

# Postal Newsletter

AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION

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NATIONAL POSTAL PRESS ASSOCIATION

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The Meadows Events & Conference Center at Prairie Meadows Hotel, Racetrack & Casino Altoona, Iowa site of the Biennial PPA Conference on August 1-3. Preceding the conference will be a full day of workshops on Wednesday, July 31. The room rate is \$129.00 per day king or double queen occupancy. Current tax rate is 12%. Room reservations can be made through the hotel's website, [www.prairiemeadows.com](http://www.prairiemeadows.com) using group code 07292019APW or call 1-800-325-9015. Prairie Meadows will provide free shuttle service from Des Moines International Airport, complimentary Internet access and no charge for parking a vehicle.

## Plans progress for August PPA Conference

On August 1-3, APWU editors, associate editors and officers will meet in Altoona, Iowa for the 2019 biennial conference of the APWU National Postal Press Association. Preceding the conference will be a full day of workshops on Wednesday, July 31.

Established in 1967 and held every two years, the PPA Conference is not only for editors. It is an educational event specifically designed to help participants, whether novice or experienced sharpen their communication skills. Regardless of the office held in our union, learning about communication as a means to better represent the membership should be a part of every representative's educational development. This conference is also a must for local or state organizations that are interested in establishing (or re-establishing) a communications program for its membership.

Led by a group of talented instructors from the Labor Movement, the intensive four-day program will cover a variety of

communication-related topics. In addition to eleven workshops, the gathering will include three general sessions, four networking events and an awards banquet.

The conference will be held at The Meadows Events & Conference Center at Prairie Meadows Hotel, Racetrack & Casino Altoona, Iowa. A guestroom rate of \$129.00 per day for king or double queen 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 12%. To make room reservations, please visit the website, [www.prairiemeadows.com](http://www.prairiemeadows.com) using group code 07292019APW or call 1-800-325-9015. Prairie Meadows will provide free shuttle service from Des Moines International Airport, complimentary Internet access and no charge for parking a vehicle.

Further details about the conference, including workshop and registration information will be provided in the coming weeks.

## The union: an organization made up of real people

By Tony Carobine, President

What is the most read column in a local, commercial newspaper? That's a question I often ask participants at editor's workshops. This question usually generates a number of responses, such as: Dear Abby, sports, editorials, etc. Actually, the correct answer is the obituary column. Even though the reader may not know the unfortunate individual who passed on, this example demonstrates the interest that people have in people.

This same principal should be kept in mind when we prepare material for our publications. Union publications that employ what is called "member-oriented" labor journalism enjoy an extremely high readership. What is member-oriented labor journalism? Basically, it involves including the rank and file members in the publication; telling the union's story through the experiences of its members, as opposed to only a forum for the leadership to pass down information. By including the membership in the paper, by making it the "member's publication," two things happen. Readership increases and members are more likely to see the union as their organization and as a result are more inclined to be supportive.

In this regard, please consider the following:

- **A well-balanced publication should not only inform the members but also encourage participation in the union, directly and indirectly.** Careful attention should be given to how information published in a union paper is presented, and most importantly, received. Ask yourself: Does the paper portray the union as an "institution" or an organization made up of

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

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



# PPA Conference: an investment in your union

By Edward J. Brennan,  
Secretary-Treasurer

This summer, the American Postal Workers Union National Postal Press Association will hold its biennial conference in Altoona, Iowa. This event will bring together many APWU communicators from around the country who have varying levels of experience with publishing union newsletters from the seasoned editor to the new editor. However, some of our editors

tional event in our union going back to 1967!

As editors we should take pride in our positions and have the desire to put forth our best efforts in performing the duties of editing. We should learn the necessity of obtaining instruction in both the fundamental mechanics of editing a newsletter and also the legal aspects of those things that go into that publication.

**Additionally, the PPA Conference**

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***"The PPA Conference is not just for the education of editors. Communicating with the membership is also the responsibility of every representative of our union. Therefore, workshops presented at the conference are not only geared towards helping editors, but also helping all union representatives improve their communication skills."***

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may remain at home for one reason or another and our entire union could suffer because of it.

Our editors are a major link in the educational chain of our union. They are the lifeline between the union leadership and the rank and file members. They are the guardians of the written word. They are the protectors of good journalism and fair and honest reporting. They are the voice of local and state organizations. They are the voice of the members whom they represent. They are the protectors of proper grammar, freedom of the press and the legalities of journalism which relate to postal union publications. They should be the trained editors which our union needs so badly during these trying times.

