



The Hi-Lites



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RETURN



SENDER

Save Our
Postal Service



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**Paul McKenna
President**

I hope all of you have had a safe and enjoyable summer and have kept safe from the COVID 19 virus.

I am sure you are all aware that we are in a crazy time with the Postal Service and what the new PMG (Postmaster General) is trying to do to make us and the Postal Service all look incompetent. Management has cut staffing so bad that it's hard for us to get the mail out, but somehow, we continue to do it. It is in all Postal Workers DNA that every piece of mail that comes in everyday leaves the same day.

We all realize that we provide a vital service to our neighbors, friends, and family, and to the overall economy of our country. But for the new PMG, who knows nothing about our postal mission, does not care if we get the mail out or not.

We as Postal Workers can no longer afford to sit back and do nothing while the Postal Service crumbles at our feet. We must get involved to save this institution. We can no longer wait for others to do the work for us. If we do not stand up and fight for our jobs, why should others? At the very least, we all need to stay informed of what some politicians and the PMG want to do to us. This is not about Republicans vs Democrats. This is about protecting our jobs and providing the service that the Ameri-

America Depends On Us

"We as Postal Workers can no longer afford to sit back and do nothing while the Postal Service crumbles at our feet."

can people depend on us to deliver their mail and packages.

We need every Postal Worker to call their Representative in Congress to tell them that they need to Save Our Postal Service.

They need to stop the destruction and removal of postal equipment, stop closing post offices in our communities and staff our offices with enough employees to provide the service that the American people deserve. We need to tell our elected officials to pass postal legislation that will keep us funded for generations to come. We also need to take time to attend a local rally at a nearby post office to show support to our co-workers and our country that we are all willing to fight to keep the postal service doing what we do best, and that's delivering medicine, paychecks and packages.

It is very unfortunate that the Postmaster General has shown that he does not believe in that same commitment. Without any consultation or input from postal workers, postal customers or the mailing community, he launched a series of actions that are harming service. In our own Main Processing Plant in Milwaukee, four (4) of those machines have been removed over the past several months and more are scheduled to be removed. Each of these machines can sort 30,000- 35,000 letters an hour. Many of these machines are in operation 16-20 hrs a day.

By removing these machines like PMG DeJoy is doing, could create

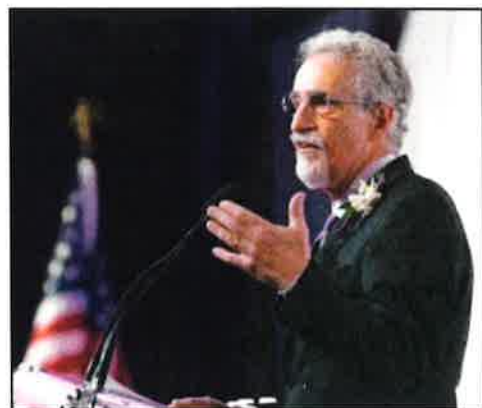
problems in the near future as mail volume starts to pick up for the holidays and elections. We believe removing the mail processing machines is a deliberate action to slow the mail down for the elections, and will only undermine the Postal Service's ability to fulfill its mission and drive away revenue – and the public trust – that the Postal Service needs. Remember, the word SERVICE is in the title of the organization in which PMJ DeJoy was chosen to lead. We would hope he knows this, but it appears he does not.

Now, that the National Contract for the APWU has been settled, its time to start negotiating for our local issues. We have received several proposals from members on ideas for changing language in our local agreement that we will put forward to management. We have had several meetings with managements negotiating team for our Milwaukee area local contract, and we are hopeful that we can make some positive changes that help our members.

Many of the proposals are to tweak overtime issues that will give our members more options for those who want to work overtime. We continually look into language that benefits all of the crafts that we represent.

Statement by APWU President, Mark Dimondstein

Postmaster General Louis DeJoy Announces That Recent Changes Slowing The Mail Will Be Temporarily Reversed



The members of the American Postal Workers Union applaud the efforts of postal customers who, along with civil rights and veterans organizations, other labor unions, community groups, and elected officials, pushed back against newly implemented policies instituted by Postmaster General Louis DeJoy. They fought against those measures that were designed to delay mail by canceling overtime, limiting mail transportation, eliminating sorting machines, and reducing Post Office hours.

We welcome the postmaster's reversal of these policies. These rollbacks would not have happened without public outcry and civic action. The public would not have been aware of these regressive policies if postal workers around the country had not sounded the alarm.

However, this fight for the public Post Office is far from over.

The Covid-19 induced economic crisis is deeply affecting the projected finances of the United States Postal Service. As a public agency that normally does not rely on tax dollars, a steep drop in revenue linked to the pandemic will cause the USPS to run out of money early next year.

In order for postal workers to continue to carry out their vital work and deliver for the people every day, the USPS is in immediate need of \$25 billion in Covid-related financial relief. It's time for Congress to deliver.

