

# Postal Newsletter

## Press

AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION

NATIONAL POSTAL PRESS ASSOCIATION

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## Editors: Keeping the membership informed

By Tony Carobine, President

Everything we do in our every day lives involves communication. From the moment we step out of bed, until our day ends (whatever time that may be) we employ communication in our lives. Whether it's picking

up a mainstream media newspaper, turning on the television to watch the news, logging onto the internet, or social media; we rely on communication to find out what's going on in the world. We also depend on communication to interact with family, friends, and co-workers.

portunity for the editor to learn more about communication thus enabling him or her to better serve the membership.

The editor is the messenger of the union. With communication being such an important and controlling part of our lives, support for the editor and support for the union publication should be among the first and foremost items a union considers. This is especially true in these challenging times; the need to communicate is even greater.

It's difficult to understand the logic of not sending the union into the homes of members through a newsletter because it "costs too much." While each organization is responsible for spending their funds as they choose, it would seem that the last place for reductions should be the one vehicle that

serves each and every member – the union publication.

By cutting off the link of communication with the membership, especially with the many serious issues facing postal workers, we reduce the union's strength along with our chances and opportunities to defeat these challenges. Reducing the union's visibility will also work to disconnect members from their union and in some instances, may eventually leave them wondering if they should retain their membership.

Without the membership being well informed, without a form of communication to provide direction, we are not fulfilling the responsibility we have to protect the livelihood of our members. If anything, our efforts to communicate should be increased; for if we are going to succeed our members need to be informed.

Great emphasis is placed on educating union officers about contract administration, and rightfully so. However, it's equally important to educate our editors on ways to improve their communication skills. It's also imperative that we all recognize the vital role that editors perform by keeping the members informed.

After all, editors are the messengers of an important institution, an institution that is responsible for the livelihood of postal workers – our union!

*"As union leaders we have the responsibility of looking out for the welfare of the members we serve. It is therefore incumbent upon us to do everything in our power to inform the membership about matters that affect them."*

The job of an editor is quite an important and demanding one. Editors that make up the PPA's communications network continually strive to perform their duties in a sincere effort to inform and communicate information to the membership.

**Attend the 2015 Biennial PPA Conference!**  
**August 20-22, Madison, Wisconsin**

(Pre-conference session August 19)

See pages 4-5 for more information  
and on the PPA website: [www.apwupostalpress.org](http://www.apwupostalpress.org)

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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.**



# Awards to be presented

First place and honorable mention awards in 15 categories will be presented at an awards banquet on Saturday, August 22 in Madison, Wisconsin at the conclusion of the 2015 PPA Conference.

Serving on the 2015 PPA Awards Committee are Chairperson Jenny Gust, editor, *Ohio Postal Worker* and *Black Swamp Outrider*, Toledo, Ohio; Loren Adams, editor, *Arkansas Postal Worker* and *Razorback Scheme*, Fayetteville, Arkansas; Phillip Breunig, editor, *Tour's End*, Gainesville, Florida; Valerie Schropp, editor, *Redwood Empire Area Local News*, Santa Rosa, California; John Stevens, editor, *Nevada State APWU*, Reno, Nevada.

With the exception of the website category, the awards committee has the responsibility of independently reviewing and rating each entry using a point system. The results will be tabulated to determine the top eight finalists in each category. A judge from outside the Postal Press Association

and APWU will then review the finalist entries and select the award recipients. All website entries will be sent directly to the outside judge for review and final selections.

Originally called the Biennial Award of Merit Program, it was established at the August 1967 conference in Cleveland, Ohio. The purpose of instituting an awards program was to recognize Association editors for outstanding work in editing, publishing and writing. The first awards were presented at the 1968 conference in Minneapolis,

Minnesota. Over the years, the awards program has been modified several times to reflect changes in technology and production methods.

Awards Program rules and entry form were previously mailed to editor members. A duplicate copy of this material is available on the PPA website [www.apwupostalpress.org](http://www.apwupostalpress.org). Deadline for receipt of entries is Monday, May 18.



