

**INSIDE**  
Award-winning  
entries & conference  
photos!

# Postal Press Newsletter

AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION

NATIONAL POSTAL PRESS ASSOCIATION

Volume 51, Issue 4

September-October, 2019

## 2019 PPA awards presented



Proudly displaying awards at the August 3 awards banquet during the 2019 Biennial Conference of the APWU National Postal Press Association (PPA) in Altoona, Iowa are (seated left to right) John Greathouse, editor, *Michigan Messenger* and *The Pacer*, Lansing, Michigan; Carlos Barrios, editor, *San Antonio Alamo Area Local Dispatch*, San Antonio, Texas; Jolanda Bell, editor, *Voice & Views*, Jacksonville, Florida; Michelle Hewett, editor, *The Auxiliary Spirit*, Saint Charles, Missouri; Steve Beyersdoerfer, editor, *First Class Worker*, Cincinnati, Ohio; (second row left to right) John Miceli, editor, *The Hi-Lites*, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Roscoe Woods, associate editor, *The Communicator*, Ferndale, Michigan; Mark Sarcone, editor, *DMI News & Views*, Des Moines, Iowa; Drew Stevenson, editor, *The Philadelphia Postal Worker*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (third row left to right) James Parker Jr., editor, *The Rank & Filer*, Raleigh, North Carolina; APWU President Mark Dimondstein, PPA President Tony Carobine, Robert Dyer Jr., editor, *Evergreen State Postal Worker*, Mountlake Terrace, Washington. — Photo by Lance Coles

First place and honorable mention awards in 14 categories were presented on Saturday, August 3 during an awards banquet at the PPA Biennial Conference in Altoona, Iowa.

The Postal Press Association Awards Program was established at the 1967 PPA Conference in Cleveland. Originally called the Biennial Award of Merit Program, it was established for the purpose of recognizing editors, and newsletter

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

The judging procedure involved the chairperson of the awards committee organizing the entries according to the proper category and sending the entries to the other members of the Awards Committee. Committee members independently reviewed and rated each entry using a point system.

The results were tabulated by the chairperson to determine the top eight entries in each category. An outside judge then made the final selections from the finalists in each category.

Members of the Awards Committee included Chairperson Jenny Gust, editor *Black Swamp Outrider* and *Ohio Postal Worker*, Toledo, Ohio; James Krivonak, editor *The Virginia Postal Worker*, Mount Vernon, Virginia; Cathy Hanson, editor *The*

*Northern Light* and *Minnesota Postal Worker*, Minneapolis, Minnesota; Loren Adams, editor; *The Arkansas Postal Worker* and *The Razorback Scheme*, Fayetteville, Arkansas; Valerie Schropp, editor; *Redwood Empire Area Local News*, Petaluma, California.

The outside judge was Christopher Martin, Professor of Digital Journalism at the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls.



— courtesy of Lance Coles



BEST FEATURE STORY (First Place)

Sally Knows Best

By Mark Ferrari,  
Local Business Agent  
*The Hi-Lites*  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

“Special thanks to the overwhelming majority of Clerks, Maintenance and Motor Vehicle Services employees who belong to the APWU. Your membership is greatly appreciated by ALL!”

Sally gets up for work in the morning. She drives to work and parks in the employee parking lot at the postal facility she works at. She wears her uniform to work and is appreciative that the APWU has negotiated that she be given a uniform allowance to help with the cost. This is nice because at the job she held prior to being hired by the USPS she had to purchase her own work clothes and pay the full cost.

Sally completes her eight hour day at

work. She is grateful that she is guaranteed eight hours of work and 40 hours per week thanks to the union contract. Her friends and family are surprised to hear that she gets a guarantee like that as they have never heard of such a rule. She tells them her union negotiated it.

Some of Sally’s co-workers mention that a pay raise for all employees is coming soon. Sally is glad that she doesn’t have to beg her boss for a raise as she had to do at her previous employer. She remembers her former employer constantly promising she would get a raise but never receiving one. She knows that the contract between APWU and management has provided her a pay raise, a step increase and even COLAs over the years. All guaranteed under the contract. Thanks to her union negotiated salary, she has also been able to buy a home, make her car payments and help put her son through college.

Sally signed the quarterly overtime desired list and noticed she is on the overtime call to work her scheduled day off. The union negotiated a fair rotation for the employees to work overtime and it is her turn. At her previous employer, people would be called randomly for overtime based on who the boss liked or didn’t like. Sally works her overtime the next day and appreciates the fact that it is at 150%. At her previous employer, she wouldn’t get overtime pay until she went over 40 hours for the week. She knows and appreciates that the union has negotiated that career postal employees get 150% or even 200% of her base rate depending on when she works the overtime.

It’s time to make annual leave picks for next year. Sally makes her picks with the other employees based on seniority. Sally and the employees appreciate how the union negotiated that there is a guaranteed number of employees allowed off on annual leave on any given day of the year. They also like how the annual leave picks are done fairly and not awarded by management based on who they like or don’t like. Sally gets her annual leave slip back approved and she makes plans knowing she will have the time off thanks to the union negotiated rules.

The USPS decides it must reduce the staffing in the facility where Sally works. However, unlike most companies, Sally and her co-workers know that thanks to the union negotiated contract, as a career employee she cannot be laid off. Her friends and family can’t believe she gets this guarantee as they have never heard of any employer with such a rule. Not having to worry about being laid off is a huge relief for Sally as she had been laid off at a previous employer and had problems making ends meet while unemployed. Sally knows she now will still be able to make her house payment, pay her bills and provide for her family with no worries thanks to the union.

Sally notices there is additional money for an adjustment on her paycheck. She hears the union settled a grievance over management violating the contract. She is glad the union is there to help protect the workers’ rights and appreciates the

additional money that she will use on her vacation. She never had to call the union much over the years but is grateful for the time the union steward filed a grievance for her when management attempted to discipline her for something that was not her fault. She knows that thanks to the union the discipline was rescinded.

The job bids are posted and there is a job that Sally wants where the schedule is better for her and her family. She appreciates that the awarding of the jobs will be based on either seniority or qualifications the union helped negotiate and not awarded to whomever the boss likes or to the biggest butt kisser. She knows the union will make sure the jobs are awarded fairly in accordance with the contract.

Years go by and Sally has had a long career at the post office and decides it is time to retire. She is grateful that she gets a retirement package that allows her to

retire comfortably. She knows that some forces (including many in Congress) think that postal workers get too much in regards to employee pay, benefits and retirement. Thankfully, the union has successfully fought against those forces over the years. Sally can retire knowing she has financial security in large part because the union believes workers should have a decent retirement.

Sally knows that thanks to the union she has all of the previously mentioned pay and benefits in addition to many other things postal employees enjoy and sometimes take for granted. She understands the union has fought and won these things for her and which she is grateful for.

Special thanks to the overwhelming majority of Clerks, Maintenance and Motor Vehicle Services employees who belong to the APWU. Your membership is greatly appreciated by ALL!

BEST PHOTOGRAPH (Honorable Mention)

By Mark Sarcone,  
Editor  
*DMI News & Views*  
Des Moines, Iowa



Fallen Iowa workers are remembered during a Workers Memorial Day ceremony on April 28, 2018 outside the state capitol building in Des Moines.

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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.**







# PPA award recipients

First place and honorable mention awards in 14 categories were presented on Saturday, August 3 during an awards banquet at the PPA Biennial Conference in Altoona, Iowa.

