



PPA award recipients



Proudly displaying 2013 PPA Awards after the Awards Banquet at the PPA Biennial Conference in Madison, Wisconsin are (seated from left to right) Lance Coles, editor, *Iowa Postal Worker* (representing Janice Gillespie, Chris Salinas, Robin Arnold & Christine Sarcone); Jim Gabe, editor, *The Spectrum*; Angela Johnson, editor, *Voice & Views* (representing Doris Orr-Richardson); Louise Balog, editor, *The Newsroom*; Deanne Tesone, associate editor, *The Mountaineer*; Beth Morrison, editor, *The Advocate*; Diane North, editor *Coastal Breeze & Florida Postal Worker* (also representing Jeff Pearlman); Standing from left to right: John Greathouse, editor, *The Pacer*; John Miceli, editor, *The Hi-Lites* (also representing Bob Wood); Robert Dyer Jr., editor, *Evergreen State Postal Worker*; PPA President Tony Carobine; APWU President Cliff Guffey; Paul Felton, editor, *480-481 Communicator*; Dana Slocum, editor, *Miami Postal Labor News*; Dominic Corso, associate editor, *The Dispatcher*; John Durben, editor, *The Badger Bulletin*.

The Postal Press Association Awards Program was established 46 years ago 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 the following editors: Jenny Gust, (chairperson) editor, *Ohio Postal Worker* and *Black Swamp Outrider*, Toledo, Ohio; Ray Holland, editor *The Alabama Flash* and *The Union Voice*, Falkville, Alabama; Christine

Nellman, editor, *Postmark*, Stockton, California; Larry Sorrells, editor, *Tarheel Postal Worker*, Asheville, North Carolina; and Jacque Childs, editor, *Flash Report*, Madison, Wisconsin. The outside judge was Shawn Ellis, Central Region Training Coordinator, International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

See page 3 for a complete list of award recipients.

BEST EDITORIAL (First Place)

Do not let our boat sink

By Janice Gillespie, Member
DMI News & Views
Des Moines, Iowa

The post office is an ever-changing entity. Everyone is over-burdened, now more than ever, with the retirement incentive taking our most knowledgeable and experienced people and bids not being replaced. What as clerks can we do? What should we not do?

Management is stressed. Supervisors have more work with less staff and near impossible expectations from higher-ups.

Coveted day bids with weekends off are becoming extinct and veteran clerks are struggling with split days off and increased workloads. The stations are running with skeleton crews who are pushed to the limit. We have long lines on the windows, customer complaints going unresolved, phones going unanswered, curtailed mail, mistakes made from employees hurried too fast for accuracy or under-trained new employees. Everyone, for good reason, is getting more disgruntled, fed-up, bad-

each other, even if you don't. Talk to everyone with respect, the way you want to be spoken to. You know, like adults.

In the event that another clerk is being mistreated by a customer, by all means, have their back. Know what to do. We depend on each other. I cringe when I hear stories of clerks belittling or laughing at or cutting down other clerks or just flat out refusing to help them. Does every window clerk know as much as the next? No. Does every window clerk have as much experi-

well decide to abolish a bid. Will they look at the fact that the parcel operation has fewer hours than work? Probably not. Clock rings are also useful to the union stewards when filing grievances. I know it is a pain to run to the time clock each and every time you move to a different area, but try to get into the habit. You can also use a PS form 1260. These are especially useful when you have forgotten to move. Keep in mind to check periodically to make sure management is actually inputting your cards. I've

“What should we not do? Do not take our frustration out on each other. We are all in the same boat; a seemingly sinking boat, none-the-less.”

APWU National Postal Press Association

P.O. Box 888
Iron Mountain, MI 49801
Phone/Fax: 906-774-9599

E-mail: ppa@apwupostalpress.org
Website: www.apwupostalpress.org

Advisory Council

Tony Carobine, President
P.O. Box 888
Iron Mountain, MI 49801

Edward Brennan
Secretary-Treasurer
P.O. Box 451
St. Charles, MO 63302

Jenny Gust
Editor-at-Large
30630 Drouillard Road, #76
Walbridge, OH 43465

Lance Coles
Editor-at-Large
P.O. Box 539
Des Moines, IA 50302

Cathy Hanson
Editor-at-Large
1234 4th Street NE
Minneapolis, MN 55413

Frank Antinone
Editor-at-Large
P.O. Box 443
Youngstown, OH 44501

Hank Greenberg
Honorary Member
2800 Black Oak Drive
Rocklin, CA 95765

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tempered, irritated, vexed, cranky, disappointed, and critical. Need I go on? OK. Crabby, disillusioned, peeved – just plain pissed off.

What should we not do? Do not take our frustrations out on each other. We are all in the same boat; a seemingly sinking boat, but the same boat, none-the-less. Fighting with each other is not going to do anything other than cause us to sink faster. That is not our goal. It is not your coworker's fault that there is no coverage if he or she takes a sick day, or two or three or ten, or uses annual leave, or that there is more work than people to do it even on "fully staffed" days. It is not up to you to time their productivity, judge their knowledge, or for that matter to monitor their breaks. Doing this is only going to cause more distress. If you need to vent, and we all do at one time or another, take your boss aside and complain about your working conditions, the lack of help or time, whatever. Do not try to place blame on fellow co-workers – management does that quite well on their own. Staffing is their responsibility. Of course, keep in mind that which we all know – management has the right to mismanage and miss-staff. We can still gripe to them. That's who should be hearing our complaints.

We also should never, ever take our resentment out on our customers. Their business pays our salaries. They are not to blame for our problems. We want our customers. They are our guests. We need our customers. We want them happy. We want their needs met. We want them to return. It is paramount that we put a good face on when interacting with our patrons, for their sake and ours. This includes the way we treat each other at the window. We should never put a co-worker down or ridicule them at the window. Of course, we should never do this anywhere, but especially not at the window. For most of us, treating each other with respect is a given, but unfortunately some need to be reminded. Help each other out. Helping each other helps our customers. If they need assistance with a transaction, help them. Act like you like

ence as the next? No. Does every window clerk retain information as fast as the next? No. Does every window clerk even want to be on the window? No. Management caused this by eliminating so many other day bids. Are we all still in that same boat? Yes. I especially get upset when I hear of other lead SSAs refusing to help their clerks or talking down to them. If you have chosen to be a lead, then know your job and lead by example. Share your knowledge and experience.

For everyone, front and back, do not "kill" yourselves trying to get everything done. You will only wear yourself down and eventually hurt yourself. Take your allotted breaks. You are entitled to them. Everyone is. Don't work through them and then expect others to do the same. It has been proven that by taking periodic rest periods a person is better able to do quality work. Lumping your breaks and lunches all together at the end of your shift totally defeats the purpose of having them in the first place. You are doing no one, including yourself, any favors by not taking your breaks at appropriate times. Ask yourself this. Do you like the privilege of being able to take two breaks and lunch in your eight hour day? Use them or eventually, lose them for everyone.

Enough of the should not and do not. What can you do? You can document and file a grievance each and every time management does bargaining unit work. You may not be the one who gets the monetary award, but the grievance gives our union leverage to ask for more bids. You may not, probably will not, see an immediate advantage to filing these grievances – but please believe that it is important. It is a beneficial concrete action that you can take.

We can be sure to always be clocked into the right operation. It is crucial that everyone maintains their own clock rings. Management is shortsighted. If the "owners that be" see that there is an average of twenty hours work a week in box section but sixty hours a week are used i.e. people throwing parcels forget to clock over, they might very

seen then laying on the desks and never get put in.