# Weapons of mass instruction

**By Hank Greenberg, Honorary Member PPA Advisory Council**

One of the activities I miss most is the PPA conference. If you have attended in the past you know what I mean and if you have never attended, you don't know what you're missing.

New editors will find the classes to be the single most important opportunity to get a jump start on making your local or state publication a more professional vehicle of information and education for your members. If you already have a few years under your belt as editor, you will **always** learn new information, new ideas and at

the same time have an opportunity to renew old friendships and make new ones.

PPA President Tony Carobine always manages to bring together a group of talented instructors who present a well-rounded educational program; the kind of program you will not find anywhere else. I have attended many journalism classes in the public sector and the private sector and have **never** found a better program than the one presented at the PPA conference.

These classes are "**weapons of mass instruction**" that will make you a better editor. I sincerely believe this and after you attend I think you will agree too.

# Election committee formed

Members of the 2015 PPA Election Committee were recently appointed. Serving as chairperson is John Durben, editor, *Badger Bulletin*, Cecil, Wisconsin. The committee is responsible for

conducting the PPA election of officers.

Other committee members include: Zanetta Davis, editor, *Vindicator*, Columbus, Ohio and Jim Gabe, editor, *The Spectrum*, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

# Education – participation: Your postal insanity deterrent

By Edward J. Brennan,  
Secretary-Treasurer

In the course of reviewing recent newsletters I have noticed an ever-increasing number of new union officers and vacant union officer positions. Much of this is being caused by a nationwide affliction that seems to be immune to past remedies such as common sense and working together to wipe out postal insanity.

Staffing is being cut in postal installations and employees are being uprooted and moved from one place to another along with the mail. The sanctity and protection of the mail is being jeopardized by moving the mail out of postal installations to private business where it is being handled by non-postal employees and the protections afforded in regular postal buildings are nowhere to be found.

Regular postal units are being downsized and postal workers are finding themselves without union representatives, in house and large areas of states without mail processing facilities, and lower mail delivery standards.

Postal facilities losing members are finding themselves also losing their local union representation and gaining facilities are finding themselves in need of addi-

tional officers and new methods of holding and representing their members. Past officers are going into retirement and new employees are entering the postal service.

New employees tend to be totally devoid of union knowledge or experience. Thus they do not rush to join unions or run for union office. Lack of knowledge about the importance of a united workforce and standing together with our brothers and sisters is growing because of the ever-increasing anti-worker attitude of present day postal management.

In a non-convention year how is the APWU in a gaining facility going to be able to ensure continuity of the education and representation of the members in that unit and others connected to it? How do we educate our members? How do we keep them informed in a continuing way? How do we inform them of their benefits and obligations? What is the glue that will bind the workers together and ensure an informed and dedicated workforce?

The answer to that question is education through a constant flow of information from national and local union officers to the membership and back to the officers. And, the best long proven method of doing this is through the creation and fre-

quent issuance of local, state and national newsletters. Trained and educated officers and members add up to higher performance and lower costs for local, state and even national union operations. And non-convention years provide the best opportunity for this training.

This year in particular, with the spread of postal insanity, is the best opportunity

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*“Present and future newsletter editors and state and local officers will come together from August 19-22 for a communications training session conducted by some of the most outstanding labor union educators in the labor union movement.”*

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to educate our officers and membership. This is the year of the APWU National Postal Press Association Biennial Conference in Madison, Wisconsin in August. Present and future newsletter editors and state and local officers will come together from August 19-22 for a communications training session conducted by some of the most outstanding labor union educators in the labor union movement.

Local editors, officers and future editors are urged to attend this meeting geared to fill their every educational need. And, we are finding more and more local and state presidents coming with them so that, they too, can learn about legal and other aspects of union communications in order to build a more educated and informed membership.

Inoculate yourself against the spread of postal insanity. Set up a communications network in your local or state organization or find out how to improve the one you already have. An informed local and state membership is the best remedy to confront postal insanity. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Pick up your ounce in Madison. See you there.

