

# Postal News Press Newsletter

AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION

NATIONAL POSTAL PRESS ASSOCIATION

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## Looming on the horizon: Election Day 2020

By Tony Carobine, President

The COVID-19 Pandemic, its horrific effects and desperately needed legislation funding the Postal Service through this difficult period is the primary focus at the time of this writing.

Even with all of this “on our plates” so to speak, there is also an additional important matter looming on the horizon. That is Election Day – Tuesday, November 3. Postal workers and all working families have a stake in the 2020 elections, as control of the White House, Senate, House of Representatives, governorships and state legislatures will be determined.

It is not too early to start conveying to our members and their families the significance of this election and when possible where the candidates stand on issues important to postal workers; such as: Postal Service preservation and privatization, along with a host of other issues affecting the everyday lives of members and their families.

We must also be wary of attempts to distract attention away from issues affecting working people. During national elections in recent years, attempts were made (often-times successfully) to get voters worked up about so-called wedge or hot button issues. Such issues are often controversial and designed to split apart a demographic or population group.

As a result, votes were cast not based on which candidates were better suited to address the important and critical “pocket-

book” issues facing postal workers and all working people, but instead on wedge or hot button issues.

Also, we should stay away from support (or opposition) of candidates solely based on political party affiliation. The determining factor should not be about political parties but rather the candidate’s position

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on issues affecting postal workers and their families.

As communicators and representatives of the union we need to prepare our members for this election. We need to advise them about how candidates stand on relevant issues, help them become registered voters, and remind them about the significance of voting on Election Day.

As the late labor leader Walter Reuther said, “There’s a direct relationship between the ballot box and the bread box, and what the union fights for and wins at the bargaining table can be taken away in the legislative halls.” This statement is so appropriate in these days of turmoil.

Preparing members and their families for the upcoming election is an important task even while other issues, affecting our livelihood demand attention. Communication is the key!

**The right approach**

The following excerpt from the PPA produced booklet, *Federal Elections, Union Publications and the Internet* examines techniques for increasing the participation level of APWU members and their families on Election Day.

“Many working people are not keenly involved in the political process and therefore may not be familiar with the candidates and where they stand on issues important to their lives. The less working families are involved in politics, the more we will see politicians elected who don’t represent their interests.

“Adding to this dilemma are labor unions whose only election effort is to tell their members who to vote for on Election Day, often just a few days before they are asked to go to the polls. With this practice union members don’t feel any ownership of the process and may resent being told what to do.

“Research indicates that members desire unions to focus on two key elements:

(1) Members desire political action to be, first and foremost, about them and their needs, not about candidates or political parties. Unions need to make clear their criteria for making political and legislative decisions are based on what is in the best interests of members and other working people.

(2) Political action should focus on informing and involving the members so they

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

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



# Exchange of member publications

Over the years, one of the most popular services facilitated by the PPA is exchanging copies of publications between members of the PPA. An example of the benefits of this practice is that it's not only a great way to find out what is going on in other areas of the country, but time and again members have reported that because of what they've read in an exchange publication they were able to favorably resolve a contract administration issue. Exchanging copies also provides editors with resource material that can be used as reprints (with proper credit) plus ideas for producing their own publication.

For those not currently mailing a copy of their publication to fellow PPA members, please consider doing so. The additional cost for copies and postage is minimal with the value of exchanging this information far outweighing the cost. A union publication is a valuable resource – please share it widely!

To help with this practice, the PPA Membership/Mailing List is posted in the Member Resources section of the PPA website. If preferred the list is available in Excel format (which would work better for mailing label setup) upon request by calling the PPA at 906-774-9599 or by sending an email to [ppa@apwupostalpress.org](mailto:ppa@apwupostalpress.org).

# Posting publications on PPA website

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

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

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

# PPA reprint policy

Reprinting material that originates in APWU local, state or national publications (including cartoons and photographs) is an acceptable and common practice. However, it is especially important that proper credit is given.

Always give credit to the publication that **originally** published the material, along with the name of the author. The credit should be placed at the beginning of the piece.