Window clerks, SSAs, who are on the POS system, have an additional challenge. You also need to be clocked into the right operations, but additionally, you must make sure to enter all that you do into POS. POS records all of your transactions. There is a standard time allotted for everything. There are "right" ways to enter some transactions that actually credits you with more time. POS, of course, only records what you enter. If you are answering questions in person or on the phone, picking up held mail, handing out COAs, giving directions, whatever. You must enter your time used into POS, such as selling stamps, and if you are not entering anything in, POS is recording you as idle. Idle translates as unneeded hours. Unneeded hours translate to lost bids. There are tips that an SSA can use to increase their time in POS. There are better ways to do certain transactions. "WOS" training is now included in many of the new SSA classes and the union has offered a few classes in the past. If this is all "Greek" to you get ahold of Bryon Preminger or me and we will see that you get some training literature on this. Only you can give yourself the credit you are due in POS. It makes a difference. Will increasing your time in POS help create new bids? Probably not. Can it help us keep from losing jobs? Quite possibly. Can it keep small offices from losing hours or closing completely? Yes.

In closing, vent your frustrations and concerns to management. Treat your coworkers as if you like them, as if they are family, as you want to be treated. Treat our customers as if they are gold. They are our "bread and butter." Remember the times that you have been treated well by a business and try to copy the experience, better yet try to top it. Take care of yourself and take your hard earned breaks. Document when management goes against our contract and file on it. Be the eyes and ears of our union. Give yourself the credit you are due if you are on POS. Help each other out. Do not let our boat sink.



2013 PPA awards presented

First place and honorable mention awards in 13 categories were presented on Saturday August 24 during an awards banquet at the PPA biennial conference in Madison, Wisconsin.

Journalism Awards

Best Editorial:

First Place: "Do Not Let Our Boat Sink," *DMI News & Views*, Des Moines Iowa; Janice Gillespie, member.

Honorable Mention: "Who's Lobbying Who?" *The Newsroom*, Mentor, Ohio; Louise Balog, editor.

Best Feature Story:

First Place: "Saving the Troubled United States Economy," *Evergreen State Postal Worker*, Bremerton, Washington; Robert Dyer Jr., editor.

Honorable Mention: "Is Plutocracy Destroying Democracy?" *Miami Postal Labor News*, Doral, Florida; Dana Slocum, editor.

Best Headline:

First Place: "What's In the Oven? Lame Duck," *The Dispatcher*, Youngstown, Ohio; Dominic Corso, associate editor.

Honorable Mention: "Don't Push Me 'Cause I'm Close to the Edge," *Voice & Views*, Jacksonville, Florida; Doris Orr-Richardson, associate editor.

Best News Story:

First Place: "PRC Holds Hearing on Service Standard Changes", *Iowa Postal Worker*, Des Moines, Iowa; Chris Salinas, member.

Honorable Mention: "Union Wins Big! MVS Drivers Keep Their Jobs!" *Evergreen State Postal Worker*, Bremerton, Washington; Robert Dyer Jr., editor.

Best Cartoon:

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

Honorable Mention: *The Advocate*, Great Falls, Montana; Beth Morrison, editor.

Best Creative Writing:

First Place: "Jumping Off the Plank," *Unionizer*, Walnut Creek, California; Omar Gonzalez, western region coordinator.

Honorable Mention: "My Lucky Day," *The Dispatcher*, Youngstown, Ohio; Dominic Corso, associate editor.

Best Non-Postal Labor Story:

First Place: "The History of Labor Day," *Florida Postal Worker*, Davie, Florida; Jeff Pearlman, secretary-treasurer.

Honorable Mention: "Right to Work, Is Wrong," *480-481 Communicator*, Ferndale, Michigan; Paul Felton, editor.

Best Community Service: (Outside Judge Awarded two Honorable Mentions)

First Place: "Sixty Mile Walk for the Cure," *Coastal Breeze*, Davie, Florida; Diane North, editor.

Honorable Mention: "Restore Swift Pass," *The Hi-Lites*, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Bob Wood, vice president.

Honorable Mention: "Annual 'Christmas in July' is Big Success"; *DMI News & Views*, Des Moines, Iowa; Robin Arnold & Christine Sarcone, members.

Best Photograph:

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

Honorable Mention: *The Badger Bulletin*, Cecil, Wisconsin; John Durben, editor.

Website Awards

(There were no eligible entries)

Overall Excellence Awards

There are three awards in the Overall Excellence Category.

Best Professional, defined as a publication printed by a commercial printer from camera-ready copy prepared by the printer;

Best Non-Professional (A), Publication printed by a commercial printer from camera-ready copy; prepared by the APWU editor;

Best Non-Professional (B), Publication printed in-house by the APWU editor from camera-ready copy; prepared by the APWU editor.

Overall Excellence Best Professional:

First Place: *480-481 Communicator*, Ferndale, Michigan; Paul Felton, editor.

Honorable Mention: *Unionizer*, Walnut Creek, California; Stephen Lysaght, editor.

Overall Excellence Best Non-Professional (A)

First Place: *Fort Worth Outpost*, Fort Worth, Texas; Tonya Brooks, editor.

Honorable Mention: *The Mountaineer*, Aurora, Colorado; Deanna Tesone, associate editor.

Overall Excellence Best Non-Professional (B)

First Place: *Lehigh Valley Visions*, Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania; Andy Kubat, associate editor.

Honorable Mention: *The Spectrum*, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Jim Gabe, 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 president for over 17 years.

First Place: John Miceli, *The Hi-Lites*, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Honorable Mention: John Greathouse, *The Pacer*, Lansing, Michigan.

BEST COMMUNITY SERVICE (Honorable Mention)

Restore Swift Pass

"... it affords an opportunity to get fast medical service in areas that by the conventional way could take days, weeks, even months."

By Bob Wood, Vice President
The Hi-Lites
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

In the near future APWU members will be receiving a letter in the mail which contains a card labeled Restore Swift Pass. Make sure to keep this card, as it may become a very helpful tool in obtaining a specialist for your medical needs.

The program has been approved by the Milwaukee Area Local Executive Board, as it affords an opportunity to get fast medical service in areas that convention-

ally take days, weeks, even months.

There is no cost to the local or the members for this service.

There are numerous specialists in the program which include General Surgeons Ophthalmology, Otolaryngology, Pulmonology, Wound Care, Dermatology, Orthopedic, Spine, Bone and Joint. All of which are (PPO's) Preferred Providers, in the APWU Consumer Driven Health Plan and the APWU High Option Health Plan.

Another benefit is that the doctors within the program are familiar with work related injuries. They all have a clear un-

derstanding of what is required to process work related injury reports. This is very important, as approval of a workers' compensation claim is based highly on the medical information.

Convenient Locations

Orthopedic Institute of Wisconsin has offices in Milwaukee, Franklin and Brookfield

Sports Medicine & Orthopedic Center located in Greenfield

Franklin Orthopedic & Sports Medicine in Franklin

Integrated Spine Care in Wauwatosa
Wisconsin Bone & Joint in Wauwatosa.

The phone number for Restore is (414) 465-3600 or you can also go to restorewi.com.

In the event you are unsuccessful in obtaining timely medical treatment with a specialist, please call me @ (414) 273-7838. If I am unavailable, leave a message, and I will get back to you.

I would also appreciate any and all positive feedback.

This is just another example of your local union officers working for you.

BEST EDITORIAL (Honorable Mention)

Who's lobbying who?

By Louise Balog, Editor
The Newsroom
Mentor, Ohio

Since 2006 postal employees have dealt with their own fiscal cliff because of the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act. We, as union employees, have held pickets, sent petitions, put commercials on TV, and engaged in media campaigns to stimulate the public to contact congressional representatives. Why? To save the Postal Service as we know it – with the emphasis on the service part.

As we try to pull Congress in our direction, just who is pushing Congress to go another way?

The players

FedEx spent almost \$9 million in lobbying and over \$1.5 million in contributions. They keep a fleet of private planes on standby to jet lawmakers hither and thither. This lobbying gives them access to aspects affecting international trade, tax cuts, and rules that govern and affect the USPS. One big deal for them was to allow the transport and delivery of overnight packages and express in exchange for putting FedEx drop boxes in front of post offices.

In 2012 their top recipient in contributions was Mitt Romney, no surprise, to the tune of \$91,121. They predominately fa-

vored Republicans but did give money to those across the aisle.

