idea so I asked Peter Rachleff, one of our former labor history workshop instructors at past Postal Press conferences. I'm lucky to have him available close by and willing to come talk. My main reason for asking was because I see a lot of new stewards and officers moving up and they haven't been with the USPS very

long, so may not be aware of our union's involvement in our past.

Bringing someone into a union meeting from the outside provides a point of view you may not have heard before. If you have a college near you, see if you can find a labor historian. Libraries also have resources for finding staff willing to speak and it's a way to change things up and make your meetings more than just union business. I find it makes people more willing to stand around after the meeting and talk and that brings closeness and solidarity. The more the better!

Reminder:

Posting of member publications

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

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

To submit a publication for posting, e-mail it as a pdf to ppa@apwupostalpress.org. Publications are posted for 30 days.

Fake social media

By Lance Coles, Editor-at-Large

Fake social media accounts can promote phony products, spread scams, and even share lies and misinformation. It's important to spot a phony account right away – before you engage with their content.

How to identify fake social media accounts

- **Question the source.** If a story comes from a newspaper, is it from a reputable site?
- **Take advantage of verification in-**

account is thousands of followers, with little to no engagement.

- **Look for confirmation.** If you don't see a story across mainstream media, there's probably a good reason why.
- **Analyze account transparency.** Ask yourself, who runs this account? If an account profile is little more than generic phrases, quotes, or introductions, with no specifics about a person's name, occupation, or background, you may have stumbled across a fake account.

“Check the facts with third-party sites like Snopes and Politifact.”

icators. Check the FAQ section of each social media network separately to know what the verification badge should look like and where it should be in the account. Accounts without verification are potentially owned by imposters. Look for verification symbols. Accounts claiming to be celebrities or influencers may be owned by imposters. Verified accounts have a blue or green icon and may even say “Verified Account.”

- **Beware of polarized political opinions.** Accounts designed to spread misinformation or sway political opinions often promote one-sided viewpoints that border on extremism. If an account posts only one-sided political theories and ideals, never revealing information about the person posting, you may be dealing with a troll.

- **Look closely at the content.** Scammers and spreaders of false information often fill their feeds with stock images, memes or other recycled images that are not original. They may use profile pictures that are not of an actual person, or simply an avatar. Be wary of accounts with no original images. Posts that contain no written content at all, or written content with many spelling or grammatical errors, could be signs of a fake account as well.

- **Examine the follower-to-engagement ratio.** Account owners can also buy followers, so one tell-tale sign of a fake

- **Check the facts with third-party sites like Snopes and Politifact.**

- **Inspect the quality of engagement.** Some fake social media accounts purchase engagement. This means that, at first glance, their account appears to have many real followers. However, these purchased fans and followers typically leave comments unrelated to the post, comments that are just emojis, and multiple comments from a single individual that aren't part of a conversation. Even real accounts inevitably



gather a few fake followers, but if the bulk of the engagement looks fake, steer clear.

- **Spot the bot warning signs.** Does this person post about only one topic? Who else do they follow? Do they post or tweet hundreds of times a day, trying to get their message out before they get caught? Are there a lot of typos or grammatical errors? Do they post in multiple languages? Bot-check.me can check Twitter for bots, and you can log in to Facebook from a computer

to see if you've liked or followed a page created by the organization behind the Russian bots.

- **Look at the followers.** Review the number and type of followers a person has. If the followers aren't authentic, the account probably isn't, either. Fake accounts also pay people to engage with them, so a lot of emojis or off-topic comments could indicate the followers' comments were purchased.

- **Examine the profile pic.** Fake accounts often use avatars and symbols instead of photos. Run the profile picture through search engines like Google Image Search to see if it's linked to some other account.

- **Don't assume video is real.** A worrisome new trend is fake video – using artificial intelligence to place people in situations they were never in.

- **Recognize your biases.** We are all inclined to agree with information we already believe and to discount information contrary to our beliefs.

- **Watch out for transfers of trust.** If your best friend shares something, you're likely to believe it. We trust information posted by people we trust, and that trust transfers to the message, regardless of the message's origin.