Up until now, the Trump administration has blocked the USPS from any direct financial assistance. The USPS is an essential public service that binds the country together and delivers vital public health information, medicine, financial transactions and needed supplies to every American household and business and is a critical component in our election process with vote-by-mail access to the ballot box.

We do our job. Congress and the administration need to do theirs and ensure that postal workers can safely and reliably deliver for the people of the country during this year and beyond.

The struggle to save the public Postal Service is far from over. The USPS, which delivers to 160 million addresses every day and is normally supported by the sale of stamps and services, needs emergency financial help. And we must ensure that these rollbacks announced today are made permanent and that the people's Post Office remains a public service. This is the United States Postal Service, not Postal Business. It is overwhelmingly supported by the people and belongs to the people. They have made it clear that they intend to keep it.





What Is Advanced Sick Leave?

"...you must submit medical documentation supporting your request."

Per the Employee Labor Manual (ELM), Advance Sick Leave is sick leave that “may be advanced in cases of serious disability or ailment if there is reason to believe the employee will return to duty. Sick leave may be advanced whether or not employees have annual leave to their credit.”

Your doctor says you will need to be off work for 3 weeks and you can return to work after the 3 weeks. Since many of us would be in a certain degree of financial hardship without any money coming in for 3 weeks, the Advance Sick Leave would certainly come in handy. When you return to work, the sick leave that was advanced to you would have to be paid back. This is accomplished by the USPS deducting your sick leave as you accrue it until the sick leave is paid back. Also, you do not have to ex-

When applying for Advance Sick Leave, you must submit medical documentation supporting your request. For example, your physician can state that “due to surgery, the employee will need to be off work during whatever timeframe and will return to duty after this time.”

In lieu of giving the request to your supervisor, members can go to their steward who can ensure the request is properly handled. While there are some capable supervisors, unfortunately, many have a tendency to forget about issues like this which will leave you scrambling at the last minute. Thus, see your steward if possible.

The main advantage of Advance Sick Leave is that it allows someone to continue receiving a paycheck during an absence that would normally have been without pay due to lack of sick leave.

Advance Sick Leave is a seldom used benefit that is sometimes misunderstood by both craft employees and management. Therefore, it is important that you ask your union steward for information on this so as to properly determine if Advance Sick Leave will work for you.



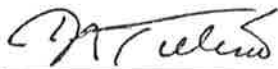
**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN THE
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
AND THE
AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION, AFL-CIO**

Re: Annual Leave Carryover for Leave Year 2021

The parties agree that for leave year 2021, regular work force career employees covered by the USPS-APWU Agreement may carry over 520 hours of accumulated annual leave from leave year 2020 to leave year 2021.

In all other respects, the ELM provisions for payment of accumulated leave are not changed because of this Memorandum.

This MOU will expire December 31, 2021.



Doug A. Tulino
Vice President, Labor Relations
United States Postal Service



Mark Dimondstein
President
American Postal Workers
Union, AFL-CIO

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN THE
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
AND THE
AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION, AFL-CIO**

Re: Annual Leave Exchange for Leave Year 2021

The parties agree that APWU career employees will be allowed to sell back a maximum of eighty (80) hours of annual leave prior to the beginning of leave year 2021 provided the following two (2) criteria are met:

1. The employee must be at the maximum leave carryover ceiling at the start of the leave year, and
2. The employee must have used fewer than 75 sick leave hours (excluding emergency sick leave taken under the Family First Coronavirus Response Act) in leave year 2020.

In all other respects, the provisions of the Annual Leave Exchange program will remain unchanged.

This MOU will expire December 31, 2021.



Doug A. Tulino
Vice President, Labor Relations
United States Postal Service



Mark Dimondstein
President
American Postal Workers
Union, AFL-CIO



Chris Czubakowski
Vice President

The Trump Administration is always saying the quiet part out loud and the current politicization and privatization of the USPS has been no exception. The plan to wholesale privatize the People's Post Office was previously announced in a June 2018 OMB report.

At the behest of the privatizers, Congress passed legislation in 2006 that required the USPS to pre-fund 75 years of retiree benefits into the future.

No other business, private or public, has ever been subject to such onerous fiscal demands. This legislation also prohibited the USPS from raising rates.

The fix was in. It must be noted that this legislation led to losses of 5.5 billion dollars (or more) a year over the past decade. It must also be noted this legislation accounted for 92 percent of overall loss since 2007.

If the USPS were allowed to act like any other company or agency, it would have been in the black in 6 of the past 7 years. These losses are why the agency has been forced to reduce staffing and service, close post offices and has been unable to invest in infrastructure, new vehicles, etc.

The American people finally had enough and in response to their concerns, the House repealed this horri-

Dear America

"There is nothing more American than the People's Post Office."

ble legislation with the USPS Fairness Act this past spring. The APWU was successful in forming bipartisan support in the Senate and grew confident this legislation could pass if brought to a vote.