UPS is another major lobbyist. They and FedEx usually go neck and neck in lobbying. Their contributions totaled almost \$2.2 million and their lobbying expenses exceeded \$3.6 million. Their top recipient for 2011-2012 was Barack Obama and number two was Mitt Romney. Interestingly enough, 25 of 41 lobbyists for UPS previ-

There is an organization called The Coalition for a 21st Century Postal Service that represents a wide variety of companies and organizations. They have hired lobbyists to represent them in dealing with postal reform bills and policy. As a group they recognize that the USPS still plays a major role in the nation's economy and represents 7% of the GDP. They are for the following reforms: 1. Relieve the USPS of

vince Congress that your salary needs to be reduced and to prevent collective bargaining in the future.

Two pieces of legislation, H.R. 2309 (which the postal unions are opposed to) and S. 1789 are the legislative proposals that the coalition has reviewed and are weighing in with their views. Here are some of their proposals to amend, eliminate, or change if this legislation should go forward.

“This article just gives you a thumbnail sketch of what is occurring on Capitol Hill. These lobbying efforts are like water wearing down a rock.”

ously held government jobs. Nancy Pelosi, Blanche Lincoln, Ben Nelson, Mitch McConnell, and Mark Hatfield are some of the Congressional people that these lobbyists used to be employed by. Both FedEx and UPS also own townhouses in DC where they hold fundraising events for lawmakers. Even the Envelope Manufacturers of America engage lobbyists to engage their position on such areas as post office closures, mailing tobacco products, issues related to nonprofit postal rates, 6-day delivery, and consolidation of plants.

its unfair financial obligations. 2. Streamline and modernize the infrastructure, systems, and workforce. 3. Update the postal collective bargaining process. 4. Innovate by partnering with businesses on non-postal services. Items 2 and 3, especially 3, will affect your paycheck and not for the better I'm guessing. Some members of this coalition are American Express, Bank of America, Conde Nast, Direct Marketing Assn., eBay, FedEx, catalog and mailer associations, Medco, newspapers and printing alliances, Pitney Bowes, Time Warner and Verizon. What you see are mailers and suppliers working together to achieve what they want via legislation. They view the Postal Accountability Act as vital and we all know where that has taken us.

You might be curious about some of the methods they use to “educate members of Congress” besides lavishing money and goodies on them. One thing the lobbyists do is disseminate information via white papers which emphasize the “reality of the situation” as they see it and what must be done to correct the myriad of problems facing the Postal Service. Greg Bell, Executive Vice President of the APWU, recently stated that **“Postal bashers are blinded by their desire to dismantle government and destroy large public employee unions.”** Make no mistake that this is the agenda of these lobbyists, especially the coalition that we are talking about now. The lobbyists for this coalition also give Postal 101 classes so that legislators know exactly how the post office works. Quoting from their website it states that the coalition recognizes that “it is vital that workforce costs at every level of the USPS fully reflect the changes wrought by its massive decline in business.” They are using that argument to hopefully con-

Proposals

1. End the no layoff provision.
2. They support the Postal Service leaving the FEHB and establishing their own health program.
3. Both pieces of legislation call for advisory committees but they have different emphases. The coalition would urge Congress to have the USPS go into “bankruptcy lite” and to use their words “hold the USPS and the union's feet to the fire.”
4. USPS should have wide latitude to contract out work.

This is just one group which is actively going after the Postal Service as we know it and definitely going after your job. Do not think any of these companies engaging these lobbyists have your best interests at heart because they don't.

Why do I mention this? Because last year our union, it is estimated, spent around \$153,000 on lobbying. That's it. Do you still think contributing to COPA isn't important? The APWU represents over 200,000 employees. Just imagine if each employee gave \$5.00 to COPA. That is \$1 million dollars plus. Skip a meal out or go without that Starbucks and put that money toward COPA. That is not a lot to ask to save your job. Most of the locals have a very poor per capita rate of contributing to COPA. This needs to change. Every local and every editor should be ramping up their efforts to encourage contributing to COPA. This article just gives you a thumbnail sketch of what is occurring on Capitol Hill. These lobbying efforts are like water wearing down a rock. Congress and the general public will just throw in the towel eventually. Time is running out – contribute now.

BEST COMMUNITY SERVICE (Honorable Mention)

Annual ‘Christmas in July’ drive is big success

By Robin Arnold & Christine Sarcone, Members
DMI News & Views
Des Moines, Iowa

Our annual “Christmas in July” donations drive to help Hawthorn Hill's New Directions Shelter for women and children was another big success.

After getting off to a slow start, the collection time was extended through Labor Day. By that time, we were quite pleased with the amount of supplies that were provided, considering the state of the economy.

We took at least two very full carloads of items including: bus tokens, postage stamps, diapers, wipes, baby formula, over-the-counter medicines, underwear, socks, hygiene items, food items, paper products, school supplies, women's clothes, cleaning supplies, and even some individual monetary donations.

They were highly impressed and grateful for the generosity of our members and other postal workers who donated.

Thank you all very much for your participation! It really helps our community when we care enough to be involved in helping others who really need it.

BEST HEADLINE (Honorable Mention)

By Doris Orr-Richardson,
Associate Editor
Voice & Views
Jacksonville, Florida

Don't push me 'cause I'm close to the edge

BEST CREATIVE WRITING (*Honorable Mention*)

My lucky day

By Dominic Corso, Associate Editor
The Dispatcher
Youngstown, Ohio

There it was sitting in my mailbox, the golden invitation to an exclusive party – an invitation that only a select few would receive. I felt like Charlie Bucket, from “*Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*,” when he found the golden ticket in a candy wrapper. I was as joyful as Charlie and his grandpa with the opportunity to visit the most “wonderful candy factory of all!”

So, I followed the instructions on the letter and called in my reservation. Because, after all, seating was limited and I didn’t want to be left out of this rare opportunity. Then a couple of days later, I received a very strange phone call from the post office. In a very long-winded and obscure way, the voice told me that all of my mailing concerns could be answered over the phone.

Basically, the person that phoned said that I did not need to attend the meeting and that I should just call them instead. What about the meeting for the bulk mailers (like our local) of the Youngstown Main Post Office? The invitation letter said that we were a “Dear Valued Customer.” Our Local has had a bulk mail permit for nearly forty years, ever since the Youngstown Main Post Office was built!

We have one of the first and oldest bulk mail permits on file. I was beginning to feel unwanted. Obviously, the caller from the post office didn’t realize that I was a valued and longtime customer. Surely, there must be some mistake – a mistake that I would be able to clear up before the meeting on the next day.

Postal mumble jumble

When I tried to sign in, I was told that I wasn’t allowed to attend the meeting. I thought, wow, this really is like the “*Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*” movie, complete with the “Oompa Loompa” blocking the elevator door and singing riddles. Do you remember the part when Willy Wonka slammed a contract on the desk, pulled out a magnifying glass, started to say some mumble jumble about section 378 and

shouted at Charlie and his grandpa to read the fine print of the contract as he told them to leave?

Well, things weren’t as dramatic but they were filled with mumble jumble. First, postal management told me that I couldn’t go to the meeting because it wasn’t “a union

the moratorium because they have closed and are prepared to close more facilities while Congress is figuring out a solution. The post office is deceiving everyone with the “Internet Myth” and declining mail volume. It’s the economy and there are signs of a rebound in mail volume. The post office

manipulating Congress and the postmaster general so that the \$1.1 trillion mailing industry and almost 10% of America’s Gross Domestic Product goes through their door and not the post office. Corporate raiders are not interested in defending a public service. They are putting profits before people.

Postal management kept saying that the Network Rationalization is about capacity not productivity. First off, the postal service wants to act like a business but isn’t making a major business decision based on productivity. Now that makes sense.

Secondly, if consolidation to these postal facilities is based on unused capacity, then the postal service shouldn’t be adding on to these buildings. And another curious question. When did the postmaster general get to be more powerful than Congress and the president of the United States? After all, the president is the commander in chief and the Constitution empowers Congress to have control over post offices, not the postmaster.