Improprieties tend to occur when material is reprinted from a paper that reprinted the material from another publication. Credit should be given to the publication that **originally** published the article not to the publication(s) that reprinted the material.

For example, publication A publishes an article which is then reprinted in publication B. The editor of publication C reads publication B and also decides to reprint the article. The editor of publication C

should give credit to publication A because the article **originated** in and belongs to publication A.

Also, when reprinting material from another publication, it is inappropriate to use the term "PPA reprint." This incorrectly gives the impression that the material came from the Postal Press Association. Instead, give credit to the publication that **originally** published the material.

Before reprinting material that includes contract language, arbitration decisions, policies or regulations verify it for accuracy, as these items tend to change over time. A well-written article that was correct a few years ago may not be pertinent today.

All editors take great pride in their accomplishments as do individual writers. It is wrong to lift material, not include a credit line, and in some instances imply authorship. This is contrary to ethical journalism and most unfair to fellow members.



# Looming on the horizon: Election Day 2020

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can be politically empowered. The traditional candidate endorsement of labor political action does not empower them. What members want most from their union is more political information and then to be trusted to make the right decisions, rather than receiving endorsements that often seem like ‘marching orders.’ Members understand that knowledge is power and they want their unions to give them the information they need to be smarter voters and to make a difference.

“Surveys conducted after past elections offer some interesting facts about the influence that communication had on the elections. Union communications to mem-

bers and their families made a difference in the election – not only in how they voted, but also, in many cases, with the outcome of the election. Local union communications were particularly effective and had the highest degree of credibility with the membership.

“When it comes to politics, members want information, not orders from their unions. They want to know about issues – not partisan agendas. Following are guidelines based on union members’ views to keep in mind when communicating political information:

**“Issues come first, candidates and parties second.** From the members’ perspective, political information should be based on issues. Working to elect pro-worker candidates is a legitimate union activity, but only as a means to win on important issues – not as an end in itself.

“Members are distrustful of information that comes from politicians, and are even skeptical of much they see in the mass media – so they are looking for independent sources of information. Communications with members, therefore, should emphasize the union’s independent perspective and respect workers’ general skepticism. Union publications should feel like *Consumer Reports* for working people, providing an objective and independent view on important employment and economic issues.

**“Members want information, not**

**voting instructions.** Information is what most members want from their union.

“Before members will respect endorsements, they need to see what lead to them – such as issue positions and voting records. Members prefer information from the union that shows the positions of both candidates on key issues.

“If solid information is provided, most members do not object to the union also making a formal candidate endorsement.

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***“We should stay away from support (or opposition) of candidates solely based on political party affiliation. The determining factor should not be about political parties but rather the candidate’s position on issues affecting postal workers and their families.”***

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But recommendations or suggestions – indicating respect for members’ intelligence and good judgment – are received better than what members perceive as commands. The first choice of many members is to have the union evaluate candidates, provide information and leave it to the individual to make the final call.

**“Present information credibly and objectively to overcome members’ distrust of politics.** It is important that information is credible – with information sources cited, for example, and without unbelievable claims about how good (or bad) candidates may be.

“Members’ favorite union political materials are voter guides that evaluate candidates for an office. Side-by-side comparisons of the candidates and their positions and records on key issues allow members to make direct comparisons, which are very helpful in decision-making. Such pieces also suggest the union actually evaluated the candidates, and didn’t simply make a partisan choice.

**“Downplay partisan rhetoric and stress the union’s role as an independent voice for working people.** Political communications should be based on issues, not on parties. Members recognize that unions may endorse Democrats more often than Republicans, but want reassurance the union’s support is a result of a

candidate’s commitment to workers and their families rather than a reflection of a pro-Democratic bias.

**“Members want unions to represent their interests as workers,** addressing issues that directly affect them on the job and by advancing a populist economic agenda. Labor’s issue agenda should focus primarily on work-related and economic issues – the areas where members feel unions have clear understanding. Members trust the union to

represent their interests on matters directly relating to their jobs.

“Most members are also comfortable with the idea of unions representing their economic interests beyond the workplace. Members

generally consider such issues as Social Security, Medicare, the minimum wage and tax fairness to be “pocketbook” concerns within the proper sphere of union involvement. Members see that large corporations and the wealthy have hugely disproportionate political influence, and believe that unions’ counterweight on economic matters benefit working families.