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## Ensuring readership

Whatever editors may do, they must above all else communicate . . . and communication is not simply issuing information. Communication implies someone on the receiving end as well as the sending.

This means that editors must make sure their newsletters are read, and, being read, that they have said what they meant them to say!

There are various devices to ensure readership. If one device doesn't work, perhaps another will.

What made you reach for a particular magazine the last time you were in the doctor's office? Why that special one? It could have been a pleasing cover, of course, which made you feel that this was your

kind of magazine, or it could have been a headline that piqued your interest.

Appearance is important. An attractive-looking publication invites readership.

A headline tells enough – but not too much – to snare the reader into pursuing the matter further. Think back to the last time your eye strayed over a newspaper page. You looked at the headlines, didn't you, to decide what you were going to read?

Or perhaps a reader will select reading material according to the by line, or name of the writer who did the piece. Local union editors, it is true, will have a limited field from which to garner names that make their readers want to read the newsletter, but they must never overlook possibilities.

# Plans set for August Biennial PPA

Plans are set for the 2015 biennial conference of the American Postal Workers Union National Postal Press Association. Established in 1967, this event is part of the PPA's mission; helping communicators fulfill their responsibilities of informing and energizing the membership of our great union. This year's event will be held on August 20-22 in Madison, Wisconsin with a full day of pre-conference workshops on Wednesday, August 19.

The intensive four-day program consists of eleven workshops that will be helpful to all who attend; from novice to experienced, to local or state organizations interested in establishing or enhancing a communications program for its membership. Also featured will be two general sessions, along with four networking events.

Faced with a variety of issues affecting our livelihood, these are indeed trying times for postal workers. As a means to confront these challenges, it is especially important to have an active, supportive and united membership.

How can this be accomplished? We should consider the value of maintaining a presence with our members and in our communities by the regular use of effective

communication mediums; such as newsletters, social media and by communicating through public forums as well.

The PPA conference is an opportunity to learn more about communicating – a valuable activity that can influence not only the membership but also everyone the union needs to reach in order to promote and protect the interests of union members and their families.

The conference will be held at The Madison Concourse Hotel in Madison, Wisconsin. A guestroom rate of \$134.00 per day single or double occupancy will be in effect throughout the conference, in addition to three days before and three days after the actual meeting dates. Current tax rate is 14.5%. For more information about The Madison Concourse Hotel or to make room reservations, please visit the PPA website, [www.apwupostalpress.org](http://www.apwupostalpress.org) or call hotel reservations at 1-800-356-8293. A conference registration form is also available on the website.

The conference registration fee for PPA members is \$160, non-PPA members \$225 and includes workshops, dinner, refreshment breaks, and Awards Banquet.

## Pre-conference workshops Wednesday, August 19

### Communicating to Win: Case Studies of Effective Communication in Recent Struggles and Victories

How are workers still winning against the odds, sometimes in the face of daunting challenges? This workshop will introduce selected case studies of recent struggles in which unions used highly effective internal and external communication strategies to help achieve bargaining goals or key policy changes. We will analyze real examples from contract and issue campaigns and ask what lessons we can learn and apply to our own contexts.

### APWU – A Historical Perspective; Coping with Stress

How did the American Postal Workers Union come into existence? What was

achieved because of the postal strike of 1970? *APWU – A Historical Perspective* will address these questions and many more interesting events involving the history of the American Postal Workers Union and its predecessor unions. This session will conclude with a presentation on the subject of stress and how to successfully deal with it.

## Legal Issues, Your Responsibilities

Can you be sued if you don't name an individual? Is it illegal to reprint material from a commercial source without permission? Is it a violation of election law to advocate the election of candidates for union office? What is the value of establishing an Editorial Policy? *Legal Issues, Your Responsibilities* will address these questions and others with a presentation on the subjects of libel, copyright, union elections, and editorial policies.