## JOURNALISM AWARDS

### BEST EDITORIAL:

First Place: **“Point in time – fake news,”** *DMI News & Views*, Des Moines, Iowa; Mark Sarcone, Editor

Honorable Mention: **“Why in the hell do we vote against ourselves?”** *Unionizer*, Walnut Creek, California; Shirley Jean Taylor, National Business Agent

### BEST HEADLINE:

First Place: **“Winds of Change and Sneaky Snakes”** *First Class Worker*, Cincinnati, Ohio; Greg Mann, Clerk Craft Director

Honorable Mention: **“Hokey Pokey with PSEs,”** *Voice & Views*, Jacksonville, Florida; Angela Johnson, Clerk Craft Director

### BEST CARTOON:

First Place: *Michigan Messenger*, Lansing, Michigan; John Greathouse, Editor

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

### BEST FEATURE STORY:

First Place: **“Sally Knows Best”** *The Hi-Lites*, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Mark Ferrari, Local Business Agent

Honorable Mention: **“FMLA and Additional Documentation”** *First Class Worker*, Cincinnati, Ohio; Walt Luthy, Vice President

### BEST COMMUNITY SERVICE:

First Place: There were no eligible entries for this category.

Honorable Mention: **“Serving those who served our country”** *The Philadelphia Postal Worker*, Darby, Pennsylvania; Drew Stevenson, Editor

### BEST PHOTO:

First Place: *The Pacer*, Lansing, Michigan; John Greathouse, Editor

Honorable Mention: *DMI News & Views*, Des Moines, Iowa; Mark Sarcone, Editor

### BEST NEWS STORY:

First Place: **“Fire Storm in Santa Rosa and the Napa Valley”** *Unionizer*, Walnut Creek, California, Al Ross, Vice President

Honorable Mention: **“2017 Legislative Priorities”** *The Hi-Lites*, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Chris Czubakowski, North Sectional Director

### BEST CREATIVE WRITING:

First Place: **“A Nightmare on ELM Street”** *Evergreen State Postal Worker*, Mountlake Terrace, Washington; Robert Dyer Jr., Editor

Honorable Mention: **“Health Care Poem,”** *The Communicator*, Ferndale, Michigan; Paul Felton – Retiree, Former Editor

### BEST NON-POSTAL LABOR STORY:

First Place: **“SCOTUS Ruling Bad for Unions”** *The Auxiliary Spirit*, Saint Charles, Missouri; Michelle Hewett, Vice President Saint Charles Local Auxiliary

Honorable Mention: **“Take Time Out”** *The Rank and Filer*, Raleigh, North Carolina, James Parker Jr., Editor

## BEST WEBSITE

There were no entries in the Best Website Professional Category.

### BEST WEBSITE NON-PROFESSIONAL:

First Place: Aurora Local, Aurora, Colorado; Edward Seidler, Website Editor

Honorable Mention: San Antonio Alamo Area Local, San Antonio, Texas; Nick Dipasquale, Website Editor

## OVERALL EXCELLENCE AWARDS

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

First Place: *The Western Michigan Area Local Voice*, Grand Rapids, Michigan; Adrienne VanDreumel, Editor

Honorable Mention: *The Pacer*, Lansing, Michigan; John Greathouse, Editor

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

First Place: *The Philadelphia Postal Worker*, Darby, Pennsylvania; Drew Stevenson, Editor

Honorable Mention: *The Auxiliary Spirit*, Saint Charles, Missouri; Mary Lee Brennan, Editor

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

First Place: *The Badger Bulletin*, Cecil, Wisconsin; John Durben, Editor

Honorable Mention: *Michigan Messenger*, Lansing, Michigan; John Greathouse, Editor

## HANK GREENBERG AWARD FOR BEST NEW EDITOR

This award recognizes a new editor striving to produce a union publication that exemplifies dedication, sincerity and professionalism.

Named in honor of past PPA President Hank Greenberg, this award signifies the type of spirit, determination and leadership that Brother Greenberg displayed as principal founder of the PPA and as president for over 17 years.

First Place: Jolanda Bell, *Voice & Views*, Jacksonville, Florida

Honorable Mention: Adrienne VanDreumel, *The Western Michigan Area Local Voice*, Grand Rapids, Michigan





BEST NON-POSTAL LABOR STORY (First Place)

SCOTUS ruling bad for unions

By Michelle Hewett,  
Vice President  
*The Auxiliary Spirit*  
Saint Charles, Missouri

Labor unions took a major hit due to a ruling from the Supreme Court of the United States on 6/27/18. It was on this date when the court ruled that government workers who choose not to join unions, may not be required to help pay for collective bargaining. As a result of this, public-sector unions stand to lose millions of dollars. If this occurs, their strength and power could be diminished.

The 5-4 majority stated their ruling

was based on our First Amendment, saying that requiring payments to unions that negotiate with the government forces workers to endorse political messages that may be at odds with their beliefs.

Justice Samuel A. Alito Jr. wrote for the majority, “We conclude that this arrangement violates the free speech rights of nonmembers by compelling them to subsidize private speech on matters of substantial public concern. We recognize that the loss of payments from nonmembers may cause unions to experience unpleasant transition costs in the short term and may require unions to make adjustments in order

to attract and retain members,” Justice Alito wrote. “But we must weigh these disadvantages against the considerable windfall that unions have received over the years.”

Justice Elena Kagan summarized her dissent from the bench, a sign of profound disagreement.

In disagreement, Justice Elena Kagan writes, “There is no sugarcoating today’s opinion. The majority overthrows a decision entrenched in this nation’s law – and in its economic life – for over 40 years.”

“As a result,” she continues, “it prevents the American people, acting through their state and local officials,

from making important choices about workplace governance. And it does so by weaponizing the First Amendment, in a way that unleashes judges, now and in the future, to intervene in economic and regulatory policy.”

During collective bargaining, each employee who gains benefits should pay their share when receiving the benefits. Conservatives have been working hard to limit the power of labor unions. So, it’s up to us to build up our membership, promote the usefulness of unions, and encourage others to be active. We need to ensure they don’t continue to try to break us down.

BEST NEWS STORY (First Place)

Fire storm in Santa Rosa and the Napa Valley

By Al Ross,  
Vice President  
*Unionizer*  
Walnut Creek, California

My Brothers and Sisters.

On October 24, 2017 East Bay Area President Lisa Ortega and I took the opportunity to visit several Post Offices in the Napa Valley near Santa Rosa that had to deal with the reality of a fierce fire that affected not only Post Offices, but employees’ lives and living conditions. The Santa Rosa fire, which started at Tubbs Lane and Highway 128, moved so quickly that residents had mere seconds to evacuate their homes and get out of harm’s way. A lot of those who were affected only escaped with the clothes they were wearing. This fire bared a similarity to another fire that started nearly in the same area in 1964.

On September 19, 1964, a discarded cigarette from a hunter started the

eight hours. It took the 1964 fire days to cover the same distance. The 1964 fire covered five counties while the

heading towards Calistoga but traffic was backed up on my route,” she said. “I called my husband and he told me to grab a hotel room for the night. I got a room and was sleeping until four a.m. At that point a staff member of the hotel banged on my door and told me that I had to leave because the whole town was being evacuated because the fire was not being contained.”

Another member, Rosa Llama, told of the conditions that existed within the Calistoga Post Office.

