

Volume 134/Number 1 January 2021

The Postal Record

The monthly journal of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS

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In our hands



Letter carriers reach out to help their communities

— PAGES 10-16



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Happy New Year



Fredric V. Rolando

The new year is starting off a lot like last year—but positive change is coming. Indeed, as we went to press, the total U.S. death toll from COVID-19 surpassed 300,000 (nearly 1 out of every 1,000 people) and the fatality rate surged past 3,000 per day. Offsetting the fear, sadness and exhaustion we all feel is the news that the first of several COVID-19 vaccines was approved by the Food and Drug Administration in December. Over the next six to nine months, hundreds of millions of Americans will be vaccinated, hopefully putting an end to this public health crisis. NALC will urge Washington policymakers to include postal employees among the front-line essential workers to be given priority on inoculations.

In the meantime, I urge every letter carrier to remain vigilant against the dangers of the virus—wear your masks, use your hand sanitizer, and maintain your social distance. We are not exactly sure how much longer this crisis will last, but we must protect ourselves and our families for as long as it takes to end this pandemic.

We also must contend with the uncertainty surrounding the economic recovery from the pandemic. Sadly, the Senate failed to act on COVID-19 relief legislation for more than seven months after the House of Representatives passed the Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions (HEROES) Act in May. That bill called for \$25 billion for the Postal Service and hazard pay for letter carriers. The Senate declined to respond to the crisis as the recovery stalled, the use of food banks reached record levels, and almost a million workers each week continued to file for unemployment benefits.

Fortunately, as we approached the Dec. 31 expiration of special unemployment benefits, a bipartisan group of senators and representatives stepped up to offer a downsized compromise solution that passed in Congress (see page 5). The bill, which at press time had been sent to the president's desk, fell far short of what was needed, but it did convert the USPS's existing \$10 billion line of credit for COVID-19 response into a grant.

On the bright side, the Biden-Harris administration has demonstrated its staunch support both for the Postal Service and the NALC's legislative agenda. Consistent with that support, President-elect Joe Biden appointed my chief of staff to serve on his transition team, giving our union a voice in formulating the postal policy of the incoming administration (see page 5). The agency review team, to which he was appointed, is working to provide the White House with advice and policy options for

administrative and legislative actions affecting the Postal Service and the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC).

Beyond the administrative and legislative support from the new administration, pending appointments will have a positive effect on letter carriers and working people in general. Among the most important appointments President Biden will make will be individuals to serve on the USPS Board of Governors. There currently are three vacancies that the president can fill. Under the law, the Board is responsible for the overall management of the Postal Service—it sets strategic policy on products, pricing and strategy while supervising the activities and performance of the postmaster general and the agency's executive management.

President Biden also will select the chairman of the PRC, a vitally important body that regulates postal pricing and service issues. Indeed, soon after the election, the PRC finally announced the result of the 10-year review of the rate-making process (see page 5). NALC is still going through the 500-page ruling, but the new rules appear to liberalize the strict price cap that has undermined the Postal Service's financial health for the past 13 years.

Meanwhile, the new administration will appoint dozens of officials across the government who will indirectly affect letter carriers and other working people. The men and women who run key agencies, such as the National Labor Relations Board, which guarantees the right to organize unions and enforces our nation's collective-bargaining law, and the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, which helps resolve labor-management disputes, are good examples. Hundreds of positions at the Department of Labor also will be filled, including secretary of labor, as well as key appointees to oversee our workers' compensation program and to manage the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA). The OSHA position is especially important, given the need for an emergency safety standard on infectious diseases like COVID-19. In all of these cases, NALC's voice is being heard both in the transition process and through the leadership of the AFL-CIO. We hope to help build the most pro-union administration in decades.

As our active members vote this month on ratification of our new collective-bargaining agreement with the Postal Service (see page 4), I also look forward to continued discussions with Postmaster General Louis DeJoy about our respective visions regarding the future of the Postal Service. I hope to have a detailed exchange on operational, legislative and strategic objectives for the coming year.

As always, NALC will continue to engage the Postal Service on efforts to improve working conditions and service to the American people, while searching for growth opportunities that can strengthen the Postal Service financially. In these discussions, I am confident that the postmaster general will recognize the essential role that city letter carriers play in the popularity and success of the U.S. Postal Service and in the overwhelming trust the public has in USPS.

Happy New Year, brothers and sisters.



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Since 1889, representing city letter carriers employed by the United States Postal Service.

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Postal vignettes



**Philip
Dine**

The *New York Times Magazine* approached with an ambitious photo/essay national project chronicling postal employees' election work, given vote-by-mail's historic role. They wanted 15 letter carriers. We planned, internal NYT delays ensued, the project narrowed to Florida, time was short. An efficient Lynne Pendleton, Region 9 national business agent, stepped up with Sunshine State prospects. The first draft of history was published, under the headline "America has never needed its postal workers more," with the subhead "Couriers of Democracy."

Detroit Tigers fans were treated to a (virtual) first pitch by 27-year letter carrier and longtime Branch 1 steward

Benjamin Dixon at a First Pitch Friday game recognizing front-line workers. Tiger executives reached out to regional USPS folks, who selected Ben. At a postal facility, they videotaped his pitch and provided talking points. Ben requested a pen and paper; easier to memorize his own words, he said. They chose not to argue with a Marine veteran. Ben mentioned his postal job, encouraged social distancing and face masks, and closed with: "On behalf of the United States Postal Service, GO TIGERS!!!"

The call was from a New Jersey letter carrier's widow. John F. Twilight, 96, carried mail from February 1950 to January 1981. Ann Twilight hoped her husband, a Jersey City Branch 42 member, would be listed in *The Postal Record*. She wanted to do this for him, she said, adding that he was a World War II Army veteran (and ardent Brooklyn Dodgers fan who had a farm team offer but returned home with a damaged leg). Informed that the next issue, our veterans cover, would include John, Ann was beyond grateful. "It's important to honor our veterans," she said. It is, Ann, and thanks for helping make that happen.

Region 4 NBA Dan Versluis was describing how it played out when folks uncomfortable with other races joined the Marine Corps: "You go through boot camp, then start doing combat exercises, and you realize very quickly, your life may depend on your brother next to you." Whatever their initial attitudes, Black and white Marines "would take a bullet for each other." Well into a fascinating conversation, I posed my question—and realized I'd called the wrong guy. I'd meant to ask Region 2 NBA Nick Vafiades about a media/postal matter. My mistake, but fortuitous. And, perhaps, understandable? Not only do they oversee adjacent regions, have names starting with "V" that require study to spell or pronounce, both are plainspoken, eight-year Marine veterans, shaping their views of leadership,

cohesion and duty—and providing NALC with an embarrassment of riches in that section of the country.

Uniting some topics above: racial justice, military service, Florida and letter carriers who began long ago. Lloyd N. Pearson Jr. signed on in October 1942 as a special delivery messenger, riding the train daily from his native Jacksonville to St. Petersburg and back. The job involved carrying a weapon, and though Lloyd prudently stayed onboard during stops, "In some small towns, people would stand outside and look at you through the window, see a black [postal] clerk, see the badge on your belt, the pistol on your belt, and they would stare a little harder," he said. Lloyd switched to the carrier craft in 1947, encountering racially separate post office restrooms/water fountains. Soon, he joined the Navy Reserve, guarding the East Coast as a ship gunner two weeks a year. The civil rights movement beckoned; he delivered mail and championed racial equality, serving Northeast Florida Branch 53 as treasurer and scribe alongside NAACP leadership roles—delegate to 20 NALC national conventions and 25 NAACP ones. Lloyd hung up his satchel in January 1977; this month marks 44 years of retirement. The first dozen, Lloyd took a folding card table outside stores and schools, registering 35,000 voters in Duval County: "I got trained just after I retired. I was on a good pension, so I gave my time for free." I called him after receiving a branch photo of his 99th birthday celebration in November from Bob Henning. When Bob was elected Branch 53 president in 2010, Lloyd, 89, "faithfully" attended retiree meetings and helped in various ways, as now. Bob's summary: "This guy is unbelievable."

Amid a contentious election, a Wisconsin respite arrived in the form of a letter to the editor about letter carriers collecting letters to Santa on their routes. "No postage is required...Santa has a busy crew standing by to answer and reply to all your letters," Chris Paige of Racine Branch 436 wrote. The Dec. 7 deadline "is flexible...merry band of elves will always take stragglers up until Christmas!" Thanks to this 30-year letter carrier, assistant vice president and branch scribe for some joyous reading. And for adding to the Paige postal presence in America's newspapers. (If the allusion escapes anyone, feel free to ask.)

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Proposed National Agreement mailed to active members for vote

During the week of Jan. 11, every active letter carrier eligible to vote in the contract ratification election was mailed a copy of the proposed 2019-2023 National Agreement between NALC and USPS.

Included in the mailing is a letter from NALC President Fredric Rolando, a summary of the contract's provisions, a ballot and secrecy envelope, a return envelope and instructions for casting a vote. For a ballot to be counted, it must be received by noon on Feb. 16, 2021.

The *NALC Constitution* provides that "membership acceptance or rejection of a proposed National Agreement shall be by majority of valid ballots returned by the voters." If the agreement is accepted, it will go into effect immediately. If the agreement is rejected, then, under the Postal Reorganization Act, the parties may continue bargaining or, ultimately, refer the dispute to an interest arbitration board. Under the law, decisions of the arbitration board are conclusive and binding upon the parties.

If any of the ballot materials described above are missing from your mailing, immediately call NALC Headquarters at 202-393-4836.

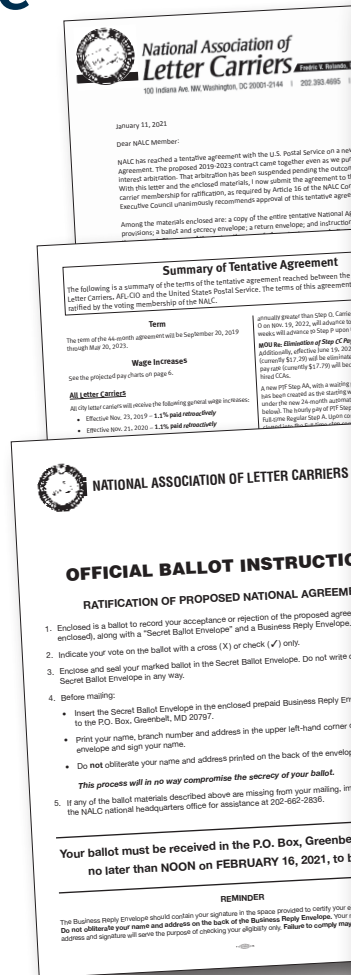
President Rolando has appointed a Ballot Committee to oversee the mailing, collection, and tabulation of the ballots. Its members are:

- Delano Wilson (chairman) of Branch 2611
- Homer Christian of Branch 359
- Ted Lee of Branch 84
- Chareke Batten of Branch 247
- Sylvin Stevens of Branch 545
- Rod Holub of Branch 1018
- Andy Weiner of Branch 562
- Mike O'Neill of Branch 38
- Antonia Shields of Branch 530
- Joel Malkush of Branch 28

- Paul Roznowski of Branch 3126
- Ethel Ford of Branch 283
- David Norton of Branch 82
- Barbara Stickler of Branch 1100
- Rene Eberhardt of Branch 1681

Virtual rap session

Additionally, the Executive Council decided to hold a special national conference, commonly referred to as a "rap session," before the ratification process is concluded so that branch leaders could be fully briefed on the proposed contract and would be prepared to answer members' questions



before the ratification vote is taken.

Because of travel and meeting restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic, the rap session was held virtually on Dec. 20 through virtual meeting software. Per the *NALC Constitution*, invitations for the rap session were sent to branch and state presidents, who had to log into the Members Only portal on the NALC website to register and attend. **PR**



News from Washington

COVID-19 relief and recovery update

The 117th Congress convened on Jan. 3, and while it will be spending much of January configuring operations, leadership, committee assignments and priorities for this Congress, it will remain responsible for responding to the needs of Americans as COVID-19 cases spike and relief and recovery needs remain pressing.

Prior to adjourning the lame-duck session of Congress just days before Christmas, lawmakers passed a \$2.3 trillion combined omnibus/relief package that included \$900 billion for COVID-19 relief and \$1.4 trillion to keep the government funded until Sept. 30, 2021. The deal, which at press time had been sent to the president for his signature, came together after months of failed negotiations between the leaders of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

House Democratic leaders previously had called for a comprehensive \$3.4 trillion deal in additional relief funding, while Senate Republican leaders failed to advance two packages in the \$600 billion to \$900 billion range.

In the end, it was the efforts of a bipartisan group of senators, prompted to act by the House Problem Solvers Caucus (a group whose influence has risen in Congress with its ability to identify areas of commonality and elevate legislation on those issues) that led to the deal. In fact, the Problem Solvers Caucus was instrumental in passage of the Postal Service Fairness Act (H.R. 2382), which moved to repeal USPS's mandate to pre-fund retiree health benefits. That bill was passed in the House earlier this year but was not taken up in the Senate.

Regarding the Postal Service, the deal reached days before Christmas—



the Emergency Coronavirus Relief Act of 2020—including language converting the \$10 billion loan previously approved in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (Public Law 116-136) into a grant. That is a far cry from the \$25 billion public-service appropriation NALC supported to help the Postal Service cover COVID-19 expenses. On the appropriations front, the government funding measure preserved six-day language for mail delivery.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 deal failed to include hazard pay for letter carriers and other front-line employees. The deal also failed to include an extension of paid Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave provisions for employees whose school or child care is closed due to COVID-19, or the mandate for emergency paid sick leave, which provided up to 80 hours of paid leave for COVID-19-related absences. Both provisions went into effect in April under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) but expired Dec. 31, 2020. Instead, lawmak-

ers included a tax credit for employers who choose to extend emergency paid sick leave, thus ending the mandate.

“Members of Congress will need to step up to the plate in the next Congress for letter carriers and the Postal Service,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “NALC remains steadfast in ensuring that letter carriers and the network are protected, and we expect the new administration and Congress to do the same as we remain on the front lines of this pandemic.”

General provisions of the deal also include \$166 billion for another round of direct payments—\$600 per adult making under \$75,000 adjusted gross income and \$600 per child; \$120 billion for a 10-week extension of unemployment insurance in the amount of \$300 per week; \$325 billion for small businesses, mostly for an extension of the Paycheck Protection Program (not including unions); \$12 billion for community banks; \$45 billion for transportation—including \$14 billion in airline payroll support; \$69 billion for vaccine testing, tracing and distribution; \$82 billion for schools; \$25 billion in rental assistance and an eviction moratorium through Jan. 31, 2021; \$26 billion for nutrition assistance and agricultural losses; \$10 billion for child care assistance and \$7 billion to expand broadband.

The deal also makes COVID-19 relief funds available for states and localities for another year, includes an extension of employee retention tax credit, allows lower-income Americans who experienced wage loss in 2020 to use earned income tax from 2019 to receive larger refunds, and allows agencies to reimburse contractors who were unable to work due to COVID-19-related facility closures.

Notably absent from the deal were

two points of major contention between the parties. Democrats ended up dropping demands for nearly \$1 billion in additional state and local funding, while Republicans abandoned their demand for liability protections for corporations worried about COVID-19-related lawsuits from sick workers. Both issues are expected to re-emerge in the next round of relief and recovery negotiations in the new Congress.

Relief and recovery efforts are far from over. Check the Government Affairs section of the NALC website to get the latest news on this and all NALC priorities this Congress.

Postal Regulatory Commission adopts new rulemaking

On Nov. 30, the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) released its “Statutory Review of the System for Regulating Rates and Classes for Market Dominant Products” (Docket No. RM2017-3). The rulemaking stems from the requirement imposed by the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act of 2006 (PAEA), which directed the PRC to implement a new rate-setting system and review that system 10 years after enactment to evaluate whether it meets the statutory objectives of the PAEA.

The PRC noted that the objectives of the PAEA were “to create a flexible, stable, predictable, and streamlined ratemaking system that ensures the



Postal Service’s financial health and maintains high quality service standards and performance. As adopted, these rules are necessary to enable the Market Dominant ratemaking system to achieve the statutory objectives set forth... ”

In its review, the PRC determined that while the PAEA’s rate-setting system was largely successful in streamlining the process, it did not increase pricing efficiently, had not achieved short- and long-term financial stability measures, and did not ensure high-quality service. The revised rulemaking provides the Postal Service with additional rate authority to address the Postal Service’s largest deficiencies—financial losses from declining mail volume and the cost of pre-funding retiree health care—while maintaining a CPI-based price cap system. The price cap is liberalized to allow for rate adjustments to address declining mail

density, which increases the per-piece cost of delivering mail. The PRC's order also allows for rate authority to address the amortization costs of certain retiree liabilities. According to the PRC, the rulemaking gives the USPS Board of Governors the decision-making authority to ensure operational efficiency and quality service standards.

The PRC noted its removal of a proposed performance-based rate authority, opting to instead issue a separate rulemaking to study rate-setting effects on service.

The PRC will review this new system after five years of implementation to determine if it is meeting objectives that include:

(1) To maximize incentives to reduce costs and increase efficiency. (2) To create predictability and stability in rates. (3) To maintain high quality service standards established under section 3691. (4) To allow the Postal Service pricing flexibility. (5) To assure adequate revenues, including retained earnings, to maintain financial stability. (6) To reduce the administrative burden and increase the transparency of the ratemaking process. (7) To enhance mail security and deter terrorism. (8) To establish and maintain a just and reasonable schedule for rates and classifications, however the objective under this paragraph shall not be construed to prohibit the Postal Service from making changes of unequal magnitude within, between, or among classes of mail. (9) To allocate the total institutional costs of the Postal Service appropriately between market-dominant and competitive products.

The final rulemaking will go into effect 30 days following publication in the Federal Register.

Biden agency review team includes NALC chief of staff

NALC Chief of Staff Jim Sauber has been serving on the Biden-Harris transition's Agency Review Team for the United States Postal Service.