## Conference workshops Thursday, August 20 – Saturday, August 22

### Influencing Public Support: Developing a Strategy for Getting your Message Out (Thursday only)

This interactive session will examine the importance of establishing a working relationship with the mainstream media and techniques for generating public support as a means to protect and enhance a vibrant public postal service. Presented will be communication techniques for developing and executing a plan that will boost your media relations efforts and influence public support.

### Newsletter Production: Giving Your Paper a Makeover

The emphasis of this workshop will be to examine and evaluate overall design of your publication from nameplate to mailing block and everything in between. This unique design seminar will stimulate your creative skills and help you reinvent a pub-

## Friday Night at the Movies

Networking is an important part of every conference. For conference attendees who like to continue stimulating discussion into the evening hours this event is for you. At this session you will be invited to pull up a chair, grab a snack and watch the film **Inequality For All**, a documentary examining the massive consolidation of wealth by a precious few and how it threatens the viability of the American workforce and the foundation of democracy itself. The film will be followed by a discussion about the movie's subject matter.

# Conference in Madison, Wisconsin

lication that your members notice. Through a publication review you'll be able to see and discuss successful new designs for various types of publications. **(Note: Participants should bring a copy of their publication to this workshop.)**

## Communications for Member Involvement and Union Building

In today's multi-media environment, union editors have the opportunity to make their publications the centerpiece of a strategic communications system that builds a stronger union. This highly interactive workshop will walk through the steps of assessing your local's communications needs and capacity, analyzing what messages and media best motivate members, considering pros and cons of print, electronic, and face-to-face formats, developing a distribution/communications network that reaches all members, and integrating the newsletter into an overall communications plan.

## Illustrate Like a Pro: A Cartoon Collage Workshop

In addition to the written word, cartoons are an important communications tool and another way to deliver a message. Join cartoonist Mike Konopacki in this interactive, hands-on session and explore the deep dark secrets of political cartooning. You will brainstorm ideas relevant to your workplace and learn how to use readily available material to transform those ideas into cartoon collages that demand attention. Learn to think like a cartoonist without having to draw like one.

## Using Electronic Communication to Boost Your Message

To tweet or not to tweet? That is the question – indeed one of many questions – that union communicators face today. This fast-paced workshop will examine when and how electronic communication can broaden the reach of your print publication and reinforce important messages, as well as how to recognize situations where electronic communication might not be the right choice. Then we'll delve into “dos and don'ts” of member communication via e-mail, mass text, and social media plat-

forms, and tips for establishing or improving your local union's on-line presence.

## Learning from the Past to Conquer the Challenges of Today

This workshop will explore the relevance of labor history to today's labor movement. By examining how our predecessors built and maintained effective unions, we can learn what strategies and tactics might be currently useful. As the labor movement increasingly becomes comprised of a new generation of members, it's important to pass on the lessons that the founders of our unions learned so well themselves. This session will help communicators educate their readers about the purpose of unions, inspire them to increase their involvement and encourage them to face up to the issues of today.

## News, Headline, and Feature Writing: Reaching Members with Messages that Matter

Give your readers news they can use, features about people they know and stories on issues they care about. This valuable hands-on workshop will examine why we put local news and features in our publications and how they build credibility, readership, and member engagement. Through a host of exercises you will learn how to write timely, relevant news stories, eye-catching headlines, and high-interest features that help members connect their experiences to union priorities.

## Photojournalism, Creating Irresistible Photos

Even more compelling than the adage, “People like to read about people, themselves first and others second” is the fact that people like to look at people and other visual images. The focus of this gathering will be the benefits of including the membership and activities of the union in your publication and website through the art of photojournalism. A portion of this session will include a “field trip” whereby participants will take photos for a classroom critique. Also discussed will be the rules of editing photographs with computer programs.

## Conference Schedule

Following is a condensed timetable of conference meetings and activities. A complete schedule of events is available on the PPA website, [www.apwupostalpress.org](http://www.apwupostalpress.org).