**“Information is a key to increasing participation.** Members strongly support union efforts to encourage them to vote on Election Day. Regardless of party, they feel this is an important and legitimate union activity.

“Traditionally, mobilization is thought of as a fundamentally different activity than persuading members to support particular candidates. Research suggests, however, that the most important barrier to participation is members’ low level of knowledge. People who do not feel they know much about the issues in a campaign, or where the candidates stand, are reluctant to walk into a voting booth.

“Consequently, the best way to increase turnout is to educate members about the issues and candidates. Armed with this knowledge, members and their families are more likely to participate and will make informed choices when going to the polls on Election Day.



# Altoona, Iowa site of 2021 PPA Conference

Altoona, Iowa will be the site of the 2021 Biennial Conference of the APWU National Postal Press Association on Thursday, August 5 through Saturday, August 7, 2021 with a preconference session on Wednesday, August 4. The conference will be held at the Meadows Events & Conference Center at Prairie Meadows Hotel, Racetrack & Casino.

No proposals were received from PPA affiliates to host the biennial event, which in accordance with the PPA constitution is held in either the month of July, August or September.

A factor in the decision to return to Prairie Meadows was the positive response re-

garding the location, hotel and meeting facility from members who attended the 2019 conference. Also, Prairie Meadows was able to offer another cost-effective proposal.

A guestroom rate of \$132.00 per day



single or double occupancy will be in effect throughout the conference. Current tax rate is 12%. Prairie Meadows will provide free shuttle service from Des Moines Inter-

national Airport, complimentary Internet access and no charge for parking a vehicle.

“Regardless of the office held in our union, learning about communication as a means to better represent the membership should be a part of every activist’s educational development,” said PPA President Tony Carobine. “Effective communication, both internally and externally is an especially relevant tool for addressing issues affecting the livelihood of postal workers.”

“In hopes the coronavirus pandemic is over by that time, we encourage PPA members, officers and interested members to plan on joining us in Altoona, Iowa on August 4-7, 2021,” he said.

## Time for spring cleanup

By Jenny Gust,  
Editor-at-Large

Yes. It’s that time of year again – spring cleaning time! And no I don’t mean your house! Of course I am referring to your paper. Time to clean it up and change it up just a little. Move your banner; change the headings of your articles by the officers. Keep your officer listing but change up the steward’s listing and put it someplace new. Use subheads, bullet points, artwork – try to keep things fresh and different. That way, your members don’t look at an issue and they aren’t sure if it was from last month or even last year. Geez they all look the same!

If you think about it your union publication is the best way to communicate with your members. Does anyone keep a bulletin board anymore? Is it updated regularly? Is it accessible to all your members? Probably not. A website is wonderful but it is more for quick bites of information – I for one am not going to read some big, long article on a web page. And last but not least, is word of mouth. We all know how we hear gossip on the workroom floor. Do you want to hear union business like that? Yes sometimes you can’t stop that but putting the facts in print, on paper will help nip that in the bud!

Your publication helps with the image of the union. Keep it informative, professional and positive. The paper can be a reminder to those who pay the dues; that we are in this together and the union fights for them as

much as possible. Keeping your members in the loop and setting the record straight when needed makes them feel included. Reinforce the benefits of belonging. Try to keep them proud they belong to this organization. Unfortunately in this day and age many of our members know very little about unions in general. A great article to include is one on the history of the APWU. Tell them how

much postal employees made back in the 60’s and blow their minds. Yes, we have come a long way!

So before you start spring cleaning the house or doing yard work, take a look at your paper. Could it use a few changes and some cleaning up? You don’t have to overhaul the whole paper; just a few little things here and there. Just do it!

## Effective communication requires complete attention

Whatever we attempt in life, communication is involved to a greater or lesser degree depending on our situation, stage of life or vocation. Our ways of communicating also vary but two aspects remain stable for almost everyone: nearly all people need to communicate and we can almost all learn to improve our communicating skills.

