

2016 Publications Competition

Judges' comments

Judge No. 1

Comments: Small

Beast of Burden, Branch 290, Santa Barbara, CA

- Sidebar charts are helpful for explaining proposed rule changes.
- It was smart to include an article on suicide prevention next to an editorial about toxic work environments and the unfortunate suicides that have taken place within the USPS as a result. This is a very tricky topic to cover, but including positive educational guidance in concert with the editorial shows good planning
- There are a lot of hyphenations between lines – it would look cleaner if “orphaned” syllables were moved down to the next line.
- Many important images are pixelated and hard to read, but stock images are readable.
- Not all wire stories are attributed.

The Informer, Branch 74, Saginaw, MI

- Small, bound, spot color format is clean and easy to read.
- Format of letters from the editor and contributed articles is inclusive and represents multiple points of view.
- The How Would You Fight It column presents hypothetical situations and suggested actions, which is likely useful for readers.

- Includes interesting articles and information, like how letter carriers can participate in the ice bucket challenge professionally and correct ways to hang a flag.
- More attention could be placed on formatting and punctuation.

The Maine Letter Carrier, Branch 391, Bangor, ME

- Professional-looking layout and good attention to detail (spelling, punctuation, etc.).
- Articles are well written.
- Nice use of photos and cartoons.
- Using either a corner staple or binding staples would likely improve the user experience over how the issues are currently stapled together.

The Relay Box, Branch 916, Eugene, OR

- Clean, professional design with good attention to detail (spelling, punctuation, etc.).
- Format of letters from the editor and contributed articles is inclusive and represents multiple points of view.
- Use of drop caps to start each paragraph gives a design element that is unique to this publication and creates consistency
- Contributed, hand-drawn cartoons are a nice touch.
- Home Away From Home box in each issue is a fun way to celebrate members as they go out of their way to visit other post offices around the country.
- Volume 20's upgrade to stapled binding and color cover is an added benefit.

The Union Vision, Branch 2128, Toms River, NJ

- Great use of photos throughout each issue.
- Interesting story content such as Q&As with retirees and clever piece on business clichés.

- 2016's upgrade to glossy paper is a nice benefit.

Hoosier Post, Branch 828, Bloomington, IN

- Content is brief, but cover design is eye-catching.
- Use of pull quotes adds visual appeal but could be used more frequently.

Comments: Large

The New Hampshire Letter Carrier, Branch NHSALC, West Epping, NH

- Professionally written articles cover a wide range of material.
- There is a lot of space dedicated to photos which are large enough to clearly see.
- Photo captions add to professional look of layout.
- It's nice to see photos of each article author by their byline.
- Missing children postings are a great community service addition to the publication and probably very relevant, since letter carriers are so visible in and connected to the communities where they work.

South Florida Letter Carrier, Branch 1071, Miami, FL

- Magazine-style format is very professional and high quality.
- It's nice to see photos of each article author by their byline.
- Photo collages of social and charitable events are a great way to build community within the branch.
- Callout boxes to highlight individuals (new members, anniversaries, etc.) add personality to the publication.

Mound City Carrier, Branch 343, St. Louis, MO

- The large feature photos on the front cover add character and visual interest.
- It's nice to see photos of each article author by their byline
- Social event collages would be more impactful with larger featured photos instead of small, hard-to-see photos.

The Seventy-Niner, Branch 79, Seattle, WA

- Nice use of cartoons to add visual interest and snarky humor.
- More simplified, consistent formatting of sidebar and collage-style pages would add more of a professional touch.

Branch Nine News, Branch 9, Minneapolis, MN

- Callout boxes to highlight individuals (new members, anniversaries, etc.) add personality to the publication.
- Overlaying text over images is a unique way to add visual interest.

The North Carolina Letter Carrier, Branch NC State Association, Charlotte, NC

- It's nice to see photos of each article author by their byline.
- The Words of Wisdom column from retiree George LeVander is lighthearted and shows the personality of individual members.
- Nice tribute to late members with thoughtful obituaries.

The Twigs, Branch 28, St. Paul, MN

- Good use of photos to add visual interest.

- Copy could use some design elements (headline font changes, columns, etc.) to bring interest to stories.

The Voice, Branch 214, San Francisco, CA

- Great layouts keep readers focused on stories (use of columns, font styles and pull quotes, in particular).
- Photos are large and clear with captions that accurately capture the people involved.

Venice of America Branch Bulletin, Branch 2550, Ft. Lauderdale, FL

- Good use of consistency throughout entire layout.
- Issues are short but pack in a lot of information – they could benefit from more visual appeal and added white space.

The Buzz, Branch 3, Buffalo, NY

- Really well designed cover layouts to commemorate milestones like presidential elections and anniversary of 1970 strike.
- Good use of consistency throughout entire layout.