“We were trying to do our jobs to the best of our abilities but it was difficult because the smoke was so thick,” she said. “We got masks to deal with it but



made on a daily basis because of the fire. Post Offices in St. Helena, Yountville, Oakville and Calistoga were shut down and their employees and operations were moved to the Napa Post Office. During this timeframe, the Napa Post Office needed the extra bodies because of the long lines from customers affected by the fire that were trying to get their mail.

“We had to process between 1100-4000 customer transactions per day which caused long lines that were beyond our control,” said Postmaster Juliana Davison.

“However, with the extra help from the other Post Offices, the employees stepped up and got the job done.”



Hanley Fire which started on Mount St. Helena. Similar to the 2017 fire, high winds propelled the flames into at least a half-dozen brushfires which eventually burned 83,000 acres and destroyed over 156 homes. However, the 1964 fire didn’t move with the speed of the 2017 fire. The 2017 fire crossed Highway 101 into Santa Rosa within

2017 fire covered eight counties and consumed 245,000 acres of land. Compare this to the size of New York City which is 197,760 acres! The fire, which finally was contained on Oct. 31, burned nearly 9,000 homes and businesses, forced at least 100,000 residents to evacuate their homes, and ended the lives of at least 43 people. The devastation in Santa Rosa was so enormous that entire neighborhoods were destroyed.

During our visits, stories were shared by employees and Postmasters about the adjustments they had to make during that fire-storm.

Union member Lisa Moore, who worked at the Oakville Post Office, told of the impact on her life made by the fire.

“I was moved four times from Oakville to other locations because of the fire,” she said. “In the end, I slept in my car in front of the Oakville Post Office. This fire made me think of what happened in Calistoga in 1964 and it’s something I thought I’d never go through again.”

Lori Cantrell, who is a Union member and is an SSDA at the Calistoga Post Office, recalled the horrors of the fire as it affected her.

“I was trying to get home the day that the fire was burning Santa Rosa and



it still was very hard to breathe.”

St. Helena Postmaster Lisa Hicks told about her firsthand experience with the fire.

“In the morning as I was on my way to work I noticed the fire was on top of a hill and I actually took pictures. However, by the late afternoon the fire had already spread down to the valley. This caused part of Highway 29 to be closed and I had to move my operations to the Napa Post Office.”

At the Napa Post Office, adjustments were being





BEST NEWS STORY (Honorable Mention)

# 2017 Legislative Priorities

By Chris Czubakowski,  
North Sectional Director  
*The Hi-Lites*  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

*“After all, if we are unwilling to come together and fight for our own livelihoods, how can we reasonably expect others to do it for us?”*

### The House Budget and Page Act – Just Say No

As the summer comes to a close and the House and Senate are back in session there are two things that the GOP House will be frantically working to pass; the 2018 House Budget and tax reform. The current 2018 House Budget proposals target postal services and would end up greatly slashing the pay and benefits of postal workers if passed. It must also be noted that the two pieces of legislation are interrelated as all of the proposed cuts will help finance an enormous tax break to corporate America and the wealthy elite. The 2018 House Budget proposes;

- \$46 billion in “savings” to the Postal Service by a reduction in the methods of delivery. This could include cutting the number of delivery days and a further reduction in service standards.
- The elimination of COLA on FERS retirement benefits and the reduction of COLA on current civil service retirees.
- Significant increases in the amount federal and postal employees pay towards their retirement plans. Under the most recent proposals, the GOP is calling for an increase of 6% employee pension contributions into FERS – 1% a year for each of the next six years. This would result in a \$3,000 annual pay cut (\$90,000 over a career) for the same benefits. Hiking employee contributions with no increase in benefits equates to nothing more than a back door pay cut.
- A “tweaking” of the way the federal retirement system calculates annuities. Rather than averaging the highest three years of an employee’s salary, their proposals seek to average the highest five years. The net effect of this change takes 3 billion dollars out of the pockets of retirees.
- The elimination of the Social Security Supplement that currently bridges the gap in FERS benefits for those who retire before they are eligible for Social Security benefits.
- Moving the Postal Service “off budget” to “on budget” even though it operates without taxpayer money. Being “on budget” would let Congress control how the Postal Service spends its money and would make it vulnerable to government shutdowns. It will also allow Congress to raid the Postal Service budget to pay for non-postal government expenses.
- Replacing guaranteed pension benefits for new hires with riskier 401 (k) “retirement” benefits. This means that postal retirements will be in the hands of Wall Street robber barons.

Congressman Todd Rokita (R) of Indiana reintroduced the PAGE Act on 7/4/17 and it has been referred to the House Committee of Oversight and Government Reform. The PAGE Act is brutal anti-worker legislation that strips union

representation and protections from new postal and federal employees. The PAGE Act would make all newly hired postal and federal employees “at-will” employees that can be fired at any time.

The Act also states that new postal employees “may be removed/suspended without notice or a right to appeal for good cause, bad cause, or no cause at all.” It also:

- Weakens postal unions.
- Severely restricts union official time.
- Grant managers full control over future pay raises.
- Denies CSRS and FERS annuities to any employee convicted of a felony.

### Postal Reform (H.R. 756 & H.R.760 – Just Say Yes

The USPS is a national treasure, enshrined in the Constitution and supported by the American people. Without any taxpayer funding, the USPS serves 150 million households and businesses each day, providing affordable, universal mail service to all. The 2006 Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act placed an erroneous prefunding mandate on the USPS to pay future retiree benefits 75 years in advance, with an unsustainable payment schedule hardwired into the law. These payments have crippled the USPS financially as the company has defaulted on payments since 2012. Because prefunding is responsible for 90 percent of postal losses over the last decade, Congress needs to urgently pass comprehensive postal reform legislation to address the pre-funding mandate.

The Postal Reform Act of 2017 (H.R. 756) and its companion bill, the Postal Service Improvement Act of 2017 (H.R. 760) present a golden opportunity to finally move the Postal Service toward solid financial footing. It is also a positive step forward in resolving the pre-funding obligation set forth in the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act of 2006. The APWU joins its sister unions in support of these bills moving forward and we are encouraged by the bipartisan effort on Capitol Hill to fix postal financial problems. There are many components to the legislation, however, the largest component of postal reform, is H.R. 760. H.R. 760 addresses the prefunding mandate through Medicare integration and a “postal only” health plan that will be created within the Federal Employees Health Benefits program (FEHBP) Under H.R.760:

- Eligible retirees will be placed into Medicare A and B.
- Medicare will be the primary insurance and a FEHBP plan will be the secondary insurance.
- Medical and prescription bills not covered by Medicare are covered by the FEHBP plan (if the medical care or drugs are normally covered by the plan’s benefits).

### Postal Friendly House Resolutions

Simple resolutions are made to get a “sense of the House.” This kind of vote forces House members to go on the record with opinions, and in doing so this holds lawmakers accountable. Simple house resolutions are not presented to the Presi-

dent, and do not have the force of law. Sometimes, however, these resolutions provide a good opportunity to get the ball rolling on actual legislation. There are three simple House resolutions that the APWU currently supports:

- House Resolution 31 expresses the sense of the House of Representatives that the USPS should take all appropriate measures to restore service standards in effect as of July 1, 2012. Prompt and reliable service is critical to retaining businesses and customers and delayed mail will continue to drive business away from the USPS.
- House Resolution 28 expresses the sense of the House of Representatives that the USPS should take all appropriate measures to ensure the continuation of door delivery for all business and residential customers. Converting existing door delivery to delivery points is wildly unpopular among small business and residential customers. The USPS brand is its best asset. Our brand is trusted by the American people whether it is at their door or inside their business.
- House Resolution 15 expresses the sense of the House of Representatives that the USPS should take all appropriate measures to ensure the continuation of its 6 day mail delivery service. The USPS provides affordable last mile delivery for FedEx, UPS and Amazon. Without Saturday service these companies will most assuredly find alternate and more expensive means of delivery. The elimination of Saturday delivery is counterproductive to the thriving e commerce trade.