- **Call out fake news you see in your network** — but do it privately.

- **Be wary of scams.** Fake social media accounts are also a favorite tool of scammers. If a social media account repeatedly shares the same link in a short period of time or if the account shares a link with incorrect information about where it leads, it's probably a scam. Only click links

you trust, otherwise, you could fall victim to a phishing scam and download malware onto your device.

- **If you think you have followed a fake account, unfollow it or remove it from your friends list.** Block the account to revoke its access to your information and report the account to the social media network.

Sources: Better Business Bureau; *Mountaineer News* and *WHNT News*

Who needs a union publication?

Your members do!

Members who know what's going on – where they fit in and what they can do – are likely to be more active, and more committed. That kind of membership is what every union needs. So if the union is going to function effectively, all members need to be informed.

In fact, making sure that members know about the union's programs, achievements, goals and people is one of the most important jobs of every local union leader.

For instance, one place a member learns about the union is at the regular membership meeting. But it's a fact of life – not all members can go to regular meetings every time. Some who might be interested can't attend at all.

In some places, unfortunately not many do. There are schedule conflicts, family obligations, distances to travel. Sometimes people just don't know when or where meetings are being held. Others, not knowing much about the union, feel excluded.

Whatever the reason, many of those members who don't make it to the meetings are (or could be) interested. They want to know what the union is doing. It is their right to know.

How are members learning about their union? Some locals post the minutes of the meeting on a bulletin board, along with countless other announcements and notices. How many people read them?

Of course there is always word of mouth. However, the story can change from one person to the next. Most often it does. Details get lost; facts become confused.

There is the national union publication that each member receives. But its focus necessarily is different from what your local might have; after all, that publication is designed to inform all members of the union. Events of concern to all appear in those pages – but day-to-day issues of your local union cannot.

Electronic forms of communication such as websites, Facebook, email and Twitter are also available. Good methods of communication to be sure that should be used, but not all members are tuned into electronic communication and it does lack being a tangible presence by physically arriving in the homes of our members and their families.

This means that the local union publication is still the primary vehicle for communicating the union's message.

It's the local publication that fills the com-

munications gap. Here's what a newsletter can and will do:

- **Makes union news easily accessible** – only the effort of reading it is necessary.
- **Informs** – it tells members what the local has done to protect them; what the officers who represent them are doing; what activities are being planned and what other members are interested in.
- **Sets the record straight** – written by and about union members, its point of view is that of the members themselves. It directly answers the question, "How does this event affect me?" It can address rumors started by management to divide members by presenting the workers' (and the union's) side of the story.
- **Promotes identification with the union** – it draws people together, reinforcing each member's feeling of belonging. The paper can help to define the local union as an ongoing presence in members' minds.
- **Educates** – what better way to explain how the union represents the membership on the workroom floor. Using real situations, it teaches in a way that a dictionary or academic textbook cannot.
- **Motivates** – when people know something about an organization like the local union, when they know more about other members and officers, they are more likely to want to participate. Knowing about an issue or an event is the first step towards saying, "I want to be part of this."
- **Involves** – everyone has some talent. Members are all creative and knowledgeable in their own individual ways. Most people, given the opportunity, like to share what they know with others. The union publication tells people about those opportunities.
- **Gives recognition** – it reinforces that motivation to join in by letting other members know about what you, or he, or she did for the local. And it's hard to resist seeing your own name in print.
- **Reaches beyond the local union membership** – while it's building union pride, that newsletter can be reinforcing the benefits of belonging to current members and serve as an organizing tool for nonmembers.

Your local's goal should be to establish open, direct communication with all of the members. A local union paper is a valuable key to that communication.

Free riders club

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

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

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



Attend the 2023 Biennial PPA Conference!

