

# Postal Newsletter

## Press

AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION

NATIONAL POSTAL PRESS ASSOCIATION

Volume 53, Issue 3

May-June, 2021

## The rules of responsible journalism

By Tony Carobine, President

At one time or another, most of us have probably said things we later wished we hadn't. As much as we'd like, there isn't any way to turn back the clock and take those

visible products the union has to offer, such as the union publication. Taking all of this into consideration, the editor not only has an awesome responsibility, but also is in charge of the "voice of the union" so to speak.

*"As much as we'd like, there isn't any way to turn back the clock and take those words back."*

words back. On occasion, we also may have exaggerated the details of a story.

These situations bring to mind a tale about a man who called his dentist for an appointment. "I've got a tremendous cavity," he told the dentist. When the man got into the dentist's chair, the dentist peered into his mouth. "Oh, that doesn't seem too big. We can take care of that with a small filling." "Really?" said the man. "When I stick my tongue into it, it's huge." The dentist smiled, "Sometimes it's natural for the tongue to exaggerate."

While we can control what we say by thinking before we speak, we should also be on guard when we publish a newsletter for our members. The responsibilities and demands placed upon an editor are many indeed. Editors are the caretakers of the union publication, a valuable piece of property that belongs to the membership we serve. Whether elected or appointed, editors have been given a sacred trust that must be protected and upheld.

There is no other piece of property that is owned by the membership which has the potential to affect the union and its members more than a union publication. The union newsletter can be a mighty powerful vehicle as it reaches each and every member.

A lot of important work the union does may "not be visible," so most people will form an opinion about the union by the

Given this power, we must never forget that the paper belongs to all members and not certain individuals.

As mentioned earlier, the editor is the caretaker of the union newsletter. The caretaker's duties include the responsibility of being impartial and serving all members, regardless of the editor's personal feelings or opinions.

### Responsible journalism

Following are what I call the rules of responsible journalism that editors should consider in order to produce a union publication of the highest ethical quality:

1. **Verify information for accuracy.** Material submitted by others or written by the editor needs to be checked to make sure that all facts and statements are accurate and truthful. Anything less and the publication, union, and editor will lose credibility. Once lost, credibility is extremely difficult to regain.

2. **Be fair and objective.** When dealing with disagreements or differences of opinion pertaining to a specific issue (between members, not management) all sides deserve to be heard regardless of the editor's personal feelings on the subject. The union newsletter should present both sides so readers can form their own opinions. (A disagreement or difference of opinion in this sense is not the same as personal attacks, which do not belong

in a newsletter.) The editor should always be fair, objective, impartial and not allow personal views to interfere or influence decisions regarding the content of the publication.

3. **Do not misstate or overstate.** Again, an editor must make sure that information submitted for publication, or articles that he or she writes are factual. To view facts in a manner that suits personal views not only violates the sacred trust of the office, but also destroys the integrity of the editor, paper, and the union.

4. **Never print an article to punish someone.** Many of us (member and officer

*Please see Responsible Journalism, page 2*

## Save the Dates

**Wednesday,  
August 4  
&  
Thursday,  
August 5**

**Online communication  
workshops via Zoom**

**See page 4 for details**



Editors come in contact with subject matter for their publications on a regular basis. So it helps to always be on the lookout, as writing is an ongoing endeavor. When this happens, immediately collect the details and develop them into an article for the paper. Employing this technique is especially helpful to the editor because substantial portions of the paper can already be completed when the paper's deadline arrives. This will allow the editor to concentrate on other work that needs to be done on the paper and make his or her life less stressful. Being on the lookout for subject matter can also be helpful to other officers. They may not know what to write about. With the editor keeping a watchful eye, he or she may be able to help these individuals select the subject matter for their articles.



# Tried anything new lately?

By Jenny Gust, Editor-at-Large

Suppose someone handed you a stack of PPA publications including your own paper. After reading the papers would the content of your paper rise to the top, hover in the middle or sink to the bottom? Reading other publications can help you improve what you are doing. You will see what works and looks good. You will also see what doesn't work!