“When did the postmaster general get to be more powerful than Congress and the president of the United States?”

thing.” I explained that I wasn’t there for the union, but as a bulk mail customer. The response to that was a sarcastic, “Yeah, I bet.” This response was followed by the assertion that the meeting was not for employees to attend. I explained that I was off the clock and on my own time as a bulk mail customer.

Next, postal management asked if I had received a letter. I told them that I had received a letter that said “Dear Valued Customer.” Postal management said that wasn’t good enough and the letter had to have my name on it. They also said that the meeting was for bulk mailers of 10,000 pieces per mailing. We mail a lot, but not quite that much.

There is nothing quite like getting an invitation for a party and then when you get there, you find out that you’re not welcomed. Management, without shame kept coming up with one excuse after another. The invitation letter, the phone call and even the announcement in the paper did not state all these stipulations for attendance.

Nothing was previously said about being an employee or having a minimum amount of mailings in order to qualify for the meeting. Postal management treated me like I was Old Mr. Slugworth trying to sneak into the meeting and steal Willy Wonka’s recipe for chocolate. The real reason for the Willy Wonka routine? Postal management did not want the union attending the meeting. Postal management did not want anyone in the meeting who could tell the public the truth.

All kidding aside

Even though there was a humorous twist put to this story, we live in very serious times. There isn’t anything funny about the way the post office keeps the truth from the public. There isn’t anything funny about the underhanded tricks and deception from the post office. The post office deceived everyone at the AMP public meeting by saying that the public’s opinion mattered. They deceived everyone by saying Youngstown was being transferred to Pittsburgh and switched the paperwork to Cleveland. Postal management deceived everyone by saying that they didn’t know what was going on, when the paperwork was signed months ago. The post office deceived everyone at every AMP public meeting because adding up all the so-called projected savings of all the presentations to the public does not equal the total projected savings the postal service claims will happen. Not even close!

The post office deceived Congress with

is deceiving everyone by saying they are broke. It’s a manufactured crisis, created by Congress and the pre-funding.

The post office is deceiving everyone by saying that closing postal facilities is the only way. The postal service cannot cut its way to prosperity. These cuts are unnecessary. This cut and gut routine is to privatize. Pure and simple. Corporate raiders are

BEST CARTOON (*Honorable Mention*)

By Beth Morrison, Editor
The Advocate
Great Falls, Montana



**A proud
tradition
of service!**



BEST FEATURE STORY (First Place)

Saving the troubled United States economy &

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

Mail volumes are down; morale is in a free fall; employees are angry; and management is absent without leave. This is the sad state of affairs in the U.S. Postal Ser-

“The only way to grow an economy out of depression is to create jobs — decent long term jobs with a livable wage.”

vice this year . . . but we have not arrived at this precipice suddenly or unexpectedly, as some would have us believe, and the apparent pending downfall of the U.S. Postal Service is not the result of labor contracts, or overpaid employees.

Yes, America is in a recession of the magnitude never before seen by most that are alive today. Few of us were born prior to the Great Depression of the late 1920s and many in Washington DC have forgotten that the key to coming out of that depression was to find work for the unemployed American public. Without decent jobs and a living wage for the mainstream populace, there is little hope of ever coming out of a serious depression.

Putting America back to work, and working on projects that will change America is the key to America's future. I am not referring to investing in Wall Street, or purchasing stock options, or even investing in treasury bills; although, it would be wonderful if American citizens owned our national debt instead of China. I am talking about rebuilding America and reemploying the out of work middle class.

The Great Depression was not overcome by “wise investment” or by “private enterprise” at all. Many of us in Washington and other west coast states are aware of the fact that **the most expensive government projects in history were responsible for bringing America out of the Great Depression, and also investing in the retirement of Americans by creating Social Security.** Even with all the economic problems that America is currently facing, it would be infinitely worse if there was no Social Security as well.

Franklin Roosevelt's vision

When initially signed into law by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1935 as part of his New Deal, the term Social Security covered unemployment insurance as well.³ Social Security is currently the largest social insurance program in the United States, constituting 37% of government expenditure and 7% of the gross domestic product⁴ and is currently estimated to keep roughly 40% of all Americans age 65 or older out of poverty.⁵ **President Roosevelt has done more for America's future than we can possibly imagine, by supporting and passing a government umbrella of protection which currently encompasses such programs as:**

- Federal Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance
- Unemployment benefits
- Temporary assistance for needy families

Health Insurance for aged and disabled (Medicare)

Grants to States for Medical Assistance programs (Medicaid)

State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP)

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

Without these programs, the current dif-

ficult plight of millions in America would be catastrophic in comparison to what it is and the current depression would seem like a walk in the park compared to the suffering that would be going on around us.

God bless Franklin Roosevelt for taking action as he did to prevent the Great Depression from ever happening again for the reasons that it did back in the 1930s. However, this action was taken to preserve America's future, not to bring us out of the poverty and despair that was brought on the American public because of unscrupulous private entrepreneurs and unregulated business in America.

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

The heyday of Reclamation construction of water facilities occurred during the depression and the 35 years after World War II.¹ The massive amounts of irrigation water provided by this project greatly benefits the agricultural production of the areas involved. North Central Washington is one of the largest and most productive tree fruit producing areas on the planet.² Absent this project, eastern Washington would be an arid desert, not producing much of anything.

Ironically, the project was originally aimed at putting Americans to work at the time, and to irrigate otherwise useless land, but the undertaking had significant importance concerning upcoming events that were never imagined when the project began. Though dams such as the Grand Coulee produced huge amounts of electricity, such power was not in demand at the time – this was just a windfall to the irrigation and reemployment effort.

WW II creates new demand

With the emergence of World War II, a whole new market was created by the cheap and abundant supply of electricity provided by the Columbia Basin project. It takes a lot of electricity to produce aluminum and the demand for planes and ships created by the war made aluminum a most valuable commodity.

Without the abundant and cheap electricity available for production, however, it would not have been produced in Washington. Companies like Alcoa and Kaiser Aluminum were the product of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and companies like Boeing were the product of the aluminum produced in the area, which was needed to meet the demand for planes to defend Europe in the war.

It was the government investment of both capital and jobs which produced the companies and their contribution to the war

effort and the American economy – not the other way around.

Tax \$\$\$ driving the industry

The whole aluminum industry, the dam construction projects, and the Columbia Basin fruit industry was created and nurtured by taxpayer investment into America's economy, and the taxpayers also created jobs for hundreds of thousands of otherwise unemployed workers. Along with construction jobs for the hard working middle class Americans performing the dangerous work of constructing the dams, **came the need for hospital care for injured employees.**

This need was met with the creation of yet another industry – **health care for workers.** In 1948, Kaiser established the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, (also known as Kaiser Family Foundation), a **U.S.-based, non-profit, private operating foundation focusing on the major health care issues facing the nation.**⁶ **Kaiser Permanente** is an integrated **managed care** organization based in Oakland, California; founded in 1945 by industrialist Henry Kaiser.⁷ Kaiser Permanente still provides care throughout eight regions in the United States. Each of these regions purports that it is comprised of two or three (and, in one case, four) separate but interdependent legal entities. **This structure was adopted by Kaiser Permanente physicians and leaders in 1955.**⁶

The two types of organizations are:

Kaiser Foundation Health Plans work with employers, employees, and individual members **to offer prepaid health plans and insurance.** The **health plans** are purported to be **not-for-profit** and provide infrastructure for and invest in Kaiser Foundation Hospitals and **provide a tax-exempt shelter for the for-profit medical groups.**

Permanente Medical Groups are physi-

cian-owned organizations, which provide and arrange for medical care for Kaiser Foundation Health Plan members in each respective region. The medical groups are for-profit partnerships or professional corporations and receive nearly all of their funding from Kaiser Foundation Health Plans. The first medical group, The Permanente Medical Group, formed in 1948 in Northern California.⁶

Getting the big picture

Now, 65 years later, America is faced with the prospect of another Great Depression. The answers to America's woes are the same ones which faced President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The legacy of his contribution to provide for the American working class is still with us, 65 years later. The 50 mile long Lake Roosevelt backed up behind Grand Coulee Dam stands as a tribute to his vision, as well as a supply of water that continues to produce crops and job opportunities in eastern Washington.