Then the pandemic hit.

Considering this prior effort to starve the USPS to death appears to be on life support, the privatizers have now bypassed legislative avenues to break the People's Post Office and have placed one of their own at the helm of it.

As such, the current PMG, a Trump Mega donor with a reported 70 million dollars of assets in our competitors, is currently exploiting the pandemic and the election for the privatizers in order to shake public confidence in the agency by disenfranchising voters and chasing away customers.

The People's Post Office currently has bi-partisan support of over 90 percent, a record high. As such, this rating poses an obvious obstacle to privatization.

The general public should be aware that the recent directives by PMG DeJoy to delay the mail are just a continuation of a never ending assault upon this agency by corporate privatizers.

The three "D" postal privatization playbook is always the same.

First the privatizers and their allies seek to **DEGRADE** service. This opens the door for them to begin

publicly and relentlessly **DENIGRATE** the institution and its employees in order to undermine public support and shake public confidence. Finally, if they are successful in those efforts they can come in for the kill and **DESTROY** (privatize) the institution.

President Trump continuously denigrates the People's Post Office as a 'joke'. Yet, as one American dies every minute because of a failure of leadership, those who remain alive, including veterans and seniors, depend on their Post Office more than ever in these unprecedented times for the timely and affordable delivery of their medication, checks, and ballots.

This is far from a joke! These current delays based on the unseen hand of privatization have serious, real life consequences for everyday Americans regardless of political affiliation.

We ask that all Americans contact their legislators and tell them they oppose any effort by the current PMG to delay the mail including the removal of machines, leaving mail behind, the reduction of hours, and the removal of collection boxes.

Why do the privatizers want to destroy the post office? Simply put, they currently cannot compete with its dedicated employees and a national network that provides such a high level of universal and affordable service. Under the status quo, not only are they unable to significantly raise their rates but also reward their shareholders with access to every mailbox

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in America. Unfortunately, if they ever succeed in their efforts to sacrifice the People's Post Office at the alter of private profit, it is expected that many Americans, especially in rural areas, will see mailing and delivery costs skyrocket.

The APWU believes the PMG should be serving the American public and not the business, personal or political interests of politicians and the privatizers. The American public deserves nothing less than prompt and reliable service. There is nothing more American than the People's Post Office. United with each other we will save this national treasure by defeating the efforts of the privatizers that are currently slowing down the delivery of our mail.

* * *



Marvin Rivera
West Sectional Director

Make Sure You VOTE !

I hope everyone is doing well. I hope no one has had to personally deal with the COVID 19 pandemic.

Please wear a mask. Wear it for your spouse. Wear it for your son. Wear it for your daughter. Wear it for you parents. Wear it for your co-workers. Wear it for your daughter. Wear it for your parents. Wear it for your co-workers.

By now we should all know the importance of our privilege to VOTE.

- Vote for your job. Vote for your benefits. Vote for your job. Vote for your co-worker.
- Vote for your job. Vote for your spouse. Vote for your children. Vote for your Parents. Vote for your Grandparents.
- Vote for your job. Vote for the Doctors and Nurses. Vote for the CNAs. Vote for the Teachers.
- Vote for your job. Vote for the grocery store workers. Vote for all bus drivers.
- Vote for your job. Vote for the ambulance drivers. Vote for the Firefighters
- Vote for your job. Vote for the Police Officers. Vote for your right to peacefully protest.

I could go on and on here...

I hope I have made my point. Everyone needs to get out and vote. Vote by mail. Vote in person, be safe while doing so. If you are able to donate your time as a Poll Worker, that would be great. Either way... just make sure you VOTE!!!

This election in November will affect us as Postal Workers like no other. We have all seen what some have done to try to demonize the Postal Service. Don't let that happen. Don't let them take away our lively hood, our chance at a decent retirement. Don't let them take away your families future. Don't let them take away your freedom to live where you want to, love who you want to, practice your religion the way you want to, and most importantly vote the way you want to.



Larry Brown jr
Automation Director

This article is not going to be long. It will not be a big thought provoking "think piece" that I attempt to write in order to capture the mind of the reader. This article is going to be straight to the point. So, lets gets straight to it.

What are we doing? Why do I, or anyone, have to convince you that you want your job. We have seen what has been going on in congress for years.

They've been flirting with 5 days a week delivery and changing the delivery standards. How long have we been asking for some sort of legislation that would end this prefunding mandate that has crippled the Postal Service for years? Not to mention that the prefunding mandate was only put in place to speed up the process of privatization. (That is the only reason, don't believe me, do your research...) You watched it all come to a head.

We were classified as essential workers when the pandemic hit, yet we didn't receive any type of hazard pay as many other essential workers did. The leader of our country called us a joke in front of the nation and then went on to put one of his mega donors, that has never worked for the Post Office before, in charge of us and he immediately started destroying everything!