On Jan. 20, President-elect Joe Biden will be inaugurated and become the 46th president. As is customary, the president-elect has been using the time between Election Day and inauguration, known as the presidential transition, to prepare for the new administration.

Part of this preparation involves creating a formal transition team to work with the outgoing administration on the peaceful transfer of power. The goal is to ensure the continuity of government services and a smooth handoff between administrations, which is especially crucial this year with the pandemic and the associated economic crisis.

Immediately following the election, Biden also established agency review

teams, pulling together top experts "responsible for understanding the operations of each agency, ensuring a smooth transfer of power, and preparing for President-elect Biden and Vice President-elect Harris and their cabinet to hit the ground running on Day One," Biden said in a statement announcing the agency review teams. "These teams are composed of highly experienced and talented professionals with deep backgrounds in crucial policy areas across the federal government. The teams have been crafted to ensure they not only reflect the values and priorities of the incoming administration but reflect the diversity of perspectives crucial for addressing America's most urgent and complex challenges."

In his role on the agency review team, Sauber is joined by former Deputy Postmaster General Ron Stroman, New York University's Xavier Briggs, Care Journey's Aneesh Chopra and Boston Consulting Group's Mat Hernandez. **PR**



Is voting by mail here to stay?



In the aftermath of a whirlwind election year during a global pandemic, the issue of safely increasing voter access through voting by mail was thrust into national headlines. As a result, most states have made the process easier, making voting by mail an option that is here to stay in future elections.

The pandemic prompted most states to quickly adopt changes to give voters the option of receiving or casting ballots via the Postal Service, with the bulk of those changes permanent. States also provided voters with the ability to vote early, either in person or by using drop boxes.

“The accommodations provided to voters this cycle will be transformative when it comes to increasing voter access in the future,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “Experience has shown that once you give voters the opportunity to vote from the comfort of their homes, they are inclined to choose that option in the future. We’ll see if states recognize their voters’ preference and continue to allow them to do so.”

The first instances of voting by mail were borne from another national calamity—absentee voting was instituted during the Civil War to allow soldiers in the field to vote.

Before the pandemic, most states allowed their residents to vote absentee, but many required a specific reason, such as the voter serving in the military, attending college away from home or planning travel on Election Day. Fearing that millions of voters would face a choice between not voting or taking the risk of contracting the virus at polling places, and then spreading it, most states switched to “no-excuse” absentee voting, allowing any voter to vote by mail.

Most states still required voters to first request that absentee ballots be mailed to them. However, a few states opted to mail out all ballots—automatically sending a ballot to every registered voter—as an emergency measure for the 2020 election only.

California, the District of Columbia, New Jersey, Nevada and Vermont mailed ballots to every registered voter as a temporary measure in the recent presidential election, and Montana gave its counties the option of doing so. Unless these states (and the District) make automatic mailing of ballots permanent, they will revert to their previous voting processes when their emergency orders expire.

Four states—Colorado, Oregon, Utah and Washington—already had conducted previous elections entirely by mail, with Hawaii holding its first all-mail election in 2020.

After all of the changes in election law, about three in every four voters nationwide had access to voting by mail in the 2020 general election, and most will enjoy that access in future elections. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, the voting landscape now looks like this:

- Five states conduct elections almost entirely by mail. All registered voters in those states receive a ballot automatically and make it easy to return them by mail.
- An additional 29 states and the District of Columbia offer no-excuse absentee voting. In these states, a voter must request an absentee ballot, but the voter is not required to state a reason.
- The other 16 states allow voting absentee only for specific reasons. Voters who do not satisfy one of

those reasons must vote in person, though some of these states allow early in-person voting before Election Day.

Some states permit all-mail elections in certain circumstances, such as for special elections, local elections, in voting districts with small populations, or simply at the discretion of the county clerk.

Federal law requires all states to send absentee ballots to military and overseas voters for federal elections, so these requirements apply only to domestic voters.

Over the years, NALC has worked on a state-by-state basis to expand the ability of voters to vote through their mailbox. As a founding partner of the National Vote at Home Institute (NVAHI), the union has supported efforts in several states to move to no-excuse absentee voting or to initiate automatic mailing of ballots. (For more information about NVAHI, see *The Postal Record's* interview with Chief Executive Officer Amber McReynolds in the May 2020 issue.)

Several NALC state associations have succeeded in convincing legislators and voting officials to open access to voting by mail. In addition to advocacy, NVAHI helps states improve the design of ballots and the communication with voters to make voting by mail easier and more secure.

In the face of unfounded attacks on the capacity of the Postal Service to handle the surge in mail ballots, and the intensified media interest and congressional scrutiny resulting from USPS operational changes in the summer, NALC joined the Postal Service's National Election Task Force along with other postal unions and management associations. Our goal was simple: to

bolster confidence in voting by mail. The task force successfully adjusted to the surge in mail ballots and handled issues related to public communications, operational challenges and, when necessary, developed new protocols to ensure that election mail was securely delivered on a timely basis. In many stations, local task forces monitored the process on a daily basis and addressed issues on the workroom floor.

The extraordinary measures in place between labor and management resulted in the Postal Service delivering for the large number of voters who cast their ballots by mail.

At least 65 million voters cast their ballots by mail in the 2020 general election, nearly double the 34 million who did so in 2016. Because some states do not report data on mail-in ballots, the figure could be much higher. With 155 million total ballots cast in the election, nearly half of all votes were cast by mail. The ease of mail voting almost certainly contributed to the high voter turnout—two-thirds of eligible voters casting a ballot, the highest turnout rate in a century.

“Voting by mail simply could not work without the faith the American people have in letter carriers and their dedication to delivering their ballots,” Rolando said. “As we often do, letter carriers serve a higher cause simply by doing our jobs.”

Indeed, public confidence in voting by mail remained high leading up to the election.

In an August poll commissioned by the University of Maryland Center for Democracy and Civic Engagement and *The Washington Post*, 73 percent of respondents said that voting by mail should be an option. The same poll found that 72 percent thought

the Postal Service was doing either a “good” or “excellent” job. Other polls have consistently rated USPS as the most trusted federal agency each year, with 90 percent public approval, circling back to the idea of letter carriers as caretakers of democracy.

While voters embraced the vote-by-mail option, some politicians and other observers questioned the efficacy or reliability of mail voting, despite its proven success in states that have gone to it. But that skepticism did nothing to reduce the historic use of mail ballots in the 2020 election. President Donald Trump mounted unwarranted attacks, repeatedly and inaccurately claiming that vote-by-mail was unreliable or subject to fraud. But the public was not swayed.

Amid the controversy, election officials across the country, security experts, and federal and state courts agreed that the 2020 elections were safe, secure and fair. This was due in large part to the hard work, determination and passion that letter carriers and other postal employees demonstrated under extremely challenging circumstances.

As NALC looks forward to the changing environment in Washington, DC, and the increased reliance on our network, voting by mail is here to stay. NVAHI CEO McReynolds noted that voting by mail has been growing steadily for the last three decades, and that when voters vote by mail for the first time, they tend to like it.

“In states where mail voting has been expanded, you don’t see voters go back once they vote by mail,” McReynolds told *Governing* magazine. “You don’t see people return to waiting in line or voting in person.”

And so, letter carriers can expect to carry many ballots in their satchels when the next election season arrives. **PR**

In our hands



and
hearts

Letter carriers reach out to help their communities

Each year, the holiday season brings reminders of how letter carriers give back to their communities in so many ways. It starts with delivering special packages, but our caring for the people on our routes extends far beyond doing our jobs. Letter carriers assure that letters to Santa Claus are answered—and sometimes that requests for gifts are fulfilled. Carriers collect and donate toys and books for needy children, and food and clothing for their families.

The spirit of goodwill prevails year-round, when letter carriers work to keep their customers cool in the summer heat and

gift gloves to kids so their hands stay warm in the frigid winter.

In these trying times, many more people need help than usual—and letter carriers have responded. Likewise, we could all use some heartwarming stories to remind us that caring and resolve can overcome any obstacle. In that spirit, *The Postal Record* brings you these stories of letter carriers and branches lending a hand in their communities.

If you have a story to share with us, please contact *The Postal Record* by phone at 202-662-2851, by email at postalrecord@nalc.org or by letter at 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001.

Lending a helping hand

Better carrier Wendy Jeter was raised with the mindset that with great power comes great responsibility.

Growing up with a letter carrier as a father (retired former Chicago Branch 11 member Edward Ball), Jeter saw him and his co-workers put on a toy drive during the holiday season every year, and he'd always include her.

"It's about people first," Ball would tell her, and "he'd take me to the store to pick out a toy," she said.

Inspired, the South Suburban Merged, IL Branch 4016 member started up a program at her own small post office in 2018. Initially, she was planning to run it the same way as her dad's office did—every carrier whose route had a school on it put the name of the school in a hat, and one was chosen at random.

However, they realized that one underprivileged school in the area could use the attention more than any other, so the carriers unanimously decided to turn their focus there. Jeter soon kicked off the process by reaching out to the elementary school principal.

"Principals are like the Mother Hen of the school," the 16-year letter carrier and union steward said. "They can only do so much when there is a lack of funding."

Each year, Jeter and the principal choose a class of 30 to 40 students to sponsor. Just before Thanksgiving, the carrier figures out the gender breakdown of the selected group of students and creates a spreadsheet to hang in the post office. Some of her co-workers like to sponsor a specific student, while others prefer to give a general donation. The carrier takes any donated money and goes to the store to buy toys and supplies for the kids.

The drive began as mostly letter carriers and a clerk the first year, but "it grew into a whole station effort," Jeter says, with management, clerks and custodians joining in.

Because it was such a success, Jeter expanded her ask to include gloves and hats for the students for the second endeavor in 2019, to make sure that they stayed warm all winter. That year, NALC regional officers and branch officers also contributed.

The post office crew ended up with more than 30 pairs of gloves and hats for the youngsters, along with 50 toys.

After she collects the donated items, the carrier goes to the school, where she turns over the gloves, hats and toys to the principal. The school then holds an event for the children to distribute the items.

"I'm so proud that we, as letter carriers and postal employees alike, were able to come together and put a smile on every kid's face in that class," she said. "That's truly what life's all about—giving back." The carrier hopes to eventually grow the program to be



Wendy Jeter shows off the gifts she and her co-workers got for students at a local underprivileged school.

able to donate to each child in the school.

It's important to Jeter that she and her postal brethren have ties to their neighborhoods. "It's really my hope, as with the food drive, to raise awareness of how [carriers] help," she said, adding that the annual drive "bridges the gap between the community and the Oak Forest Post Office. We are the example to the community. They see us every day."

To Jeter, it's about thinking beyond oneself: "If everyone has the theory in life that they're not alone, it will make the world a better place."

Debbie Edwards Thompson delivers books from Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.



'Charity coordinator'

Helping is Debbie Edwards Thompson's M.O.

The Muncie, IN Branch 98 member delivers joy to kids on her route as part of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, a book-gifting program that provides free books to children from birth to age 5 in participating communities.

She was serving on her local United Way's Board of Directors, covering Delaware, Henry and Randolph counties in Indiana, when the organization became the local coordinator of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library in 2015.

The legendary country singer's Imagination Library provides one age-appropriate book per month free of charge to children in the program. "The purpose of the program is to get them kindergarten-ready," Edwards Thompson says. "Getting children ready for school is a huge priority."

Any child in the participating area

can sign up, and the books are sent through the Postal Service, but that can make the delivery process "kind of tricky," the 26-year carrier and branch vice president said. She knew she could help navigate it for United Way.

Edwards Thompson explained that because the books in the program come from a nonprofit with no service endorsement, if a child's family moves, the books can't be delivered—they will go back as undeliverable bulk business mail. With permission from the three counties' postmasters, she tries to intercept books before that happens and return them to United Way. From there, she and a clerk will try to get correct addresses to help children finish the program.

Since the program's inception in the carrier's area five years ago, 46,868 books have been sent out, some of which Edwards Thompson's delivered herself.

"I have little kids who love to come out to get the mail," she said, asking, "Miss Debbie, did I get a book?"

Seeing the kids' excitement is gratifying, the carrier says, adding that it's an "honor to be a part of a child's growing experience. Education is important, and we have the perfect opportunity to get involved."

Edwards Thompson has hopes for the future of the program. "It's just going to be bigger and better," she said, adding that more participants join in the three counties each year. The entire Dolly Parton Imagination Library program sends out more than a million books each month around the world, and more than 150 million internationally since the program began in 1995.

And it appears that the pandemic has played a role

in the program's growth, with more youngsters being at home with time to read. "Just this year alone, we've added 800 children," she said.

The carrier also has served as Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive coordinator for her branch for the past 25 years. In that role, she fostered a relationship with the local United Way, which asked her to be on its board.

"She's pretty much our charity—and everything—coordinator," Branch 98 President **Cody Reum** said. "She's all about that. That's her realm."

Edwards Thompson and other volunteers provide holiday stocking stuffers like socks, hats, gloves, shampoo, stuffed animals and blankets to nursing home residents on their routes. Edwards Thompson coordinates with facility administrators, to whom the carriers drop off the gifts.

She and her co-workers also provide food baskets for 50 less fortunate families within their community.

Carriers will nominate families on their routes, and then the postal family of all crafts will hold small fundraisers such as bake sales and bowling tournaments, with the profits going toward supplies for the food baskets that are delivered just before Christmas.

Being a letter carrier, Edwards Thompson says that she has a unique perspective of her area. "My occupation gives me an opportunity to give back," she said. "We see the need in the community."

So why does Edwards Thompson give so much of her time? It's simple, she says: "I love my community that I serve. I'm just thankful I'm a part of it."



Dolly Parton's charity has given away more than 150 million books.

A calling on her route

Five winters ago, Lisa Wiebking experienced a revelation while out on her route in Chatham, VA. The Lynchburg, VA Branch 325 vice president was delivering mail to a business on her route on a frigid day when “a still, small voice spoke to me,” she recalled.

“While hearing the customer’s remarks about staying warm, I was getting perturbed at having to be out in the cold. Then I heard a whisper saying, ‘at least you have a warm home, a coat,’” Wiebking, a 29-year letter carrier, said. “I called my pastor, crying, because I knew God had made clear my mission in life was to help the less fortunate.”

That’s how Grace A LOT Ministries was born. Based in a former church building,

the nonprofit organization offers essential items, including clothing, school supplies, personal hygiene products and food, for needy people of the area. Its mission also includes providing emergency assistance for people who lose their homes to fire or other disasters. As children head back to school each fall, Grace A LOT offers free backpacks, each filled with school supplies.

The “LOT” in the ministry’s name is an acronym for “least of these,” a term used in a biblical passage referring to the least fortunate people among us.

The ministry relies on donated cash and items, with volunteers donating their labor. In its five years with Wiebking as president, she said, Grace A LOT has served several hundred families.

Based in a former church building, the nonprofit offers essential items to those in need.



“Grace A LOT was formed as a ministry to give the less fortunate in our community a start in the road to self-sufficiency and resilience,” she said.

For more information, go to gracealot.com.

Melissa Stinsman



A letter to Santa Claus never goes unanswered

Each Christmas season, the postal employees of the Bloomsburg, PA, post office can guarantee that every letter addressed to Santa Claus from local children will receive a response from jolly St. Nick. Sometimes they also make a special delivery.

Harrisburg, PA Branch 500 member **Melissa Stinsman** has taken on the duties of Secret Santa in Bloomsburg, with the assistance of the carrier who previously filled the role, **Adam Ulmer**. After a day of work that includes collecting letters addressed to the North Pole, Stinsman sometimes spends several hours a night writing letters to hopeful children.

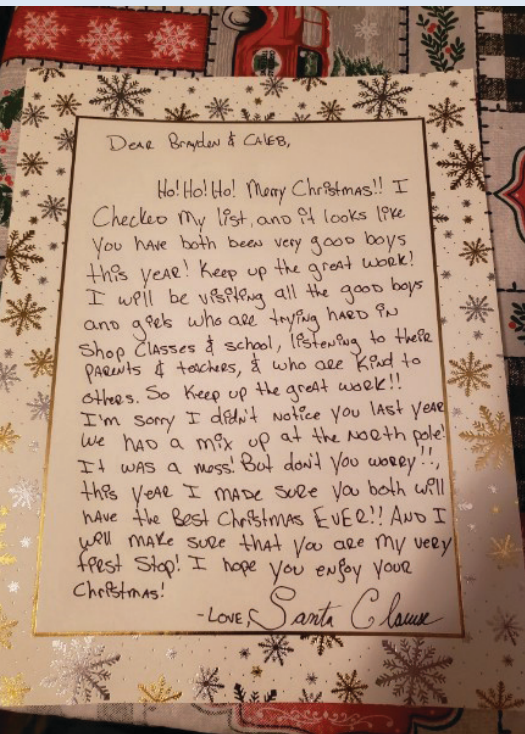
“It’s an exciting thing for them to get a letter from Santa,” Stinsman said. “It makes their day.” She answers about 20 each year. Of course, because she

isn’t *really* Santa Claus, Stinsman must find a way not to promise children a gift they request in case their parents don’t give it on Christmas morning.

“You have to keep it vague,” she said. For instance, if a child asks for a science kit, she will write something such as, “I see you like science—keep your grades up in school and you could become a scientist.”

But sometimes a letter requires more than just a cheerful reply.

Last December, one of the letters made her cry. Along with requests for the usual Legos and other toys, a 9-year-old child’s list included “food for family” and “clothing for family.” What’s more, inside the envelope were two more letters. One, from the same boy, read, “Dear Santa, last year you didn’t notice me, so



A letter from Santa

I hope this year you notice me, and this year I will be good. I pinkie promise.” The other letter was a similar wish list from the boy’s little brother.

“That was a tearjerker,” Stinsman said. She decided to offer help to the family, but wanted to ask permission first. “I knocked on the door and talked to the mom,” she said. “Some people don’t like charity.”

The mother accepted the gesture, after initially making sure of the offer. “Is this real?” the woman asked.

Yes, it was real. Stinsman’s plan was to buy the family a \$50 gift card, but when she notified her supervisor, word of her efforts got out, prompting dona-

tions from postal employees and the community. “It just blew up,” she said, and the gifts ballooned into about \$500 in gift cards, toys, clothing and food.