If you are looking to change it up a bit here are some ideas to help. Photos of your members/officers help to put a face with a name. Try an interview with someone – get their point of view and a photo to go with it. Do a survey of your members – see what is on their minds and/or what they want to see in the paper. Try to find someone or a few people to draw or work up a cartoon or two. We need a sense of humor! If you find an artist maybe they could redo the banner of your paper.

Every chance you get be sure to publicize the victories – grievance wins, arbitration wins, even things that are fixed before going through the steps – that we all know can take forever in the system. Let the members know – hey we are fighting and we are winning!

Notices of meetings – when, where, time, and agenda. Report on last month's meeting and what happened. Work on your officers, even stewards, to write articles for the paper. Just tell them it doesn't have to be a Pulitzer Prize winner – just write like you are talking to someone. Write about future events – picnics, conventions, parties, Labor Day walks, holiday events, charity events, etc.

Legislative and political news and how it could affect their jobs. Let them know what the national and state APWU are doing on their behalf. Check out the websites of the national and your state before you publish. They generally have lots of information available for you to use.

Is someone in your local interested in health and safety? Maybe they could write up something once in a while. Also, people love to hear about other members – birthdays, anniversary, births, grandchildren, members who are ill or had surgery. Show respect for members/retirees who have passed away – put condolences in the paper. Try to keep retirees in the loop also. You might find one who would love to write about what they are doing now. Have a mem-

ber or steward of the month. Have an Ask the Editor column for questions concerning the contract and grievance procedure and what your rights are.

Last but not least, you can check out the APWU PPA website! There you will find

lots of union history, profiles, fillers for your newsletter – all kinds of goodies. There is no way you will have any blank space ever again if you check it out!

Be proud of your paper! Make the effort to have it rise to the top!

## Editorial goals: serving needs, wants

Every editor struggles with the question, "What do my readers want to know?" This question is different from the statement: "My readers need to know ..."

Editors in organizations must provide information that readers need, which will help the organization move forward. Yet if the publication contains nothing but need-

to-know information it is in danger of boring and patronizing readers.

*Remember:* Answer questions that readers are asking and you'll win the loyalty, even the affection of readers. The tension between need-to-know and want-to-know comes with the territory. Use it to serve your organization well.

## Attention PPA Members:

**Send your photos to the APWU Communications Department!**

**Have your event featured in the *Members in Action* section of *The American Postal Worker***

You are invited and encouraged to send photos of members at APWU local, state, retiree chapter or auxiliary sponsored events, community parades, picnics or any other civic event.

Anything from membership events, to supporting a picket line or an organizing drive for other union brothers and sisters, to participating in a community donation drive, to handing out flyers at a community event are welcome.

High-resolution photos should be emailed to [communications@apwu.org](mailto:communications@apwu.org).



# APWU National Postal Press Association Online Workshops via Zoom

## Wednesday, August 4 – Thursday, August 5, 2021



**APWU National Postal Press Association  
Online Workshops  
Wednesday, August 4  
Thursday, August 5, 2021**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Registration Fee: \$50.00 • After July 20: \$75.00**

### Workshops

**You must register for the workshops in advance by selecting up to four of the six workshops by using the letter next to the workshop title (a - f).**

**Workshop Choice #1** \_\_\_\_\_

**Workshop Choice #2** \_\_\_\_\_

**Workshop Choice #3** \_\_\_\_\_

**Workshop Choice #4** \_\_\_\_\_

**Alternate Workshop Choice #1** \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

**All times listed are Central Standard Time  
Must be a PPA member to participate**

### Wednesday, August 4

**9:00 – 9:25 a.m. Opening Comments/Introductions**

**9:30 – 11:30 a.m. Workshops (Choice #1)**

- a. Writing for the union communicator
- b. Using social media as a communications tool
- c. Upgrading your website presence
- d. Public speaking and working with the media
- e. Planning a public protest that communicates your message
- f. Creating podcasts and member videos