### Make The Call!

Before Congress went on August recess, the APWU asked every member to take a moment to pick up the phone and

speak out against the outright assault on postal workers that is contained in the 2018 House Budget. **Now that Congress is back in session, we are again asking you to reach out for the first time (or again) to your Representatives at 1-844-402-1001 (District Office) and 1-844-813-4060 (D.C. Office). After you dial in, you will hear a short message and be asked to enter your ZIP code. It will state your Congressional Representative’s name and automatically connect you to their office.**

**Please tell your Representative to Support H.R. 756, H.R 760, House Resolution 31, House Resolution28, and House Resolution 15. Please tell them to oppose the 2018 House Budget and the PAGE Act.**

### A Rising Tide Raises All Ships

There are currently 508,908 career employees and 130,881 non-career employees working for the Postal Service. Thus, while it is true that postal workers represent the entire political spectrum it is equally true that not one of us voted with the hope that Congress would destroy the Postal Service and our livelihoods. We all need to come together and take the necessary individual and collective actions needed to shape postal worker friendly legislation before it’s too late. Our sheer numbers afford us the ability to exert a tremendous amount of pressure on both major political parties in order to achieve that goal. Let’s not waste that opportunity!

*After all, if we are unwilling to come together and fight for our own livelihoods, how can we reasonably expect others to do it for us? Stand with your union as we fight for worker power and postal friendly legislation!*

BEST CREATIVE WRITING (Honorable Mention)

# Health Care Poem

By Paul Felton, Retiree, former Editor  
*The Communicator*  
Ferndale, Michigan

Candidate Donald Trump had said  
Better times for health care lay ahead  
He stated that it was a fact  
He’d ditch the Affordable Health Care Act  
He told us that he had a plan  
To help every woman and man  
But as it turned out he was lyin’  
His plan was designed by Paul Ryan  
His plan cost more and covered less  
It sure created quite a mess  
Even the “Freedom Caucus” said NO  
So they made it worse; it still was no go  
As folks in cities big and small  
Went in huge numbers to Town Halls  
And made Republicans shake with fear  
About their election chances next year  
And so their awful plan went down  
And Trump can only wear a frown  
Perhaps this is the time to call  
For Single Payer - Medicare for All



BEST CREATIVE WRITING (First Place)

By Robert Dyer, Jr.,  
Editor  
Evergreen State Postal Worker  
Mountlake Terrace, Washington

I woke up to a loud banging at the door—rap rap rap rap!!!!  
“All right, all right I’m coming . . . no need to tear the house down.”  
I opened the door and there before me was a letter carrier. At least I thought it was a letter carrier . . . the uniform was different. Where there once was the proud eagle—noble symbol of America, justice, freedom and liberty—now was a cold generic patch with the letters TPPS —Trans Pacific Postal Service.  
“What the hell!”, I said. “What happened to your uniform?”

“Mr. Dyer, you are late for work, and Father Trump is not pleased.”

“Father Tramp . . . uh I mean Trump!” I blurted out, “He ain’t my Daddy . . . the father of many-a-liar maybe, but I always try to tell the truth.” I snickered at the scowl on her face.  
“Mr. Dyer, I must warn you, any more talk like that and I will have to turn you in for violation of the ELM—666 US Code of Conduct.”  
“I’m well aware of the ELM, 666 Postal Code of . . . wait a minute! Did you say the US Code of Conduct?”  
“That’s right, Mr. Dyer; 666 is now the US Code of Citizen Conduct.” She continued on, “The Council of 10 has decided to expand the scope of the ELM [Employee Labor Manual] to include all citizens, not just Postal Workers. Father Trump feels that it will solve many of the ills of society if citizens would follow the guidelines of 666.”  
“What do you mean the Council of 10?” I was incredulous! “What about Congress, and the judicial system? None of this even sounds legal to me!”  
“We no longer are ruled by elected officials, Mr. Dyer; it was such a quaint system anyway. The legislative branch was a total waste of time and money, and the justice system was a sad testimony of a failed and useless experiment in democracy. Father Trump has ‘pruned the tree so that it may bear more fruit’. Now, the Executive branch—the President and cabinet—are in control, and it is known as the Council of 10; appointments are made as Father Trump sees fit.”

“Father Trump has created such a brilliant plan! What a savings of money for all the citizens of the United State!”

“Excuse me, but don’t you mean the United States? With an ‘S’, you said the United State.”

“We are now the United State—the greatest state in the World Community. Father Trump is the President of the Council of 10, and we are his loyal citizens!”

The Postal Carrier was clearly very proud of this, and she had a look of absolute adoration on her face as she spoke in exalted superlatives about Father Trump.  
“You MUST be joking!!! I think I’m gonna hurl!” I retorted. “Who in their right mind would ever want to be loyal to a lowlife, no good bum!”  
“Mr. Dyer, I’m afraid I have no choice but to place you under arrest!”, said the carrier with a look of utter disdain. “Your insolence and disrespect has gone too far. Pray that Father Trump is merciful and you may yet keep your job.”  
As she was speaking, two very large men—resembling World Wide Federation wrestlers—appeared suddenly in the doorway and drug me by the arms to a vehicle with WPS written on the side (World Postal Security). I was handcuffed and roughly tossed in the back seat.  
“Hey! What about my Miranda rights! What about my 1st Amendment rights! What kind of a world society is this???”  
“I suggest you keep your outdated idealistic rantings to yourself, Mr. Dyer.”, said one of the security officers with a sardonic grin. “You’re already in enough trouble as it is.”

No Union . . . No rights . . .  
I couldn’t believe it!!!

Where are you taking me?”, I demanded.  
“We’re taking you to the Postal Educational Department of Corrections (PEDC), which is at the Staples Postal District Headquarters, for a drug test. If you show clean, then perhaps Father Trump will let you off with a six-month probation, and a psychological profile over at the Employee Analyzation Program (EAP) down at the Wallmart Human Relations Department”.  
“I would advise you to keep your mouth shut and just say that you had a bad dream, and were confused when you came to the door. Clearly you are very groggy and dazed. I do hope you are not going to fail a drug test on us.”

“The United State no longer tolerates such disloyal and hostile language as you used about Father Trump; it is not in the best interest of the world collective public good.”

Then he reached over and, to my horror, passed a scanning device across my right wrist (previously used to keep track of the movement of mail), and the small computer display blipped a tone—apparently registering some sort of ID as positive.  
“Where did this mark on my wrist come from?”, I screamed! “I don’t remember anything about this!”  
The officer laughed out loud as he said, “Mr. Dyer, you are really not having a good day, are you? We’ll take care of that; you just sit back and take it easy. Boy! We’ve really got a live one here!”, he said to the other officer under his breath.  
I was in shock. I couldn’t believe it . . . I stared in horror at the scanner in the officer’s hand, and mouthed the acronym which was written on the side—Binary Encrypted Analyzation Satellite Technology (B.E.A.S.T.).

“You used that . . . that BEAST thing to record something about me?” I asked.  
“Well of course. The BEAST controls everything—you get scanned on and off the clock for work, buy and sell all goods and services, pay your citizen’s dues—you really can’t do much of anything anymore without the mark of the BEAST.”  
“Hey Joe,” said the officer to the driver, “I think Mr. Dyer may have had some kind of a stroke, or a breakdown or something; let’s take him down to the headquarters’ medical unit. He really doesn’t remember anything.”