Some gift cards were from local grocery stores, so Stinsman delivered them early to give the family time to prepare a Christmas feast. On Christmas Eve, Santa Claus himself (who, amazingly, looked just like Ulmer in a Santa suit) and one of Santa’s elves, resembling Stinsman in an elf costume, brought the gifts to the grateful family’s door.

Stinsman hopes to help more families if she receives similar letters in the future. “It’s doable if everyone comes together,” she said.

Carriers put needed food on the table

Each holiday season, the letter carriers of Clearwater, FL Branch 2008 look for customers who are struggling financially. As Thanksgiving approaches, they bring those households enough food for a family feast, and then deliver donated gifts for Christmas.

“The carriers know their routes better than anybody,” Branch President and Florida State Association President **Al Friedman** said. He relies on them to compile a list of postal customers who seem like they could benefit from help. The letter carriers pitch in to raise funds to buy food and toys, and then deliver them. It’s an annual tradition for the branch, one that stretches back 15 years.

In November, the branch served up 122 Thanksgiving donations of food for needy families. “Turkeys, stuffing, pumpkin pie, green beans—it will be an entire meal,” Friedman said. “[The postal supervisors] let us deliver it like Express Mail,” he added, because the food is perishable.

One Thanksgiving delivery last year generated interest from the local news

media, after a carrier dropped off a surprise feast for a local couple. The man, Lee Mathis, and his girlfriend, Janet Wetherington, had finally found a place to live after spending the previ-

ous Thanksgiving without a home. The carrier left the supplies before the couple could thank him.

“When he stepped up at that door, and I opened it, it blew my mind,”

Members of Clearwater, FL Branch 2008 pose for a photo with the Thanksgiving food they’re about to deliver.



Mathis, the recipient of the Thanksgiving dinner, told the local NBC TV affiliate. The man said he and his girlfriend could not afford such a feast. “I didn’t know anything else to say, except thank you,” he said. “I’d really like to give him a big hug.”

The story generated a search for the carrier by local media outlets, who

asked the public for help identifying him. Branch 2008 reunited the carrier, **Nick Brue**, with Mathis and Wetherington, who gave Brue a proper thanks.

Each year at Christmastime, the branch gives toys and gifts to about 20 to 25 families, though at *Postal Record* press time, as Friedman was still compiling the list for 2020, he

guessed it might be more because of the struggling economy. “I don’t know what number we’ll come up with this year,” he said, “because everybody’s hurting.”

Customers always appreciate the thoughtful donations as much as the carriers enjoy delivering them, he added: “There’s rarely a dry eye.”

A branch comes together to help a vet in need

Delivering on his route last summer, Buffalo-Western New York Branch 3 member **Kevin Bystrak** saw one of his customers standing outside his home. “Something told me to stop” and speak to the man, the city carrier assistant recalled.

When Bystrak approached the customer, an elderly man wearing a Korean War veteran’s cap, he immediately could tell that the man was not well. “He said he couldn’t take the heat, that he was out of breath and dizzy,” the carrier, a Navy veteran himself, said. “So, I offered to get him a bottle of water.”

When Bystrak returned with the water, he still was concerned about the customer’s health, so he continued their conversation. Given the heat of the day, Bystrak recommended that the man go back inside and stay in the air conditioning until he felt better. The customer responded that he did not have an air-conditioning unit in his home.

As he continued on his route, Bystrak felt troubled by the man’s situation, especially because the customer was older and living with a daughter with special needs.

He knew that his fellow branch members were invariably willing to assist their community—“they’re always there to help,” the carrier said—so he posted a message on the branch’s

Facebook page. In it, he outlined the customer’s situation, and asked if anyone in the union could obtain an AC unit for the veteran.

The next day, fellow Branch 3 member **Jody Kotowski** saw the post and reached out to Bystrak. She wanted to help, so Kotowski and her husband, Frank, went to Lowe’s to purchase one.

Unfortunately, given the heat, all of the most-desired AC units were sold out. So, the Kotowskis decided to donate one of their own AC units. “I knew we had a really good unit,” she said. “And if he needed it, I knew I couldn’t see it sitting there.”

They drove over to the customer’s house with the AC unit, which Frank installed for the man. Bystrak and

Kotowski also were able to connect the customer with a veterans’ service volunteer group that was able to care for the man’s lawn and have his house professionally cleaned.

Through Bystrak’s attentiveness and networking skills and Kotowski’s initiative and kindness, the two carriers were able to significantly enrich the man’s living experience during the summer. “Letter carriers are not afraid to roll up their sleeves and use a little elbow grease to help a U.S. veteran in need,” Branch 3 President **David Grosskopf Jr.** said. “Total cost: zero dollars. Letters carriers caring for their community: priceless.”

The carriers themselves said that they were simply following their



branch's example. "When you're a letter carrier, you see people every day," Kotowski explained. "Our purpose is not just delivering mail; it's to take care of the community."

Kotowski, a 23-year carrier, added, "I'm closer to retirement than Kevin is, but it's great to know that newer carriers are still continuing that purpose." Bystrak also was reluctant to accept

praise for his actions. "I was just there to help someone in need," he said. "It was because of the example of people I work with that something told me to stop [and help]."

Bringing the holiday spirit to her community

During her holiday delivery season in 2017, Shawnee, OK Branch 883 member **Jennifer Kirk** kept seeing "Dear Santa" letters from the children on her route—and though they were being answered by postal workers, she wanted to do more to help the children's Christmas wishes come true.

"I wanted to give all the kids presents," she said, but she didn't have the resources to do so.

Then, in 2018, Kirk attended the NALC national convention in Detroit. At the convention, she spoke with members from Pennsylvania, who told her that their branch ran a program that adopted families for Christmas to

connect them with donated gifts.

Kirk took the idea back with her to Oklahoma, and decided to give it a try in her community. Instead of adopting families, however, Kirk used the letters she collected on her route to match kids with their desired presents.

Along with several fellow carriers and her friends and family, she set up 12 donation boxes around Shawnee to collect the toys.

The first year, she didn't know how much support she would get for her project. "I thought, even if we only help 10 kids, that's still 10 kids" who would have gone without presents that year, she said.

In 2018, they were able to give presents to 115 children—and the next year, the number increased to 186 children.

The toy drive also adopted

classrooms to donate to in 2018 and 2019. This year, however, because the COVID-19 pandemic has closed many schools, Kirk decided to adopt families instead.

But the "Dear Santa" donation program is still going strong. "Any letters from kids in the community will still get presents," the carrier said. "I try to match what they ask for in their letters to the donated gifts."

Then, the Christmas magic really begins. Kirk and her fellow volunteers dress up as elves and deliver the presents in person to the children.

"It's great to see the expression on their faces," she said with a laugh. "Some are so shocked that they don't have anything to say, and some act like they just won a Publishers Clearing House [sweepstake]. It's fantastic."

Kirk says she feels a call to give back to her community in any way she can. Besides the toy drive, the carrier also has served as her branch's coordinator for the annual NALC food drive.

"God gave me a service heart," she explained. "Community service is my drive." **PR**



Left: Jennifer Kirk (l) with Santa and Mrs. Claus
Below: Some of the gifts Kirk and others were able to collect to be given away during the holidays



Free city delivery

The first post office letter carrier and the system he helped create



Joseph W. Briggs

A stamp was issued to commemorate 100 years of free city delivery in 1963.

Before the American Civil War, a postage stamp would take a letter only as far as the post office in the city or town to which it was being mailed. To actually get the letter, the intended recipient would have to go to the post office and see if he or she had any mail.

Much of a city's adult population would pass through the post office regularly, checking to see if they had received any mail. While there were private carriers who would deliver mail to the recipient for 2 cents a letter, that was considered a luxury and out of reach for many Americans.

One bitterly cold winter day in Cleveland, OH, in 1862, a long line of citizens was anxiously waiting at the lone post office in the city to see if there were any letters from husbands, relatives or friends fighting in the Civil War. The same people would come every day, making the lines much longer than before the war. The assistant postmaster and window clerk, Joseph W. Briggs, was appalled at this sight. He felt the government should treat its citizens better than he could on that cold day in Cleveland.

Briggs decided to experiment to see if mail delivery that didn't charge any extra fee could work, giving birth to the idea of free city delivery. Briggs canvassed neighborhood grocery shops to find out if mail could be brought to these stores, sorted by post office personnel and then delivered to the front doorsteps of patrons.

Before he could start the experiment, he had to ask the local postmaster, Edwin Cowles, for permission. Cowles, who also was the publisher of the *Cleveland Leader*, one of the city's newspapers, thought that his paper's circulation might

benefit from free delivery and gave Briggs the go-ahead.

Briggs mapped out a route for himself, satisfied that his plan was workable. Then, he loaded a basket with letters and headed out to personally deliver them. It was an instant—and popular—success. Not only did the recipients like it, they and others in the area wanted more of it.

And yet, Briggs quickly realized that for city delivery to continue, some changes were needed.

Back then, there were fewer rules for street names and planning. Many streets had no names, while other streets shared popular names. At the time, Cleveland had two streets named Lincoln, and the residents on neither street wanted to give up the name of the wartime president. After much arguing about which street's residents would have to surrender the name, Briggs solved the problem by renaming one of them Abraham.

Then he had to start numbering all of the houses in Cleveland.

There was pushback from the private letter carriers who delivered mail for 2 cents a letter to those who could afford it, such as wealthy merchants. They feared the loss of business if free city delivery continued. Briggs struck a deal to hire 10 of them as government letter carriers.

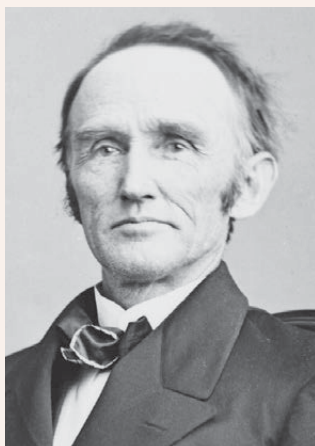
He mapped out the delivery district for the carriers. But people who lived just beyond the line were furious because they were barred from





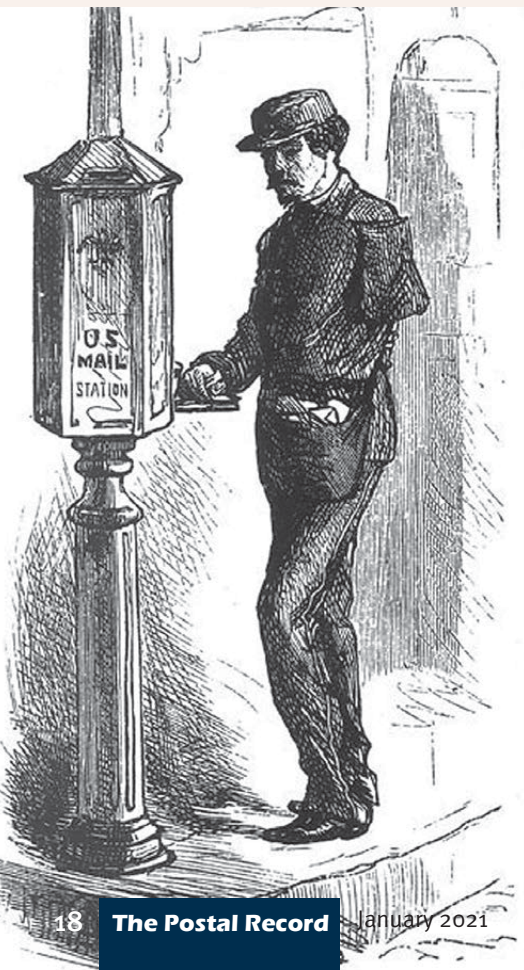
Free city delivery

The first post office letter carrier and the system he helped create



Above: Postmaster General Montgomery Blair

Below: Civil War veterans were often hired as the first letter carriers.



delivery, and they accused him of discrimination.

Merchants wanted Briggs's men to bring enormous packages out with their mail. Housewives were upset because the carriers would not bring their groceries from the store, even though the carriers were coming their way with the mail they had picked up at the grocery stores.

Briggs and Cowles decided that it was time to take the idea to Washington, DC. Briggs wrote to Postmaster General Montgomery Blair, describing the idea of free city delivery and outlining the success of the Cleveland experiment. Knowing there might be concerns about costs, Briggs pointed out that it would be less expensive to hire mailmen than to require the entire adult population of a city to stand in line for hours at each post office throughout the land.

Briggs found a capable ally in Blair, the former mayor of St. Louis, MO. Blair thought that if the process of mailing and receiving letters was more convenient, people would use it more often, thereby increasing revenue. He pointed out that England already had adopted free city delivery and had experienced increased postal revenues as a result.

In his 1862 report to President Lincoln, Blair pushed for free delivery of mail by salaried letter carriers, which he felt would “greatly accelerate deliveries, and promote the public convenience.”

Members of Congress liked the idea of free city delivery and also liked the idea of getting credit for passing a bill that would deliver the mail right to the door of every voter in every big city in the United States. But Congress also feared the cost. With the Civil War

underway, some in Congress wondered whether this was the time to engage in expensive and radical experiments with the postal establishment.

On March 3, 1863, Congress passed a law that free city delivery be established starting on July 1 of that year at post offices where income from local postage was more than sufficient to pay all expenses of the service.

“For the first time, Americans had to put street addresses on their letters,” wrote the USPS historian in a 2007 report about free city delivery.

On July 1, 1863—the day the savage battle of Gettysburg began—449 modern letter carriers began walking the streets of 49 cities. More than one-quarter of them—137—delivered mail to the doors of patrons in New York City; on the other extreme, three letter carriers delivered mail in Louisville, KY, while one letter carrier walked his route for the first time in Nashua, NH.

In 1864, Briggs wrote to Postmaster General Blair, suggesting improvements to the system. Blair brought him to Washington and appointed him “special agent” in charge of the operation of the letter carrier system. He later was appointed to the job of national superintendent, responsible for organizing free mail delivery in 52 cities throughout the United States.

Postmasters, groups of citizens, or city authorities could petition the Post Office Department for free delivery service if their city met population or postal revenue requirements. The city had to provide sidewalks and crosswalks, ensure that streets were named and illuminated, and assign numbers to houses.

By 1869, revenues from free city delivery were more than 10 times the cost of delivery, and the new system



Some of the first letter carriers

provided employment for many Civil War veterans as letter carriers. By 1880, 104 cities were served by 2,628 letter carriers, and by 1900, 15,322 carriers provided service to 796 cities.

Initially, letter carriers hand-delivered mail to customers. If a customer did not answer the carrier's knock, ring or whistle, the mail remained in the carrier's satchel, to be redelivered when the customer was home.

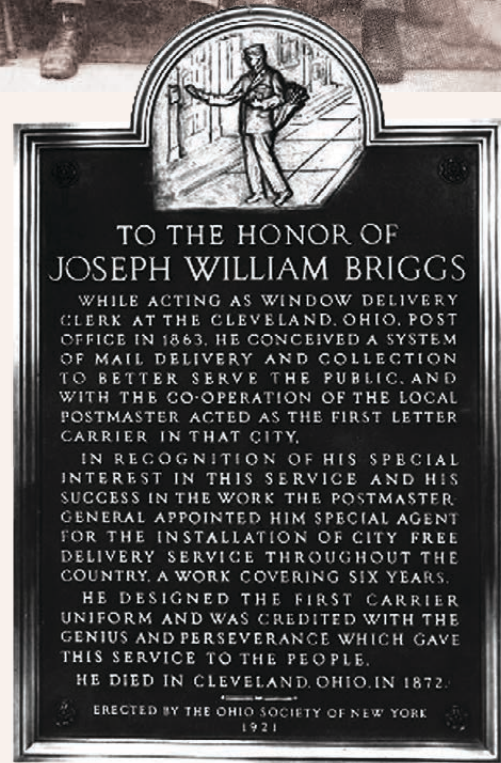
By 1912, new customers were required to provide mail slots or receptacles, and postmasters were urged to encourage existing customers to provide them as well. As late as 1914, First Assistant Postmaster General Daniel C. Roper estimated that on the average, letter carriers spent a daily total of 30 minutes to an hour waiting at doors where there was person-to-person delivery.

As of March 1, 1923, mail slots or receptacles were required for delivery service. By the 1930s, as a convenience to customers living on the margins of a city, letter carriers began delivering to customers with "suitable boxes at the curb line," according to the Post Office Department's *Supervision of City Delivery Service*.

Briggs remained with the Post Office Department, fine-tuning the system he had created, until his death in 1872. Before he died, Briggs helped design the first letter carrier uniform—it was gray cloth with black trimmings.

A postal committee formed in 1921 and was tasked with determining who should be credited with the establishment of free city delivery, after examining the available evidence reported to Postmaster General Will Hays that "no one individual can be considered the author or originator of this service ..." The committee said, "Mr. Briggs cannot be properly credited as the author of the City Free Delivery Service" because, with its introduction in England, many people were talking about free city delivery, and because Briggs would not have been able to introduce it without the help of Postmaster General Blair and many others.

However, it was his know-how and vision that propelled city delivery forward and developed it after the law passed. Despite the postal committee's ruling, a plaque in the Cleveland Federal Building commemorates Briggs's service and accomplishments, recognizing him as that city's first free city delivery letter carrier. **PR**



A plaque was installed in Cleveland to celebrate Briggs and his accomplishments.

The role letter carriers play in contract negotiations

In 1970, the Postal Reorganization Act (PRA) was signed into law, granting postal employees the right to bargain collectively for wages, benefits and improved working conditions. Because they did not legally have the right to strike, they were given the right to binding interest arbitration. Should contract negotiations fail, each party presents its case to a three-member arbitration panel—one member named by each party and a third, neutral member selected jointly as board chairman. The panel considers the issues and renders a binding award.

Since the first contract negotiations between NALC and the Postal Service

in 1971, eight contracts were negotiated by the parties and ratified by the membership, and seven contracts were awarded by an arbitration panel. In November, after many months of negotiation, a declared impasse by the two sides, several weeks of testimony and presenting evidence to an interest arbitration panel (all while continuing to negotiate), NALC and the Postal Service reached a tentative agreement on a proposed National Agreement.