**Every local or state organization should finance the education of their editor through the Postal Press Association. The PPA Conference is only held every two years and is a longstanding educa-**

**is not just for the education of editors. Communicating with the membership is also the responsibility of every representative of our union. Therefore, workshops presented at the conference are not only geared towards helping editors, but also helping all union representatives improve their communication skills.**

The PPA Conference is just like money in the bank for our union. Everything we need to know to become more knowledgeable communicators is there for the taking. All we have to do is be there and be a part of the conference. It is an insurance policy for our local, state, and national union in that the knowledge gained at the conference could insure the education of our membership. It could insure the addition of members. It could rally our members around our national union. It could insure us from lawsuits or election violations. Do we have adequate coverage? Plan to attend the PPA Conference. Protect and help to strengthen your union!



# When the national APWU calls . . .

By Cathy Hanson,  
Editor-at-Large

How does your local respond? During contract negotiations, the national APWU has called for union members to wear union gear on Thursdays to show solidarity.

Knowing how much people love pictures in their newsletters, getting involved in something happening all over the country and then showing that involvement is key to showing your membership they are part of something much bigger.

Every union member wants to know what's happening when it's contract time. Being involved in something as easy as wearing a T-shirt on a designated day promotes solidarity and again, is key to showing your membership they are part of something bigger.

Are you promoting that solidarity in your newsletters? Editors are the perfect people to promote this kind of activity – people expect us to take pictures and print them. Show your membership you support the national APWU by passing along the message they've put out. Your local's newsletter is the link your members need to connect to that big picture, use it!



## Answering the call for solidarity

**Minneapolis Area Local officers, Left to right: Dave Gangl, executive vice president, Donna Thompson, clerk craft director, Dave Wold, assistant director, Bernard Juran, assistant director, in front, Teresa Hable, assistant director.**

# 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.



# The union: an organization

*Continued from page 1*

real people? Do members continually ask, "What is **the union** going to do about this problem? Or do they ask, what are **we** going to do about this problem?"

- **Present information in a way that brings a "human touch" to the paper.** Including the membership will help overcome the perception that the union is not some hard, cold institution located in a faraway place, but instead an organization made up of real people – members and officers alike. Using this approach is a step towards building readership and more union involvement.

- **People like to read about people, themselves first and others second.** By striving to bring a human touch to a union publication and including the membership, the paper becomes much more interesting to read and the union is less likely to be perceived as an institution or a clique being run by a few. The idea is to develop the paper into a forum for an exchange of ideas and a place to share the experiences of members not only at work, but in other aspects of their lives as well. By employing this practice, readership will increase and members will more likely see the union as **their** organization.

- **Effective union education and communication means using as much available space as possible to reflect the experiences and voices of the union membership.** People will respond and get involved when they have an understanding of what's going on and believe they have a reasonable chance to change things. Make the pages of the paper come alive by including real members and not just a place to pass down information from officers.

Following are some member-oriented labor journalism ideas for your publication. Keep in mind that when readers pick up a publication, the first thing they look for is their favorite column. Therefore, any column that is devoted to people will become the favorite column of many of your readers. They will open the publication to find it. An added caveat is that once you've gotten them into the publication, it's likely they will stay and read more.

## Presenting the news

Reporting on union activities and happenings in the post office can also be done

in a way that brings a human touch to this important news and demonstrates that the union is actually made up of real people. **(Coverage of rank and file members actively involved in their union; such as wearing union gear on Thursdays during contract negotiations, "The U.S. Mail is Not For Sale" rallies, service cut demonstrations and union solidarity gatherings have noticeably increased in local and**

on a daily basis affecting the membership. Reporting this news with a human touch is a great way to involve the members and promote the union.

## Members speak out

Devote a column in each issue whereby randomly selected members are asked the same thought-provoking question. Publish their responses (and if possible, a photo of

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***"Coverage of rank and file members actively involved in their union; such as wearing union gear on Thursdays during contract negotiations, 'The U.S. Mail is Not For Sale' rallies, service cut demonstrations and union solidarity gatherings have noticeably increased in local and state publications over the past several months. Yes indeed, the union is made up of real people!"***

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**state publications over the past several months. Yes indeed, the union is made up of real people!)**

We often read about substantial labor-management settlements that impact the membership in a positive way. What is missing in most of these reports is including the reactions and opinions of real members as to how their union was successful on their behalf. Interview these members and find out how they feel about what the union did for them.