The Satchel, Branch OSALC, Portland, OR

- Good use of consistency throughout entire layout.
- Interesting use of inserts (postcards, key chains, coloring pages) in annual convention reports.

Branch 34's CLAN, Branch 34, Boston, MA

- Color, broadsheet format on newsprint is a unique calling card for this publication.

- Content is engaging and newspaper quality.
- Very visual with high-quality, prominent photos.
- Consistent, professional layout.

News and Views, Branch 361, Lexington, KY

- Mixing up the fonts and layouts could add visual interest (photos could help as well).
- One suggestion to catch readers' attention is to add headlines for each article instead of only listing the name of the column and the author.

The Mail Bag News, Branch 2902, Chatsworth, CA

- Good use of spot color to add visual interest.
- Bold headlines help to define new articles and catch attention.
- Adding more feature photos would break up long articles.

Front Lines, Branch 4374, Utica, MI

- It's nice to see photos of each article author by their byline
- The issues that are heavy in photos are more appealing than those heavy in seasonal clip art.

Judge No. 2

Editorial/Column

Richard Thayer, “PMG Donahoe’s Plan for USPS: Death by a Thousand Cuts,” NC

Richard Thayer explores the disconnect between PMG Donahoe’s rhetoric around “improving efficiency and service,” and his actions, which are clearly aimed at privatization. Thayer details USPS-management-supported bills before Congress, such as those that eliminate door-to-door, and/or Saturday delivery, which would result in job losses. Donahoe is “cunning enough not to put all his eggs in one basket,” and Thayer describes his other “eggs”: reducing post offices, consolidating processing facilities, and moving toward cluster boxes, all of which has meant service delays and complaints. Thayer shows that the drive toward privatization is taking place on many different fronts, and urges customers and letter carriers to work together to ensure that the USPS remains, as intended, a public service.

Javier Rodriguez, “PMG Blames Unions for USPS Woes,” South Florida

Javier Rodriguez capably and convincingly counters the argument put forth by then-Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe about where the blame falls on the state of the Postal Service and what must be done to save it. Wisely notes many of Donahoe’s points before moving into the response, which cites facts to support an emotional topic, faults those who hold the purse strings, and presents the dangers of following Donahoe’s recommendations.

Susan Lewis, “Putting the Service Back In Postal Service,” Buffalo NY

Susan Lewis begins with what might be a standard “union” position, i.e., carriers should take the breaks and lunch due them, make sure timecards reflect actual work hours, and not cut (delivery) corners. But, with a twist, she argues that this isn’t only so that a carrier receives every dime owed but because it is in the interest of *customers* to do so. It takes time to give good service, she argues, and that produces satisfied customers, which will help protect jobs and the USPS itself. In the face of privatization drive, and in competing with UPS and FedEx, she says the USPS must be the “best option, not the last.”

Javier Rodriguez, “I Hate Politics . . . But, I Love the Postal Service,” South Florida

This column encourages readers to get involved in the 2016 elections even if they have been discouraged by politics in general. Rodriguez takes on responses and excuses one by one, arguing that even if people dislike politics, they certainly like having their job, a job that is at the mercy of politicians. And for those who are not willing or able to contribute money to the Letter Carrier Political Fund, he reminds readers about the NALC e-Activist Network and the power of making their voices heard. A reasonable, convincing piece.

Michael Yerkes, “If You Lost Your Job, Where Would You Be?” Boston MA

Michael Yerkes grabs the reader’s attention by starting with a question no one wants to consider: what would happen if you lost your job? He explains that it’s a myth that USPS is protected by the fact that a Constitutional amendment would be required to privatize the agency; rather, USPS was created by an act of Congress and can be undone that way too. He notes that all public sector employees are under attack and emphasizes taking action now. Letter carriers must fight for their jobs *before* they are lost, by restoring service standards, by paying attention to legislation, and acting when prompted to by the e-Activist Network. He asks carriers to consider, were their jobs gone, what efforts they might have made to save them, and that they take those actions now.

News/Feature

Jess Stoner, “CCA Diary: 'Blues on Wheels,'” Santa Barbara, CA

Jess Stoner had long wanted to be a letter carrier. But as her lengthy first-person account shows, her stint as a CCA quickly transitions from a dream come true to being grounded in reality, giving voice to many of the struggles and frustrations experienced regularly by postal workers everywhere. As Stoner notes, “These are not stories unique to one station. There are dozens of online forums, where postal employees' complaints log thousands and thousands of pages. These things happened to me and continue to happen to my former colleagues.” She may be preaching to the choir, but it’s an impressive yet depressing chronicle whose message needs to be shared outside of postal circles.