**11:30 a.m. – Noon Lunch**

**Noon – 2 p.m. Workshops (Choice #2)**

- a. Writing for the union communicator
- b. Using social media as a communications tool
- c. Upgrading your website presence
- d. Public speaking and working with the media
- e. Planning a public protest that communicates your message
- f. Creating podcasts and member videos

### Thursday, August 5

**9:30 – 11:30 a.m. Workshops (Choice #3)**

- a. Writing for the union communicator
- b. Using social media as a communications tool
- c. Upgrading your website presence
- d. Public speaking and working with the media
- e. Planning a public protest that communicates your message
- f. Creating podcasts and member videos

**11:30 a.m. – Noon Lunch**

**Noon – 2 p.m. Workshops (Choice #4)**

- a. Writing for the union communicator
- b. Using social media as a communications tool
- c. Upgrading your website presence
- d. Public speaking and working with the media
- e. Planning a public protest that communicates your message
- f. Creating podcasts and member videos

**\*2:10 – 2:40 p.m. Closing Comments/2021 PPA Awards**

(\*Please note: The length of this session is subject to change.)



# Editing for quality – a standard of good writing

Successful editing lies in your ability to delete a phrase here and a sentence there with the ultimate goal of informing the reader in the quickest and most under-

• Are the addresses, dates, times, and names correct?

Many corrections run by newspapers are concerned with incorrect addresses,

story. Do not make changes in copy just for the sake of making changes. Consider what the copy may imply or what the reader is likely to infer.

• Does the headline accurately reflect the story?

• Does the cutline (caption with photos) correspond with the text and your notes?

You should always look at the photograph when writing or editing the cutline. Make sure you know everyone in the picture or that you have reliable resources that can identify them for you – including your own notes.

• Are names spelled correctly and consistent with your style?

• Are titles, positions, and other personal facts accurate?

Again, look to your notes and other reliable resources.

*“In editing your own work, you will find it helpful to let the story ‘cool,’ giving it a rest before going back over it. It is easier to identify unnecessary words or phrases when the piece is a day or two old rather than when it is still smoking.”*

standable manner possible. Editing other people’s work requires care and honesty, respecting the writer’s style, the editor’s needs, and the newsletter’s objectives. A good editor knows when to cut and does not fiddle with good writing.

In editing your own work, you will find it helpful to let the story “cool,” giving it a rest before going back over it. It is easier to identify unnecessary words or phrases when the piece is a day or two old rather than when it is still smoking.

Writing is really rewriting, editing, proofing, and then more writing, editing, and rewriting. Even seasoned writers fine tune their manuscripts, sometimes completely changing what they wrote initially. Effective editing involves these questions:

• Can I replace this clause with a phrase?

• Can I replace this phrase with one word?

• Can I replace this fancy word with a simpler one more commonly known?

Review the major facts that apply to the idea outlined in the lead by asking:

• What is most significant?

• What is most interesting?

• What can I leave out without affecting the story?

• Is the action clearly stated?

Nouns and verbs tell the story. If you can “see” the story in your mind’s eye, the words probably describe the action logically and clearly.

• Does a word look funny?

If anything seems inaccurate or misspelled, look it up.

• Does anything raise doubts?

Never assume anything . . . never take it on faith. When in doubt, question the facts and then verify them in your notes or source material.

dates, times, and names and titles. Compare names and titles with another source that you know is correct.

• Can the story be read to mean several different things?

• Does the story say what it should say?

Make sure you understand each word and its meaning within the context of the

## 2021 APWU National PPA Election Committee Report

April 6, 2021

Incumbent APWU National PPA President Tony Carobine, Editor of the *PPA Newsletter*, was the sole candidate to submit a letter of candidacy in this year’s Election for the position of President. His letter was received on March 17, 2021. As an unopposed candidate, Tony Carobine has been declared winner and duly elected as per the PPA Constitution.