Vote For Your Job

"There is clearly, a candidate that has proven to you that he wants to get rid of YOUR JOB."

Yet, I still have to sit here and tell you who you should be voting for.

Interesting story. I was talking with a guy/gal the other day, and they made a comment. I won't say this person was a Trump supporter because I don't know. I just know the question that was asked and the comment that was made. The comment that was made was, "I see all of the "bumper stickers" in the Union office, and quite frankly I don't agree with any one of them."

Bumper stickers that say things like: UNITED WE STAND, BUY UNION, WE ARE STRONGER TOGETHER.

Okay, I see one that says Latinos for Obama, and another one that says vote Obama. These have to be the bumper stickers that this person disagrees with, right? Because how could you not agree with the other ones? Are we not stronger together? Should we not be buying Union made? I won't speak on standing united, as I know that will open up a conversation that some of us are not willing to have. So, maybe this person disagreed with that one also? As I stated earlier, I won't say he was a Trump supporter, but you can see where I'm drawing MY opinions from.

I said all of that to say this. We all see things different. When voting, we vote for social issues such as gay rights and abortion issues. Some believe their vote is religious. I understand all of that, but let me promise you something...let your livelihood be dramatically changed, or even taken away from you, and I

promise you will find yourself not caring so much about all of the other social issues that you cared so much about before! Gay rights and abortion issues won't mean so much when you trying to figure out how you are going to pay your bills, or keep a roof over your head.

I was always taught that you don't give bullets to someone holding a gun. You don't help someone hurt you. I know we have a lot of people working with us that THINK, they are democrats or republicans, but what you should KNOW, is that you WORK, for the U. S. Postal Service.

There is clearly, a candidate that has proven to you that he wants to get rid of YOUR JOB.

You know who that person is and the party that he represents. So are you going to help them hurt you? Some of you will, because feeling of belonging to something is an incredible feeling. How does it feel when that feeling of belonging turns into betrayal and you're the only one suffering as a result of your own actions?

I'm not telling anyone who to vote for, what I am saying is based on what you have seen and already do know, based on what you have already witnessed, you should already know where your vote shouldn't be going.



John Miceli
Treasurer

With many different ways to save, the Roth has some advantages other choices can't match.

It's important to save for retirement, but many people find it intimidating to consider all the retirement savings choices they have. Between two different types of IRAs, employer-sponsored retirement plans like 401(k)s, and the wide range of regular brokerage and bank accounts at your disposal, it can be tough to decide which one fits best for you. Amid all your options for saving for retirement, the Roth IRA stands out. Its special characteristics make it especially suitable for many savers. In particular, in the following three situations, you'll often find that a Roth IRA has some real advantages.

1. You're not paying much in income taxes right now

One key way in which the Roth IRA differs from most other retirement savings accounts is in the way it gets taxed. With most retirement accounts, you'll get an upfront deduction for the money you contribute. That's appealing to many people because of the immediate tax savings they'll enjoy, and to them, it's worth paying taxes on withdrawals in retirement in order to get that tax break now.

However, if you're not in a high tax bracket currently, then the value of that upfront deduction isn't very high.

3 Reasons To Pick A Roth IRA Over Other Retirement Accounts

Dan Caplinger, The Motley Fool

That's where the Roth looks like a better choice, because instead of taking a deduction now that won't do you much good, a Roth lets you withdraw money free of tax in retirement. What that amounts to is a decision about when you want to pay your taxes: now or later.

If you're in a low tax bracket now, then locking it in by using a Roth IRA can save you money in the long run. Moreover, with tax rates at their lowest levels in a long time and with the prospect for tax increases at some point in the future, even those with higher incomes might want to consider using a Roth to hedge their bets against possible tax rate hikes.

2. You don't want to deal with required minimum distributions

Using a tax-favored retirement account to save gives you tax-deferred growth, potentially for a long time. As long as you leave money in a retirement account, there's no tax impact, and the income and gains you earn on your investments aren't subject to immediate tax. However, lawmakers didn't want that tax-deferred ride to last forever, so for most retirement accounts, you have to start taking money out of your account when you reach a certain age. Congress just raised that required minimum distribution (RMD) age for regular IRAs and 401(k) plans from 70 1/2 to 72, but that can still be a hassle if you don't yet really need the money. Roth IRAs have the advantage of not forcing you to take RMDs. You can leave your Roth money alone throughout your lifetime, choosing

to leave it for your heirs if you wish. That's a level of flexibility many savers find handy.

3. You need tax flexibility in retirement

Conversely, if you know you'll need your retirement account money for living expenses, there are situations in which having to take it from taxable sources like regular IRAs and 401(k) plans can cause problems. For instance, those whose income is above certain threshold levels have to pay taxes on a portion of their Social Security income, and taxable distributions from regular retirement accounts count toward that threshold.