The tentative agreement requires majority approval by the membership in the ratification process to become effective. With the ratification process proceeding for the tentative agreement, here is a review of how the union is structured to serve the membership and how the process works.

The *NALC Constitution* sets the governance structure for the national organization, including national officers and local branches. It also contains provisions related to state letter carrier associations, the U.S. Letter Carriers Mutual Benefit Association and the NALC Health Benefit Plan.

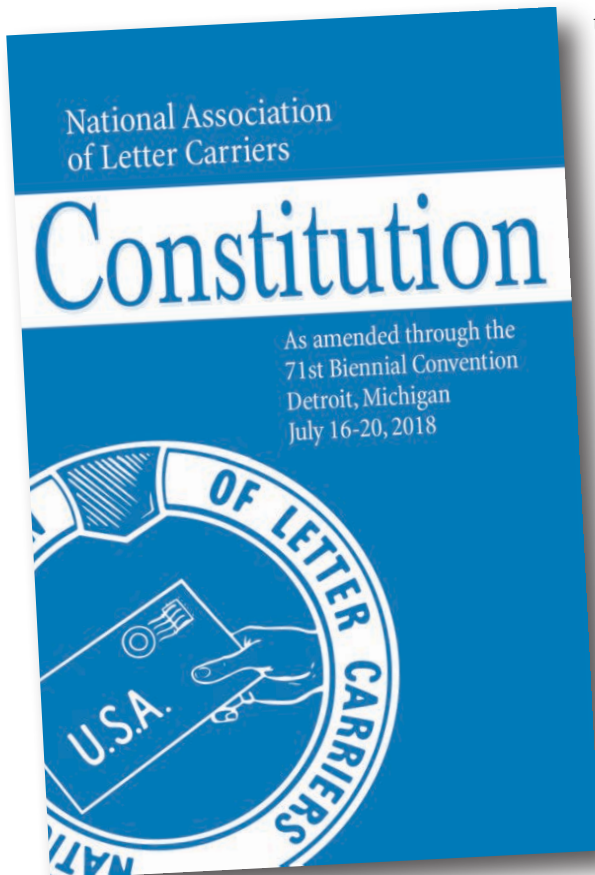
The *NALC Constitution* requires the union to hold a national convention of elected delegates from all of the branches every two years. The convention is the union's supreme governing body. The convention may amend the *Constitution*. In addition to considering amendments, delegates at the convention discuss key issues and set national policy for the union. Convention delegates to every other convention also are

responsible for nominating national officers for election to four-year terms.

The contract, known as the National Agreement, is the “law of the workplace” for letter carriers. It guarantees your wages, hours and working conditions. (“Working conditions” covers a wide range of job-related topics, such as seniority, promotions, job security, and more.) During the biennial convention, NALC branches or state associations may submit resolutions to be considered by convention delegates for potential adoption. Resolutions that are approved by the convention body are then used by NALC in negotiations with the Postal Service on future National Agreements. The recent tentative agreement contains many items that NALC members have submitted as resolutions during past conventions.

While the parties at the national level have agreed to the terms and conditions contained in the tentative agreement, it will not become effective until the membership—you—complete the ratification process contained in the *NALC Constitution*.

Article 16 of the *NALC Constitution* governs the process for ratification of the tentative agreement. This ratification is conducted by mail-in balloting, in which each regular member of the NALC as defined in Article 2, Section 1 (a)—excluding retirees, OWCP departees and non-letter carrier regular members—gets the opportunity to vote. Members must be on the NALC membership roster as of 90 days prior to the date that the tentative agreement was reached to be eligible to receive a ballot. This ballot allows each qualified member to vote for or against the ratification of the proposed agreement. The ballots are then tabulated under the supervi-



sion of a ballot committee composed of 15 members appointed by the national president to oversee the process. These results are then certified by the committee and reported to the membership via one or both of NALC's official publications—*The Postal Record* or the *NALC Bulletin*. Once the membership approves the tentative agreement, it then becomes the “law of the workplace” for city carriers for the covered period.

After the new National Agreement is ratified by the members, a period of local negotiations will take place as well. While most of letter carriers' contractual rights and benefits are negotiated at the national level, some subjects have been left to the local parties to work out according to their own preferences and particular circumstances. These rights and benefits are incorporated by Article 30 of the National Agreement into what is commonly referred to as the “local agreement” or “local memorandum of understanding” (LMOU).

In many local NALC branches, LMOU committees are established to prepare and plan for local negotiations. One of

the functions of these committees is to find out what the members think about their LMOU, what's important to them, and what changes they would like to see. Some branches accomplish this by discussing it at branch meetings or by mailing out a questionnaire. Some engage in a one-on-one canvassing campaign, talking to as many members as possible to get their feedback. However it's done, this input is invaluable to help guide the branch in what the members may or may not want from local negotiations.

NALC is a democratic union, and the message to all letter carriers is: “You are the union.” From the letter carrier national convention delegates who guide NALC's national bargaining positions to local letter carriers who guide their branch leadership in local negotiations, and to every regular member having a say in whether a tentative agreement should be accepted or rejected, letter carriers have a voice in the negotiation and ratification process. **PR**



Please note: There will be no Branch Items, State Summaries or Retiree Reports in the February 2021 edition of *The Postal Record*. That edition will be the special annual tribute issue honoring contributors to LCPF during 2020.

Deberdoo's Door Decor

"I make wreaths to unwind," Debbie Droesler says. "It keeps your mind off of all the busy stuff going on."

The Buffalo-Western New York Branch 3 member says she always has had an artistic bent and enjoyed crafts and do-it-yourself, even holding her own little art shows while in elementary school.

A few years ago, she started following and joining some craft groups online, and soon found herself creating wreaths of her own. "My friends were like, 'Wow!'" the carrier recalled, and they suggested that she try to sell them.

Droesler began joining more advanced craft groups and watched YouTube tutorials to increase her skill level. She eventually took her friends' advice, and two years ago she created a Facebook page to offer her completed designs, [facebook.com/DeberdoosDoorDecor](https://www.facebook.com/DeberdoosDoorDecor). The name honors her father, whose nickname for her was "Deberdoo."

Though wreath-making is a big business, Droesler has purposely kept her operation small. She said

that with a family, including three children and a dog, she usually devotes only an occasional hour or two in the evening to her creative projects, and possibly some extra time on Sundays.

She tries to make wreaths for every major holiday, but she had so many orders last year that she was constantly busy. Her kids would be asking, "What's for dinner?" she said with a laugh.

The carrier wanted to take a step back from that situation. Now, she says, "I do it as a hobby, but if I sell one here and there, great." She mostly sells locally, but has shipped out some to customers. But, she emphasized, "I don't do it for the money."

Droesler begins the creative process by picking out some sort of decorative item or sign to use as a focal point. "I really just look at the sign and pull colors [from it]," she said. "I look for fun ribbon."

Her creations are priced from \$15 for a simple decoration like a candy cane to \$50 for a more involved wreath. She sometimes receives specific requests from potential customers. One buyer asked for a fall wreath but requested that Droesler "throw some turquoise in there." Another customer inquired about having a wreath made for every holiday, like a subscription service. Droesler says that at this point, she thinks the customer has been provided one for almost every major holiday.

The 20-year letter carrier has even made a wreath for her post office, featuring North Pole Air Mail, which has adorned the front lobby for three holiday seasons now. She starts up Christmas crafts in early November and will play Christmas music "to get me in the mood," she said—even though the early celebrating causes some teasing from her children.

The carrier makes her crafts at home. She took a corner of the basement and dedicated an area to what she calls "my craft dungeon."

She puts the wreaths on hangers with a bag over them and hangs them around the basement, which also contains many racks for ribbons and other supplies. Though her hands are her main tool for her designs, she also uses pipe cleaners, decorative mesh, ribbons and glue guns to produce her creations.

"Most of the time it looks like a bomb went off," Droesler said of her work space.

"Fake bakes" are a new creation she's producing. "I've been doing so much of that lately," she said. It includes making realistic-looking food items such as hot chocolate, candied apples or pie. They can be used as decorations on their own, or as Christmas ornaments.

Since crafts have become the "thing to do



Debbie Droesler



Left: Some of her fake bakes
Right: A holiday wreath Droesler posted on Facebook



this year” during quarantine due to the COVID-19 pandemic, she says, some supplies (such as lightweight spackle, which she uses to simulate whipped cream in her fake bakes) are hard to get. Wreath frames also are more difficult to come by now—Droesler says she’s lucky she ordered a whole case of them a year ago.

Droesler doesn’t advertise her business; she garners attention for her wares entirely through Facebook and by word of mouth.

A few of her co-workers have ordered from her, too. When a fellow carrier who had bought from her in the past joined the “last punch bunch” recently, she made her a postal-themed wreath for her co-worker’s retirement that included a small LLV. “She loved

it,” Droesler said, adding that wreaths “make nice gifts.”

Many craft vendors set up shop at craft fairs, but Droesler hasn’t done so, as she prefers to only craft in her spare time. “I pretty much make a wreath, post it [on Facebook], and it’s sold,” she said, adding that she has no inventory like most sellers.

People have asked her to teach how to make wreaths, though so far, she jokes, she doesn’t think she has acquired the patience to do so.

Droesler has, however, gone live on Facebook to show Deberdoo’s Door Decor followers how to do a “fun and simple” craft that she says she

wouldn’t feel right selling because it is so easy to make. She likes the live format because it also gives her an opportunity to sit and chat with friends while creating.

Making decorations is “not as hard as it looks,” she says. “Anyone could do it.”

Droesler says making things can be cathartic. “For me, it’s kind of a therapy,” she says, noting that “after my father passed away, my mom and I took up ceramics [for a while]. It quiets all the noise.” **PR**

Last chance to donate through Combined Federal Campaign

There’s still time to sign up for the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), the federal workplace charitable giving program, but don’t hesitate; the last day to enroll or make changes during Open Season is Jan. 15.

As federal employees, letter carriers can participate in the CFC by making charitable donations via deductions from our paychecks. Pledges made during the campaign season support eligible non-profit organizations chosen by the donor. Carriers can select which groups they want to support from a list of more than 2,000 eligible charities, and an amount of their choosing will be deducted from their paychecks each pay period and automatically sent to each charity.

If retired letter carriers choose to donate, they will follow the same steps, but their selected amount will be deducted from their annuity payments.

Go to the CFC Donor Pledging System at cfcgiving.opm.gov to see the list of eligible charities and to sign up to donate.

Three charities on the CFC list have ties to NALC:

The **Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA)** is NALC’s only official charity. It is the world’s leading non-profit health organization sponsoring research into the causes of, and effective treatments for, neuromuscular diseases. MDA research grants support about 150 research projects worldwide, as well as camps and activities for children who have one of these diseases. For more information, go to mdausa.org. MDA’s CFC number is 10561.

The **Postal Employees’ Relief Fund (PERF)** provides financial support to active and retired postal employees whose primary residence has been

completely destroyed or left uninhabitable by a major natural disaster or an isolated house fire. The charity is run by the four postal employee unions and three management organizations, whose members support PERF through voluntary donations. Information and applications for PERF assistance can be found at postalrelief.com. PERF’s CFC number is 10268.

United Way Worldwide is the leadership and support organization for the network of nearly 1,800 community-based United Way organizations in 40 countries and territories. United Way focuses on creating community-based and community-led solutions that provide the foundation for a good quality of life: education, financial stability and health. For more information, go to unitedway.org. United Way’s CFC number is 10322. **PR**

Proud to Serve

Proud to Serve is a semi-regular compilation of heroic stories about letter carriers in their communities. If you know about a hero in your branch, contact us as soon as possible at 202-662-2489 or at postalrecord@nalc.org. We'll follow up with you to obtain news clippings, photos or other information.

Honoring heroic carriers

Heroism, like the mail, comes in many packages—think of police officers or firefighters. But for some citizens in need of assistance, their heroes come in the form of concerned letter carriers.

Letter carriers are members of nearly every community in this nation and know when something is wrong. Spotting fires and injuries, they often are the first to respond. The following stories document their heroism. For them, delivering for America is all in a day's work.

Working together to save a life

On April 16, 2020, "I was on the [workroom] floor of the post office," Petoskey, MI Branch 523 member **Buck Anthony** recalled, "when I heard someone say, 'Hey, someone has collapsed!'" The 13-year carrier rushed to assist; when he got close to the unconscious man, he realized that it was the office janitor.

"I noticed he wasn't breathing," Anthony said, so he and a clerk knelt down to provide medical aid. While the clerk did chest compressions, the carrier kept the man's airway open so he could breathe. Eventually, Anthony felt the man's pulse return.

By this time, the station's safety officer had arrived on the scene with the office defibrillator. Anthony helped him set it up next to the custodian. The carrier, who had previously been an EMT, had the most experience using defibrillators—"I've brought a few other people back," he said.

"I shocked him five times to keep him [alive]," Anthony said. "And I stayed with him until the paramedics arrived." The man was taken to the hospital, where he recovered.

The carrier, who also has previously

served as a station safety officer, shop steward and branch vice president, was glad that he was able to provide the man with the necessary medical aid. "I did the [defibrillator] training, and I use it when I need to," he said.

"I just do what I have to do," Anthony added. "It's not until afterward that you realize—I just saved someone's life."

Carrier helps man after lawnmower accident

"I was driving up the street delivering, when I happened to see someone lying on the ground," Bristol, TN Branch 807 member **Derrick McKinney** recalled about his route on June 3, 2020. "So I parked and ran over to him."

When the seven-year carrier got closer to the man, McKinney heard him speaking to a 911 operator on his phone, for reasons which were painfully clear—his foot had been seriously injured and a toe had been severed. The customer had run over his own foot with a lawnmower.

McKinney leapt into action. "I told him to take his shirt off to use as a tourniquet," the carrier said. "I knew the first thing I had to do was stop the bleeding."

The carrier, who had received medical training in his previous job as a firefighter, managed to tie off the man's foot with his makeshift tourniquet. "Then I got him a bottle of water and kept him calm," McKinney said. He waited with the man until paramedics arrived.

The customer was able to keep his foot, and he has since made a full recovery. But McKinney doesn't feel that his actions were particularly heroic. "I just thought, if that was me, I would want someone to stop and help me," he said.



Buck Anthony

Eye on the elderly

On June 23, 2020, Winston-Salem, NC Branch 461 member **Ronald O'Neal** was delivering on his route when he reached the apartment of one of his customers, Gloria Reid. "She usually met me every day," the 27-year carrier said, but on this day, Reid was not there to greet him. Then, O'Neal noticed that something else was off. "The door was cracked open, but the top lock [on the apartment door] was locked," he recalled. The carrier made the rest of his deliveries in the apartment building, but after he was done, he still felt uneasy about Reid and went back to her unit. The door was still locked, so he knocked and called out her name. After receiving no response, O'Neal looked through her window and saw that her purse was on the floor. "I knew something was wrong," he stated. Concerned, he reported the situation to the apartment complex manager, who called

police. Upon their arrival, officers found Reid—she had been lying on her bedroom floor for more than a day. The woman was taken to the hospital, where it was determined that she had had a stroke. One of Reid's friends sent a letter to the post office, writing, "...O'Neal certainly deserves to be commended by [USPS] for his heroic actions... he was an angel in disguise saving my friend's life." O'Neal said that, as a letter carrier, "You get to know everyone's routine, and you notice when something tells you that something's not right." He added, "I just try to look out for everybody."

"I've been carrying the same route for eight years, and I know all the people on my route," Northern Kentucky Branch 374 member **Karl Herklotz** said. That's why he became concerned on Sept. 28, 2020, when he realized that one of his customers,

an elderly woman, had not collected her mail from the previous day. "I stop and talk to her every day when I see her outside," the 21-year carrier and Marine veteran explained. "I always see her out there." He also knew that she had fallen the month before. "When I stopped to talk to her [the day following the previous incident], she was sitting on her porch all bruised up," Herklotz recalled. Given her history, he wanted to investigate to make sure that she hadn't hurt herself again. The carrier knocked on the door, but there was no response. "I thought, 'Man, that's not right,'" he said. Herklotz went next door and spoke to the woman's neighbor, who mentioned that she, too, had not seen the older woman recently. They decided to contact police for a wellness check. Upon entering the house, police found the woman on the floor—she had broken her hip and been



Karl Herklotz

lying there for a day. Later, the paramedics who responded to the call told the carrier that the customer might have died if he hadn't taken action. The neighbor commended Herklotz's actions in a news article by the local Fox affiliate, and praised his intuition. But Herklotz says that those instincts come with the job. "We're a set of eyes and ears in the neighborhood," he elaborated. "When something's different, you notice it." **PR**

Carrier uses movie inspiration to provide emergency aid

"It was a regular day," Garden Grove, CA Branch 1100 member **Fernando Garcia** said about delivering his route on Oct. 9, 2020. "I had just finished delivering to the street when I heard a lady scream."

The woman was screaming loudly, and the three-year carrier knew that something was wrong. He looked around for the source of the noise, and saw a man on the ground outside his house.

"I went to go check [on him] and ask if everything was OK," Garcia continued. "When he turned around, I saw

that he was holding his left arm, and he was just covered in blood."

The man, Miguel Cabrera, had injured himself on a tool while working on his roof; his sister, who was calling 911, was the one who had screamed.

Given the fact that Cabrera's arm was "bleeding profusely," the carrier determined that immediate medical aid was necessary while they waited for the ambulance. Garcia remembered the tourniquets he had seen in movies, and quickly fashioned one out of his belt.

"[I] looped it through the hole, put it around his arm, tightened it as best I could" and then held it in place, the carrier recalled. "It was only about five minutes, but it felt like forever."

The paramedics arrived and took Cabrera to the hospital, where he

received 10 stitches for his wound.

The story was covered by many media outlets, including CNN, the *New York Post*, and local Fox and CBS affiliates.

Cabrera was grateful to the carrier, whom he called a "real hero."