**Thursday, July 20 – Saturday, July 22
(Pre-conference session Wednesday, July 19)**

**The Madison Concourse Hotel
Madison, Wisconsin**

A guestroom rate of \$169.00 per day will be in effect throughout the conference. Current tax rate is 15.5%. The Madison Concourse will provide a complimentary airport shuttle for service between Dane County Regional Airport and the hotel, complimentary wireless Internet access and a reduced parking rate of \$12 per night. To make room reservations, please call 1-800-356-8293 or connect to a reservation link on the PPA's website apwupostalpress.org.

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

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

All of this and much, much more!

Editor's toolbox: Tips for APWU communicators

Libel vs. slander

These words are often confused. Both apply to damaging another person's character or reputation. In general, libel is written or published defamation, while slander is spoken. Note: Avoid confusing libel with liable, which means "likely" or "at risk of."

Quote mark etiquette

Quotation marks should be used honestly and sparingly, when there is a genuine quotation at hand, and it is necessary to be very rigorous about the words enclosed by the marks.

If part of it must be left out because of space limitations, it is good manners to insert three dots to indicate the omission, but it is unethical to do this if it means connecting two thoughts which the original author did not intend to have tied together. Above all, quotation marks should not be used for ideas that you'd like to disown.

How to write a successful lead sentence to your next news story

The trick to good lead writing is to focus immediately on the most newsworthy point of the story and to reserve other details until later in the story. Try to reduce the essence of the news to a single sentence or even a single word.

Use this simple device. Pretend you are calling a friend to report the news. You might start: "Do you know what happened?" "No, what happened?" Your answer to that question is your lead.

Language usage made easy

Here's a list of some frequently misused words. Use this cheat sheet as quick reference to the appropriate spelling or term.

- **Fewer or less.** This is a matter of numbers. If you are able to count the number of things or people use *fewer*. If you are unable to count a portion or quantity, use *less*.

Example: With *fewer* people attending the meeting we will need *less* time.

- **Affect or effect.** *Affect* is a verb

meaning "influence." *Effect* can be either a verb meaning "to bring about" or a noun meaning "the result." Examples: The cold weather *affects* our heating bill. The company will *effect* some new attendance policies. What *effect* will the new laws have on compliance?

- **It's or Its.** *It's* is a contraction of the words *it is*. *Its* is a possessive pronoun de-



noting ownership. Examples: *It's* extremely difficult to attribute the statement to *its* original source.

- **Me, myself or I.** Use *me* as the object of a verb or preposition. Use *myself* interchangeably with the word *personally*. Use *I* as the subject of a verb. Example: Call Fred Smith or *me* with your answer. *I* will handle the job *myself*. Fred Smith and *I* will pass along the results of the survey.

Ways to polish your writing skills

Even if you don't think of yourself as a professional writer, your writing reflects your professionalism. If your writing is sloppy and disorganized, you will be perceived as sloppy and disorganized. So, how can you hone your writing skills? Use the following pointers:

- **Use your own words.** Don't puff up your writing with pompous language. If you wouldn't say something in normal conversation, avoid it in your writing.

- **Let it sit.** If you have time, set your writing aside for several days. You will be

surprised what time will tell you. Good writing rings true; weak wording wilts over time.

- **Ask a friend** to read your work. Even when you proofread your own writing, you can miss something.

- **Develop a thick skin.** You have to learn to accept criticism without taking it personally. Every writer has to endure some red ink. The more you embrace criticism, the more you will learn.

- **Read, read, read.** Finally, you can improve your writing immensely by reading. By exposing yourself to the written word, you subconsciously develop a better ear for language.

Proofreading tips

Don't let your documents or emails go out riddled with errors. Grammatical mistakes can be particularly difficult to catch because spell-checkers often don't flag them. That's why proofreading is still the best antidote.

Here are two tips for checking your work:

- **View your document** at 125% or 150%. You can better see what you're reading and more easily spot errors.

- **Switch your font to Courier**, a mono-spaced font. That makes it easier to catch mistakes, because it forces you to pay closer attention to the text.

Organization's past helps point the way to its future

Most organizations have a rich history from which you can draw ideas to help define new goals and strength. The history will point to values on which an organization was built and how those same values can apply to the future.