“I want a Union Steward!!!”

The two Security Officers broke out in a loud chorus of laughter at this point. “What are you, some kind of religious nut??!” said the officer. “There hasn’t been a Union around here for years. The United State no longer tolerates such idealistic and mal-adjusted groups causing trouble in the workplace, let alone in society abroad.”  
“You just try to relax Mr. Dyer.”, said the driver. “Father Trump is merciful and fair. He will see to it that you are taken care of now.”







I sat in stunned silence, staring blankly out the window, as the World Postal Security Officers pulled up to the United State TPPS headquarters building—666 5th Avenue\*\* . . . **no Union . . . no rights . . . I couldn’t believe it.**

Just then, I was startled awake by a loud rap at the door. It was just a bad dream! **“Thank God!”**, I gasped with relief. I must have fallen asleep working on a grievance. This Steward thing was really getting demanding lately.

**Then I froze, as I gawked  
in dismay at the ELM  
which was open before me.\*  
THERE IT WAS:  
The ELM Section 666  
USPS Standards of Conduct**

I stumbled over to the door in a daze only to find that there was a letter carrier standing before me.  
“Are you OK Mr. Dyer? You look upset.”

**“I really don’t know . . .  
I’m not sure about  
anything anymore.”**

## 666 USPS Standards of Conduct

**666.1 Discharge of Duties.**  
Employees are expected to discharge their assigned duties conscientiously and effectively.

**666.2 Behavior and Personal habits.**  
Employees are expected to conduct themselves during and outside of working hours in a manner which reflects favorably upon the Postal Service. Although it is not the policy of the Postal Service to interfere with the private lives of employees, it does require that postal personnel be honest, reliable, trustworthy, courteous, and of good character and reputation. Employees are expected to maintain satisfactory personal habits so as not to be obnoxious or offensive to other persons or to create unpleasant working conditions.

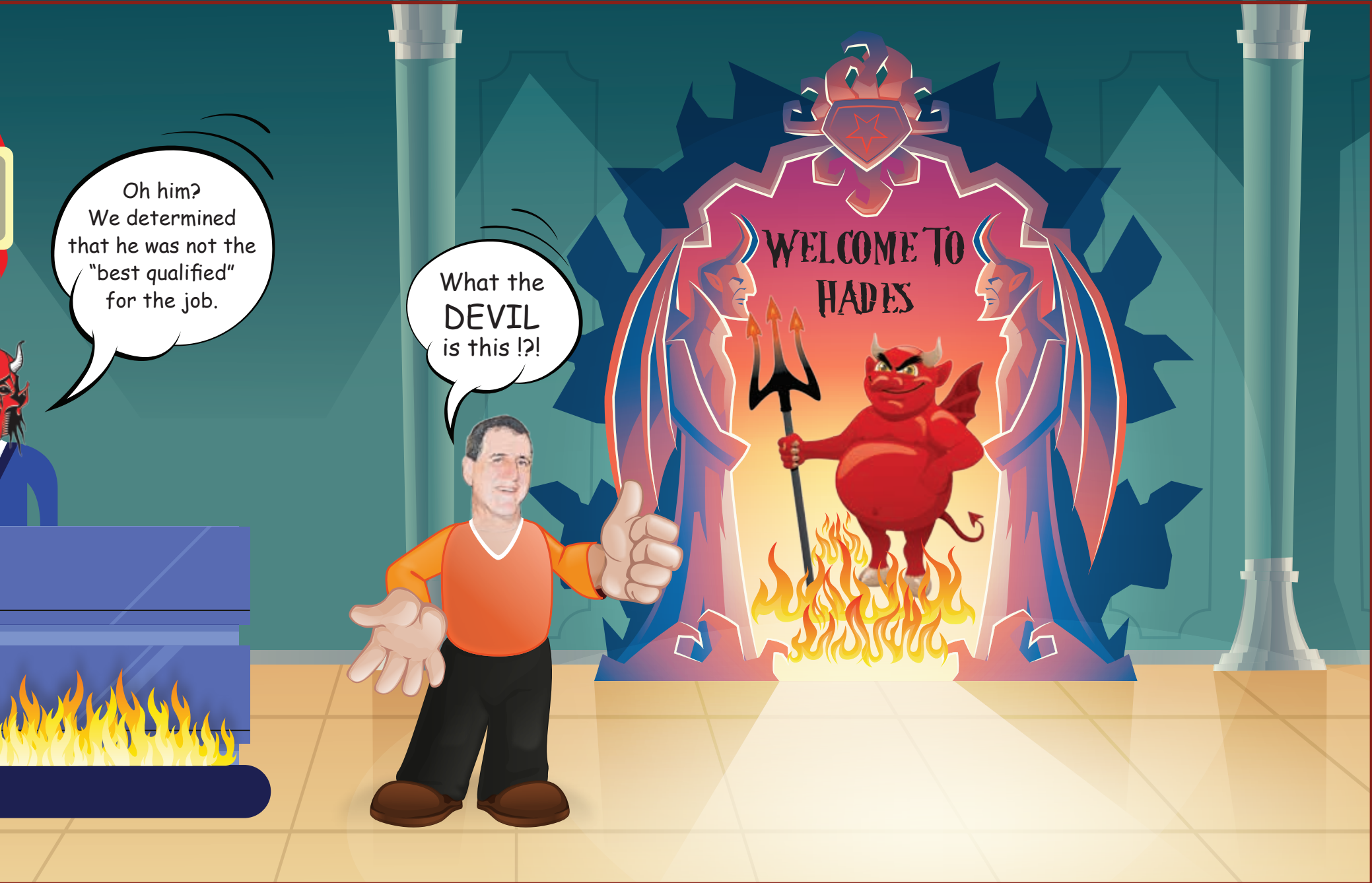
**666.3 Loyalty.**  
Employees are expected to be loyal to the government.

— ELM 16 August 2000

\*The US Postal Service has revised the **ELM Section 666** and given it a new title—Prohibited Personnel Practices. However, the section referred to in this article remains.

The former **666.1 Discharge of Duties** is now 665.13; **666.2 Behavior and Personal Habits** is now 665.16 & **666.3 Loyalty** is now 665.11. The Section **666 USPS Standards of Conduct** is now 665 Postal Service Standards of Conduct.

\*\* Coincidentally, guess who lives at 666 5th Ave.—Deal Gives Kushners Cash Infusion on 666 Fifth Avenue; *The New York Times*, Aug. 3, 2018; By Charles V. Bagli and Kate Kelly; 666 Fifth Avenue; TR Data; *The Real Deal*; [www.therealdeal.com](http://www.therealdeal.com); The Curse of 666 Fifth Avenue, the Skyscraper that Could Sink the Kushners; Clive Irving; 3/9/18; *Daily Beast*; [www.thedailybeast.com](http://www.thedailybeast.com)





**BEST NON-POSTAL LABOR STORY** *(Honorable Mention)*

Take time out

By James Parker, Jr.,  
Editor  
*The Rank and Filer*  
Raleigh, North Carolina

Reflection

Rural Carrier Brandy Pleasants was delivering mail on a spring day in Ashland, VA, when she stopped at a convenience store.

Pleasants discovered that the clerk was in medical distress and urgently needed care as he turned blue.

The Postal Service employee immediately called 911 and rendered first aid until emergency responders arrived.