However, Roth IRA distributions are tax-free and therefore don't count toward the threshold income levels for Social Security taxation. That can not only save you the taxes on your retirement withdrawals but also prevent additional tax on your benefits.

***Look at a Roth**

Roth IRAs aren't for everyone, as they don't always fit perfectly in every situation. However, if you find yourself in one of the three categories above, take a closer look to see if making a Roth IRA part of your financial plan could end up saving you money in the long run.

APWU Members Rally With Community To Demand Congress Save The Post Office

APWU News 8/28/20

On Tuesday, headlines from news outlets across the country read: "Postal Workers Day of Action." As the country continues to rise up in defense of the public Postal Service and against the new policies that have significantly delayed mail, thousands took to the streets under the banner "Save the Post Office." An estimated 300 actions took place in almost every state. Postal workers; labor, civil & human rights activists; community allies; and lawmakers made clear demands for their members of Congress:

- Pass \$25 billion in emergency COVID relief funding for the Postal Service.
- Permanently reverse the policies Postmaster General DeJoy put into place that caused mail delays.

"The APWU National put out the call and our local leaders, members, and community allies answered in spectacular fashion," said APWU National President Mark Dimondstein. "This is the People's Post Office and the people have shown they're ready to fight for it." "The U.S. Postal Service is a bedrock institution for every American," said Becky Livingston, Saint Louis Gateway Area Local President to a crowd of dozens in St. Louis. "Our elected leaders must support \$25 billion in funding to make sure the post office can run effectively, and Postmaster DeJoy must reverse his harmful slowdown policies immediately." Demonstrators held signs that read Save America's Post Office and Stop Delaying America's Mail. Proper Staffing. Faster Delivery. "It's vital," said Ceece Nucker, one of five demonstrators in rural Severn, MD. "I'm not just here to support voting. I'm here to support the lifeblood of the country."

In Miami, FL, Miami Area Local President Wanda Harris summed up the disturbing state of recent postal changes: "These changes are happening in the middle of a census, in the middle of an election year, in the middle of a pandemic," Harris said. "All of this is happening right when American people needs us more than ever."

The sentiment was reflected in New York City. "What we're seeing that there's a slowdown and a breakdown of the mail," said Glenda Morris, postal retiree, while standing in a crowd which lined the steps of the Manhattan Post Office. "A lot of people will not be able to get their medication on time. The service is getting lousy because [PMG DeJoy's policies are] delaying the mail...And that's not normal. That's not normal."

In Kentucky, supporters rallied in Inez, near the home of Postal Board of Governors chairman Robert Duncan. "This is his home, so he understands how important rural America is as well. We just want him to see the support, so that he will support us," said Kentucky Postal Workers Union Secretary-Treasurer Clyde Trent. "We need that support to be able to continue the processing of the mail."

At the day of action in Dallas, Dallas Area Local President Yared Wonde stressed that the demand for \$25 billion in emergency relief should not be made into a political issue. "Most people [are] trying to make it political with the elections, we're not into that," Wonde said. "It is not about Republican or Democrat – we want to save the public Postal Service."

By the end of August 25, it was clear that from rural towns to major cities, people across the country are united in saving the public Postal Service. Demonstrations with one single person to those with over a hundred delivered a clear message: The USPS is an American treasure and the people will not sit idly by while our public Postal Service is under attack. While the day of action was successful, the \$25 billion emergency appropriation for the Postal Service remains tied up in the Senate. The APWU encourages members to continue calling their senators to demand financial relief for the USPS and a reversal of the policies that have caused harmful delays.



Jeff Worden
North Sectional Director

I hope everyone had a safe and well...I do not want to say "fun" summer because I do not believe many of us had any summer that was too much fun.

There seems to be an "uptick" in the number of grievances concerning Letter carriers and Rural Letter Carriers performing clerk craft work! Yes, yes, I understand that with the "Covid-19" pandemic there are employees everywhere calling in either due to a friend or family member or fellow co-worker who may be ill or maybe they just had some issues at home to take care of or maybe they are just stressed out and yes some of that just might be to Covid-19.

The fact is whatever the reason that employees are taking off from work is **ABSOLUTLEY NOBODYS BUSINESS**. There, enough said on that subject!

So, subsequently, there is no reason for supervisors to let letter carriers (City or Rural) perform clerk craft work! I did have a supervisor tell me that "We work as a team to get the mail out so, if letter carriers help out...what's the problem?" I understand all that jazz, but, just imagine if a clerk went and delivered some mail to few houses (you know as a team to help get out the mail) now I am not going say that "all hell would break out" but, trust me...there would be

Welcome Back

"...If I was the clerk I would simply say "sorry, this is clerk work, my work..."

some very unhappy union brothers and sisters and I am pretty sure they would not be from the APWU!

The same goes for when/if you see supervisors or your postmaster performing clerk craft work. It is up to

**IT TAKES ALL OF US
TO PROTECT OUR JOBS**

YOU the clerk at that office to make the supervisor aware of what is going on (probably not going to happen) so, you would then give me a call to file a grievance.