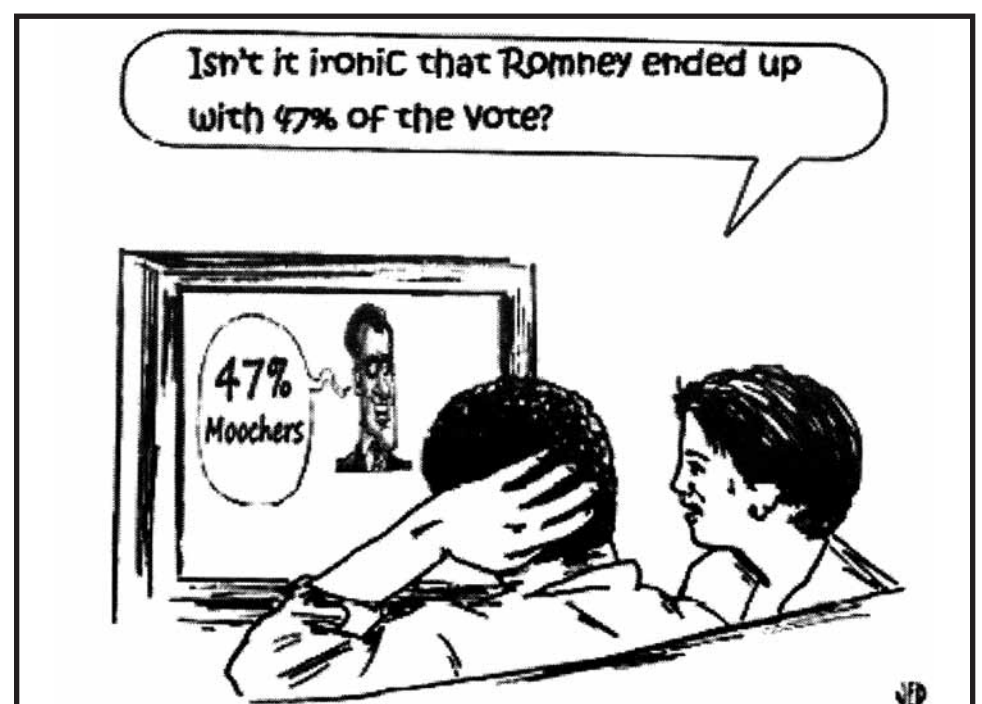
The now valuable clean and abundant supply of hydroelectric power has become a major industry in itself, and provides not-for-profit energy for American families all over the west coast. The creation of jobs in all of these subsidiary industries was fueled by American taxpayer dollars, and not-for-profit investing in America's future, as well as providing the jobs needed to work our way out of the last Great Depression.

Can America turn its back on FDR's vision, and throw away the model for America's financial recovery that he envisioned and worked so hard to bring to fruition? Have we learned anything from his success with the depression that faced America back then?

The U.S. Postal Service has something in common with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation – these are the only two federal entities

BEST CARTOON (First Place)

By John Durben, Editor
The Badger Bulletin
Cecil, Wisconsin



& keeping 'service' in the U.S. Postal Service

that have produced revenues to be self-supporting in America's Federal Government.

The United States is in big trouble financially. Our middle class is disappearing and their jobs are being exported at an alarming rate. Our mounting trade deficit is astronomical. Yes, America is facing tough times again, the toughest times since the Great Depression. Some are using these tough times as an excuse to call for the dismantling of the USPS and eliminating hundreds of thousands of jobs.

This would be an absolute tragedy for the American economy. The only way to

"America needs a U.S. Postal Service that is in business to SERVE America, not to fleece citizens for every red cent that private enterprise can extract from our increasingly shrinking middle class, and sacrifice universal service for profit."

grow an economy out of depression is to create jobs – decent long term jobs with a livable wage.

To eliminate hundreds of thousands of decent middle class jobs in one fell swoop, especially in the only federal entity which has been paying its own way, would be a disaster. To eliminate postal service to the American public would be really stupid.

Keeping the service a service

We should nurture the U.S. Postal Service, not privatize it. The postal workers spend their hard earned wages in the stores of America, and they contribute to the health care industry and produce families here in America, and pay taxes.

Instead of destroying the grand old lady that is the U.S. Postal Service, we should be preserving it. All other federal agencies in America are 100 percent subsidized. Why not partially subsidize the USPS during tough times to preserve it from extinction and to provide decent jobs for American citizens?

Preserving FDR's legacy

It would be a disgrace to the honor and memory of President Franklin Roosevelt, and a tragedy, to allow his vision and his model for America's recovery to be trampled underfoot by those who would squeeze every last dime out of the American public for their own personal profit.

Where is the ridiculous lobbying to eliminate the best postal service in the world coming from? It is coming from those who want the 65 billion a year in revenues that the U.S.

continue to provide health care to its citizens.

America's leaders should be planning for the success of this venture, not arguing over whether or not to support it. **They**

"Mail volumes are down: morale is in a free fall; employees are angry and USPS management is absent without leave."

Postal Service takes in each year. The USPS is a not for profit organization but if it is ever privatized then the American public actually will have something legitimate to complain about when they see what private enterprise is going to charge them to mail a first class letter to Rolling Bay, Washington.

Preserving Kaiser's vision

One of Henry Kaiser's proudest achievements in his life was his medical care plan, begun for employees in 1942 and made public in 1945. It later became **the largest privately sponsored health plan in the world.**

It is a disgrace to his patriotic commitment to create sustainable industries and jobs in America, and to his honorable, outstanding example of leadership in the health care industry that the United States of America has to even argue about whether or not to

should also be planning for the success of the U.S. Postal Service, and subsidizing universal service to the American public.

1. www.pbs.org/wgbh/buildingbig/wonder/structure/hover.html

2. Columbia Basin Project; From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

3. Social Security (United States); From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

4. Feldstein, M. (2005). Rethinking social insurance. *American Economic Review*, 95(1), pp. 1-24.

5. 45. On, D. (November - December, 2004). Social Security isn't broken: So why the rush to fix it? In C. Sturr & R. Vasudevan (Eds.), 2007, *Current economic issues*. Boston: Economic Affairs Bureau.

6. Henry J. Kaiser; From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

7. Kaiser Permanente; From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

BEST CREATIVE WRITING (First Place)

Jumping off the plank

By Omar Gonzalez,
Western Region Coordinator
Unionizer
Walnut Creek, California

"Thank you for listening and for the great job you are doing every day – now get off..." The PMG's announced network change mandatory stand up talk ends with a big thank you. In fact what he is doing is actually telling you another two word phrase that ended with the "you!"

One-eyed captain at the helm

Are we on a sinking ship? NO! But we are on a distressed vessel that mismanagement and Congress have torpedoed. No one has to tell postal workers about our management. You live with it every day! It is characterized by stupid instructions, wayward evil cracking hacks, and corporate suits that base decisions on data, while knowing the data is flawed.

Our management has taken a financial mess and is capitalizing on (no pun intended) and manipulating the so-called crisis to **BLAME YOU** the shipmates. **HE WANTS YOU TO PAY** for their mismanagement. He is working at:

Taking you away from our federal retirement system and create a management run (imagine that) retirement program.

Taking you out of the federal health plan program and force you into a management run medical health plan (heaven help us!)

Voiding the brand new contract he just

signed to kill Article 6 anti-lay off protections and lay-off prohibition coverage so that management can impose a Reduction In Force not necessarily based on seniority.

Gutting mail processing operations to reduce the 151,000 employees working at these facilities.

Closing community post offices, forcing employees to be relocated and Americans

"Management is ramming the USPS Titanic into the American public blaming it on workers so that no life rafts are thrown to save postal workers."

to turn bitter at us. The things the PMG is doing now have been planned for years since management's Transformation Plan – before there was a recession and before the full impact of electronic diversion of mail.