Communication is one of those skills that apply to everyone and one that can be improved and refined. We need to be more cognizant of our ability in this area.

Communication is the sharing of ourselves, as well as the passing of information. Learning to listen well is a very important communication skill – to really listen well, we learn to listen “actively,” be-

ing alert to the full message – what is said and what isn’t said. To listen well doesn’t mean we must always agree, it only means we intend to try to understand what is being said and what it means.

Being alert to visual skills is also important in communication. What we don’t say, we often impart with our silences, our gestures, facial expressions and body language.

In addition to hearing, seeing, silences and body motion, we also communicate by tone of voice and emotion. To really communicate well, we must be able to listen, to be attentive, to speak, to put ideas into words or on paper and to be able to share with others in ways that fit the relationship.



# 2020 federal election booklet available

The 2020 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 3 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 download and share 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

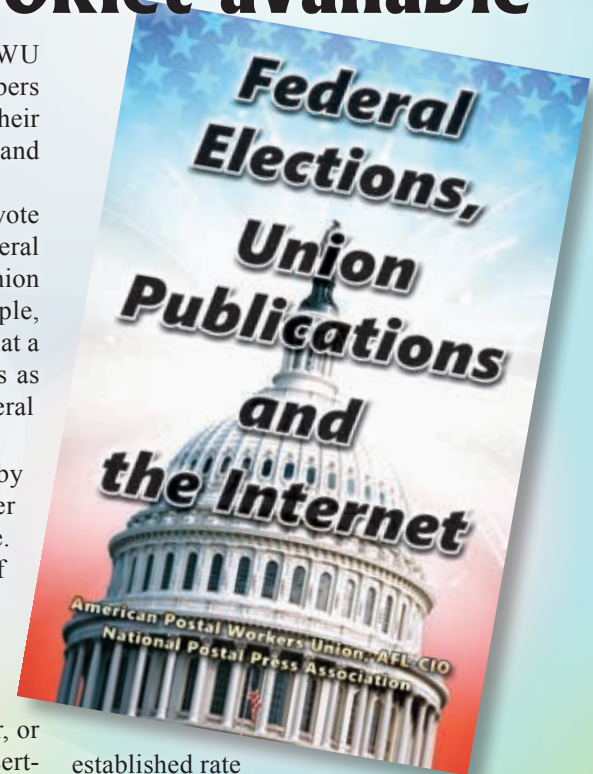
advocacy subjects only in an APWU PPA newsletter, sent to APWU members (including dues-paying retirees) and their families as well as administrative staff and their families:

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 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:

- Signed with the writer's name, address and phone number.
- Contain no more than 250 words.
- Well-reasoned and indicate the writer knows the subject (like good press releases, 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.



# Becoming a powerful spokesperson

**Project confidence.** Projecting confidence is key to winning over an audience. Being nervous while speaking to the public is normal, and many say it's positive to feel that way before you speak. But showing it is another thing – that's why it's important to project confidence (even

“As a first-generation immigrant...” – be sure this is a genuine connection that people will resonate with your audience.

**It's OK to say that you don't know.** If you don't know the answer, it's OK to say so. Remember nothing is “off the record,” but it's better to be honest about what you

## Tips for television

As with all interviews, context matters. Work from what you know and who you are trying to reach. Before the show begins, think about your audience, the format of the show, how long you'll get to speak and your key messages. With most TV opportunities, you'll have a short amount of air time, so be prepared with a key message that you can repeat comfortably and with confidence.

When interviewing on TV, image and body language are just as important as what you say in setting the tone. If you're at a rally or press conference, make sure that you are positioned so that the cameras pick up the visual posters and banners behind you, strengthening your message. How you might use your hands at a rally is different than when you're interviewing in a studio. You'll want to move your hands for emphasis, but not be overly dramatic, distracting people from hearing your message.

Be sure to look at the reporter, not the camera. Stay poised not only in your stance, but also your eye contact to demonstrate your confidence and comfort with the issue.

Always remember: Don't answer the question, respond with your message. Interview segments are often only 8-15 second soundbites. Don't get thrown by the reporter and get caught answering a bad question. Remind yourself that your audience is never the reporter, it's the people on the other side of the camera, and this is your chance to speak to them. Repeat your message and you control the interview.