For the 2021 APWU National PPA election, we had four (4) members submit letters of candidacy for the position of Editor-at-Large. Three (3) of the four members submitted letters in accordance with the PPA Constitution. One (1) member’s letter of candidacy was delivered to the authorized PO Box after the deadline of March 31, 2021 and was ruled ineligible. Therefore the three (3) eligible unopposed candidates for the position of Editor-at-Large were declared winners as per the Constitution. The eligible candidates are as follows:

### Declared Successful Candidates for Editor-at-Large [Four (4) available positions]

<u>Name</u>	<u>Newsletter</u>	<u>Date Received</u>
Jenny L. Gust	<i>Black Swamp Outrider</i>	March 17, 2021
Cathy Hanson	<i>The Northern Light</i>	March 22, 2021
Terry C. Danek	<i>Linken Postal News</i>	March 26, 2021

Congratulations to the 2021 elected Officers of the APWU National Postal Press Association.

Respectfully submitted,

John E. Durben, Chairperson  
2021 APWU National PPA Election Committee

# Editor's toolbox:

## Tips for APWU communicators

### Review your listening skills with this checklist

One-on-one communication is a two-way process, and the part most often neglected is listening. Following are eight poor listening habits. Are you guilty of any of them?

**Editing.** You hear only what you want to hear, selectively blocking out the rest of what the person is trying to communicate.

**Rehearsing.** As the person speaks, you are preoccupied formulating what you will say next.

**Delving.** Instead of listening, you focus on trying to discover a hidden message.

**Daydreaming.** Failing to concentrate, you allow your mind to wander which often leads to an embarrassing request for the person to repeat what he or she just said.

**Personalizing.** You relate what is being said to your own experience and allow your thoughts to go off on a tangent. What the person is saying becomes about you, not the speaker.

**Switching.** You are too quick to change the subject, sending the message that you are not interested in what the other person has to say.

**Arguing.** You are quick to disparage or ridicule what was just said. You are more interested in verbal sparring than communicating.

**Agreeing.** You nod and mumble agreement to everything that is said, just to avoid conflict.

### Tips for proofreading

If you're proofreading publications, you might want to:

- Reread all headlines and subheads.
- Reread all sentences following headlines and font changes.
- Cross-check the table of contents against the text.
- Proof corrections and also the area surrounding corrections.
- Check pages where stories are continued to be sure the story "restarted" at the right place.

### How to prune your prose

Here are some ways to tighten your writing:

- **Look for** sentences that begin with "There is or There are."

*Wordy:* There are five people who are working on the project." (ten words)

*Tighter:* Five people are working on that project." (seven words)

- Avoid using "in the process of."

*Wordy:* "He is in the process of adding names to the committee." (eleven words)

*Tighter:* "He is adding names to the committee." (seven words)

### Color tips

Don't overlook the effect of color in your printed pieces. Color can add both interest and appeal. It reduces errors and increases motivation. In fact, studies show that people are 35 percent more likely to be interested in a piece with color than one without it. Just adding one color to your piece can give it a new dimension. Some tips include:

- Use color to direct the reader's eye or make an element stand out.
- Use color for contrast – and stay away from using color-on-color designs.
- Color printed on a smooth, glossy surface appears purer and more brilliant than the same ink on a rough surface.
- Full-color photos will capture a reader's attention immediately.

### Top tips from Mark Twain

Mark Twain helped to shape the American language. Here are some quotes worth noting from this great writer:

- On style (to a 12-year-old boy): "I notice that you use plain, simple language, short words and brief sentences. That is the way to write English – it is the modern way and the best way. Stick to it and don't let fluff and flowers and verbosity creep in."
- On using short words: "I never write 'metropolis' for 7 cents when I can get the same for 'city'."
- On being concise: "With a hundred words to do it with, the literary artisan could catch that airy thought and tie it down and reduce it to a cabbage but the artist does it with 20 – and the result is a flower."
- On word choice: "The difference between the almost-right word and the right word is really a large matter – 'tis the difference between the lightning bug and the lightning."

ference between the lightning bug and the lightning."