Garcia, however, was modest about his actions. "I was honestly just happy to help," he said, "and happy that he was able to keep the arm." **PR**



Fernando Garcia

Handling the morning process



**Brian
Renfro**

Happy New Year! Nearly everyone is glad to see 2021. Hopefully this new year is filled with optimism and progress.

Every few years, I like to cover a topic that every letter carrier has experienced many times. Letter carriers and managers have discussions when the carrier believes he or she cannot complete the assignment within the regular schedule. Disagreements about time needed to complete an assignment often become contentious and can lead to deteriorating work environments.

Handbooks M-39 and M-41, along with several national-level settlements, have defined a process that both letter carriers and managers

are required to follow. Some basic advice on how letter carriers can best handle these situations follows. For more detailed advice that covers a variety of situations, see the “DOIS Projections, PS Form 3996, and PS Form 1571” section of the 2019 *NALC Letter Carrier Resource Guide*. This guide is available on the “Resources” page of the NALC website at nalc.org/workplace-issues/resources.

1. **Orally inform your manager**—Sections 131.41 and 131.42 of *Handbook M-41* require you to orally inform your manager when you believe you cannot carry all of the mail distributed to your route in eight hours or within your normal schedule.
2. **Request PS Form 3996**—Section 122.33 of *Handbook M-39* requires the manager to provide you with a PS Form 3996 when you request it. When you request a 3996, no matter what your manager says to you, say, “I am requesting a 3996” and explain the reasons for your request. If you are denied the form, immediately request to see your shop steward.
3. **Fill out the form completely**—It is important that you fill out the form completely. In the “Reason for the Request” box, write down why you believe you cannot complete your assignment in eight hours. Fully explain the reasons for your request. General comments such as “heavy volume” or “route overburdened” are not enough in this section.

Managers sometimes will tell you that you don’t need the requested overtime or auxiliary assistance because of what DOIS projects for your route. Multiple national-level settlements (e.g. M-01664,

M-01769) have held that these time projections are not the sole determinant of your daily workload. Nothing can replace the opinion of the professional letter carrier. Simply provide your best estimate, and the reasons why and move on to Step 4.

4. **Keep your cool**—Don’t lose your temper. While this process can be frustrating, you will do nothing to help yourself by becoming angry. If your manager denies your request for overtime or assistance, tell him or her that you will do your best. Politely ask what you should do if you are not able to deliver all of the mail and return to the office when they want you back.
5. **Don’t argue**—There is no reason to argue with your manager at this point. The best thing you can do is tell your manager that you will do your best and ask for a copy of your 3996. Section 122.33 of *Handbook M-39* requires managers to provide you with a copy if you request it.

Finish your office work and go to the street. All you have to do is your best. Work professionally. Never compromise your safety or skip breaks or lunches to make it back to the office by a certain time.

6. **Don’t make decisions**—Letter carriers get paid to deliver mail. Managers get paid to make decisions. If you realize that you will not be able to deliver all of the mail and make it back to the office by the time the manager approved, you should do everything you can to put any further decisions in the manager’s hands.

The best way to handle this situation is to call your supervisor per local instructions. If you have no local instructions, try calling around two hours before the time you are scheduled (approved on PS Form 3996) to be back. Let your supervisor know where you are and how long you think it will take you to finish. Ask whether he or she wants you to bring the mail back or finish the route. Follow whatever instructions your supervisor or manager gives you.

If the supervisor or manager refuses to tell you what to do with the rest of the mail, or if you can’t finish your assigned duties in the amount of time initially specified by your supervisor, you should return to the office in the allotted time and ask for further instructions.

Thanks to you all once again for your hard work and dedication during 2020, a year unlike any other. That spirit and determination has been a big reason for our success, and will continue to move us into the future.

Local negotiations are coming, Part 1



Lew Drass

As you know by now, we have a tentative agreement for our national contract. The matter now is in your hands. I hope every member takes the opportunity to review the proposed agreement and casts a ballot for or against ratification as you see fit.

If it turns out that our national contract is ratified, the 30-day negotiating period for each local contract in the country will begin on April 29 and end at midnight on May 28. The official title for a local contract is the local memorandum of understanding (LMOU), and every city should have one.

Negotiating the LMOU for each city in a branch is one of the most important

aspects of representation at the local level. Just as every member is directly affected by the terms of our national contract, the same is true with respect to the terms of his or her LMOU. There are 22 items that can be negotiated—that includes vacation planning and other annual leave rules, the holiday schedule pecking order, and whether non-scheduled days will be on a fixed or rotating basis, to name a few.

Preparation is the key to successful negotiations for your LMOU, and now is the time to get ready. This is true whether or not our national contract is ratified.

If you do ratify the proposed agreement, there will be good reason for both parties in many cities to open local negotiations—at least on a limited basis. This is due to the continuation of the memorandum of understanding (MOU) regarding city carrier assistant (CCA) annual leave and the expansion of how many part-time flexible (PTF) letter carriers we will have. The continued MOU sets a clear path for CCAs to have annual leave planning rights. The language in the proposed MOU follows:

Re: City Carrier Assistant (CCA) Annual Leave

Article 30 of the National Agreement and Local Memorandum of Understanding (LMOU) provisions do not apply to city carrier assistant employees, except as follows:

In any office that does not have provisions in its current LMOU regarding annual leave selection for CCAs, the parties agree that, during the 2021 local implementation period, the local parties will, consistent with the needs of employees and the needs of management, include provisions into the LMOU to permit city carrier assistant employees to be granted annual leave selections during the choice vacation period and for incidental leave. Granting leave under such

provisions must be contingent upon the employee having a sufficient leave balance when the leave is taken.

In the event a proposal(s) on this subject is appealed through the Article 30 impasse procedure, prior to a request for arbitration, such dispute(s) will be referred to an Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) team established by the national parties. The expectation is that the ADR team will reach an agreement that will allow city carrier assistants to plan for leave use while accounting for city carrier assistant absences, including during scheduled five day service breaks.

Any office that currently has provisions in its LMOU regarding annual leave selection for CCAs will continue such provisions, unless modified during the upcoming local implementation period. Any impasses that arise under this paragraph will be processed in accordance with Article 30 of the National Agreement.

“Negotiating the LMOU for each city in a branch is one of the most important aspects of representation at the local level.”

There are some things that branch presidents can do now to get started. The first is to review your current LMOU and evaluate any problems you may have had with any of the existing provisions over the last few years.

The next step of preparation is to consider the views of the active letter carriers in each city your branch represents regarding the current LMOU language.

This can be accomplished in many ways, such as sending out a survey or having a discussion at your monthly meetings. If you decide you want to send a survey to your active members, there is a sample survey in the Members Only section of our website, to which each branch president has access. The sample survey is in a format where you can change the mailing address and questions to fit your needs.

Here is some advice for this round of bargaining for a local contract: Unless your branch is happy with the current language you have, the LMOU already has provisions to permit CCAs to be granted an annual leave selection during the choice vacation period and for incidental leave, and it includes language for PTFs, you should plan to open local negotiations. As long as you will be planning to open local negotiations, the best advice is to be ready to negotiate all 22 items. To be continued....

In closing, I want to wish all of you and your families a happy new year!

Reporting to the DOL: Electronic filing requirements



**Nicole
Rhine**

Unless your branch has no annual income or financial activity, you must file one of three types of financial reports with the Office of Labor-Management Standards (OLMS), depending on the total number of annual receipts from the branch. The Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRDA) requires that unions file the report within 90 days after the branch's fiscal year. Most branches' fiscal years end on Dec. 31, so most should be filing by March 30 each year. Branch presidents and treasurers are responsible for ensuring that the required reports are filed in a timely and accurate manner. The LMRDA does

not provide for or permit an extension of time for filing for any reason.

The filing requirements are:

- **Form LM-2**—Lengthy report filed electronically by branches with \$250,000 or more in annual receipts.
- **Form LM-3**—Four-page report filed electronically by branches with total annual receipts of at least \$10,000 but less than \$250,000. The Department of Labor (DOL) instituted an electronic filing system, the Electronic Forms System (EFS), which replaced the Adobe Acrobat and digital signature system. The branch treasurer may complete, sign (along with the branch president) and electronically file the LM-3 without purchasing a digital signature or downloading special software. In addition, EFS performs all calculations for the LM report and completes a form error check prior to submission to the DOL.
- **Form LM-4**—Two-page report filed electronically by branches with annual financial receipts of less than \$10,000.

The officers who are required to file annual financial reports are responsible for maintaining records that will provide, in sufficient detail, the information and data necessary to verify the accuracy and completeness of the report. The records must be kept for at least five years after the date the report is filed. Any record necessary to verify, explain or clarify the report must be retained, including, but not limited to, vouchers, worksheets, receipts and applicable resolutions.

Willfully failing to file a report or to keep required re-

ports can lead to criminal penalties—specifically, a fine of not more than \$100,000, imprisonment for not more than one year, or both. Knowingly making a false statement or representation of a material fact or knowingly failing to disclose a material fact in a report or other required document; and/or willfully making a false entry in, or withholding, concealing or destroying documents required to be kept, may result in the same penalties listed above.

As a reminder, since 2005, OLMS has required labor organizations to submit Form LM-2 electronically. OLMS also permitted, but did not require, those who file Forms LM-3 and LM-4 to file electronic reports. Under a new rule, OLMS requires all filers to file electronically. This new rule was applicable to fiscal years beginning on or after Jan. 1, 2017.

More information concerning electronic filing is available on the DOL website, as is information on registering with EFS. Anyone who needs to prepare or sign an LM form in EFS will need a specific personal identification number (PIN) for his or her union. The DOL advises that each union (i.e., each branch) select one representative to register with EFS online and obtain a PIN for that union (branch).

More information on filing the appropriate LM form for your branch can be found at dol.gov/olms.

In addition to information on filing the LM report, the same link can be used to search for other important information, including, but not limited to:

- **Conducting audits in small unions**—A guide for trustees with a limited, focused review of financial records that was developed for use by trustees from small unions. The guide can be found at the above link by clicking on “Union Resources” under “Compliance Assistance,” and then clicking “Publications” under “Union Financial Integrity.” The link to a PDF of the guide is under “Financial Safeguards.”
- **Bonding requirements under the LMRDA**—All branches that have liquid assets and annual receipts of \$5,000 or more in value must be bonded.
- **Bonding computation worksheet**—Many NALC branches either do not have a bond and should, or are under-bonded. This worksheet will assist the branch treasurer in assuring that any branch officer who handles funds or who has access to funds is bonded for at least the minimum amount required by the DOL. (Both the bonding requirements and the computation worksheet can be found by following the same links listed above for the guide for conducting audits.)

COVID-19 branch and state association administration



**Paul
Barner**

During 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic created new challenges for state associations and branches in how business is transacted from convening meetings to conducting elections. NALC President Fredric V. Rolando, on behalf of the NALC Executive Council, offered a series of measures to state associations and branches in response to the coronavirus outbreak. These letters from President Rolando address several scenarios pertaining to overall administration. At the time these letters were being drafted, the continuation of the presence of the coronavirus was unknown, and I doubt anyone could have forecasted that the pandemic would not only survive 2020 but continue into 2021. As such, the letters

addressed events and provided relief extending only through calendar year 2020.

In my August 2020 *Postal Record* article, titled “Planning for upcoming elections,” I referenced the March 2020 letters, as well as a June 1 update specific to branch elections.

The first such letter dated March 11, 2020 – Re: Dispensation for branch and state events schedule changes due to coronavirus provided the following:

For any branch or state association that decides to postpone or cancel an event scheduled in calendar year 2020 due to the coronavirus outbreak, and dictated by its by-laws, this letter will serve as dispensation to do so.

In a follow-up letter dated March 18, 2020 – Re: Extension of dispensation for all branch and state gatherings due to coronavirus, President Rolando, consistent with guidance provided by the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act, provided in pertinent part the following as it pertains to nominations and elections:

Consistent with this guidance, Branches may postpone scheduled nominations and elections without requesting dispensation from the President to do so. Postponed nominations and elections should be rescheduled as expeditiously as possible...

State Associations may postpone scheduled nominations and elections until their next convention. Alternatively, State Associations, at their option, may permit delegates to nominate and elect officers by mail.

The full text of the referenced letters can be found in the “Latest news & updates” section under the News and Research tab on the NALC website.

Since the onset of the pandemic, many NALC branches and

state associations have adapted by utilizing alternative methods for conducting meetings and carrying out normal business. Branches have proven that, with a little ingenuity, business can be conducted in a manner reflective of the will of the membership and the NALC Constitution.

Realizing that the impact of the pandemic will continue well into calendar 2021, NALC President Fredric V. Rolando, on behalf of the NALC Executive Council, has offered a series of measures to state associations and branches in response to the coronavirus outbreak going forward for calendar year 2021.

In a letter dated Dec. 10, 2020 – Re: Dispensation for branch and state event schedule changes due to coronavirus, President Rolando provided the following regarding branch meetings for calendar year 2021:

In order to adhere to the requirement to hold monthly meetings, this letter constitutes dispensation for all branches to utilize alternative electronic meeting methods through calendar year 2021, such as video conferencing. Alternative electronic meeting methods may be used for approval of branch expenditures, deciding appeals, addressing merger proposals, amending By-laws, and conducting other routine branch business that doesn’t require secret voting. Alternative electronic meeting methods should include call in features to ensure all members are able to participate. In all instances, appropriate notification should be provided to the members.

The letter goes on to address nominations and elections:

Branches and state associations that have postponed nominations and elections that normally are conducted at in-person meetings should implement alternative procedures for conducting nominations and elections expeditiously. This letter constitutes dispensation to all branches and state associations to conduct nominations and balloting by mail. Branches must send appropriate and timely notice of the procedures to be followed in nominating and electing officers and delegates by mail to all active and retired members.

Branches and state associations may request dispensation from me to implement different procedures. Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Paul Barner may be contacted for advice on using alternative methods of conducting nominations and elections.

The NALC Regulations Governing Branch Election Procedures provides a compliance roadmap to conducting elections. Branches should become familiar with election regulations well in advance of the election date. Members appointed to serve on election committees should review the procedures manual to ensure that they are properly fulfilling their role. Proper advance preparation and thorough review of the NALC Regulations Governing Branch Election Procedures will help ensure compliance with our democratic process.

The guide can be downloaded from the NALC website at nalc.org. Go to Union Administration, click on the Secretary-Treasurer’s page and select “Election information.”

New year tests and updates



**Christopher
Jackson**

Another peak season is thankfully behind us and, as always, letter carriers have exceeded expectations—not only in the delivery of mail and parcels, but also in the delivery of holiday cheer. The media is full of stories about letter carriers providing heroic rescues, making charitable efforts and having positive interactions with homebound or sheltering customers. I am so proud of the strength, perseverance and remarkable courage that carriers have displayed during these extraordinary times.

With peak season and the pandemic, USPS is experiencing continued increases in parcel volume. I want to use this month's article to discuss a new parcel initiative and a unique software issue related to the Mobile Delivery Device (MDD) and parcel delivery.

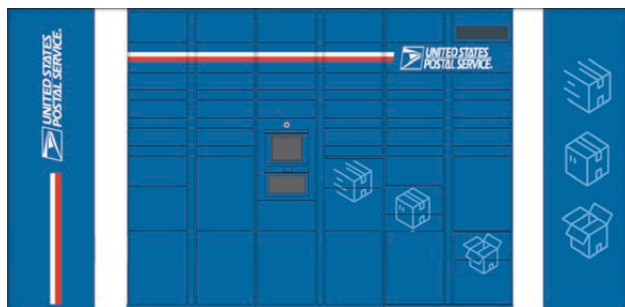
Smart Locker test

As parcel volume rises, the Postal Service consistently explores initiatives involving alternate parcel delivery options. USPS hopes to improve the customer experience by providing more secure and efficient delivery options, as well as by reducing first-attempt failures. One recent initiative about which the Postal Service has communicated to me is a test partnership with locker manufacturer Smarte Carte.

In this partnership, USPS has commissioned 11 Smart Locker units which have been installed at various postal locations in the Northern Virginia District. These self-serve units are various-sized parcel lockers, in which USPS may place parcels for customers to access. The Smart Lockers are installed either in the lobby or outside the delivery unit, and are available to customers around the clock.

Letter carriers will attempt to deliver parcels using normal delivery procedures. During the test, if parcel(s) cannot be left and the parcels will fit in the Smart Locker, the letter carrier will make the appropriate scan on the MDD and leave a modified PS Form 3849. Multiple parcels may be scanned to the same PS Form 3849, if the parcels will fit in one locker. The letter carrier then returns the parcels to the delivery unit at the end of the day and places them in the area designated for Smart Locker placement. In the evening or the next morning, a clerk will load these parcels into the Smart Locker for the customers to retrieve them.

The modified PS Form 3849 left by the carrier explains to the customer that the parcels are available in the Smart Locker located at the customer's local delivery unit. Each PS Form 3849 has a barcode and associated numeric code that the customer can input on the Smart Locker computer screen to retrieve his or her parcels from the Smart Locker. If the parcels do not fit



A rendering of Smart Locker units

in the available locker space or requires identification verification, the screen will display a message instructing the customer to visit the retail counter to retrieve the items.

This test began in December in the Northern Virginia locations. At this time, USPS has not provided an end date for the test. I will continue to provide information to the membership as this test progresses.

MDD address errors

Over the past several weeks, I have received reports from letter carriers describing an error involving the MDD and parcels. These carriers have reported that when they scan the USPS tracking barcode, the MDD displays a different address than what is on the parcel. For example, the parcel is addressed to 100 Indiana Ave.; however, when the carrier scans the barcode, the MDD displays 160 Indiana Ave. Additionally, in some cases, the MDD also will generate an alert that warns carriers that they may not be at the correct delivery address, and asks whether they are sure that they want to deliver the parcel at this location.

I requested that the Postal Service investigate this issue and provide me any related information. USPS states that this discrepancy between the actual parcel address and the scanned address on the MDD is sporadic and involves parcels that are accepted at the retail counter.