When ending the interview, thank the reporter, and wait until the camera is turned off before saying more to the reporter or offering further background information.

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*“People believe in those who are perceived as confident, who know the issue and can show how they are personally connected or affected by it, able to reach people's hearts and minds.”*

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if you're not feeling it). People believe in those who are perceived as confident, who know the issue and can show how they are personally connected or affected by it, able to reach people's hearts and minds. Remember to stand tall, or if sitting, sit forward in your chair. Commanding a strong presence assures your audience that you are a credible spokesperson and shows that you believe in yourself and your expertise, that what you have to say deserves and needs to be heard.

**Keep it short.** You don't need to explain everything to be heard. Rather, it's better to keep it brief. Think about what you want to say beforehand, create short soundbites (eight seconds in length) that capture your main points and your key message about the issue or campaign. And practice, practice, practice.

**Personalize your message.** Add something personal at the beginning of your soundbite to create more of a human connection between you and your audience. Some examples are: “As a working mother...” or

don't know than to say “no comment.” Keep it slow and steady. Remind yourself to speak slowly. It is OK to pause and take a deep breath. Practice annunciating, and even over-annunciating, each syllable so that your words will be clearly articulated. If you catch yourself speaking too quickly, it's OK to pause, take a breath and start again. Remember, slow and steady.

Keeping it slow also helps keep you steady under more aggressive or difficult interview questions. It's always better to look more reasonable than your “opponents” or a somewhat hostile interviewer. Calm, cool and collected is the way to go.

The goal is to learn how to do this while also being confident and strong in your message, from beginning to the end. Even if you're on long-form radio shows, it's important from the very beginning that you respond with your message, not simply answer the question.

Practice, practice, practice!





# Help pin down victory on Election Day!



## How? Just follow these steps.

1. Through your publication between now and November, inform your members about the significance of this election.
2. Educate your members about postal worker and working family issues and where the candidates stand on these issues.
3. Provide voter registration information and encourage members and family members to make sure they are registered to vote.
4. Constantly remind them about the importance of voting on **Election Day, Tuesday, November 3.**
5. Remember the adage, “In order for a message to become unforgettable it must be repeated several times!”

# Becoming a powerful spokesperson

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## Radio rules

While many of the tips for TV also apply to radio, without a visual component, it's your voice that "sets the stage." Ask yourself many of the same questions you would for TV, particularly in terms of preparation, research, listening to the show ahead of time, greeting hosts warmly and thanking them at the end. Practice on tape – record yourself so you can learn your strengths and areas you need to improve before the interview.

Radio often allows more time for you to talk about your issue and deliver your message. You could be on air for as long as 60 minutes, so be prepared with your soundbites, but also be ready to share stories that convey the points that you are trying to make. If you're on a longer show, remember that radio audiences change every 10-15 minutes, so repeat your messages often.

The host will often repeat who you are and who you represent, but don't rely on them to do so. Be sure to mention your organization's full name and a way for people to be in touch (preferably a website they can visit) at the beginning and end of the program.

When using statistics to help convey the larger impact of the story you are sharing, translate the numbers. For example, say "one-third" instead of "33.3 percent."

If there are opportunities for people to call in, organize your supporters to do so.

It's a boost to you and the messages you are trying to convey to have friendly people call in to ask supportive questions, driving your message even further. Be sure to ask for an air-check, or if the show will be archived,

so you can keep a copy for your news clips. Also, listen to the show afterwards so that you can use it as a learning tool, as well as a way to celebrate your successes!

*--The SPIN Project*

## Techniques for answering questions

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

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

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

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

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

- Don't be afraid not to answer a question. Phrase the response: "I don't want to misrepresent myself or my union. I'll be happy to do a bit of research and get back

to you." (But make sure you get back to that reporter!)

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

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

- Short, to-the-point sentences are most powerful. Use succinct and graphic "sound-bite" sentences that sum up your point of view. Draw anecdotes and analogies to illustrate your message.

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

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

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

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

- Don't lie. Don't say "no comment." And don't go "off the record."