### Write clearer, more readable paragraphs

Paragraphs should make reading easy. Put the topic sentence first; follow with supporting material, held together with conjunctions; and finish with a summary.

Here are some tips:

**Think** of paragraphs as units of thought. Give each main idea its own paragraph.

**Keep** paragraphs fairly short. The breaks between paragraphs are stopping points for readers; don't stretch their patience by making paragraphs more than 4-5 sentences long.

**Vary** paragraph length. This will help maintain your readers' attention. Use single-sentence paragraphs sparingly to emphasize important ideas.

### Can't solve the problem?

If you've tried everything else to solve a problem, try standing. Researchers at the University of California say you can improve your chances of solving the problem by 20 percent if you're standing instead of sitting.

*Reason:* Standing boosts your heart rate by about 10 beats a minute. And the increase in blood flow stimulates your brain.

### Performance quiz

Is your publication doing its job? Nine basic questions to ask yourself:

1. Who are my readers?
2. Are they getting the publication regularly and on schedule?
3. Why do they want to read my publication?
4. What do I want to tell them?
5. What does my organization want me to tell them?
6. What do they want to read?
7. Is my message unique? Is it unavailable from any other source?
8. Am I delivering what I promise?
9. Do my graphics, art and layout suit editorial content, publication purpose and reader expectations?



# Photographs a necessity

Big, striking photos attract readers. They help people picture what the organization's doing and why. And best of all, photos can show readers the paper involves them. Print as many photos as possible of your members. And don't stop there. Include pictures of all different kinds of people, someone for every reader to identify with.

## Say it with pictures

A good picture is worth a thousand words. And when a picture dramatizes an idea, the text doesn't need to repeat what the photo says. An article written partly with pictures is shorter, quicker to read, more powerful, and more fun to look at than a page full of words.

## The best proof

Don't expect people to believe whatever you say. Convince them with facts, interviews and logic – plus the right pictures. Photos may show just a part of the truth, but at least readers know what's before their eyes is real. Reading that a hall was filled to capacity isn't as impressive as seeing a photo with hundreds of animated people everywhere you look.

## The camera doesn't lie; it exaggerates

Photographers aren't neutral observers; they pick and choose what to show. The same room is either half-full or half-empty, depending on how the photographer looks at it. If you're glad so many people showed up, pick the most crowded bunch, and take a close-up. If you're upset there weren't more people, capture rows of empty chairs in front.

## Make your group's events look interesting

If you don't think before you shoot, you'll find yourself printing nothing but boring clichés. Who wants to see a parade of speakers hugging the podium, the same old officials holding awards, and officers sitting behind a long dreary table? Here's how to avoid photos that make your group look dull.

## Look for action

To take a picture of the union president for example, visit him or her on a busy day. Don't let the president sit behind a desk, dressed up in fancy clothes looking like a manager. Instead, capture a photo of the

president serving the membership. Snap a photo of him or her visiting the workplace, speaking at a meeting, talking on the phone, discussing a problem, or just plain on the move.

## Make speeches come alive

You may not think there's much action in a speech. Granted, the action is subtle. It's in the gestures and the expressions on people's faces. When you shoot each speaker, include the hands and capture as many moods and gestures as possible.

Show the speaker with the audience. If you forget the audience, you'll get photos that make it look like the speakers are up there all alone, as isolated as if they were in their offices.

When the audience does appear, too often it's just the backs of heads. It takes some doing, but look for an angle where you get at least part of the faces of both speaker and audience. It will be near impossible to get that shot if the front row or two of the audience is empty or the podium is too far from people.

If you just pop in, take a picture and take off, you will likely get an audience that looks half asleep. Sooner or later they will clap, laugh at a good joke, or otherwise look alive. Don't be shy. Stand in front of the audience and take head-on shots of the whole group.