An article complete with quotes from some of the affected members brings a human touch to the situation while still reporting the news. And for the reader it says, "This is more than a settlement on paper. It involves real people that I know personally!" Plus, it demonstrates the value of the union.

Whether it's protests, rallies or grievance settlements; such articles become much more interesting when they include real people, plus it's a way to demonstrate the value of the union through the experiences of its members. The possibility for such stories is endless because conditions change

each member). The possibility of developing questions is endless; from union issues to management policies to community topics. This makes very interesting reading and brings a human touch to the paper, plus is a step to increasing membership participation in the union. Also, it sends a message to all members that their opinions and input are important. This may prompt other members to write a letter to the editor voicing their opinions in response to this column.

## Personality profiles

Many APWU members lead interesting lives and are involved in various activities outside the post office. From volunteer efforts, hobbies, to unique talents, the membership is a fascinating and diverse group of people. Articles of this nature make very interesting reading and recognize members for their achievements.

## Importance of union membership

Many members (or potential members) are not aware of the importance of union membership, and may not realize the ben-



# on made up of real people

efits enjoyed today were not generously provided by management but were achieved because of the union. Articles of this nature can stimulate participation and bring about an increased awareness of the union.

Interviewing longtime members about how conditions were at the time they began working for the Postal Service compared to now is an excellent way to present such information. Many of these individuals have very fascinating stories to tell that will make good human-interest columns. Such a column demonstrates the importance of the union in the lives of members and again illustrates that the union is made up of real people.

Members or potential members are more inclined to listen to people they perceive most like themselves. In other words, they will listen to their peers more than anyone else, especially when it involves promotion of the union. Every opportunity possible should be used to promote the union through the experiences of real members instead of solely relying upon union leaders.

## Organization involvement

Some locals are involved in community efforts to help the needy in such ways as

food drives, “adopt a family,” working at telethons, etc. Articles highlighting these efforts bring out the human side of the union – people helping people; as opposed to “the only thing the union does is file grievances.” An added touch is to interview members who are involved in these events to get their reactions.

## Member only benefits

There are a variety of benefits and services only available to union members. An effective way to publicize these “member only” programs is to interview members who’ve been helped because of the union making them available. Again, such stories bring a human touch to union benefits and services, promotes the union and is something the reader can relate to and visualize as it involves real people – fellow union members.

## Photographs

Just as people like to read about people,

people also like to look at people. Including photographs of the membership in a union publication is another way to make the pages of a union paper come alive and show that the union is alive – an organization made up of real living and breathing people.

## Devising a plan

Developing ways to increase membership participation should be a priority of every local. How a member perceives the union can often be determined by what he or she reads and sees in the paper. Adding a human touch and devising ways to include the membership in a union publication may sound trivial on the surface but will go a long way to increasing readership and support for the union. The results may surprise you. Instead of someone saying, “What is the union going to do about this problem? They just might say, “What are we going to do about this problem?” Far fetched? No! Achievable? Yes!

## In search of that captivating headline

People glance at the headlines to see what the articles are about. If headlines or pictures don’t grab them, many will turn away, without reading another word.

Coming up with good, simple headlines is one of your biggest challenges. Don’t just top each article with a label. Take the time to write headlines that lure people into eagerly reading one article after another.

Don’t get your heart set on a particular headline right away. Let your imagination go, writing down all the possibilities you can think of, even if many turn out awful. Then pick the best and see if you can improve them further; or combine the better two so-so headlines to get one great headline.

## Attention PPA Members:

**Send in your photos!**

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

The APWU Communications Department needs your help! Please send photos of local officers and members at APWU local or state (retiree chapter or auxiliary) sponsored events, community parades, picnics, or any other civic gathering.

Photographs from events such as informational picketing, supporting a picket line or organizing drive for other union brothers and sisters, charitable activities, to handing out flyers or membership picnics, would be appreciated.

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





# Steal away – but give proper credit

By Jenny Gust,  
Editor-at-Large

One of the lovely options we have as members of the PPA is to steal! Yes, you got that right, steal! What I am referring to, of course, is reprinting articles from each other's publications.

Don't you love it when you have space to fill that you can look at other papers and perhaps find the perfect article/artwork/cartoon that says just what you wish you or one of your officers had? Someone with more knowledge on a certain subject or a different take on something has done the work for you!