### Wednesday, August 19

7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.  
Registration  
9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
Pre-conference session  
6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.  
Reception  
(Dinner from 6:30 – 8:00)

### Thursday, August 20

7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.  
Registration  
9:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.  
General Session  
11:00 a.m. – 4:15 p.m.  
Workshops

### Friday, August 21

8:30 a.m. – 5:15 p.m.  
Workshops  
7:00 p.m.  
Friday Night at the Movies

### Saturday, August 22

8:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.  
Workshops  
1:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.  
General Session  
5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.  
Reception  
6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.  
Awards Banquet  
7:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.  
Award presentations/Installation of officers

# Sit down and write – prepare for the coming conflicts

By Lance Coles, Editor-at-Large

As the APWU negotiates at the bargaining table, the workers need to do their share in the community.

President Dimondstein has asked locals and members to help educate our communities about the importance and impact this contract will have on their postal service.

An easy way to help out with this is to write letters to the editor or some form of public input with local media.

Some media outlets have a format where you can write in short comments, usually anonymous. In the *Des Moines Register* it is called “Two cents worth.” This is a great place to make a short, to the point comment about the importance of saving the USPS. Some TV and radio outlets have a similar venue where you can send in a comment or “tweet” on in. Take advantage of these, they are easy and free.

Writing a letter to the editor is easier than you might think. You are not writing a dissertation or an essay – you need to write short and to the point.

Usually letters to the editor are in the

100 word range. This may seem like a lot, but it really is not; usually no more than four paragraphs.

Here are some suggestions on how to write your letter to the editor:

Stay away from personal attacks and name calling. Don't attack management, postmasters or Congress.

Keep it local if you can. Don't use jargon, abbreviations or technical language.

Start your letter off with a strong sentence, something that will grab the reader's attention. Follow up with the body where you support your opinion(s). Keep it simple, to the point, and don't repeat the same points. Close it with a summation of your thoughts.

Most newspapers now ask that you submit your letter electronically. You can send it in the mail, but you will have a better chance of getting printed if you follow instructions on their OP/Ed – submitting letters to the editor web page.

You can send your letter to more than one area newspaper, in fact you should.

Don't be surprised if the paper edits your letter. They usually do not alter the intent, but may reduce the size.

Some ideas for content can be: Dismantling the USPS doesn't just harm workers; it robs people of speedy delivery, service and has an economic impact on the community. The USPS is the most liked of all federal agencies; the USPS is making money, but has an unreasonable burden with a law Congress passed; the sanctity and security of mail will be compromised if the USPS goes private.

Remember there is limited space in the newspaper, and chances are your letter won't always get published – keep writing them and sending them in. The more you write, the better your chances they will print it.

The future of the post office and APWU are in your hands – send those letters now!

## Are YOU going to enter?

By Jenny L. Gust, Editor-at-Large

I was wondering if you are going to enter the 2015 PPA Awards? If not, why not? The rules have been mailed to all editor members. I would hope that you would take the time to look them over. I also hope you will give some consideration to entering your publication. Why? It's just like the lottery – you can't win if you don't play! If you think it is too much work to enter, I am here to tell you it isn't.

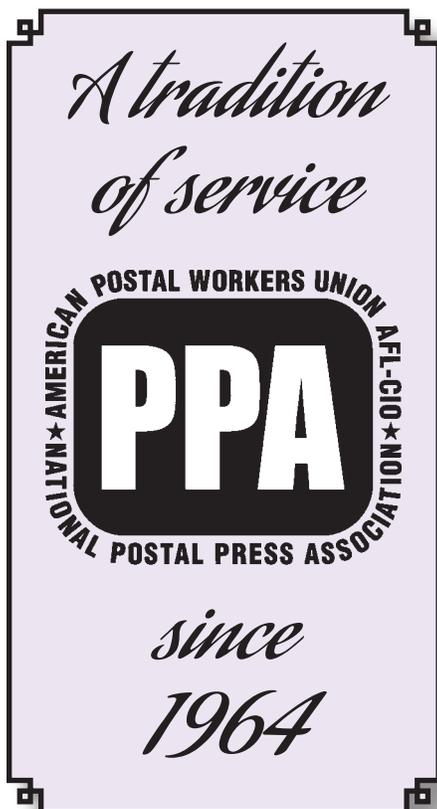
First, read over the instructions carefully. Go into your files and take out one copy of each issue that you are allowed to enter going by the dates given in the rules. Take a good look at each issue. Look for a good editorial, a feature story, a headline, etc. If you need help in determining what type of article you have – check the guidelines for judging. Go through each of the entries allowed. There are nine Journalism categories. You might surprise yourself and find more than you thought. Or maybe you only find one article that you think is worthy. So be it. That one article could be a winner. Then, there is the Overall Excellence Award. Just look for your best issue.