The PMG is now crying about the Congress imposed mandate to pre-fund future (75 years-worth) retiree health benefits in only 10 years, at \$5.5 billion a year. This typical postal manager and his then boss Potter were the ones who supported so-called postal reform in 2006. **Our boss SOLD US OUT!**

Now he cries about what the 2006 law, which he backed, is doing to us.

The house on the hill

Congress is the culprit that imposed the fi-

nancial mess on the postal service. The PMG was for the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act (postal reform), democrat & republican politicians were for it, and former President Bush signed it into law in 2006.

We have been going down the "Hill" (pun intended) ever since. That law mandates that USPS pay for retirement medical health benefits for postal workers who are not even born yet. That law also mandates management to submit to Congress their network restructure plans and so here we are today!

Since 2006 management plotted to downsize operations. The END (Evolutionary Network Development) was not good enough. NRP (National Reassessment Program) only caused compensation costs to increase. In 2008 management submitted to Congress their Network plan as the recession hit.

In 2010 Congress changed hands, economic recovery slowed, management started crying about the ability to make their imposed payments, and **we** all worked together to try to convince our elected politicians to change the law – **then our PMG turned on us!**

Now those who control Congress that floated the dangerous icebergs into postal waters in the first place, are playing with the *USPS Titanic* steering it into an even bigger iceberg – H.R. 2309.

H.R. 2309 created by Representative Issa will destroy the postal service and create more bureaucracy yet do nothing to ensure it remains solvent. It will throw workers overboard with no life jackets or even a log

to cling to. Those who sit on Capitol Hill would rather see us drown.

A life raft that is available – H.R. 1351 (a proposed law that will recalculate payments into our federal retirement systems and give USPS credit for overpayments) – is not being allowed to be lowered into the waters by Issa.

Issa wants the postal service to be destroyed and our management is helping him by taking the service out of the postal service.

Ramming the public

Our management is blaming our wages/benefits for the hole in the *Titanic*, despite the fact it was our management that supported postal reform. They are closing post offices and facilities while they lie to America, saying it is the 80% in labor costs doing it.

Our management is selling the idea that because of our greed they must revise service standards of 2 to 3 days and 2 to 9 days.

Management is ramming the *USPS Titanic* into the American public blaming it on workers so that no life rafts are thrown to save postal workers. **American postal workers want to provide service**, but Congress and management don't want us to. They want us to sink!

So what is the union doing about it? Indeed – what are you going to do about it? You are the union! Contact your local today and see how you can help. You either sink or swim! **Don't let them push you and your family off the plank. Fight back – take action now!!**

BEST FEATURE STORY (Honorable Mention)

Is plutocracy destroying democracy?

By Dana Slocum, Editor
Miami Postal Labor News
Doral, Florida

Plutocracy is a term used when a government is controlled by the wealthy. Statistical and political trends indicate that our democracy is being replaced by plutocracy. In a total plutocratic society there is virtually no middle class. Our newly elected officials that support plutocracy want to take away our freedom under free speech, to bargain with management. They feel that individuals of high net worth, who control corporate America, cannot survive by paying a working person a fair day's wage. Let's take a closer look at the plight of the wealthy.

The Survey of Consumer Finances, which is conducted by the Federal Reserve Board, collects economic data, which is used to determine the distribution of wealth in America. As of 2004, the findings show that the wealthiest one percent of families own approximately 34.3% of the net worth of this country. The top ten percent of the wealthiest families own 71 percent of the nation's net worth. The bottom 40 percent, 4 out of 10 people, collectively, not individually, have less than 1/5 of one percent vested in the net worth of our economy. Mathematically speaking, on average, for every dollar of net worth attributed to an individual in the lower 40 percentile, a person in the upper one percent of the wealth distribution has \$6,860.00.

Some of my readers at this time may be saying, "Hey, in a free market system,

hard-working individuals should make more money." I could not agree more with that statement, but this huge disparity between almost half of our society and the elite upper one percent has nothing to do with the rich being more industrious, but rather the effects of plutocracy in this country. Through the influence of

highly skewed to the top few percent. Middle class America is dealing with high unemployment and a significant reduction of net worth due to decreasing equity in their homes. The wealthy, (the upper 10 percent), on the other hand, who have ownership of over 90% of the stock, bonds and mutual funds within this country, as the result be-

rest of America while employing underpaid non-citizens, to work as domestics in their many houses around the country.

In 2010, the Supreme Court determined that corporations are to be treated as individuals in regard to funding election campaigns. This action will allow corporations to significantly increase their funding to political candidates of their choosing. It is amazing to me that any judge in the Supreme Court, let alone five, could come to this conclusion.

Corporations are legal entities, not human beings. They do not vote in elections and surely are not of flesh and blood. The motivation of these five conservative Supreme Court judges, responsible for this decision, was to give big business the political clout to elect candidates that support their agenda of plutocracy. The above decision will further the economic disparity between the rich and everyone else, at the cost of our individual rights under the constitution.

The importance of unionism at this time cannot be overstated. Unions are the citadel of working men and women. It was organized labor that gave rights to working people such as an eight-hour working day, safe working conditions, Social Security, minimum wage, sick leave, paid vacations, overtime pay, etc. Given the current plutocratic dynamics of this country, where the wealthy want it all, it is time for our members to stand up and be counted by voting for candidates who support the rights of the working class to organize and collectively bargain.

"I hope we shall crush in its birth the aristocracy of our moneyed corporations, which dare already to challenge our government to a trial of strength and bid defiance to the laws of our country."

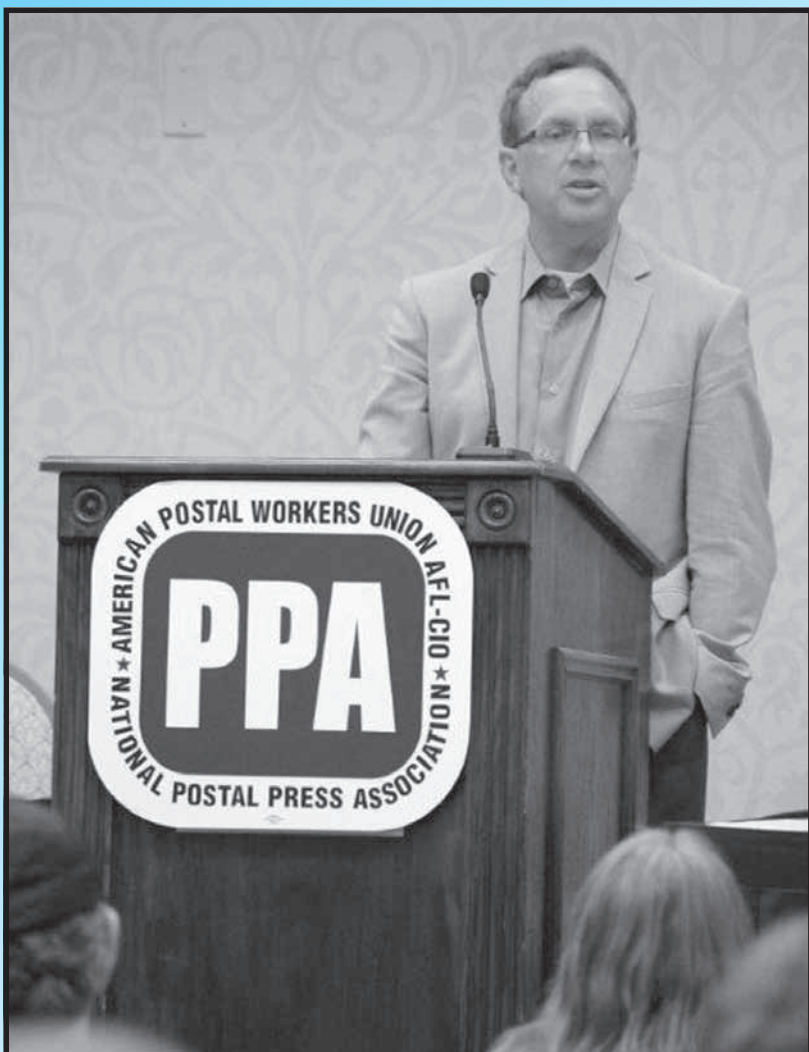
— Thomas Jefferson

the wealthy in government, tax structures that significantly favor corporate America, while discriminating against the middle class, exist. Furthermore the wealthy do not want you and me to earn a fair wage for a day's work and that is why collective bargaining is currently being attacked by many of our newly elected republican officials.