Yeah! We are here to educate our members. And if it takes stealing to get

to that goal – go for it!

But here's the deal – you knew there was a catch, right? **You must always give proper credit for someone else's work.** There is nothing more irritating than printing a great article that you or one of your members wrote and then seeing it repeated in another publication and there is no credit, or just as bad, improper credit listed with the article.

How do you do it correctly? I am "stealing" the PPA Reprint Policy from the *APWU National Postal Press Association Constitution and Ready Reference Guide*. Yes I am stealing it and giving proper credit! Please take the time to read this policy and save it for future reference.

## PPA Reprint Policy

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

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

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

For example, publication A publishes an article which is then reprinted in publication B. The editor of publication C reads publication B and also decides to reprint the article. The editor of publication C should give credit to publication A because the article **originated** in and belongs to publication A.

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

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

All editors take great pride in their accomplishments, as do individual writers. There is nothing more unfair than to see someone lift material – not include a credit line – and in some instances imply they are the original writer. This is contrary to ethical journalism and most unfair to fellow members.

## Living a positive life

It's a simple philosophy, but one that can have vast repercussions. Research shows that most illnesses, including headaches, backaches, heart disease, and digestive ailments, can be caused or influenced by our feelings. A positive attitude will help you work better, too. Optimism gives you energy and enthusiasm.

Next time you're ready to give in to the blues, try these tips.

requires 78 muscles. A smile uses only 14.

### 4. Use positive people as role models.

Focus on someone who seems to make the best of any situation. This person can show you how he or she maintains that attitude.

**5. Learn to accept situations over which you have no control.** It can be frustrating to see a problem that needs fixing, but sometimes it is either inappropriate or simply impossible for you to help.

**6. Be satisfied with results once you've done your best.** You can't do any better, so don't focus on your limitations.

**7. Be part of the solution.** It's more challenging-and inspiring-to try to fix problems than just to point them out and dwell on them.

**8. Take time to reward yourself.** You deserve appreciation, from yourself, as well as from others.

**9. Expect the best, not the worst both of people and situations.**

**10. Appreciate the good things that happen.** Stop focusing on what is lacking in your life. Count your blessings, not your troubles.

It's not always easy to maintain a positive attitude. Like most things, it requires work. But the results are worth it!

**"DON'T LET  
YESTERDAY TAKE  
UP TOO MUCH  
OF TODAY."**

WILL ROGERS

**1. Don't take everything so seriously.** There are few problems that have truly monumental consequences.

**2. Try to see the positive aspects of problems.** You can find a bright side in almost every situation – if you look hard enough.

**3. Smile.** It's easier than frowning, which



# Internal union elections and the LMRDA

*Editor's Note: The following information is being provided as a guide to ensure fair and equal treatment of all candidates during this national APWU election year and to help APWU affiliates avoid election law violations.*

Title IV of the Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959, as amended (LMRDA or the Act) establishes election procedures to be followed by all unions covered by this Act, regardless of whether their constitution and bylaws so provide. The Act does not spell out detailed procedures; rather, it sets minimum requirements. Beyond this, elections are to be conducted according to the constitution and bylaws of each union, as long as the union's rules do not conflict with the provisions of the Act.

Under Section 1209 of the Postal Reorganization Act, unions of U.S. Postal Service employees are subject to the LMRDA.

Therefore, the LMRDA administered by the United States Department of Labor must be followed concerning internal union elections. In addition, sections of the Act contain provisions affecting the use of a labor union publication in internal union elections.

Section 401 (g) of the LMRDA provides that: *"No monies received by any labor organization by way of dues, assessment or similar levy, and no monies of an employer shall be contributed or applied to promote the candidacy of any person in any election subject to the provisions of this title. Such monies of a labor organization may be utilized for notices, factual statements of issues not involving candidates, and other expenses necessary for holding an election."*

This means that since a union publication is funded by the union, it cannot be used for the purpose of promoting the candidacy of any individual running for union office. Also, any social media (websites, Facebook, YouTube, twitter, etc.) that involves the use of union resources to operate also cannot be used to promote (or attack) anyone's candi-

dacy. The same is true regarding the use of any union facilities and equipment. Such activity is an indirect expenditure of union funds which is prohibited under Section 401(g) of the LMRDA.