Based on the information received from the Postal Service, this error occurs because the two software systems—the retail system and the MDD software—have a communication issue that causes the MDD software to recognize only the ZIP+9 that indicates the sector segment or block range on the route, rather than the ZIP+11 that identifies the specific address. The MDD then displays the first address contained within the sector segment or block range and generates the alert to the carrier to verify the delivery location.

USPS believes that this error occurs only with parcels that are accepted at the retail counter and that customer tracking information is not affected. It appears that this error impacts only letter carriers and the MDD. USPS is working to resolve this software communication issue and letter carriers, as always, should deliver the parcel as addressed. MDD alerts can be a useful tool for carriers, and hopefully this issue will be resolved quickly.

COVID-19 vaccines



Manuel L. Peralta Jr.

As I wrote this, the first Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved COVID-19 vaccine was front-page news as it began deployment throughout the country. Once the vaccine reached its destination, the media was on the scene again, showing the first people to get the injection. In addition, the FDA has approved a second vaccine for deployment.

The battle is not over. We need to keep our guard up and continue applying the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The CDC also now has a section dedicated to vaccines, with the following eight things to know about COVID-19 vaccines:

1. The safety of COVID-19 vaccines is a top priority. The U.S. vaccine safety system ensures that all vaccines are as safe as possible.
CDC has developed a new tool, “V Safe,” as an additional layer of safety monitoring to increase our ability to rapidly detect any safety issues with COVID-19 vaccines. V Safe is a new smartphone-based, after-vaccination health checker for people who receive COVID-19 vaccines.
2. COVID-19 vaccination will help protect you from getting COVID-19. You need two doses of the currently available COVID-19 vaccine. A second shot three weeks after your first shot is needed to get the most protection the vaccine has to offer against this serious disease.
3. Right now, the CDC recommends that the COVID-19 vaccine be offered to health care personnel and residents of long-term care facilities, because the current supply of COVID-19 vaccine in the country is limited.
4. There currently is a limited supply of COVID-19 vaccine in the United States, but supply will increase in the weeks and months to come.
5. After COVID-19 vaccination, you may experience some side effects. This is a normal sign that your body is building protection. The side effects from COVID-19 vaccination may feel like flu and might even affect your ability to do daily activities, but they should go away in a few days.
6. Cost is not an obstacle to getting vaccinated against

COVID-19. Vaccine doses purchased with taxpayer dollars will be given to the American people at no cost.

7. The first COVID-19 vaccine is being used under an emergency use authorization (EUA) from the FDA. Many other vaccines are still being developed and tested.

If more COVID-19 vaccines are authorized or approved by the FDA, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) will quickly hold public meetings to review all available data about each vaccine and make recommendations for their use in the United States.

All ACIP-recommended vaccines will be included in the U.S. COVID-19 vaccination program. The CDC continues to work at all levels with partners, including health care associations, on a flexible COVID-19 vaccination program that can accommodate different vaccines and adapt to different scenarios. State, local, tribal and territorial health departments have developed distribution plans to make sure that all recommended vaccines are available to their communities.

8. COVID-19 vaccines are one of many important tools to help us stop this pandemic. It’s important for everyone to continue using all of the tools available to help stop this pandemic as we learn more about how COVID-19 vaccines work in real-world conditions. Cover your mouth and nose with a mask when around others, stay at least 6 feet away from others, avoid crowds and wash your hands often.

The CDC also states that among the benefits of getting a COVID-19 vaccine are:

- that a COVID-19 vaccination will help keep you from getting COVID-19;
- that experts believe that getting a COVID-19 vaccine may help keep you from getting seriously ill even if you do get COVID-19; and
- that getting vaccinated yourself also might protect people around you, including people at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

In addition, experts continue to conduct more studies about the effect of COVID-19 vaccination on the severity of illness from COVID-19, as well as its ability to keep people from spreading the virus that causes COVID-19.

The best way to get the latest information on COVID-19 is to visit [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) and click the COVID-19 link.

Keep an eye on each other.

Medicare: Part B and COVID-19 updates



Dan Toth

I've written previously about Medicare, providing an overview of Parts A, B, C and D in the August 2018 retirement column of *The Postal Record*. This article will discuss Medicare Part B and provide some Medicare updates regarding COVID-19.

Medicare Part B medical coverage includes physician and nursing care, laboratory and diagnostic tests, vaccinations, outpatient hospital procedures and similar services. It also includes durable medical equipment such as crutches, walkers and wheelchairs, as well as prosthetic devices.

Retirees will be faced with a decision at age 65 to decide if they want to enroll in Medicare Part B. When you're first eligible for Medicare, you have a seven-month initial enrollment period. You can sign up during the seven-month period that begins three months before the month you turn 65 (including your birth month), and ends three months after the month you turn 65. If your initial enrollment period ends, you may have a chance to sign up during a special enrollment period if you or your spouse (or family member if you're disabled) is working, and if you're covered by a group health plan through that employer or your union. If you are eligible, the eight-month special enrollment period starts the month after the employment ends or the month after group health insurance based on current employments ends (whichever comes first).

The reason there is so much emphasis on the enrollment period is the late enrollment penalty associated with Part B. A late enrollment penalty will increase the monthly premium 10 percent for each 12-month period you could have had Part B but did not sign up. This late enrollment penalty is not temporary and very quickly becomes cost-prohibitive.

The standard Part B premium for 2021 is \$148.50 per month. This reflects an increase of \$3.90 over the 2020 standard premium. The premium will be higher if your yearly income in 2019 exceeds a certain amount, and the premium continues to grow at certain income thresholds. If your 2019 yearly income was more than \$88,000 under an individual tax return, or more than \$176,000 under a joint tax return, the premium will be increased above the standard of \$148.50 for 2021.

Now that we understand the standard cost of Part B, let's look at an example of the late enrollment penalty to under-

stand its impact. Let's say I retired at age 62 and became eligible for Part B at 65. I decide I'm healthy, have good health insurance and don't need Part B. A few years later, I'm now age 70 and have had a few minor health issues. Although I have good health insurance, my out-of-pocket costs have started to add up and now I'm interested in Part B. But because I'm now five years past my initial enrollment period, I would be facing a 50 percent premium increase over the standard premium. A 50 percent increase over the 2021 premium would amount to a monthly premium of approximately \$223. The longer you wait, the less likely you are to be able to afford the premium, especially on a fixed income.

Most retirees elect to continue their Federal Employees Health Benefit (FEHB) plan and also enroll in Part B when eligible. For retirees, your FEHB plan becomes a secondary payer and Part B becomes the primary (this is not the case for active federal employees). This means that Part B will first pay in accordance with its fee schedule, minus certain deductibles and co-pays. Then the FEHB plan pays for the deductibles and co-pays (however, some FEHB fee-for-service plans—for instance, those that are not high-option—do not always cover the cost for deductibles and co-pays; therefore, check a plan's brochure for how it coordinates benefits with Medicare Part B). With this combination, out-of-pocket costs for medical treatment generally become zero. Signing up for Part B does not affect the premium of your FEHB plan.

Medicare can be used to cover some expenses related to the coronavirus. Medicare Part B covers the lab test for COVID-19, and you pay no out-of-pocket costs. Part B also covers a COVID-19 antibody test at no cost to you. Additionally, Medicare states that vaccines will be covered.

Part A (hospital insurance) covers inpatient hospital care when all of these factors apply: you're admitted to the hospital as an inpatient after an official doctor's order, the order says that you need inpatient hospital care to treat your illness or injury, the hospital accepts Medicare, and in certain cases, the utilization review committee of the hospital approves your stay while you're in the hospital.

Making health care decisions, especially when it involves multiple plans, can be complex and intimidating. But the time and effort to analyze the costs and benefits of your options is vital to a long and healthy retirement. I encourage everyone to research and take the time necessary to make a sound decision suited to your needs. Be sure to visit [medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov) for premiums, benefits and other information regarding Medicare, as well as researching how your FEHB plan interacts with Part B.

CCA Retirement Savings Plan



**James W.
“Jim” Yates**

Did you know that city carrier assistants (CCAs) have retirement saving options with the Mutual Benefit Association (MBA)? The MBA offers retirement saving plans for all city letter carriers who are members of the NALC, along with their families. For more information about the Family Retirement Saving Plan, see my September 2020 *Postal Record* article.

The MBA CCA Retirement Savings Plan (RSP) provides an opportunity for CCAs to begin saving for retirement prior to a career appointment with the Postal Service. The CCA RSP is a retirement plan designed to protect against the risk of outliving one’s resources by providing a lifetime of

supplemental retirement income.

The CCA RSP is offered either as a traditional or a Roth IRA.

With a traditional IRA, the contributions you make each year may be deducted from your federal taxes. In addition, earnings accumulate tax-free until the time of withdrawal. Upon distribution at age 59 and six months or older, the earnings and principal are taxed as ordinary income. For 2021, the maximum annual contribution per individual under age 50 is \$6,000. If you reach the age of 50 or older before the end of 2021, you may contribute an additional \$1,000 in catch-up contributions. Modified adjusted gross income eligibility limits are \$66,000 for a single filer and \$105,000 for a married couple filing jointly.

Contributions to a Roth IRA are not tax-deductible, but earnings accumulate tax-free. At the time of withdrawal, earnings are free from taxes if the owner has held the IRA for a minimum of five years and is at least 59½ years old. For 2021, a Roth IRA also allows you to contribute a maximum of \$6,000 per person each tax year (\$7,000 for those 50 and older before the end of 2021), if your modified adjusted gross income does not exceed \$140,000 for single filers or \$206,000 for married couples filing jointly.

Participation in the CCA RSP is easy. Once enrolled, you can simply make small contributions—as low as \$15 a pay period. The easiest way to pay is through automatic deductions from your paycheck. You can adjust how much you want to contribute, stop and start making payments, or pay in lump sums whenever you want. MBA will handle the automatic deductions or bill you monthly or annually.

If you need emergency cash, you can stay in the RSP while withdrawing money any time after one year, subject to cer-

tain minimums and limitations. However, during the first six years you are in the plan, you will pay a surrender charge on the amount you withdraw in addition to any IRS penalties, if applicable. You can also surrender your plan for its cash value at any time.

When participating CCAs become career employees, they may transfer their traditional IRA funds to the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), or continue the plan with the MBA to have an additional source of retirement income. The MBA will waive the surrender charge in this instance only. The TSP is not set up to receive Roth IRA transfers.

When you have reached the end of your career and are ready to retire, the MBA offers four ways to collect your benefits:

- 1. Life annuity with period certain**—Receive a lifetime of monthly payments. You are guaranteed this income for as long as you live. If you die during a specified period (five, 10, 15 or 20 years), payments go to your beneficiary until the end of the period.
- 2. Life annuity**—Receive monthly payments throughout your lifetime. No further benefits will be paid after your death.
- 3. Joint life annuity**—You or your beneficiary receive monthly payments as long as either of you lives.
- 4. Full cash refund**—Receive monthly payments as long as you are alive. When you die, the MBA will pay any money in your account to your beneficiary.

As with all of our plans and policies, you get all the advantages of your MBA:

- **Dependability**—NALC stands behind every policy written by the MBA, which was created more than a century ago to give letter carrier families reliable savings and insurance plans.
- **Affordability**—The MBA operates with low overhead, no fees and no salespeople on commission, so the savings are passed on to you.
- **Simplicity**—Just fill out an application to join the Retirement Savings Plan. You will receive your policy to examine for 30 days. If you are not fully satisfied for any reason, return it for a full refund of any premium you have paid. There is no risk.

For more information regarding any MBA products, please call the MBA office toll-free at 800-424-5184, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., or call 202-638-4318, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Eastern time (see note below). You also may visit our website at nalc.org/mba.

Please note: Currently, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the MBA phone lines are open only on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Eastern Time.

New Year's resolutions



**Stephanie
Stewart**

Another year has hit the horizon, and I believe it is time for a fresh start, or a renewed enthusiasm to try again for success. This should be our joint New Year's resolution.

Many times, throughout our lives, future success is hindered because of previous failures, mistakes, or just not knowing where to start. In these situations, we find it easier to tell ourselves that we can't do it, so we do not have to make another attempt.

If you are feeling this way, I would like to challenge you to change your perspective. No matter your age or where you are in

life, we all have a responsibility to ourselves. First, let go of 2018, 2019, 2020 or whatever has been holding you back. Take charge of this year and all of the opportunities available to help you obtain your goals. Start with a list, but make sure to be realistic as you write down your vision and dreams. Although we all want to find a magic Jeannie bottle, that probably will not happen.

Someone out there accomplished their goal weight, quit an unhealthy habit, started a dream business, paid off a debt or simply found happiness in living. Why shouldn't the next person to find success be you? You deserve it.

If you want to start with your health, the NALC Health Benefit Plan is here to help. We encourage you to start your list with making sure to have preventive checkups, immunizations and tests. You'll even be able to schedule and receive an annual routine physical exam (age 3 or older) or certain adult routine immunizations and tests without worrying about the cost, since you pay nothing when you see a PPO provider.

Next, if you would like to drop some unwanted pounds, and you are enrolled in the High Option Plan, check out the Real Appeal® Program through Optum®. This program is an online weight-loss program that offers both group and one-on-one personalized coaching through an online platform. The program focuses on weight loss through proper nutrition, exercise, sleep and stress management. Members will have access to a "transformation coach" and a suite of online tools to help track food and activity. Members also will receive a success kit to support their weight-loss journey, including a food and weight scale, resistance band, workout DVDs and more. Real Appeal en-

courages members to make small changes toward larger long-term health results with sustained support throughout the duration of the program. Members can enroll at nalchbp.org.

If you are enrolled in the CDHP or Value Option Plan, you can join the Cigna Weight Management Program. This free program helps you meet your weight goals by also providing a structured weight loss plan and motivational support. You can choose a telephone or online program, whichever works best for you. This is a non-diet approach to weight loss with an emphasis on changing habits. To enroll, call 855-511-1893 or go to mycigna.com.

What is next on the list? Organizing? Have you seen our Personal Health Record?

The NALC Health Benefit Plan understands the importance of having an organized accounting of your health-related information. Our online Personal Health Record at nalchbp.org is a helpful tool that our members can use to create and keep up-to-date records of:

- Medications
- Medical conditions
- Immunizations
- Physicians
- Allergies
- Emergency contacts

Your personal health information is stored in a single, safe, password-protected place accessible only by you or your designated personal representative.

To start using your Personal Health Record, simply go to our home page at nalchbp.org and refer to the top right corner, where you can register and sign into your account. It's set up to be easy to navigate, so you can update information at your convenience. The blue button feature on the Personal Health Record home page even allows you to access and download your Personal Health Record information into a simple text file that can be read, printed or stored on any computer.

Your list can include many things. Remember, these are goals. Other good ideas are:

- Designate "me time," and love who you are.
- Try meditation.
- Add to your savings account.
- Declutter your space.
- Pick one day a week for a random act of kindness.

"All our dreams can come true if we have the courage to pursue them."—Walt Disney

Contract Administration Unit

Brian Renfro, Executive Vice President
Lew Drass, Vice President
Christopher Jackson, Director of City Delivery
Manuel L. Peralta Jr., Director of Safety and Health
Dan Toth, Director of Retired Members
Jim Yates, Director of Life Insurance

Posting vacant assignments

The November Contract Talk outlined the process used to fill temporarily vacant letter carrier assignments. This article will discuss the procedures used to fill vacated and recently created letter carrier assignments, including letter routes, carrier technician assignments, parcel post and collection routes, and reserve letter carrier assignments.

Unless an assignment is under consideration for reversion, the National Agreement requires that it be posted for bid within 14 days of the date it is vacated, or that it be established, in the case of a newly created assignment. The local parties may agree to extend the 14-day time limit.

Article 41 Section 1.A.1 states in part:

1. A vacant or newly established duty assignment not under consideration for reversion shall be posted within fourteen calendar days from the day it becomes vacant or is established, unless a longer period of time is negotiated locally.

This section goes on to explain the time limits that management must follow if an assignment is under consideration for reversion:

When a position is under consideration for reversion, the decision to revert or not to revert the position shall be made not later than 30 days after it becomes vacant. If the decision is made not to revert, the assignment must be posted within 30 days of the date it becomes vacant. The Employer shall provide written notice to the Union, at the local level, of the assignments that are being considered for reversion and of the results of such consideration.

This provision delays the amount of time between the date that an assignment under consideration for reversion is vacated and the date it must be posted. However, this language does not allow management to adopt a “blanket” policy to consider all vacant routes for reversion. In a national-level settlement, M-01389, the parties agreed to the following:

The issue in the instant grievances involves a local district policy to consider all vacant routes for reversion pursuant to the provisions of Article 41.1.A.1.

The parties agreed that a “blanket” policy to consider all vacant routes for reversion prior to posting is inconsistent with the provisions of Article 41.1.A.1. Routes considered for reversion are to be considered on a route by route basis.

A complete copy of M-01389, as well as many other key contractual “M” documents, can be found in the Materials Reference System (MRS) at nalc.org/mrs.

Vacant assignments posted for bid are open to all eligible letter carriers employed in the installation, unless the local parties have negotiated local agreements, or a past practice establishes a different method. In accordance with Article 30, Sec-

tions B.21 and B.22, the parties may agree to post assignments within a specific section, as opposed to installation-wide.

Once an assignment has been posted for bid, the notice must be posted in all offices where letter carriers who are eligible to bid are assigned. In the case of installations with more than one delivery unit, the notice must be posted on the bulletin board in each office. A copy of the bid notice also must be provided to the local union. Employees absent during the time an assignment is posted may receive a copy of the notice; however, the employee must submit a written request for the notice.

The bid notice must be posted for 10 days, unless the local parties have negotiated a different time period in accordance with Article 30, Sections B.21 and B.22. The bid notice must include the information listed in Article 41, Section 1.B.4:

- (a) The duty assignment by position title and number (e.g., Key or Standard).
- (b) Grade.
- (c) Hours of duty (beginning and ending), including, in the case of a Carrier Technician assignment, the hours of duty for each of the component routes.
- (d) The fixed or rotating schedule of days of work, as appropriate.
- (e) The principal assignment area (e.g., section and/or location of activity).
- (f) Invitation to employees to submit bids.
- (g) Physical requirement unusual to the assignment.
- (h) If a city carrier route is involved, the carrier route number shall be designated. If a Carrier Technician assignment is involved, the route number of the Carrier Technician assignment and the route numbers of the component routes shall be designated.
- (i) Date of last inspection and date of last adjustment.