Who can you rely upon to obtain such information? In every organization there are a few people who've been around for long enough to tell you how things used to be. If you draw out their stories, they'll open your eyes as to how the organization has progressed and came to embrace certain beliefs. Such stories reveal a past that can strengthen the organization today.

2022 federal election booklet available

The 2022 edition of the PPA booklet, *Federal Elections, Union Publications and the Internet* is available for PPA member's use in the Member Resources section of the PPA website.

This booklet contains guidelines for including information in a union publication and the Internet regarding the November 8 election for congressional representatives along with regulations pertaining to APWU COPA solicitations. Also discussed are techniques for generating participation by union members and their families on Election Day. PPA members are urged to use this booklet as a reference (and share it with other officers).

Following is an excerpt addressing material permitted in a publication if it is mailed to the local (or state organization's) APWU Community. A local union's APWU Community is defined as other APWU members (including retirees who pay retiree dues) and their families and executive or administrative employees (including secretaries and assistants) of the local union and their families.

"Generally, you can use 'express advocacy' in your communications to the APWU Community. Express advocacy means a message that unmistakably urges for the election or defeat of a candidate, or inevitably leads to that conclusion. You

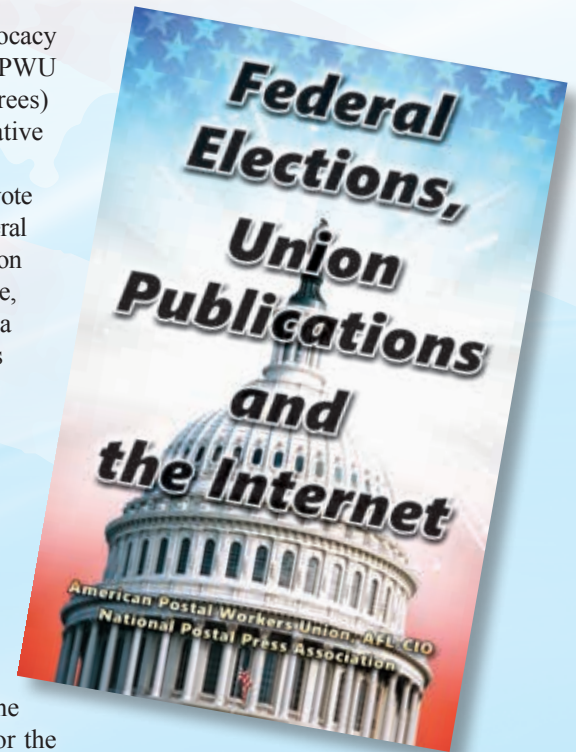
may include the following express advocacy subjects only in a newsletter sent to APWU members (including dues-paying retirees) and their families as well as administrative staff and their families:

1. Encourage readers to register to vote **and** vote for or defeat a particular federal candidate. You can also express an opinion on an issue or legislation; for example, support for Medicare, in such a way that a reasonable person would interpret this as urging the election of a particular federal candidate or candidates.

2. A column or editorial written by an APWU member stating his or her personal views on a partisan candidate. This includes personal endorsement of candidates and urging others to vote for a particular candidate. Any article that implies support for a candidate should include a statement that it represents the views of a particular local member, or the local itself. This can be done by inserting a phrase such as 'in my opinion,' or a by-line.

3. Publication of information about a candidate in the form of a resume of his or her qualifications for office, or a 'score card' of positions on issues or voting records.

4. A paid political advertisement paid for by a candidate or political party. You must



charge for the advertisement at your established rate and payment **must** be received prior to publication.

5. Encourage members to volunteer to work for a particular candidate's campaign.

6. Publicize upcoming candidate events such as political rallies, meet the candidate forums, etc. You can also report on what happened at such events, including discussing the points made by the candidate in his or her speech.

7. You can coordinate with a federal campaign or party about any communications to the APWU Community. To 'coordinate' means to cooperate, consult, work in concert with, or to do something at someone's request. **Note: Reprinting campaign material received from a candidate for federal office is prohibited.**

Letters to the editor

Letters written for mainstream media papers usually comment on items and editorials in the newspaper, but you can bring up any subject. Since editors hesitate to publish frequent letters from the same person on the same subject, this form of communication is a good way to involve other members of your local.