Since the early 1980s this country has gone through a wage repression. Data collected through 2008 conclude that the average income for the bottom 90% of Americans went from \$30,941 to \$31,244, an increase of only \$303 during a period of almost 30 years. We are currently living in an era where wealth distribution is becoming

ing diversified are buffered from decreasing property values significantly affecting their net worth.

Ironically, the success of big business has a direct correlation with high unemployment. Companies are able to squeeze out higher profits as the result of using overseas labor to replace American citizens or by just cutting jobs. What makes this situation more perverse, companies, who have received money from the stimulus plan, have demonstrated no obligation to put U.S. citizens to work. The rich get richer and everyone else gets poorer. The super-rich earn their fortunes with overseas labor, selling to overseas markets and managing financial transaction that have nothing to do with the



Political reporter, writer and commentator John Nichols speaking about the manufactured postal service financial crisis and the war on workers at the PPA Conference opening session in Madison, Wisconsin. A video of Mr. Nichols' remarks along with conference photos are available on the PPA website www.apwupostalpress.org. In addition to being a regular guest on radio and television programs as a commentator on politics, media, and worker issues; Nichols writes for *The Nation* magazine as its Washington correspondent. He is also a contributing writer for *The Progressive* and *In These Times* and the associate editor of the *Capital Times*, a Madison daily newspaper.

BEST PHOTOGRAPH (*Honorable Mention*)



By John Durben, Editor
The Badger Bulletin
Cecil, Wisconsin

President Barack Obama made a visit to Austin Straubel International Airport in Green Bay during his campaign for a second term. The president pledged to create more jobs and make sure the one percent pays their fair share. The Labor backed candidate was significantly outspent by his opponent; however the people demonstrated that their votes were not for sale.

BEST NON-POSTAL LABOR STORY (*First Place*)

The history of Labor Day

By Jeff Pearlman, Secretary-Treasurer
Florida Postal Worker
Davie, Florida

With the 2012 national convention coming to an end and Labor Day approaching, I had to choose to provide you with my take of the convention or write something about Labor Day. I decided to do a little research and found the below information on the U. S. Department of Labor web page. Although I did not write this and not to downplay the importance of our national convention, I came to the conclusion that so many officers and delegates would be writing about the national convention that I could better serve you by providing you with some history of Labor Day.

I have never seen a Labor Day parade but have attended many Labor Day picnics, but each year the number in attendance have dwindled where I have not attended one for a couple of years. Too many of us just look at Labor Day as a day we do not have to go to work and not how it came about and why it is important to labor.

Labor Day: How it came about; what it means

Labor Day, the first Monday in September, is a creation of the labor movement and is dedicated to the social and economic achievements of American workers. It constitutes a yearly national tribute to the contributions workers have made to the strength, prosperity, and well-being of our country.

Founder of Labor Day

More than 100 years after the first Labor Day observance, there is still some doubt as to who first proposed the holiday for workers.

Some records show that Peter J. McGuire, general secretary of the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners and a cofounder of the American Federation of Labor, was first in suggesting a day to honor those “who from rude nature have delved and carved all the grandeur we behold.”

But Peter McGuire’s place in Labor Day history has not gone unchallenged. Many believe that Matthew Maguire, a machinist, not Peter McGuire, founded the holiday. Recent research seems to support the contention that Matthew Maguire, later the secretary of Local 344 of the International Association of Machinists in Paterson, New Jersey proposed the holiday in 1882 while serving as secretary of the Central Labor Union in New York. What is clear is that the Central Labor Union adopted a Labor Day proposal and appointed a committee to plan a demonstration and picnic.

The First Labor Day

The first Labor Day holiday was celebrated on Tuesday, September 5, 1882 in New York City, in accordance with the plans of the Central Labor Union. The Central Labor Union held its second Labor Day holiday just a year later, on September 5, 1883.

In 1884 the first Monday in September

was selected as the holiday, as originally proposed and the Central Labor Union urged similar organizations in other cities to follow the example of New York and celebrate a “workingmen’s holiday” on that date. The idea spread with the growth of labor organizations, and in 1885 Labor Day was celebrated in many industrial centers of the country.

Labor Day Legislation

Through the years the nation gave increasing emphasis to Labor Day. The first governmental recognition came through municipal ordinances passed during 1885 and 1886. From them developed the movement to secure state legislation. The first state bill was introduced into the New York legislature, but the first to become law was passed by Oregon on February 21, 1887. During the year four more states – Colorado, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and New York – created the Labor Day holiday by legislative enactment. By the end of the decade Connecticut, Nebraska, and Pennsylvania had followed suit. By 1894, 23 other states had adopted the holiday in honor of workers and on June 28 of that year, Congress passed an act making the first Monday in September of each year a legal holiday in the District of Columbia and the territories.

A nationwide holiday

The form that the observance and celebration of Labor Day should take was outlined in the first proposal of the holiday – a

street parade to exhibit to the public “the strength and esprit de corps of the trade and labor organizations” of the community, followed by a festival for the recreation and amusement of the workers and their families. This became the pattern for the celebrations of Labor Day. Speeches by prominent men and women were introduced later, as more emphasis was placed upon the economic and civic significance of the holiday. Still later, by a resolution of the American Federation of Labor Convention of 1909, the Sunday preceding Labor Day was adopted as Labor Sunday and dedicated to the spiritual and educational aspects of the labor movement.

The character of the Labor Day celebration has undergone a change in recent years, especially in large industrial centers where mass displays and huge parades have proved a problem. This change, however, is more a shift in emphasis and medium of expression. Labor Day addresses by leading union officials, industrialists, educators, clerics and government officials are given wide coverage in newspapers, radio and television.

The vital force of labor added materially to the highest standard of living and the greatest production the world has ever known and has brought us closer to the realization of our traditional ideals of economic and political democracy. It is appropriate, therefore, that the nation pays tribute on Labor Day to the creator of so much of the nation’s strength, freedom and leadership – the American worker.

BEST PHOTOGRAPH (*First Place*)

By John Greathouse, Editor
The Pacer
Lansing, Michigan

‘Right to Work’ Rally! This is what democracy looks like



November 11, 2012 – Michigan Capitol Rotunda filled with over a thousand union members. The Michigan Legislature rammed the bill through with no public input and Governor Snyder signed it into law! So much for the government of the people!

BEST HEADLINE (*First Place*)

By Dominic Corso, Associate Editor
The Dispatcher
Youngstown, Ohio

What’s in the oven? Lame duck

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

'Right to Work' is wrong

By Paul Felton, Editor
480-481 Communicator
Ferndale, Michigan

Roscoe Woods, Larry Anderson and I were among 13,000 demonstrators in Lansing December 11th protesting the Michigan "Right-to-Work" law. For the remainder of this article I will not use the misleading term "Right-to-Work." I will use a more accurate term: "Freedom to Freeload."

What exactly does the new law say? It makes it illegal in the state of Michigan for a union and management to voluntarily negotiate a clause in their contract requiring all employees to pay union dues. This is a common clause in UAW contracts, for example. It ensures that all workers who enjoy the wages, benefits and representation on the shop floor provided by the union pay their fair share.

Postal workers know the meaning of this law as we function under similar legislation. Our members resent the freeloaders who take home a nice paycheck and even

file grievances without contributing a penny to the APWU.

The Republicans pretend this Freedom to Freeload law upholds a principle of free choice. They don't mention that the union has to represent and bargain for the non-members, who get the same benefits as the dues paying members. They pretend that without this law, those who don't believe in unions are trapped. But they already have a choice. When a job seeker decides to apply for work at an auto plant, for example, he is well aware that there is a union there. He can make a free choice to apply for work instead at a nonunion workplace; nobody's forcing him to work at a unionized workplace. In other words, the "freedom" and "choice" rhetoric of the Republicans is phony.