During the summer, Pleasants suffered a medical crisis herself. She died Aug. 1, just two weeks shy of turning 35.

In her obituary, family members said Pleasants exuded helpfulness, reflected

in medical training she pursued before joining the Postal Service.

“Brandy will be remembered for her radiating spirit and sweet personality that glimmered whenever she was met,” the family wrote.



Take time out

You know after reading this article, I just had to share this with you, to help us realize life is just too short. This was a young lady who obviously loved life and loved others. She saw someone in medical distress and stopped to help, not realizing that in just a few short months she would suffer her own medical crisis and pass away as a result.

We have to stop the hatred towards one another. Anyone who knows me knows that I try to promote unity as much as I can. I believe we should all try to help one another whenever we can. Say “good morning” when we pass by each other, hold open a door, or even share your lunch. Just do something to show kindness towards your fellow man/woman. Whether you like it or not we are all brothers and sisters and we really need to let that love shine that I know is in our hearts. God bless you all until next time.

**BEST HEADLINE** *(First Place)*

By Greg Mann,  
Clerk Craft Director  
*First Class Worker*  
Cincinnati, Ohio

Winds of Change and Sneaky Snakes



— photos by Lance Coles



# BEST COMMUNITY SERVICE (Honorable Mention)

## Serving those who served our country

By Drew Stephenson,  
Editor  
The Philadelphia Postal Worker  
Darby, Pennsylvania

As a veteran of the United States Army it is nice to know that when I have problems or issues in my life, whether medical or financial there is somewhere I can turn for assistance or information; the United States Department of Veterans Affairs or as most people know it, the VA.

The VA services every man and woman whoever served in any branch of the uniformed armed services of the United States. The mission statement of the VA is to fulfill President Lincoln’s promise “To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan” by serving and honoring the men and women who are America’s veterans.

The core values of the VA are to act with high moral principle, maintain the trust and confidence of those they serve, with the highest professional standards; to advance the interests of the veterans and other beneficiaries they serve, and to provide world-class benefits and services.

**Veterans Crisis Line**

Many veterans are not aware of the many different services available to them through the VA. One of the most important services offered by the VA is the “Veterans Crisis Line: Suicide Prevention.”

Suicide is a very serious issue whether you are veteran or not. According to the VA, approximately 16 veterans die each day due to suicide. Please, if you are a veteran in crisis, or are concerned about somebody who is, call the Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255, and press 1; or text 838255; support for deaf and hard of hearing call 1-800-799-4889.

This service is free, confidential, available 24/7 every day and serves all veterans, active duty service members, National Guard and Reserve, and their family members and friends.

**Veteran ID Cards**

Many retail service providers offer discounted goods and service to veterans. There are many types of identification cards you can use to show you’re a veteran. One of the most common is the Veteran ID Card, which is a photo ID that all businesses accept as proof you are a veteran to get the discounts offered. To be eligible for this card you must have served on active duty, in the Reserves, National Guard or the Coast Guard and received an honorable or general discharge (under honorable

conditions). You may apply for a Veterans ID Card online at [va.gov/records/get-veteran-id-card/vic](http://va.gov/records/get-veteran-id-card/vic). Instead of the Veterans ID Card you may also obtain a veteran’s designation on your state issued driver’s license or ID. All 50 states and Puerto Rico offer the designation. Please contact your local DMV office for information on obtaining a veteran’s designation on your license or state issued ID.

**VA Home Loans**

One of the most useful benefits provided to veterans is the VA Home Loan guaranty program. VA Home Loans are provided by private lenders and VA guarantees a portion of the loan, which allows the lender to provide better terms such as good interest rates, often without requiring a down payment or private mortgage insurance.

Your length of service or service commitment duty status and character of service determine your eligibility for specific home loan benefits. Prior to applying for a VA Home Loan you must first obtain a Certificate of Eligibility from the VA or your lender if they provide that service on your behalf. You can apply for your Certificate of Eligibility at your local VA Office or online at the eBenefits portal on the VA website. You will need to provide a copy of your DD Form 214 to obtain a Certificate of Eligibility.

**Burial Benefits**

Burial benefits available include a gravesite in any of our 136 national cemeteries with available space, opening and closing of the grave/perpetual care, a government headstone or marker, a burial flag, and a Presidential Memorial Certificate, at no cost to the family. Some Veterans may also be eligible for Burial Allowances. Cremated remains are buried or inurned in national cemeteries in the same manner and with the same honors as casketed remains.

Burial benefits available for spouses and dependents buried in a national cemetery include burial with the veteran, perpetual care, and the spouse or dependents name and date of birth and death will be inscribed on the veteran’s headstone, at no cost to the family. Eligible spouses and dependents may be buried, even if they predecease the veteran.

**Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder**

One of the most common issues veterans face, especially those who survived combat situations, is PTSD. It is normal for people who have experienced or witnessed a life altering event to have

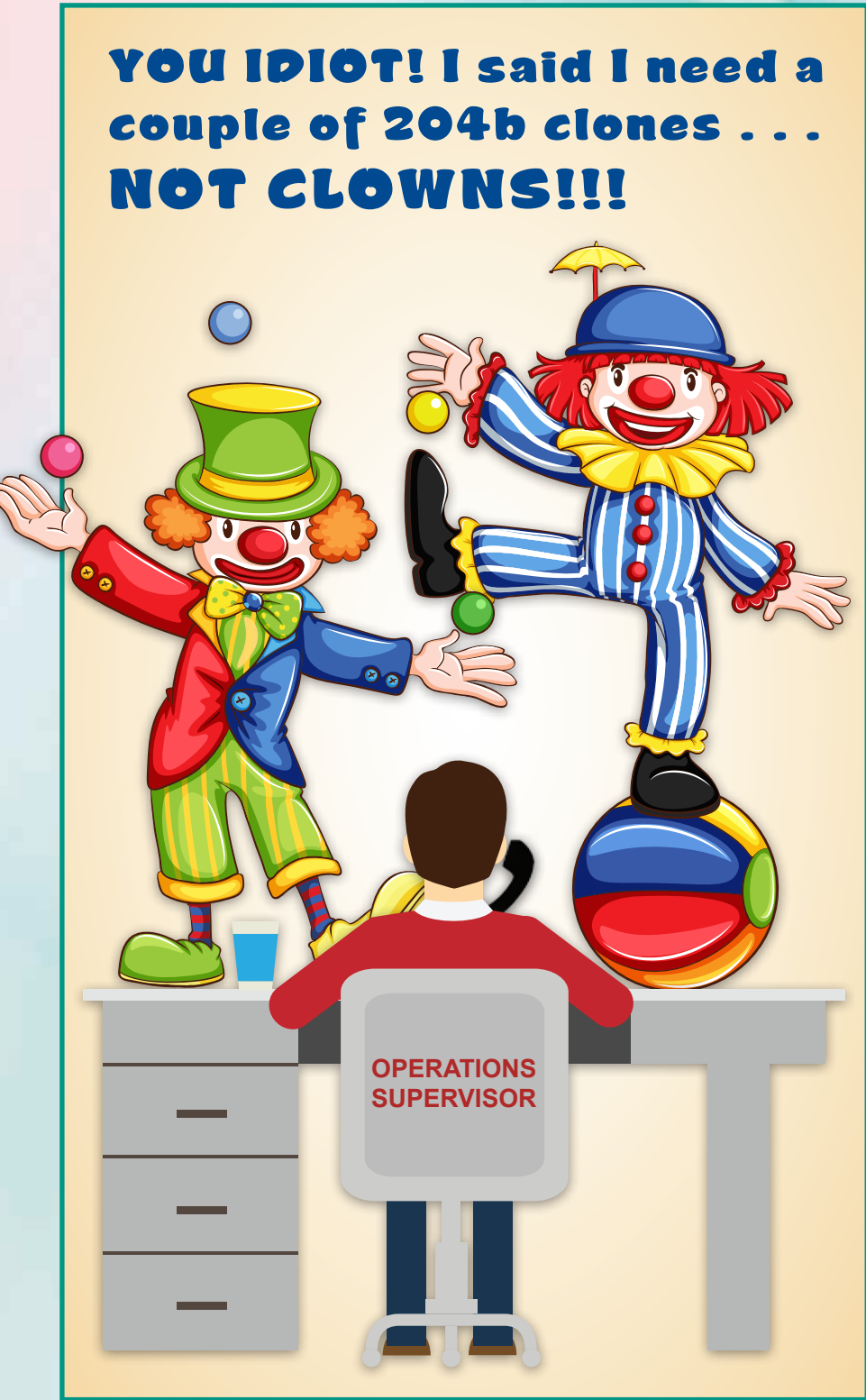
trouble sleeping, feel edgy or have upsetting memories of the event. If these symptoms last more than a couple of months you may have PTSD. In some cases the effects of PTSD may start long after the traumatic event, or come and go over time.