I know there is some offices that really do not mind paying out the extra \$\$\$ but, let's face it, if you say nothing to no one then how can we possibly put the kybosh on it?

I currently have a grievance where the clerk let/allowed the carriers to do the distribution because the truck was late so the carriers could get out to their routes!

Ok, if you do agree to do that well... that's on you, but remember that instead of getting that clerk additional help or additional hours (by bringing in the clerk earlier) management will continue to say "you have to ask the clerk because I can't agree to let you do clerk work", in effect putting it "on the clerk" as to the reason the carriers can't get to their routes at a decent time.

If I was the clerk I would simply say "sorry, this is clerk work, my work" and then tell the carriers to ask the supervisor if the clerk can be brought in EARLIER so as to get the distribution done sooner so the carriers can LEAVE on time or at an earlier time! Do not just give away your clerk hours. It is obvious at many offices the postmaster (s) are trying to (or bring told to) do more with less!

In Closing, let us all remember to stay safe, social distance when possible, wear a mask and to use hand sanitizer whenever possible. We **CAN** and **WILL** get through this **TOGETHER**.

Any questions, feel free to give me a call at (414) 530-7186. Take Care.



Healthy Ways To Relieve Stress

APWU Health Plan

From time to time, everyone experiences stress. It's a natural reaction to situations where you feel threatened or anxious. Your body responds to stress by releasing hormones that raise your heart rate, change the way you breathe, and prepare your muscles to respond. Learning how to manage stress is an important part of taking care of yourself and maintaining good overall mental and physical health.

Low to moderate levels of stress can be positive, like when you need to meet a deadline at work or deliver a wedding toast. But chronic stress can take a toll on your health and affect your wellbeing. It can cause everything from irritability and fatigue to anxiety, depression, headaches, and insomnia. And poorly managed stress can lead to an increased risk of heart disease and obesity.

Take steps to control your stress

If you feel like your stress is getting out of control, here are some healthy ways to restore calm to your life, change unhealthy behaviors, and protect your body from the effects of tension and anxiety.

Eat well

When you're under stress, rather than reaching for sugary or starchy comfort food, eat healthy meals that include a variety of fruits and vegetables, lean proteins, and high-fiber whole grains. Taking care of yourself is a great way to reduce stress.

Exercise regularly

Physical activity relieves stress and releases endorphins—your body's natural mood-boosters. If you're healthy enough to exercise, go for a walk, ride your bike, swim some laps, or practice yoga. Strength training is also an effective stress reliever. In fact, almost any activity helps, including gardening and housecleaning.

Get enough sleep

If stress keeps you up at night, or if you have trouble falling asleep, take steps to quiet your mind before bed. Cut back on caffeine and alcohol at night, remove TVs and computers from your bedroom, and try to go to bed around the same time each night. Give your brain and body a chance to recharge.

Avoid alcohol

People often cope with stress by drinking too much alcohol or engaging in other self-destructive behaviors. Having an extra glass of wine may seem to relieve stress, but abusing alcohol can create additional problems and increase your levels of stress.

Stop smoking

Cigarette smoking causes many diseases, and nicotine is a stimulant that can add to your stress. Check with your health insurance plan to see if it offers resources to help you quit the habit.

Spend time with loved ones

You may want to isolate yourself when you're stressed, but reaching out to family and friends is a healthier way to cope. Loved ones can provide support and offer a fresh perspective on what's causing your stress. And socializing can help distract you from your problems.

Laugh more

Laughter is a great stress reliever. Watch a YouTube video or a favorite old comedy. Or read a funny book. Get together with friends and tell some jokes. Laugh your stress away.

Count to ten

If someone or something is stressing you out, take a deep breath and count to ten before you react. Sometimes just giving yourself a short break can help put things into perspective. (Deep breathing helps, too.)

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Try meditation

Meditation is a simple practice that can reduce stress and help you relax. Find a form of meditation that works for you. After you learn the basics, you can meditate almost anywhere—even for just a few minutes—at work, on the bus, or while you wait at the dentist’s office.

Unplug

For a lot of us, the 24-hour news cycle and social media add to our levels of stress. Take a break. Turn off the TV, set your phone down, and choose “me time” over screen time.

Set realistic goals

You do a lot of things really well, but no one succeeds 100 percent of the time. You don’t have to be perfect. Realize that you can’t do everything—or control everything. Learn to say no and be willing to ask others for help with household responsibilities, work assignments, and other tasks on your to-do list.

Take time out for yourself

Life gets hectic, so it’s important to make time for yourself. If you have vacation time, use it. You don’t necessarily have to go anywhere. Take a staycation and do simple things—reading, cooking, spending time on a hobby you enjoy, or just kicking back and listening to some music. Soon, you’ll forget about the things in life that cause stress.