If you are a new editor there is the Hank Greenberg Award.

Remember you can enter every category if you want or you can just enter one. But you can only enter each one once – don't send two photos, two news stories, etc. You have to be selective and pick what you think is the best. That is what the awards are all about – the best. There is no reason for you not to enter. It does not matter if your paper is two pages or 12 pages. It doesn't matter how it is printed – we have three categories for that. It doesn't matter how large or small your local/state is. A two page paper can have a great photo or headline just as easily as a 12 page paper.

One last thing to keep in mind – meet the deadline of Monday, May 18! With the delivery standards now changed you must mail your entries in a timely manner to assure they will reach the chairperson in time. Don't wait until the last minute.

I look forward to serving as chairperson of the awards committee and I hope everyone will enter the awards! Come on – you know you would love to win!



# Writing: Consider your audience

Always remember when writing on any topic that your goal is to make it easy and enjoyable for your readers to understand. To do that you must put yourself in their position. What are they interested in? What do they want to learn more about? What knowledge do they already have? Your first sentences must catch their attention and tell them what reading this story or article will do for them.

The words used in the story and the logical sequence of thoughts have a lot to do with how easy it is to understand. In school, we may have been taught to use long or complex words, technical explanations, and extensive footnotes when writing essays. In organizational communication it is almost the opposite. We must know all about the topic. Then our task is to pick out

the most important facts and present them in simplest possible terms.

- Start with an outline.

What do you want to say? What order makes the most sense?

- Write as you speak.

Be as simple and direct as you would in conversation. Never use a long word when a short one will do. Don't worry about repeating a word if it is the only right word.

- Keep sentences short.

Try an average of 15 to 20 words per sentence.

Studies have shown that ease of understanding is related both to sentence length and word length.

- Stick to the subject.

If you find you are wandering, go back and rewrite. Sometimes the order can be

improved. Occasionally you may find your final paragraph should be your lead.

- Weed out unnecessary words. Don't use several when one word will do.

- Write in the active voice.

It is more effective to write, "A work accident injured two members," than "two members were injured in a work accident."

Avoid the passive form. Try writing a story without using any forms of the verb "to be." It's hard work and forces you to identify the sources of the actions. When you write this way, you can see how active verbs propel the movement of the story.

- Use direct quotes.

They provide color, pace, and emphasis.