There are effective treatments for PTSD, from self-help to therapy. All VA

Medical Centers, and many VA clinics, provide PTSD care; some VA centers have specialty programs of PTSD. For additional information on PTSD and all the help and benefits available to veterans, please contact your local Veterans Administration office or check their website at [va.gov](http://va.gov). Thank you for your service!

# BEST CARTOON (Honorable Mention)

By Robert Dyer, Jr.,  
Editor  
Evergreen State Postal Worker  
Mountlake Terrace, Washington



— photos by Lance Coles



BEST EDITORIAL (First Place)

Point in time – fake news

By Mark Sarcone,  
Editor  
DMI News & Views  
Des Moines, Iowa

About 37 shiny objects ago – and counting, at the time I am writing this article, the U.S. President had the audacity to spend his time in the White House, the People’s House, conducting a “Fake News” award “ceremony.” I try to ignore what he says and pay more attention to what he does. However, this stunt, hit a nerve with this journalist/unionist/postal worker and I just cannot let it go without saying something. I would much rather spend newspaper space talking about more constructive things but when the President of the greatest democracy in the history of humanity attacks the First Amendment, I must speak up. To do otherwise would only make me complicit to this folly.

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution reads:

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion,

or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.”

By that logic, I fully accept that the U.S. President has every right, under the First Amendment, to conduct his “Fake News” award ceremony. American citizens have fought and died for that right and I’m not here to say he cannot conduct that.

However, when these awards are coming from the leader of the free world, one cannot help but wonder what is going on in this persons mind? How many world leaders in a free

restricted or under considerable threat – including Russia, China, Turkey, Libya, Poland, Hungary, Thailand, Somalia and others – political leaders have invoked “fake news” as justification for beating back media scrutiny.

To those who despise that “fake news” has become a cudgel for strong-men, it is shocking that the U.S. is lead by a President who subscribes to the same tactics. For the record, *The New York Times* won some of these “Fake News” awards.

Are mainstream news journalists perfect? No, of course not but I believe most strive to collect facts in a careful and meaningful way and present them as objectively as they possibly can.

Even a member of the President’s own party, Sen. Jeff Flake (R-AZ), called out the President on the floor of the Senate on January 17, 2018: Flake said: “Not only has the past year seen an American President borrow despotic language to refer to the free press, but it seems he has in turn inspired dictators and authoritarians with his own language. That is reprehensible.” Flake went on to say: “the enemy of the people was how the President of the United States called the free press in 2017. Mr. President, it is a testament to the condition of our democracy that our own President uses words infamously spoken by Joseph Stalin to describe his enemies. It bears noting that so fraught with malice was the phrase enemy of the people that even Nikita Khrushchev forbade its use telling the Soviet Communist Party that the phrase had been introduced by Stalin for the purpose of ‘annihilating such individuals’ who disagree with the Supreme Leader.”

One might say that Flake went too far in comparing the current president to Joseph Stalin and I’m not about to go down that rabbit hole but I believe the intent of his message is that the President of the United States is, above anyone else, supposed to be the torchbearer of freedom and *all* that is in the U.S. Constitution. When the president took the oath of office, he said the words: “I Donald John Trump, will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States.”

We can all disagree on policy. That’s what makes America the Great country it already is! However, when the leader of the free world, and his minions, continuously attack the free press and the constructs of the First Amendment, I have to seriously question his ability to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. Where do his loyalties *really* lie?

“Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter.”

— Thomas Jefferson



society actually attack the free press? How many want stricter libel laws to imprison more journalists? Granted, most Presidents have had a history of *disagreements* with the press but this President routinely invokes the phrase “fake news” as a means of discrediting anything reported in the mainstream media. The president has also called reporters “the enemy of the American People” and “a stain on America.” He once reportedly asked former FBI Commissioner James Comey for his loyalty and now he wants complete loyalty from all of the media. Otherwise, they are all “fake news.” So far, he has only been successful with the likes of Fox News, among others.

According to a December 2017 article in *The New York Times*, when Amnesty International released a report about prison deaths in Syria, the Syrian president, Bashar al-Assad, retorted that “we are living in a fake-news era.” President Nicolás Maduro of Venezuela, who is steadily rolling back democracy in his country, blamed the global media for “lots of false versions, lots of lies,” saying “this is what we call ‘fake news’ today.”

In Myanmar, where international observers accuse the military of conducting a genocidal campaign against the Rohingya Muslims, a security official told *The New York Times* that “there is no such thing as Rohingya,” adding: “It is fake news.” In Russia, a Foreign Ministry spokeswoman, Maria Zakharova, told a CNN reporter to “stop spreading lies and fake news.” Her ministry now uses a big red stamp, “FAKE,” on its website to label news stories it dislikes.

Around the world, authoritarians, populists and other political leaders have seized on the phrase “fake news” – and the legitimacy conferred upon it by an American president – as a tool for attacking their critics and, in some cases, deliberately undermining the institutions of democracy. In countries where press freedom is

BEST PHOTOGRAPH (First Place)

By John Greathouse,  
Editor  
The Pacer  
Lansing, Michigan





BEST FEATURE STORY (Honorable Mention)

FMLA and additional documentation

By Walt Luthy,  
Vice President  
First Class Worker  
Cincinnati, Ohio

A little more persistence, a little more effort, and what seemed hopeless failure may turn to glorious success.

—Elbert Hubbard

Management has falsely required many of our employees over the last several years to provide additional documentation for Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) unscheduled absences of three days or less if they take **paid leave**. That requirement couldn't be farther from the truth!

Unfortunately, many of our managerial counterparts have either turned a blind eye to the actual contractual and lawful requirements or are simply uneducated to the requirements.

There are 4 separate elements that form the APWU's contention that paid leave for an FMLA absence of 3 days or less does not require documentation in addition to the initial FMLA certification documentation.

First, Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 825 which lists the elements of the FMLA of 1993, at Part 825.207(a) establishes that "FMLA leave is unpaid leave. However, under the circumstances described in this section, FMLA permits eligible employees to choose to substitute accrued paid leave for FMLA leave . . . Employers may not discriminate against employees on FMLA leave in the administration of their paid leave policies."