Recognize when you may need more help

If you continue to feel overwhelmed after trying these stress relievers—or if you have trouble carrying out daily activities or performing at work or school—talk to a counselor, doctor, or faith leader. Together, you can identify the sources of your stress and learn new coping skills

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Trump, beware: Americans have a deep, enduring love for the Postal Service

by: Karen Heller, The Washington Post

President Trump has branded the Postal Service “a loser,” “joke” and “scam.” It’s a first-class source of his mail-content. He routinely disparages the Postal Service because it loses money and, by his own admission, he doesn’t want to dramatically increase the number of people who can vote by mail. Trump, it should be noted, votes by mail. Critics think he’s gone postal. Many also think he’s messing with the wrong government agency. Know who dislikes the Postal Service? Almost no one. Sure, people don’t enjoy waiting in line, but that’s true almost anywhere. Millennials don’t patronize the Postal Service, according to its inspector general; one in Texas claimed to New York magazine that mailing stuff causes him anxiety. And dogs have been known to yap and masticate their displeasure. That’s about it. The Postal Service is a massive infrastructure delivered on an intimate scale. It brings us prescriptions, news, checks, condolence notes and birthday cards from Aunt Marge. It is our original information superhighway, dating back to dirt roads and the Pony Express. Our mail system has a 91 percent approval rating, according to a Pew Research Center poll released in April. In these fractious times, nothing has a 91 percent approval rating. Trump might as well have attacked kittens or pie.

The Postal Service appears to produce heightened dopamine levels in many supporters, an ardor that they would never express for, say, the Federal Reserve. Postal stans rhapsodize about its sprawling history, its enduring enrichment of our

(continued on page 14)

Trump Beware...

(continued from page 13)

daily lives. “I’ve always adored the post office,” says Liza Barrie, a post office advocate in Tappan, N.Y. She even adores “that post office smell that we can all identify.” Evan Kalish, 33, a millennial super-patron in Queens, notes, “There’s a romance to the idea of the post office.” To battle Trump’s attacks, Postal Service champions are producing art in its honor. They’re composing love letters to letter carriers and baking cookies for them, too. They’re producing patriotic videos, including a two-hanky charmer from Norman Lear’s *People for the American Way*. They’re writing letters to help save it — remember writing letters? — including a Facebook group with 5,300 members. They’re purchasing stamps. They perform tributes to its importance, including one by Ben Gibbard, who co-founded the band Postal Service. They’re updating classic ditties to become “Stand by Your Mail.”

Fictional postal characters are embedded in our cultural landscape: bar stool fixture Cliff Clavin on “Cheers,” antagonizing Newman on “Seinfeld,” stoic Agent K in the *Men in Black* franchise, speedy Mr. McFeely in “Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood.” The mail service inspires literature: Eudora Welty’s “Why I Live at the P.O.” and Charles Bukowski’s “Post Office.” (He worked as a carrier and sorter.) It lends itself to movie titles, “The Postman Always Rings Twice” (after the James M. Cain classic noir) and the dead-letter flop “The Postman,” whose star, Kevin Costner, decried the Trump administration’s actions, saying, “That’s criminal. And it spits on 200 years of freedom.”

Actually, it’s spitting on 245. “You see the mail everywhere, the buildings, the workers, the trucks,” says Steve Hutkins, a retired New York University literature professor and Postal Service champion. “It helps bind the country together.” We take the Postal Service for granted because of that ubiquity and because of its extraordinary ability to do precisely what it is was founded to do for as little as 35 cents. (Postmaster General Louis DeJoy, that’s the cost to mail a postcard anywhere in the nation. He told Congress last week, “I’ll submit that I know very little about postage stamps.”) We take the mail system for granted, that is, until it’s under attack, a frequent occurrence in recent history. Now, it is again, when its critical role in our democracy, ironically during the age of the Internet, has rarely seemed so vital. During a once-in-a-century pandemic when 75 percent of the country is eligible to vote by mail in a highly contentious November election, the USPS has warned 46 states and the District of Columbia that it cannot guarantee all mailed ballots will arrive in time to be counted, potentially disenfranchising millions of voters. More than half a million mailed ballots were disqualified in the primaries because of missed delivery deadlines and voter errors. (A USPS representative declined to provide interviews for this story.)

Under DeJoy, a top Trump donor who assumed the post in June, the Postal Service has instituted new policies — including limiting overtime and extra trips, and stricter dispatch times — that have produced backlogs of mail. USPS is telling people their mail is being held ‘at the request of the customer.’ It isn’t true. Fervent supporters, including Cher, protested at 800 locations last month. They launched the hashtag #SaveTheUSPS, which is surging on social media. Yard signs proclaiming residents proudly vote by mail freckle the nation. Trump’s crusade is partially rooted in his pique with Amazon founder and Washington Post owner Jeff Bezos. He claimed the billionaire was “ripping off” and “getting rich” from the Postal Service, and proposed doubling the commercial giant’s rates. The president has threatened to veto emergency funding. Which may ignite more protests and support. Our mail service, founded by first postmaster general Benjamin Franklin a year before the republic and embedded in the Constitution, is based on a radical notion: that mail would remain private and secure, and the system would underwrite the dissemination of news to better inform and unite what was then barely a nation.