Sometimes the situation is hopeless, when look-alike speakers just stand there reading while everyone else examines their papers. Unless you're exposing the dullness of the event, look for photos that dramatize the issues the event deals with. After the speech, stick around. If people rush the podium to chat with the speaker, that could be the shot you need.

## Get close-ups

If you're too far away from the speakers, that big clunky podium could end up dominating each photo, making all the speakers look the same. To capture the gestures and faces that make each speech special, don't be shy. Move in close. If you shoot a group that's too far away, everyone will look like little ants. Get close enough to a few people so that their faces stand out bigger than everyone else's. That will help draw the casual viewer into the scene.

## Try different angles

Move around so that each speaker and each event or person interviewed is seen in a different way, from a different spot. For variety, hold the camera different ways, to get both tall and wide shots of the same subject.

If tables and other lines in the photo go straight up, down and across, they just echo the lines of type and columns on the printed paper, and don't attract attention. To get dramatic diagonal shapes instead, shoot from an angle – the side, above or below. For example, to shoot a bunch of people sitting at a table, stand to the side so that the table goes diagonally across the photo.

(That also gives you a nice, big face in the foreground.)

Make someone look sinister or bigger than life by crouching down and shooting up. Diminish that person or make someone look vulnerable by standing on a table and shooting down.

## Catch someone looking right at you

Whoever's looking at you will end up peering into the eyes of the reader browsing through your paper. This "eye contact" can startle readers, making them feel involved. Just make sure the expression on the person's face is meant for the reader.

## Avoid "grip-&-grin" shots

If you keep taking the same tired shot, over and over again, of your leader presenting a check or plaque to someone as they shake hands, your group will start looking like a bunch of robots who spend all their time at ceremonies stiffly clasping hands. Instead, show the person holding up the check and looking excited. Or catch someone hanging the plaque on the wall, surrounded by merry well-wishers. Think up shots that dramatize how the money was raised, or why the check or plaque was awarded. Capture spontaneous good feelings, not frozen grins.

## Use symbols

Ask members to wear union or group t-shirts or buttons. When picturing a protest or picket line, ask people to hold original hand-made signs (if available) rather than pre-printed ones.

# Eleven ways to put together a publication that gets read

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

2. Avoid using all caps in headlines – it hinders reading. Instead, use lower case.

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

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

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

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

7. Use captions to link photographs and illustrations to a story. For maximum readability, place captions below the artwork. Include small photo credits to show appreciation for photos contributed by fellow members.

8. When using graphics, keep in mind that a single, large illustration is generally

more appealing than numerous, small illustrations placed randomly about the page. However, several individual, but related graphic images may be grouped together for a very effective message.

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

10. Use visual cues to guide readers to

sections of your publication that appear as regular features. For example, show hands clapping at the head of a column entitled "Kudos."

11. Want two ink colors in your publication, but your budget doesn't quite cover it? Preprint a year's supply of your newsletter stock using a second color on the nameplate.

---

## Building a news gathering network

Developing an enthusiastic team of reporters for your publication can make your job easier and your publication more complete and interesting.

The first step is to decide how many reporters you need and what they will cover. If your organization is an area local, you may want to have a correspondent for each associate office within the area local. If your newsletter is a state publication, you may want to recruit a reporter for each local within the state.

Gathering information for your newsletter will not be a high priority for most of your reporters. Therefore, try to make their jobs as easy and rewarding as you possibly can.

At the beginning of the year, give each reporter a colorful (hard to misplace) folder

with pockets on either side. Include your publication schedule and copy deadlines as well as instructions on how to submit copy.

If you are lucky enough to have reporters who are willing to write, then by all means ask them to write their stories. If your reporters are reluctant to write, just ask them to submit only the facts. Give your reporters recognition in each issue if possible. One method is to list contributing reporters in the masthead. Another is to have their names appear in a credit line at the end of each story they submit. If they have done the reporting and you have done the writing, your credit line can read, "Reported by Eric Smith."

Finally, praise your reporters whenever appropriate and thank them each time they submit information.