Does anyone really believe that Governor Snyder and the Republicans have a sincere concern for the rights of workers? Give me a break. Since the Republicans took control of the state government two years ago, they have passed close to 100 bills restricting workers union rights, wages and

benefits. Their goal with this new Freedom to Freeload legislation is to destroy unions in the state of Michigan.

The Republican dream scenario is as follows: workers in union shops drop out of the union in large numbers, crippling the unions financially and causing bitter divisiveness on the workroom floor.

How does the new law affect postal workers? The effect on us is indirect but it is huge. If the Republications succeed, they will virtually destroy the labor movement all around us. It will then be easier for the Congressional enemies of postal workers to come after us, as we will be totally isolated.

"Postal workers know the meaning of this law as we function under similar legislation. Our members resent the freeloaders who take home a nice paycheck and even file grievances without contributing a penny to the APWU."

As the unions lose membership, they lose their ability to bargain for better wages and to effectively represent members in the grievance procedure. Seeing the unions' ineffectiveness, more members drop out. Eventually the unions shrivel up and die. And the middle class living standard attained through collective bargaining will be replaced by poverty wages – and that includes the worker whose right-not-to-join-a-union the Republicans are so concerned about.

I should add that attacking us in the state of Michigan has an extreme symbolic meaning. Our state is associated with the labor movement; it is the birthplace of the UAW. The Republicans believe if they can beat us in Michigan other states will fall like dominos.

This is a battle that must be fought. These next two years must be the years of labor's counterattack. You will read more in these pages in the coming months about labor's fight back.

BEST COMMUNITY SERVICE (*First Place*)

Sixty mile walk for the cure

By Diane North, Editor
Coastal Breeze
Davie, Florida

In October of 2011 Jackie Quintana and I both walked three days, twenty miles a day for a total of sixty miles. Jackie had the support of her sister, who walked with her and I

had the support of my husband and two dogs who met me several times along the way.

But we both had the support of a whole lot of postal workers and we would like to thank you for that support. You helped us raise a lot of money for the cure and care of breast cancer.

THANK YOU AND THANK YOU!



Jackie Quintana and Diane North.

Communication

Communication is said to take place when an idea is transmitted from one point and is understood at another point. It is essential that both the sender and the receiver understand just what is to be communicated. If the sender has not chosen an effective means of expressing his or her idea, nor proper evidence to support the idea, it is unlikely that the receiver will accept or understand the message.

Unions exist to serve the interests of their members. Union officers are elected by the members to administer the affairs of the union. This democratic process imposes upon all union officials the obligation to communicate with the membership on matters that may influence the pursuit of the members' interests as individuals and as members of the union.

The members are entitled to know their rights and obligations afforded by membership in the union. The activities of the union officers that are directed at the achievement of objectives for the union should be known to the members. All activities of the union should be well-publicized. No union member should be allowed the excuse of, "I didn't hear or see a word about it."

Lack of communication within an organization can seriously weaken unity of purpose and direction, and from this, lower the effectiveness of the whole organization.

Communication is the means by which we relate to each other. Effective communication promotes understanding, acceptance and action. Ineffective or inadequate communication fosters suspicion, misunderstanding and hostility. Members cannot adopt positive courses of action unless they are informed.

BEST NEWS STORY (First Place)

PRC holds hearing on Service Standard changes

By Chris Salinas, Member
Iowa Postal Worker
Des Moines, Iowa

The Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) held its first hearing on Mail Processing Rationalization and Service Standard reduction. This hearing is one of four meetings this week as the PRC hears testimony from the USPS witnesses.

David Williams, Vice-President of Network Operation was on the witness stand, as counsel from the American Postal Workers Union (APWU), National Postal Mail handlers Union (NPMHU), Greeting Cards Association (GCA), the National Newspaper Association (NNA) and public interest representative Chris Laver would question the witness.

Witnesses Stephen Masse and Kevin Rachel were excused from testifying as their testimony was not needed.

APWU counsel, Darryl Anderson, started to ask a few questions when USPS counsel objected to the line of questioning. The Chairwoman, Ruth Goldway, overruled and allowed the questioning to proceed.

Mr. Williams stated in his testimony to the APWU that in order for the Rationalization Plan to be effective, Service Standards would have to be reduced.

Mr. Williams also stated that the USPS plans to announce reduction of Service Standards sometime in mid-April, but when questioned by the commission, a firm date wasn't set. The Commission had some concerns on

mention of transportation hubs several times causing the chair to intervene into the testimony. The chair stated that there was no mention in the USPS filings with the PRC about using hubs and told Mr.

mail handler. When further pressed, Mr. Williams stated that a clerk could do the transferring between trucks if needed.

During this testimony, Mr. Williams stated that on March 30th all plants would have a plan that will work with the Rationalization Plan no matter if it's a gaining, losing or static plant. This caught several commissioners and some counsel by surprise.

Public Representative Chris Laver asked if the consolidation model was used to reduce the impact on first class mail by shifting workloads, closing fewer plants and reducing layoffs. Mr. Williams said "no."

Mr. Williams acknowledges that the USPS didn't try using the rationalization model to capture excess capacity without reducing Service Standards.

APWU counsel followed up questioning of Mr. Williams' answers about service standards and asked about Priority and Express being affected. Mr. Williams stated that Priority and Express would not be changed, however there was no information if this was included in the USPS model.

Commissioner Mark Acton asked how the APWU contract affects the USPS consolidation plan. Mr. Williams stated it provided more flexibility in scheduling.

"Mr. Williams also stated that the USPS plans to announce reduction of Service Standards sometime in mid-April, but when questioned by the commission, a firm date wasn't set."

this and insisted that the USPS consider that the PRC could rule opposite of what the USPS wants and to proceed with caution.

GCA counsel confirmed that bulk mail in some areas might need to be brought in the morning for it to be processed the same day under the current plant consolidation. USPS assured that they will keep BMEUs open and in close proximity of their original location if they have to sell off the building when the plant is closed.

NNA counsel was informed that some of the plan would affect service to periodicals and newspapers.

During this testimony, Mr. Williams made

Williams and USPS counsel to file this intention to use hubs.

Mr. Williams then informed NNA counsel that the USPS didn't have enough information related in tracking periodicals, or at least reliable data. NNA expressed concerns to the PRC of the lack of modeling for the plant rationalization taking into account this service impact.

NPMHU counsel just clarified some of the filings when it was noticed that a transportation hub in Tennessee had ZERO mail handlers in its AMP study. Mr. Williams stated that since transportation of mail will change, a reduction of trucks entering and leaving this hub was not enough to support a full time

BEST NEWS STORY (Honorable Mention)

Unions win BIG! MVS drivers keep their jobs!

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

The U.S. Postal Service recently announced their intention to contract MVS driving work for the entire state of California. The Union filed a court injunction to stop the postal service from eliminating over a thousand jobs, which would have caused irreparable damage to the MVS Craft if it had been implemented and then later reversed in arbitration hearings.

The outcome of the court case was that the USPS could not eliminate even one job until after the arbitration hearing decision was issued to the parties.

In his decision, Arbitrator Goldberg rejected the USPS position that the postal service can overlook higher subcontracting costs when making outsourcing decisions!

"The Postal Service can no longer justify contracting out work that would be less expensive to keep in house" on the grounds that it has given due consideration to cost as well as other factors outlined in the Collective Bargaining Agreement, Goldberg wrote. A Memorandum of Understanding negotiated as part of the 2010 Collective Bargaining Agreement states that if work can be performed by postal employees at a cost that is equal to or less than the cost of subcontracting, it will be performed in-house.

Each of the factors listed in the CBA must be considered, the arbitrator wrote, "but if factors other than cost do not rule out keeping work in house, and the cost of keeping work in-house would be less than contracting out, both the text and the bargaining history of the contracting MOU require that the work be kept in-house."

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