To avoid promoting the candidacy of any person, union publications should afford fair and equal treatment or publicity to candidates for union office and be fair

the union may print this information as a **straight news story**. This news story can be reported only if the decision has been made by the membership at a regular membership meeting and **not if the endorsement was made only by the executive board**. The story must be written strictly as a news item and must not be allowed to drift over the line into an area of propaganda for (or against) those candidates who are endorsed – or who failed to gain the endorsement.

Moreover, the printing of such endorsements in a news story should be distributed to the publication's normal mailing list. To increase the circulation in an effort to reach a larger audience only for the purpose of publicizing such endorsements could be construed as employing union funds and/or equip-

ment to advance the candidacy of a candidate or candidates.

A "Letters to the Editor" column should not be used for the purpose of advancing the candidacy of an individual or individuals nor should it be used to attack a candidate or candidates. Letters to the Editor should either be eliminated or closely monitored during the election period in order to avoid conflict with the intent of the law.

These laws are not intended to restrict anyone's rights, but rather to protect the rights of the membership and to ensure equal treatment for all candidates.

## Union election review

Following are some questions that may arise during the APWU national election period. This is by no means a complete list, as it is not possible to cover every situation that could occur. Please contact the PPA for assistance with questions not covered here.

### What does "promote the candidacy of any person" mean?

To promote the candidacy of any person means to show a preference for a particular

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and impartial in reporting the activities of candidates.

If it chooses, a union newspaper can make equal space available to each bona fide candidate running for any particular office, as long as the candidates are notified on an equal basis of the availability of the publication for this purpose. The law is specific in this regard. A union newspaper has the choice of all candidates for a particular office – or none. Once the publication decides to open the newspaper to candidates, it must offer space to all candidates for that particular office on an equal basis.

Paid political advertising is legal provided that all candidates for a particular office or offices are given an equal opportunity to purchase space for an ad. And, provided that all candidates are charged the same consistent with space used.

Also, a union may neither attack a candidate in a union-financed publication nor urge the nomination or election of a candidate in a union-financed letter to the members.

If a local endorses candidates for national or state APWU office at a regular or specially called meeting of the general membership,



# Internal union elections and the LMRDA

*Continued from page 7*

candidate or groups of candidates. This is prohibited regardless of whether the preference is shown by actively supporting one candidate or by attacking another candidate.

**I receive an informational article during the election period from a candidate (either incumbent or non-incumbent) which I believe would be of interest to my membership. This person is not a regular contributor or has never submitted an article before.**

**Can I publish the article if no mention is made of the fact the writer is a candidate?**

No. Even though the article makes no mention of the fact the writer is a candidate, the writer is not a regular contributor and therefore would in effect be receiving exposure (during the election period) to the detriment of other candidates.

**Would it be appropriate to accept campaign statements from candidates running for specific national offices for publication in a local or state paper as long as each candidate for that specific office is given an equal opportunity to submit a campaign statement?**

Yes. This would not be an election law violation as long as all candidates are treated equally. For example, each candidate must

be permitted the same amount of words or space and time to submit the statement. The affected candidates should be sent a notice about this opportunity on the same day, preferably by certified mail, return receipt. That way, if there is any question later about equal notification, there will be proof that each candidate was afforded the same opportunity. The statements should also be equally presented so as not to draw more attention to

When endorsements are made at a general membership meeting and published, they must be presented as a straight news story. The news story must not drift over the line into propaganda (for or against) those candidates who are endorsed – or who failed to gain the endorsement.

**Is it legal to sell advertising space in a union publication to candidates?**

Yes, provided that all candidates for each office for which ads will be accepted are equally notified of the opportunity (preferably by certified mail, return receipt) to place an ad and all candidates are charged the same rate. Also,



## ELECTIONS MATTER

one statement over another. This means, for example, that typographical enhancements such as bold face type, bulleted or numbered lists, type set in all caps, underlined type, or extra punctuation should not be permitted.

**If the executive board endorses candidates for national APWU office, can I print this information in the paper?**

No. The only type of endorsements that can be reported in your publication are endorsements made by the general membership at a regular membership meeting. You cannot in any fashion report endorsements made only by the executive board.

such advertisements should be equally presented. That means the advertisement from one candidate should not receive more prominence as in better page placement than an ad from another candidate.

**My local has a web page. Can I publish articles on this web page promoting the election of candidates for national office?**

No. The same standards apply to web pages (and other social media) as union publications. The web page is a union resource paid for with union funds and union funds cannot be used to promote (or attack) anyone's candidacy as specified in Section 401 (g) of the LMRDA.