**Richard Thayer, “After 68 Years, America’s Senior Letter Carrier Hangs Up His Satchel,”
NC**

Thayer writes a moving story about Rudy Tempesta, who delivered mail for sixty-eight, and was still working at eighty-nine years old. One afternoon—after his supervisor suggested it wasn’t

that hot in his truck, and Tempesta said it was 98 degrees inside—he returned to the library where he'd just delivered mail and collapsed with heatstroke. Thayer recounts his life—ball turret gunner on a B-24 in World War II, began at UPS when Harry S. Truman was still president, delivered the mail in the Empire State Building—before turning to Tempesta's difficulties in getting workman's comp and his retirement benefits started. Thayer's piece gives Tempesta the respect due to "America's senior letter carrier."

Richard Thayer, "for Al Friedman, the NALC Food Drive Is in the Bag," NC

The Postal Service is, well, a service in and of itself. But letter carriers do go well and beyond that. Thayer's feature profiles the work Al Friedman and his colleagues have put in to help out a huge number of people through the NALC Food Drive. Millions and millions of pounds of food are collected by Florida's letter carriers each year. Even if you believe a good job well done is reward enough, Thayer's writing allows those involved to get some highly deserved time in the spotlight.

Vicki Rohrbach, "Customer Connect," St. Louis MO

Vicki Rohrbach does reporting in this piece on Customer Connect program, through which letter carriers have brought in nearly \$2 billion in USPS revenue. She explains the benefits of talking to customers, finding out what they need, and submitting leads to the sales team. She argues that the program helps protect carrier's time, and improves wages and benefits through increased revenue. Most importantly, she details the complaints that had been made about the sales teams (not made up of postal employees) and says they are now fixed and there has been real improvement in customer and carrier satisfaction.

Tom Schulte, "Responding to a Faint Cry, Carrier Saves Patron's Life," St. Louis

Darren Mack may be humble about what happened —"I'm no hero," he said. "That's just what we do."—but it's a good thing Tom Schulte is around to give Mack the credit he deserves. Not everyone would have stopped his vehicle while working in order to investigate a faint cry for help from somewhere off in the distance. Mack did, and he kept walking and looking until he saw an eighty-year-old woman who had been at the bottom of a ravine for nearly a full day. A heartwarming story that needed to be told.

Promoting Unionism

Javier Rodriquez, Calendar, “A History of Letter Carriers & the NALC,” South Florida

Javier Rodriquez produced an impressively professional and useful calendar—it shows federal holidays, union meetings, paydays, and even local school scheduled vacations—and then packed it full of union history, fast facts, and details about the local branch as well. Each month features some historical detail about the NALC, wages, women or African American carriers, and contract highlights or activist information. The last page includes a masthead showing not only publication information but that that includes union officials, their titles, and their phone numbers. It’s hard to imagine any letter carrier wouldn’t find this calendar useful, and it makes learning about the union, and getting involved in its activities, as easy as possible.

Dave Welsh, “Grassroots Action to Defend the Post Office,” San Francisco CA

Welsh argues the power of unions and grassroots activism is more effective than trying to influence legislators. “Congress is bought and sold by the 1 percent,” he writes. “They won’t begin to listen to us until we’re in the streets, mobilized in all our numbers.” That’s all well and good to say, but Welsh then shows that these are more than words, listing case after case where protests and other campaigns helped defend postal jobs and services.

Peggy Durso, “On this Mother’s Day: Bridging the Pay Gap Between Men & Women in America,” South Florida

Peggy Durso opens her feature by explaining Equal Pay Day, and noting that there is still substantial work to be done in closing the wage gap. She believes this is a job that can and should be done by the labor movement, as union woman workers earn more than non-union woman workers, and have better healthcare and more retirement benefits. The USPS does not distinguish workers by sex, she notes, so why should letter carriers care? Because it affects family and friends, many of whom do not have the benefit of a union (much less the NALC, “one of the strongest unions”), to help them into the middle class. She finishes with a round-up of pending legislation, and asks letter carriers to lobby their representatives on them.

Mark Travers, “Say no to Walmart!” South Florida

Travers makes the case for shopping and spending at shops that either have employee unions or treat their employees well. One company that does not, he notes, is Walmart, and he chronicles

how the retail behemoth may have low prices but creates consequences for other companies, on American jobs, and even for the people who work there.

Beki Serwach, “The Role of A Steward,” Utica MI

Becky Serwach begins her article with dictionary definitions of the term “steward”—a word that her union-member audience surely knows and uses often—and asks them to think about its meaning more in depth. She discusses its use in the union, and a steward, she notes, pledges an oath to serve in what can be a difficult job. The union is not, she says, like a slot machine—put in your dues, get the jackpot of a contract—but requires many people to function: negotiators, leaders, educators, communicators, organizers and political activists. “Every member,” she concludes, “should be represented as if it were your own family in need, because are all family . . . united in a common cause.”