Within 10 days of the date the bid notice closes, management must announce the name of the letter carrier with the most seniority, known as the “successful bidder,” who bid on the route. In the case of a letter carrier who is temporarily disabled and is the successful bidder on an assignment, certain rules apply if the employee cannot assume the job duties. For an in-depth explanation of these rules, see pages 41-7 and 41-8 of the 2014 USPS-NALC *Joint Contract Administration Manual (JCAM)*.

Once the successful bidder has been announced, the employee must be placed on the assignment within 15 days, except during the month of December. Application of this exception does not begin a new 15-day period; the days would stop

(continued on next page)

Filling vacancies (continued)

being counted at the end of November and begin again at the start of January. The total number of days between the close of the bid and the date the employee starts on the assignment is still limited to 15 days.

The following additional contractual provisions pertaining to the posting of assignments may occur from time to time.

- **Article 41, Section 1.A.2:** Letter carriers who are temporarily detailed to a supervisory position (204-b) may not bid on vacant assignments during the detail. However, the 204-b may voluntarily terminate the detail and then exercise their right to bid when they return to the craft.
- **Article 41, Section 1.A.4:** Changes in start times or non-scheduled days do not require an assignment to be posted (except as provided in Article 41, Section 1.A.5 explained below).

- **Article 41, Section 1.A.5:** Article 30, Sections B.21 and B.22 allow the local parties to determine whether a change in start time of more than one hour requires the assignment to be posted.
- **Article 41, Section 1.A.6:** When the fixed non-scheduled day of an assignment is changed, the new non-work day will be posted. This allows employees to select their non-scheduled day by use of their seniority. This provision does not apply when an assignment with rotating days off has a change in the rotation.

Letter carriers with questions regarding the rules and regulations pertaining to the posting, bidding and awarding of vacant letter carrier assignments should contact their shop steward or local branch officer.

Election Notices

Buffalo-Western New York

This is an official notice to all members of Branch 3 that nominations for president, executive vice president, vice president, secretary-treasurer, assistant secretary-treasurer, five trustees, sergeant-at-arms, director of retired members, editor and insurance representative will be held by mail in 2021 due to COVID-19 restrictions and the inability to have meetings throughout 2020. The term of office for all positions will be for three years.

Based on changes made due to COVID-19 restrictions: All nominations shall be made in writing and must arrive at the union hall (4845 Union Road, Cheektowaga, NY 14225) for all offices via certified mail and/or hand delivered to the secretary-treasurer by no later than March 9 by 5 p.m. If a member nominates someone other than themselves, they must notify the nominee of such nomination. Acceptance of nominations must be submitted in writing to the secretary-treasurer prior to March 9, or no later than three days after the close of business on March 9 (5 p.m.).

Members who have held, accepted or applied for a supervisory position are ineligible to run for or hold office for a period of two years after termination of such status. All candidates must verify, upon nomination, that they have not served, accepted or applied for a supervisory position within the last 24 months.

Article 4, Section 2 states: "All offices as listed in this Article 4, Section 1, by virtue of their election will automatically be delegates to the state and national conventions, provided each officer is actually holding office at the time of the convention."

Kim M. Fitzgerald, Sec.-Treas., Br. 3

Cumberland Falls, Kentucky

This is an official notice to all members of Branch 2242 that nominations for branch officers will be held at our Jan. 28 meeting at

5:30 p.m. Branch offices include president, vice president and secretary-treasurer.

Elections will be held, if necessary, at our Feb. 25 meeting at 5:30 p.m.

Christopher Evans, Sec., Br. 2242

Louisiana

This is an official notice to all members of the Louisiana State Association of Letter Carriers for nomination and election of officer positions for the 2021-2023 term. All members in good standing are eligible to be nominated and elected except that member who (a) voluntarily, (b) otherwise hold, (c) accept or applies for a supervisory position in the Postal Carrier Service for a period of time (whether one day or fraction thereof, detailed, acting, probationary or permanently).

Louisiana State Association officer positions include: president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, director of retirees, six letter carrier congressional liaisons and two delegates at large. Nominations and elections will be held during the state convention June 2-4 in Shreveport.

Members who want to be nominated must be present, or he/she may send a letter stating their acceptance. The letter must be sent to the secretary before or on the nomination day. Please mail your letter of intent to Clara T. Jean Batiste at 114 N Vivier St., St. Martinville, LA 70582.

Clara T. Jean Batiste, Sec., LSALC

Morrisville, Pennsylvania

Nominations for officers and trustees of Branch 2572 will be accepted from Feb. 1 through March 31. The election will be held on Tuesday, April 6, at the monthly meeting.

William Rittler, Sec., Br. 2572

Pawtucket, Rhode Island

Given President Rolando's letter to all branches issuing a blanket dispensation

to postpone nominations and elections due to the pandemic, the Branch 55 executive board has voted to postpone nominations and elections of all officers for three months from the regular scheduled time. The branch will provide *The Postal Record* with a second notice with all the details of the exact time, date and location of the nominations.

Kenneth Cahoon, Rec. Sec., Br. 55

South Dakota

This is an official notice to all members of the South Dakota State Association of Letter Carriers. Nominations and elections will be held at the convention Sept. 17-18 in Rapid City (Clarion Inn, 1902 N. Lacrosse St.) for the following positions: president, vice president, secretary/treasurer, editor, historian, director of retirees, director of education and three trustees.

Members who have held, accepted or applied for a supervisory position are ineligible to run for or hold office for a period of two years after termination of such status. All candidates must verify, upon nomination, that they have not served, accepted or applied for a supervisory position within the last 24 months.

Balloting is to take place during the Sept. 17 session of the convention. Newly elected officers will be sworn in as the last order of business during the Sept. 18 session.

Ben Lembcke, Sec.-Treas., SDSALC

Washington, DC

This is official notice that, pursuant to Article 5 of the Branch 142 bylaws, a special election for the position of recording secretary will be held by secret mail ballot; and the elected officer of the branch will be installed at the February 2021 regular meeting for a term of three years.

Nominations for the office of recording

secretary will be made at the regular branch meeting on Jan. 6. The regular meeting of the branch will be held at 6310 Chillum Place NW at 7:30 p.m.

In the event that the social-gathering guidelines from the CDC for the COVID-19 pandemic are still active and we are unable to have a regular branch meeting in February, the membership will be notified by mail in reference to nomination and election for the position of recording secretary. If you have any questions about the nominations for the election of the branch recording secretary, please contact the union hall at 202-291-4930.

All members in good standing, as defined in the *NALC Constitution*, must be present or have a member in good standing place his/her name in nomination. All members in good standing must signify his/her acceptance of nomination in writing, to the appointed recording secretary by no later than 24 hours after the January nominating meeting. The nominee's written acceptance must also include that he/she has not, voluntarily or otherwise, held, accepted or applied for a supervisory position in the postal career service for any period of time, whether one day or fraction thereof, either detailed, acting, probationary or permanently, at any time during the 24 months prior to the nominating meeting.

At the nomination meeting, the president shall declare any candidate elected when there is but one nominee for the office/position. The name of a nominee who has been declared elected by the president will not appear on the secret mail ballot. At the nominating meeting, the president will appoint an election committee of five members; none of the members shall be a candidate. The election committee shall conduct the election in accordance with *NALC Regulations Governing Branch Election Procedures*.

Keith Hooks, Pres., Br. 142

2021 MDA updates



Christina Vela Davidson



Happy New Year! The Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) announced in December that it had selected former Vice Chairman of the Board of the MDA, Donald Wood, PhD, as the new president and chief executive officer (CEO) of the organization, taking over from Lynn O'Connor Vos. Wood is a renowned medical researcher and scientist, and most recently was the vice president of institutional effectiveness at Odessa College in Texas; before that, he was president and chief operating officer (COO) of IntegraMed America, a fertility and medical services corporation.

Wood has been involved with the MDA for nearly 40 years—notably, he helped launch and managed the organization's task force on genetics, which led to the discovery of the genetic cause of muscular dystrophy in 1986. In 1980, he was named director of the task force, which also funded the discovery of the genetic cause of Duchenne muscular dystrophy.

In total, Wood has more than four decades of experience leading both nonprofit and for-profit institutions. Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, he served first as an executive and then as president and COO of IntegraMedAmerica Inc., a medical services provider, where he helped take the company public and operated the company's national network of reproductive science centers, driving profitability for 12 years. During this time, he also helped create a new genetic-testing company, Odyssey Biomedical.

“If we can keep moving our strategic plan along, we will help MDA get ever closer to finding a cure, and we will continue to provide help and hope to MDA families in need.”

Wood succeeds Vos, who had served as president and CEO of MDA since 2017. “I am very proud of the contributions and achievements we have made at MDA over the past three years,” said Vos. She went on:

With this foundation now set and the long-term strategy clearly paved I have determined that now is a good time for me to pass the baton and pursue new and different opportunities. We have always put mission first, investing in



Dr. Donald Wood

research, care and advocacy. I continue to believe deeply in the mission of MDA and will always remain dedicated to our clinicians, partners, advocates and families in the pursuit of accelerating new treatments to achieve better health outcomes and bring equal opportunities to this significantly underserved community. It has been a privilege to work with all of you. Thank you for your ongoing support and guidance.

Depending on what your evaluation of the past year shows, celebrate your accomplishments, make corrections and keep moving forward toward the goal. Then, next year about this time, do the whole process over again. If we can keep moving our strategic plan along, we will help MDA get ever closer to finding a cure, and we will continue to provide help and hope to MDA families in need.

NALC's fundraising helps MDA with that promise as it builds on recent successes. On that note: The beginning of the new year is a time when many people make resolutions to better themselves or those around them. Has your branch set any goals for community service for 2021? If not, I hope your executive board sits down soon to plan for the year and considers helping with MDA.

MDA and NALC dream of a day when every child and adult diagnosed with muscular dystrophy will have access to treatment or even to a cure. Thanks for all your work!

Register for the 29th annual food drive



Assistant to the President for Community Services
Christina Vela Davidson

As we move into this new year, there is much to mourn in the events of 2020. But there is a lot to be thankful for as well. Our communities have rallied around one another in this period of crisis, and the stressful past months have shown that even during hard times, we are looking out for each other. Though the COVID-19 restrictions may have limited how much time we could spend with each other in person this year, we have all found ways to support and assist others throughout the holiday season.

That other “season of giving,” one close to the hearts of so many of us, is just around the corner. May 8 will mark the 29th year of our national food drive. It’s a remarkable achievement: almost three decades of delivering hope and sustenance to those in need. While it is still unclear whether we will be able to hold an in-person food drive, or whether the drive will be a virtual donor drive (as it was in 2020), we are excited to launch the registration process. I will be sure to swiftly update all members about the decisions we make regarding the 2021 food drive.

Registering for the drive

Throughout the years that NALC has run the food drive, we’ve improved and evolved our online registration process as necessary. There now is a quick and easy way to register for the

drive. Using the Members Only portal at nalc.org, branch presidents can simply click the “Food Drive” button, update their branch information, click the “complete registration” button and get confirmation of registration at the top of the “review” screen. That’s it. This also is the place to order partnership materials—bags, signs and other promotional items—to help get the word out.

All branch presidents who register online are guaranteed food drive reminder postcards. Has your branch not yet registered for Members Only access? It’s easy; it can be done from any computer and it provides all members, not just branch presidents, with important and specific information tailored to them. If you’re not a branch president, please remind yours that only he or she can register for the food drive online.

That is the only way to secure reminder postcards early. If you choose not to register online, registration forms also were mailed out at the end of December to branches that had not yet registered.

Save the date

Saturday, May 8, 2021—it has a nice ring to it. Whether you’re new to the drive, have been with us since the beginning or are somewhere in between, thanks and congratulations are in order. You work, day in and day out, to build the trust we enjoy with our customers. And thanks to that trust, in our first 28 years, we’ve collected more than 1.75 billion pounds of food. Even in 2020, when NALC moved the food drive online due to the COVID-19 pandemic, you all managed to raise money to provide food to hungry community members. We know that letter carriers are the “eyes and ears” of our communities. Our food drive proves that we are also their hearts and souls.

Please join us for our food drive this year, and check the food drive portal to make sure that your branch is registered. The 29th anniversary “Stamp Out Hunger” Food Drive, here we come!

28th Annual NALC Food Drive
Saturday, May 9, 2020
OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND POST CARD REQUEST FORM

Branch Information

Branch#: [Redacted]
President: [Redacted]

Food Drive Coordinator Information

Coordinator Name: [Redacted]
Address 1: [Redacted]
Address 2: [Redacted]
City: [Redacted]
State: [Redacted] Zip: [Redacted]

Address Choice: Branch Home
Office Phone: [Redacted]
Home Phone: [Redacted]
Cell Phone: [Redacted]
Region: [Redacted]

Office Phone: [Redacted]
Home or Cell: [Redacted]

Questions? Call Christina Vela Davidson 202-662-2489 or email lettercarrierfooddrive@nalc.org

After logging into the Members Only portal (above), branch presidents should click on the “Stamp Out Hunger” Food Drive logo to get to the registration area (r).

Member Information

Classification Letter Carrier Status Active

Click if you want to be identified as deaf or hard of hearing:

Member ID	Date of Birth	Branch #	LCFP Contributions (last 12 months)
Home Phone	NALC Entry Date	P.O. Finance #	Veterans Group
Cell Phone	USPS Enter on Duty	Region	Health Benefit Plan
Work Phone	EIN Number	Congressional District	Postal Record #:

* If changes need to be made to your member information, please contact the NALC Membership Department at (202) 953-6695.

Carriers, COVID-19 and keeping safe



Assistant to the President
for Workers' Compensation
Kevin Card

As letter carriers, we are mindful of the usual suspects that can cause a workplace injury. We have always had to be careful in dealing with dogs, slippery surfaces and the myriad of other hazards that we encounter on a daily basis.

As essential workers, the coronavirus pandemic added yet another challenge. When the pandemic took off in March 2020, the NALC met with USPS officials to establish policies to combat the virus and protect workers on the job. While we worked at these measures, the lack of consistent crisis management at the highest levels of our government forced postal officials to scramble to get the necessary protective equipment to keep workers safe.

The earliest days of the pandemic took a heavy toll on our craft. While most coronavirus infections caused mild symptoms, some resulted in hospitalizations and, sadly, a number of deaths. As the year progressed, the virus's impact on letter carriers largely followed the trends in society as a whole.

By mid-December, more than 83,000 postal employees had been quarantined, with nearly 23,000 testing positive for COVID-19. As the normally hectic holiday season rolled in, there were more than 13,000 employees who had not returned to work. In our craft, 25,000-plus letter carriers were quarantined, with more than 7,000 testing positive.

Gary Degrijze has been a letter carrier in Brentwood, NY, for 27 years. He started feeling sick in mid-March, and ended up in the emergency room. Hospitalized for two and a half months, he spent most of that time on a ventilator and continues to suffer symptoms related to his infection.

"I've been healthy for the majority of my life," said Degrijze, who is a 16-year Army reservist.

However, months after his hospitalization for COVID-19, Degrijze still can't grasp a coffee cup handle. "I have limited strength in my right arm because of nerve damage," he said. "The doctors don't know how much strength and mobility in my arm and hand I will get back; it could take up to a year for my right hand to recover."

Lingering joint pain limits his ability to stand or walk for long, and his feet have residual pain as well. "It's like having plantar fasciitis," he described.

Despite being out of the hospital for months, he continues physical therapy two to three times a week. Doctors don't know if his arm and hand will ever fully heal.

"I have good and bad days," he said. "There are days I walk halfway around the block and start to feel a little out of breath."

While most people with COVID-19 recover and return to normal health, some patients have symptoms that can last for weeks or even months after recovery from acute illness. Even people who are not hospitalized and have only mild illness can experience persistent or late symptoms. A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study released in July found that, even among COVID-19 patients aged 18 to 34 with no chronic medical conditions, 1 in 5 hadn't returned to their pre-coronavirus health two to three weeks after receiving a positive test result.

University of Oxford researchers published a study on Oct. 19 that found that 29 percent of patients they analyzed with moderate to severe COVID-19 had kidney problems two to three months after the onset of the disease. The study also found that 64 percent of patients had breathing problems, 60 percent had abnormalities in their lung tissues and 55 percent had significant fatigue.

Degrijze, who most recently has been working as the NALC member on a Dispute Resolution Team, expects to return to the team sometime this month. He appreciates the support he and his family received from his co-workers. In addition to donations of leave, postal employees arranged a parade of support in front of his house.

"While most people with COVID-19 recover and return to normal health, some patients have symptoms that can last for weeks or even months after recovery."

Although the recent development of COVID-19 vaccines offers us some hope, it likely will take several months or more before we can return to some semblance of normalcy. It's important to remember that most people who have COVID-19 recover quickly. But the potentially long-lasting problems from COVID-19 make it even more important to reduce the spread of the disease by following precautions such as wearing masks, avoiding crowds and keeping our hands clean.

For those of you who are dismissive of mandates, Degrijze has this to say: "The virus is very real; it's not the flu. It affects different people in different ways. It's very frustrating to hear about people who don't take this seriously. People should follow state mandates to protect themselves, their family and friends."

Monthly CSRS annuity payments for letter carriers who retire on April 1, 2021

The table below provides monthly basic annuity, survivor reduction and reduced annuity amount estimates for letter carriers covered by the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) who plan to take optional retirement on April 1, 2021. Estimates are computed by using the given high-3 aver-

ages, which are based on the basic pay earned by full-time Step O carriers and vary by length of postal/federal/military service.

Reduced annuity amounts reflect the difference between the given basic annuity and survivor reduction figures.