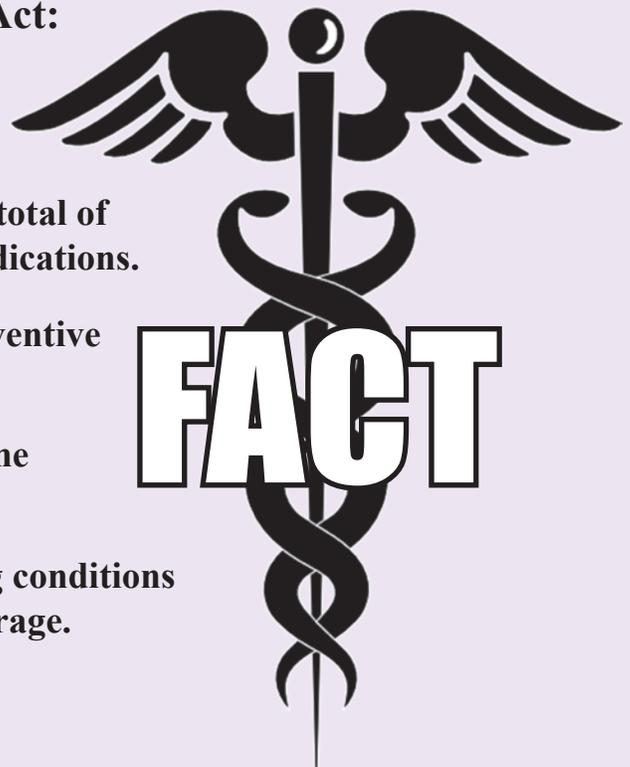
- Above all, respect your readers. They are an intelligent group.

## Affordable Care Act five years later

On March 23, 2010, President Obama signed a historic law that has transformed the lives of millions of Americans. The Affordable Care Act recently commemorated five years of significant progress. That's a fact that people across the country can see in more affordable coverage, higher quality care, and better health, thanks to Obamacare.

### After five years of the Affordable Care Act:

- More than 16 million Americans have gained health coverage.
- 9.4 million people with Medicare saved a total of more than \$15 billion on prescription medications.
- 76 million people are benefiting from preventive care coverage.
- 105 million people no longer have a lifetime limit on their health coverage.
- Up to 129 million people with pre-existing conditions are no longer at risk of being denied coverage.
- Zero "Death Panels" were created.



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# Evaluate your own publication

## Appearance

Does your publication have a pleasing appearance?

Does layout make reading inviting and easy?

Is nameplate (logo) distinctive and discreet in size?

Is paper stock suitable for publication?

Are columns wide enough and uniform throughout?

Is typeface attractive and readable in size and family?

Do you stick to one or two type families throughout?

Is there contrast between black heads and gray text?

Do you avoid color on headlines and captions?

Are facing pages (spreads) laid out as a unit?

Do you use white space effectively, not as “holes”?

Do you avoid tight crowded pages?

## Content

Do you plan each issue in advance?

Do you plan several issues ahead?

Do you strive for editorial balance in each issue over the year?

Do you present material in order of importance?

Do you pace material (serious, light; long, short)?

Do you have at least one major story per issue?

Do you review each issue to see if you are meeting objectives?

Do you conduct surveys to determine reader reaction?

Do you report results from surveys to readers?

Do you make changes based on survey results?

Do you sometimes include negative or controversial news?

## Writing

Do you vary writing styles (non-fiction, fiction, editorials)?

Do you organize thoughts before writing?

Do you research each story carefully and pick best data?

Do you avoid pompous, heavy-handed propaganda?

Do you write clearly so that ideas are comprehensible?

Do you write naturally, avoiding jargon or lingo?

Do you write interestingly, luring the reader through the story?

Do you illustrate ideas with examples, anecdotes?

Do you indicate significance of story to your reader?

Do you use simple words instead of fancy ones?

Do you avoid generalizations and cite specifics?

Do you write more short than long sen-

tences, usually one idea per sentence?

Do you lure readers through a story by revealing facts slowly?

Is there good transition from last and first sentences of paragraphs?

Do you end a story with a good closing sentence or paragraph?

Are your facts and details right?

Do you break up lengthy copy with subheads, layout, and photos?

Do you include background material to give readers perspective?

Do you occasionally update a story from a previous issue?

Does your publication appear consistently on time?

Is material timely, up to date?

Do you offer readers a change of pace (special issue, new look)?

## Headlines

Do you write headlines carefully for maximum impact?

Do you write short, punchy heads of two or three lines each?

Do you avoid passive voice and use strong nouns and active verbs?

Do you avoid headlines that are only titles (e.g., President's Report)?

Do headlines lure readers into story without giving it away?

Do you vary headline width (one, two or more columns)?

Does a major story have the largest and strongest head?