Julianne Kloza, “Income Inequality Coincides With Loss of Unions,” Toms River NJ

Julianne Kloza argues that the solution to income inequality and the shrinking middle class is to make unions as influential as they once were. “We have power in numbers,” she writes, “but we need to gather those numbers together and unite in the common cause.” For those who still doubt what unions do for them, Kloza reminds us that it is the individuals who make up the union, which then fights for all, helping out the individuals within.

Steve Devereaux, “Taking Charge of Your Workplace Life,” Eugene OR

Steve Devereaux, in somewhat unconventional take on the value of union membership, explores the perhaps counterintuitive proposition that joining a union, i.e., becoming part of a collective, can strengthen a person as an individual. He address especially CCAs but what he says applies to all. A union helps not only help with the usual things, like grievances, but helps with deeper issues, like self-empowerment, too. “Taking charge of your own life, in your workplace, with your colleagues, with your superiors” ultimately allows you “to own and know your own power and be able to access it and use it appropriately.” Such skills are learned, he notes, and offers mentorship to younger employees. There is security in knowing the contract, he says, which helps a person find their own voice, become their own advocate.

Judge No. 3

Small Branches

The Relay Box, Br. 916, Eugene, OR

Clean, easy-to-read publication. Especially like the quote of the month on the front cover each month and the regular CCA corner. May 2015 addition of color was a nice touch--very eye catching! The editor's page with summaries of recent postal news and Meet the Branch 916 Union Officers was well done (May 2015). Good promotion of COLCPE and Food Drive. Great use of photos and illustrations to break up text; however, I found the drop caps on each paragraph a little distracting.

The Beast of Burden, Br. 290, Santa Barbara, CA

Full-cover artwork is a refreshing change and draws in reader. Clean layout, informative articles about retirement and benefits, nice use of graphics and artwork throughout. Reprinting of articles from other sources provided good info, but newsletter could benefit from a little more original content.

The Union Vision, Br. 2128, Toms River, NJ

Nice, large Inside This Issue box on front cover lets reader know where to look. The article about the Strike Meeting (Summer 2015) was informative and gave readers a glimpse into the union's history. Love the Q&A with retirees. Switch to glossy paper in Winter 2016 a definite upgrade!

The Maine Letter Carrier, Br. 391, Bangor, ME

This small newsletter is chock full of information with fun graphics & cartoons, informative topics, good use of white space. Branch, labor, and world news (June 2015 issue) provided a

good summary of labor news from a variety of sources. The leaflet insert to hand out at public events to educate public (July/Aug. 2015) gives members an easy way to communicate with the local media in their area.

Large Branches

Br. 34's CLAN, Branch 34, Boston, MA

Vibrant color cover & some interior color pages draws reader's attention to this informative publication. Good use of broadsheet newspaper format. Great use of boxes for meeting reminders, COLCPE, inside this issue, etc. TONS of photos (particularly Nov/Dec) highlighting branch activities. Good choice to print calendar on back cover in color for ease of reading (Nov/Dec); terrific bold font for headlines. Photos of the authors with the NALC logo behind them is a nice touch. Educational summary of National Convention in Sept-Oct. 2014 issue.

South Florida Letter Carrier, Br. 1071 S. Florida

Very clean design with great covers and high-quality paper stock. Well-written headlines & subheads, good use of photos, callout boxes, and sidebars throughout each issue. Really liked CCA Chronicles--great source of info for new CCAs. Use of fun, bold fonts bring in audience (MDA article, May). The legislative alert (p. 6-7, February) provided a great overview of legislative issues and where FL reps. stand on the issues, along with their contact info. The quotes from COLCPE donators (pg. 9-11, February 2015) broke up the list of names and provided readers with information why it's important to donate to COLCPE. Great idea!

The New Hampshire Letter Carrier, Branch NHSALC

Well-edited, clean layout with lots of information packed into a compact format; great headlines; lots of photos break up text.

The Voice, Br. 214, San Francisco, CA

Like the use of bold color on the masthead and using different colors for different issues. Clean, easy-to-read layout with informative articles. Good use of subheads to break up articles. Lots of photos effectively promote branch activities (especially summer picnic, Sept/Oct 2015 issue). Seems like the majority of articles are written by retirees. Why aren't more active members writing?

The Buzz, Br. 3, Buffalo, NY

Love the well-designed, art-filled covers (stamps, wildcat strike) reminding members of the union's history. This publication features a clean, easy-to-read layout and informative articles. Ads are placed well and not in a distracting manner. Good use of photos highlight new members, last punch bunch, membership pins, etc.