So, Part 825.207 of the FMLA of 1993 establishes that paid leave can be substituted for unpaid FMLA if the employee chooses.

Part 825.220(a)(1) of the FMLA

of 1993 further establishes that "An employer is prohibited from interfering with, restraining, or denying the exercise of (or attempts to exercise) any rights provided by the Act."

The APWU strongly feels that when management requests additional documentation for an FMLA absence of 3 days or less, this does indeed violate an employee's right to use paid leave for such instances. This information is found not only under Part 825.207 of the FMLA of 1993, but also under ELM 513.361, page 68, bullet point 6 of the 2012 ELM and National Arbitration Q00C-4Q-C 03126482.

ELM 513.361 specifically states that when an employee requests sick leave for absences of 3 days or less "medical documentation or other acceptable evidence of incapacity for work or need to care for a family member is only required when an employee is on restricted sick leave (see 513.39) or when the supervisor deems documentation desirable for the protection of the interests of the Postal Service."

The above also applies to the use of annual leave for an unscheduled absence.

The key word under ELM 513.361 is **ONLY!**

In addition page 68 of the 2012 JCIM at bullet point 6 explicitly states "When FMLA certification has already been provided, employees are only required to provide documentation for FMLA

absences in excess of three days, when they are requesting paid leave. When the request is for leave without pay, there is no requirement for additional documentation."

Again, the key word in the above paragraph is **ONLY!**



What is essential to know about bullet point 6 on page 68 of the 2012 JCIM is that this language applies only to installations and facilities that utilize either/or the Resource Management Database (RMD) or Enterprise Resource Management System (ERMS). This accounts for over 99% of the installations and facilities in the country as well as ones represented by the Greater Cincinnati APWU; so the overwhelming majority (if not all) APWU employees represented by the Greater Cincinnati APWU fall under the guidelines as stipulated on page 68 under bullet point 6 of the 2012 JCIM.

Furthermore, this paragraph makes two very important distinctions:

1. That after requesting and being certified for FMLA protection, any time you incur an unscheduled FMLA ab-

sence under that certification for 3 days or less, you are not required to provide management additional documentation because you requested paid leave for that absence, nor are you required to follow the provisions of ELM 513.361.

2. When LWOP is taken instead of paid leave for an FMLA certified absence, management may **NOT**, no matter how many days the absence extends, require additional documentation. This can also be found at ELM 865.1.

Also, National Arbitration Q00C-4Q-C 03126482 also established two very important facts as ruled on by Arbitrator Shyam Das. In his ruling he validated two very important things in regards to employers requiring additional documentation for FMLA absences of 3 days or less when requesting paid leave

and employees who request more than 3 days of paid leave for FMLA certified absences:

1. Pursuant to part 513.361 of the ELM, when an employee requests sick leave for absences of 3 days or less, medical documentation or other acceptable evidence of incapacity for work or need to care for a family member is only required when an employee is on restricted sick leave (see 513.39) or when the supervisor deems documentation desirable for the protection of the interests of the Postal Service." A supervisor's determination that medical documentation or other acceptable evidence of incapacitation is desirable for the protection of the interest of the Postal Service must be made on a case by case basis and may not be arbitrary, capricious, or unreasonable.

BEST HEADLINE (Honorable Mention)

By Angela Johnson,  
Clerk Craft Director  
Voice & Views  
Jacksonville, Florida

Hokey Pokey with PSEs



photos by Lance Coles



BEST EDITORIAL (Honorable Mention)

Why in the hell do we vote against ourselves?

By Shirley Jean Taylor,  
APWU National Business Agent  
Unionizer  
Walnut Creek, California

We are Union! We do not lay down! We stand up and organize! Our government was founded on checks and balances and in today’s society, it seems as if Labor has to be who supplies the will to perform this task.

We must build a multifarious coalition to save the social conscience of democracy.

What we seem to forget is that we all have passed this way before. For instance, all people considered “white” today, were not included in that category, not that long ago. A review of our history, finds the following nauseous information: “Irish need not apply”, “Italians need not apply”, “Polish need not apply”, “Jews need not apply”.

What I have never understood, is why anyone ever discriminated against because of their race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age or marital status, would not jump in and fight to keep others from suffering the indignities they suffered. Why are we so happy and eager to have someone to look down on? Why do we deter-

mine our worth based upon someone else’s flawed opinion of us? I suppose that everyone wants to be loved, but if receiving said “love” requires that we forgo our humanity, is it really worth anything?

We have to join the fight, because if we don’t, we are going down for the count. We have to call these people out when they cage our children, when they separate juveniles from their families, when they move children with no intent to reunite them with their families, and when they do these despicable actions against the least of us.

How do we navigate the daily drama? How do we swim through the emotional bullshit? We cannot be blind and unconcerned to what happens around us. We are not an island unto ourselves. What we do in our daily lives has an effect on others.

We Have To Vote!

We have to vote because policies and laws are put in place by those in power. There are no reserved seats at the tables of power; we have to take what we can, and hold on to what we have gained.

We organize. It is a family matter – it is a moral matter. We build a unity coalition. We give a damn. We take it to

the street! We march. We fight. We do not surrender!

We reach into our communities and educate, and not just when we need something. We will not have a democracy if we continue to diminish the needed education of our people. We fight for the children, and we must resist the dumbing down of our children’s education and the wholesale theft of the public education system. If you are a grandparent, you may think that education concerns have passed you by, but if we do not pay attention now, in the future you will have to put bars around your houses to be safe as the prisons will not be sufficient to keep you from harm. Desperate people unfortunately do desperate things. Without adequate education, we will fall for anything and believe those who tell us not to believe, hear, or see what we witness with our own damn eyes and ears.

We must raise up and take a place in our Union and continue the struggle. We have to communicate with and challenge our members. If we stop talking to our members, our members will stop talking to us. (Save the date – October 8, 2018).

In 2017, we lost our unity and quite frankly, lost our minds. We let others define who we are. Labor allowed our opposition to use our differences to separate us. We now have to get off our collective behinds and get to work. When we gain knowledge, we cannot keep it to ourselves; we must convert this knowledge into energy and action.

WE MUST ORGANIZE AND EXECUTE!

Labor has power. This is why anti-

labor forces pushed until they got “Janus” before the Supreme Court. They know that labor unions are one of the last remaining lines of defense for working families. They seek to weaken our power. They consistently chip away at the right to vote because while they have the money, we have the numbers!

If you know someone who works with you and they are not a member of our great Union, please talk to them and ask them to join you in the fight to gain the dignity and respect which must be afforded the workers who keep this nation moving toward the more perfect union, which she must never stop striving to achieve.

Folks always say, who you vote for is your own business and it is, but why in the world would someone vote against their own interests? Do not be swayed by wedge issues (football?). The questions asked should be: Can I feed, clothe, provide health care, have a decent retirement benefit, and provide shelter for my family on the wages I receive for my honest labor? Are the policies being enacted benefiting my community? Is the water we drink or the air we breathe making my family and community ill? It should not only have to be something in it for you alone.

Stop asking what someone else is going to do and start asking what you are going to do.

So yes, it is my same old song (smile): VOTE, VOTE, VOTE as if your life depends on doing so, because it really, really does. AND REMEMBER . . . GIVE TO APWU COPA! (Try payroll deduction).

The struggle continues.

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BEST CARTOON (First Place)

By John Greathouse,  
Editor  
Michigan Messenger  
Lansing, Michigan