Writing letters can be a good exercise for activists because it helps focus the issue more clearly in their own minds. Editors are more likely to print letters that are:

- Submitted with the writer's name, address and phone number. (Writer's address and phone number are for verification only and not for publication.)
- Contain no more than 250 words.
- Well-reasoned and indicate the writer knows the subject (like good press re-

leases, good letters contain numbers and facts, not just opinion).

- Timely and relating to an ongoing issue in the news or respond to a news article or editorial printed no more than a few days before.

What are guest columns?

Often called "op-eds" because they usually appear on the page opposite the editorial page, these essentially are longer letters to the editor. They can run up to 750 words.

Sometimes they are intended to refute an editorial, but they don't have to. Call first and ask if the editorial page editor is interested in seeing your op-ed. The same tips apply here as to letters to the editor – except that since an op-ed is longer, you need:

- A beginning, which identifies the problem in one or two paragraphs.
- A middle, wherein you put forth the reasons (including facts and data) for thinking the way you do and for proposing the solution you recommend.
- An end, which in one or two paragraphs ties in the points you made in the middle to the problem you identified at the beginning.

The worst privatization deal in U.S. history just got even worse

By Donald Cohen, Executive Director
In the Public Interest

A story I've been telling over and over again while on the road for my book *The Privatization of Everything* is the notorious and disastrous Chicago parking meters privatization deal from 2008. Somehow, it just got even worse.

New numbers are out, and this past year Chicago lost another \$136.2 million in potential revenue. That's how much in parking fees went to the group of global investors who operate the meters.

As you recall, Chicago (like all cities) was struggling financially because of the Great Recession. Out of desperation, the city rushed to take a \$1.15 billion offer from private investors – including some from as far away as Abu Dhabi – in exchange for control of 36,000 parking meters for 75 years.

Once the ink was dry, the deal's finer details came into focus. The city's inspector general concluded that the meters had been sold for \$1 billion dollars under their value. And because the investors demanded a healthy return on their investment, parking rates shot up to some of the nation's highest.

Since, the investors have made out like bandits. By 2019, they had made back their initial investment plus \$500 million in profit on top.

Combined with two other privatization deals made around the same time – four

parking garages and the Chicago Skyway bridge – the parking meters have sucked billions from Chicago's budget.

"Chicago today would have between 3 and 4 billion dollars more than it has from these



three deals together," Clint Krislov, director of IIT Chicago-Kent's Center for Open Government Law Clinic, told the *Chicago Sun-Times*. (Krislov has also said that the parking meters contract "pales by comparison" to the horrendous Skyway deal.)

As I told Paul Rosenberg for *Salon* earlier this year, it was an "incredibly stupid way" to borrow money on the city's future revenues.

But what I really try to get across when I tell the story is the extra, extra, *extra* stupid (and anti-democratic) part.

Get this: The contract is written to make it harder (and much more expensive) for the

city to introduce transit alternatives, like bus or bike lanes. The city essentially has to "buy back" parking spots to cover revenue that could have been generated over the life of the (75 year!) contract.

According to the new numbers, in the 12 years since the contract was signed, Chicago has "bought back" parking spots from the investors to the tune of \$78.8 million.

And who knows how many times city planners have wanted to remove parking meters? A few years after the deal was signed, Chicago-area transportation planners told sociologist Stephanie Farmer the contract is tying their hands in efforts to build environmentally sustainable modes of transportation. Climate change has only sped up since.

This is the main reason why privatization is so dangerous. It erodes democracy, the principle that each and every one of us has an equal voice in our community. It gives too much power to banks, investors, and corporations, who have fundamentally different goals than public institutions. They exist to make a profit, not to promote equity, maintain a democratic society, or limit carbon emissions.

That's why the things we all rely on and should be available to everyone, like water or K-12 education or how we get around (roads, bridges, buses, trains), are public goods and must stay that way.