Carriers have prevailed through far more than snow, rain, heat and gloom of night. The Postal Service, which is not funded through tax dollars, has survived multiple threats, including a 2006 mandate, orchestrated by the Koch brothers among others, to require pre-funding retirement benefits up to 75 years into the future, thus threatening its existence. It has endured repeated calls to be transformed into a profitable business, something advocates point out has never been demanded of the Defense Department. The entire federal government is operating at a \$2.8 trillion loss. Known as the Post Office Department until 1970, the mail service was a slush pile of political patronage for much of the 19th century. Management has constantly clashed with union employees. It has lost revenue to private carriers. First-class mail volume has declined precipitously — though parcel deliveries have escalated during the pandemic. “It is the one positive contact most people have with the federal government,” says Mark Jamison, a retired postmaster in Webster, N.C., noting how mail carriers routinely check on the sick and elderly.

People complain about misplaced correspondence but the true marvel is how much mail gets delivered promptly, a mind-boggling 472.1 million pieces every day, some addressed in indecipherable chicken scratch. And it performs services the

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public might not expect. It was agents from the U.S. Postal Service Inspection Service, the nation's oldest law enforcement agency, who arrested Stephen K. Bannon on fraud charges aboard a 152-foot yacht off the Connecticut coast. Columbia University professor Richard John, who wrote a history of the Postal Service, says, "It's part of our DNA as a self-governing people. It's a testament to our collective identity." When properly funded and working to full capacity, "it's a daily miracle," John says. "To attack it by saying it's a joke shows almost an inability to acknowledge what made America great." Winifred Gallagher, author of "How the Post Office Created America," notes that "it's a transportation system. The post office created the first roads. It created this communications superpower," she says. "For poor people, frail people and especially for rural people, the post office is so important." In many rural areas, Gallagher notes, the post office is the town, a place where citizens routinely meet.

Our Postal Service delivers almost half of all the planet's mail. It's ridiculously affordable. "The fact that the post office charges you 55 cents to mail a letter from Key West to Fairbanks, Alaska — imagine what FedEx would charge you," says Gallagher. Which is precisely why people wait in line at the post office, not always happily but willingly. The USPS, with 630,000 employees, has long been a gateway to the middle class, allowing workers with a high school education to purchase homes and envision retirement. It was a great deal before the New Deal, and remains one of the rare mammoth national employers that extends health care, pensions and union protection, with a median annual salary of \$52,060 a year. It's a historic early employer of Black people, women, veterans and the disabled. Today, 28 percent of the workforce is Black.

Abraham Lincoln was a postmaster in Illinois, and Harry Truman served as one in Missouri. William Faulkner, Richard Wright and Walt Disney worked for the post office. John Prine, who died of covid-19 in April, was a letter carrier in suburban Chicago, producing the 2011 archival album "The Singing Mailman Delivers." He once said, "I always likened the mail route to a library with no books."

Kalish, the fan in Queens, works as a "crossword constructor," but his life's mission is "collecting" post offices. In the past decade, Kalish has toured 10,154 postal facilities. His goal is to visit all 33,000. Because of the pandemic, his last trip was in February. "It's depressing the daylight out of me," he says. Kalish adores the architectural wonders from the Works Progress Administration, when 1,100 locations were built. Philatelist Franklin D. Roosevelt admired them and played a role in designing the one in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., near his estate in Hyde Park. "Passports, tax refunds, every important document has been entrusted to the security of the system," Kalish says. "The Postal Service treats everyone equally. The price of a stamp is the same price no matter how far you're sending it."

In July, Barrie, a former UNICEF official, helped launch Stand by Your Mail, "the people's postal rescue campaign" to forge support among fellow supporters. "To me it's really about connection. At a time when the country is so divided and there's so much insecurity, the post office is a critical institution . . . so the assault on the Postal Service is really dangerous and destabilizing," Barrie says. "I think what we're doing is patriotic, reflecting on what parts of our heritage are worth preserving."

Hutkins, the retired NYU professor, started a campaign in support of the Postal Service during a previous crisis, the one in 2011, when officials announced plans to close 3,700 locations due to plummeting revenue. Ultimately, most were spared. He believes the local post office could serve an even greater role in our communities. "They could provide office services, banking services, social services, broadband and food banks," he says. The impassioned response during these latest developments comes as no surprise to him. It also sparks optimism. "The energy for defending it accelerates when the attacks accelerate," Hutkins says. "The fact that it's been around for so long, has gone through so many crises and is still here, gives me so much hope."