Years of Service ²	CC Grade 1 / High-3 Average ¹ : \$64,379			CC Grade 2 / High-3 Average ¹ : \$65,721		
	Basic Annuity	Max. Survivor Deduction ³	Max. Survivor Reduced Annuity ⁴	Basic Annuity	Max. Survivor Deduction ³	Max. Survivor Reduced Annuity ⁴
20	\$1,945	\$172	\$1,773	\$1,985	\$176	\$1,809
21	2,052	183	1,869	2,095	187	1,908
22	2,159	193	1,966	2,204	198	2,006
23	2,267	204	2,063	2,314	209	2,105
24	2,374	215	2,159	2,423	220	2,204
25	2,481	226	2,256	2,533	231	2,302
26	2,589	236	2,352	2,643	242	2,401
27	2,696	247	2,449	2,752	253	2,499
28	2,803	258	2,545	2,862	264	2,598
29	2,910	269	2,642	2,971	275	2,697
30	3,018	279	2,738	3,081	286	2,795
31	3,125	290	2,835	3,190	297	2,894
32	3,232	301	2,932	3,300	307	2,992
33	3,340	311	3,028	3,409	318	3,091
34	3,447	322	3,125	3,519	329	3,189
35	3,554	333	3,221	3,628	340	3,288
36	3,662	344	3,318	3,738	351	3,387
37	3,769	354	3,414	3,847	362	3,485
38	3,876	365	3,511	3,957	373	3,584
39	3,983	376	3,608	4,066	384	3,682
40	4,091	387	3,704	4,176	395	3,781
41	4,198	397	3,801	4,286	406	3,879
41+11 months & over ⁵	4,292	407	3,885	4,381	416	3,966

Clip and save—may not be printed every month. Always available at nalc.org.

1. High-3 averages for both grades (formerly levels) are for carriers who have worked full-time on a continuous basis between April 1, 2018, and March 31, 2021, at Step O (formerly Step 12).

2. Years of service includes any unused sick leave.

3. The reduction for a survivor's annuity is the amount necessary to provide maximum benefits (55% of basic annuity) to a surviving spouse.

4. If covered by the NALC Health Benefit Plan, a further deduction of either \$473.01 per month if for self plus one (code 323), \$408.94 if for self and family (code 322), or \$196.82 if for self only (code 321) will be made. In addition, premiums for any coverage under the Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance Program will reduce the net annuity further.

5. Under FERS rules, there is no maximum allowable yearly annuity. However, given the FERS formula of 1% per year, it is highly unlikely that any FERS employee will ever exceed the 80% maximum limit under CSRS.

6. FERS employees who retire at age 62 or later with at least 20 years of service receive an additional 10% - their annuities are calculated at 1.1% times years of service times high-three average salary.

Monthly FERS annuity payments for letter carriers who retire on April 1, 2021

The Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) covers federal and postal employees hired on or after Jan. 1, 1984. FERS employees earn retirement benefits from three sources: the FERS Basic Annuity, Social Security and the Thrift Savings Plan.

An additional Special Annuity Supplement is paid to FERS annuitants who retire at Minimum Retirement Age (MRA) plus 30 years or more, or at age 60 plus 20 years or more. It is approximately calculated by taking an individual's Social Security age 62 benefit estimate, multiplied by the number of years of

FERS coverage, divided by 40. It is payable to age 62 and then ends. Social Security benefits are payable beginning at age 62.

The table below provides monthly basic annuity, survivor deduction and net annuity amount estimates for letter carriers who plan to take optional retirement on April 1, 2021. Estimates are computed by using the given high-3 averages, which are based on the basic pay earned by full-time Step O carriers and vary by length of postal/military/federal service. Reduced annuity amounts reflect the difference between the given basic annuity and survivor reduction figures.

Years of Service ²	CC Grade 1 / High-3 Average ¹ : \$64,379			CC Grade 2 / High-3 Average ¹ : \$65,721		
	Basic Annuity	Max. Survivor Deduction ³	Max. Survivor Reduced Annuity ⁴	Basic Annuity	Max. Survivor Deduction ³	Max. Survivor Reduced Annuity ⁴
20	\$1,073	\$107	\$966	\$1,095	\$110	\$986
21	1,127	113	1,014	1,150	115	1,035
22	1,180	118	1,062	1,205	120	1,084
23	1,234	123	1,111	1,260	126	1,134
24	1,288	129	1,159	1,314	131	1,183
25	1,341	134	1,207	1,369	137	1,232
26	1,395	139	1,255	1,424	142	1,282
27	1,449	145	1,304	1,479	148	1,331
28	1,502	150	1,352	1,533	153	1,380
29	1,556	156	1,400	1,588	159	1,429
30	1,609	161	1,449	1,643	164	1,479
31	1,663	166	1,497	1,698	170	1,528
32	1,717	172	1,545	1,753	175	1,577
33	1,770	177	1,593	1,807	181	1,627
34	1,824	182	1,642	1,862	186	1,676
35	1,878	188	1,690	1,917	192	1,725
36	1,931	193	1,738	1,972	197	1,774
37	1,985	199	1,787	2,026	203	1,824
38	2,039	204	1,835	2,081	208	1,873
39	2,092	209	1,883	2,136	214	1,922
Each additional year ⁵	53.65	5.36	48.28	54.77	5.48	49.29

1. High-three averages for both grades (formerly levels) are for carriers who have worked full-time on a continuous basis between April 1, 2018, and March 31, 2021, at Step O (formerly Step 12).

2. Years of service includes any unused sick leave.

3. The reduction for survivor's annuity is the amount necessary to provide maximum benefits (50% of basic annuity) to a surviving spouse.

4. If covered by the NALC Health Benefit Plan, a further deduction of either \$473.01 per month if for self plus one (code 323), \$408.94 if for self and family (code 322), or \$196.82 if for self only (code 321) will be made. In addition, premiums for any coverage under the Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance Program will reduce the net annuity further.

5. Under FERS rules, there is no maximum allowable yearly annuity. However, given the FERS formula of 1% per year, it is highly unlikely that any FERS employee will ever exceed the 80% maximum limit under CSRS.

6. FERS employees who retire at age 62 or later with at least 20 years of service receive an additional 10% - their annuities are calculated at 1.1% times years of service times high-three average salary.

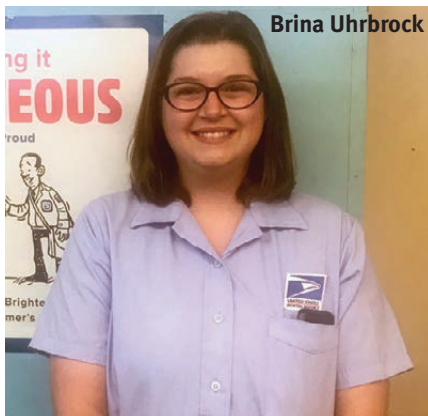
Customer Connect adds up for USPS

By touching every address in the United States at least six days a week, letter carriers naturally develop special relationships with their customers. Since USPS's Customer Connect program began in 2003, thousands of carriers have successfully leveraged their interactions with business customers to encourage them to use the Postal Service, rather than rely on private delivery and mailing services. Below are some recent stories about Customer Connect leads submitted by letter carriers that have helped USPS earn new revenue.

Neighborly behavior pays off for customer and carrier

When the COVID-19 pandemic started affecting package deliveries in March, Muskegon, MI Branch 13 member **Brina Uhrbrock** noticed that Amazon appeared to have stopped delivering to and picking up packages from her next-door neighbors. Their company, Amazing Gifts LLC, sells seeds, and had been sending out a lot of extra packages in 2020.

Given her relationship with the company's owners—"I know them, and they're nice people," Uhrbrock said—she decided to broach the subject and ask them to consider switching to USPS.



Brina Uhrbrock

"I'm not good at sales pitches myself," the six-year carrier added. "I just knew that they needed help, and I could help them."

Uhrbrock told them all of the reasons to consider changing delivery services: "I told them that [USPS] could help them save money, though it turned out they were less interested in that," she said. After their bad experience with Amazon, the customers were more interested in reliability.

But Uhrbrock was able to adapt her pitch on the fly. "I talked about our set schedule [for deliveries]," she said. "And that convinced them to switch."

For other carriers looking to find leads for the Customer Connect program, Uhrbrock advised them to be watchful while out delivering. "I just keep an eye out for businesses that are going to other companies," she said.

The carrier's lead with Amazing Gifts generated \$318,500 in new revenue for the Postal Service.

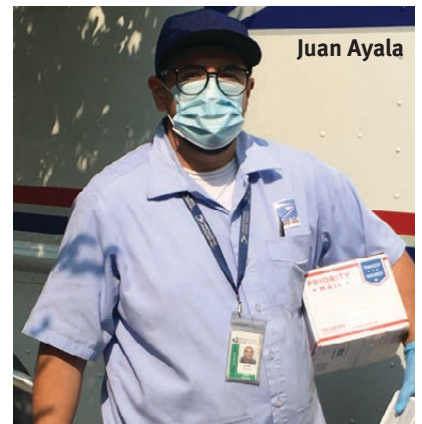
A California carrier crosses the million-dollar mark for USPS

In the four years that he has been delivering for USPS, Santa Ana, CA Branch 737 member **Juan Ayala** has been a star when it comes to finding sales leads for the Postal Service. Since 2016, Ayala has submitted 28 leads for a total of more than \$1.3 million in new revenue.

As a city carrier assistant (CCA), "I was delivering on a business route," the carrier explained, and he got to know his customers well. When doing his sales pitch, Ayala kept it simple. "I had an idea of what the customers wanted—they wanted to know, 'What can the Post Office do for us?'" he said.

Once he spoke about the potential benefits of using USPS, Ayala continued, "Most people were interested in hearing more."

One of the carrier's most recent leads



came when he noticed competitors' trucks at the loading dock of one of his customers—a company that makes espresso machines.

"They had just moved in," Ayala said. So when he went in with his deliveries, "I told them, 'We can save you money on flat-rate boxes,'" the carrier added. "I just told them to give us a chance."

After speaking with the company's shipping manager, Ayala submitted a lead through Customer Connect. A field sales representative was able to close a shipping deal with the company, and they switched to the Postal Service; Ayala's lead is estimated to have generated more than \$555,000 in new revenue.

"Juan is Irvine's very own 'Million Dollar Carrier,'" Mary Anderson, a USPS director of small business engagement, said in a statement recognizing the carrier's accomplishment. "He is proof that leads are out there, and a few questions can result in a happy customer and new revenue for the Postal Service."

Ayala, meanwhile, has since transitioned to a residential route, where he has fewer opportunities to find leads. But he believes that other carriers shouldn't be afraid to reach out to their customers. "The worst thing someone could say is 'No,'" he explained. "And someone could say yes." **PR**

California

Kudos to our negotiating team for the tentative contract just announced. Consider that in a year when tens of millions of Americans lost their jobs or had to take pay or benefit reductions, we operate in a world where not one letter carrier was laid off or had to fear for where their next paycheck was coming from. The things we take for granted, huh?

Well, our outgoing president, instead of doing his job, continues to accuse letter carriers of conspiring to rig the election. My response to The Donald is this: The same letter carriers you falsely accuse of dishonesty are the same ones who picked up ballots electing your fellow House and Senate members of the same party. Why aren't you asking for those results to be investigated?

One example illustrating the last point: Republican Burgess Owens—yes, the same Burgess Owens who played for the Jets and Raiders once upon a time—ousted Democrat Ben McAdams in Utah's 4th Congressional District. Utah is a vote-by-mail state, where both senators and all four representatives are Republicans. Not to mention the state legislature, where the GOP has an overwhelming majority.

If you are one of the trolls who attack your fellow postal employees of dishonesty without proof, mimicking the example of the president and his clown sidekick Rudy Giuliani, shame on you! I mean, you do realize that these people are not your friends, right? In each budget the president has submitted, he proposed that you be sent to the poorhouse. So good riddance to D.T. and the rest of his anti-union entourage!

I hope all of you enjoy a safe and prosperous 2021. And if you haven't done so already, please list as one of your New Year's resolutions to start contributing to the Letter Carrier Political Fund.

Eric Ellis

Kentucky

KYSALC regrets to announce that our February district meeting in Somerset has been canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We will next look at the KYSALC convention, June 13-14 in Bowling Green. If we are not vaccinated, or the virus is still deadly, then we

will not have an in-person meeting. I am not sure if a virtual convention is doable. Stay tuned.

Kentucky letter carriers who pay dues to NALC should indeed be proud to support such an organization that pays great dividends. The K-I-M region, and our officers at the national level, starting with President Rolando, placed a dynamic emphasis upon the recent federal elections, as well as legislation needed to save our employer and our fellow union brothers and sisters.

The weekly phone updates and the ability to participate in the political process through NALC made me feel like I was able to affect the election in states outside of Kentucky, like calling into Michigan. Our legislative and political organizer (LPO), Anna Mudd, was texting and calling day and night to urge our members to get involved.

As if there was not enough activity for our NALC officers, they also prepared for arbitration and then achieved a negotiated settlement with USPS that will be sent to our active members for ratification. Whatever the outcome, NALC will be ready after the lame-duck session to advance any favorable legislation to the incoming Biden administration that will help the U.S. Mail survive the pandemic's economic blight.

We are all so fortunate to belong to this great union that helps us navigate through a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic. We all need to do more to help our elected and appointed officers, staffers and stewards to deal with adversity on our behalf!

Bob McNulty

Michigan

Greetings, brothers and sisters!

Well, we have entered a new year. I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season.

As I write this, we are still in the midst of the pandemic. Letter carriers continue to go above and beyond to ensure that customers are receiving their mail. I hope everyone continues to be safe.

I have observed a lot of mixed reactions to the safety precautions, i.e., wearing of masks. I firmly believe that everyone has the right to their opinion, but I see this issue as unquestionable. The Postal Service has issued a mandate that masks will be worn if employees are unable to maintain social distancing. That isn't optional.

We must carry our satchels when delivering, we have to scan packages, we must deliver express mail on time, we cannot discard mail—these are all rules we must follow, so why is it so hard to follow the mask rule?

I know I would never want to be the reason somebody else got the virus. Please think of your safety and the safety of your co-workers and do the right thing. If we protect each other, we will get through this. I hope everybody is looking forward to the new year and whatever challenges and rewards it brings. Until next month, be strong!

Thomas Minshall

Texas

Happy New Year, everybody. Goodbye, 2020, and hello, 2021. As we start this new year, we must reintroduce all letter carrier-supported resolutions and bills. This is where the fun begins. Our letter carrier congressional liaisons (LCCLs) have their work cut out for them, but they are up to the task.

Texas leads the legislative way.

There have been several voting-related bills introduced in the Texas legislature for 2021, including a bill that would allow: registering and voting on Election Day, straight-ticket voting, implementing online voter registration, and no-excuse absentee ballot requests.

The TSALC is working with the Texas AFL-CIO and our partners to further voting rights in the state. Easier access to voting, and encouraging as many people as possible and our members to vote, is what these bills provide. We will continue to monitor this legislation and give periodic updates as the bills progress this legislative session.

News of COVID-19 vaccines is most welcomed, as there are a record number of cases across Texas and continues to increase. The TSALC board will notify all branches whether the state Committee of Presidents (COP) meeting scheduled for Jan. 30 will be held, postponed or canceled. Your safety is most important to us. If you have any questions, feel free to email secretary.tsalc@gmail.com.

Thank you to all of the LCCLs, board members and everyone who made calls, sent texts and put up signs this past election season. Your hard work did not go unnoticed; you are appreciated.

Carlos Rodriguez Jr.

In Memoriam

NALC offers deepest sympathies to the families and friends of departed brothers and sisters

W. M. Quinlan	Br. 782	Bakersfield, CA
Christophe O. Brown	Br. 1100	Garden Grove, CA
Wilber E. Spykerman	Br. 1100	Garden Grove, CA
Erica L. Wood	Br. 1111	Greater E. Bay, CA
Robert W. Jurgens	Br. 24	Los Angeles, CA
Robert McKernan	Br. 2200	Pasadena, CA
Becky M. Hayes	Br. 133	Sacramento, CA
Robert B. Rasmussen	Br. 133	Sacramento, CA
Sallyann J. Seaman	Br. 133	Sacramento, CA
Daniel Williams	Br. 214	San Francisco, CA
Timothy S. Takehara	Br. 737	Santa Ana, CA
John M. Myers	Br. 5996	Centennial, CO
Steven E. Collier	Br. 204	Colorado Springs, CO
Melvin G. Smith	Br. 204	Colorado Springs, CO
Alexander J. Lemmer	Br. 47	Denver, CO
Henry E. Olney	Br. 147	Norwalk, CT
James J. Sheppard	Br. 2689	Spacecoast Florida
Robert S. Niedermeyer	Br. 1690	W. Palm Beach, FL
Marc H. Morimatsu	Br. 860	Honolulu, HI
James E. Billings	Br. 155	Belleville, IL
Raymond F. Lackage	Br. 11	Chicago, IL
Joseph A. Mayerbock	Br. 11	Chicago, IL
John D. Buffer	Br. 4016	S. Suburban Mgd., IL

Bradley A. Jones	Br. 239	Connersville, IN
William L. Fowler	Br. 377	Evansville, IN
Tamisha Moore	Br. 580	Hammond, IN
Calvin L. Lavelly	Br. 373	Cedar Rapids, IA
Kenneth K. Lawson	Br. 352	Central Iowa Mgd.
Adrian L. Sanford	Br. 645	Fort Dodge, IA
Howard E. Bean Jr.	Br. 34	Boston, MA
Thomas R. Vreeland	Br. 34	Boston, MA
Mark T. Murch	Br. 25	MA Northeast Mgd.
Kenneth G. Knoll	Br. 1	Detroit, MI
Steven V. Vipond	Br. 1147	Grand Haven, MI
Donald L. Markle	Br. 246	Kalamazoo, MI
William L. Hoffman	Br. 13	Muskegon, MI
David L. Allen	Br. 3126	Royal Oak, MI
Gerald O. Page	Br. 3126	Royal Oak, MI
John L. Carlu	Br. 4374	South Macomb, MI
Michele L. Szafran	Br. 2184	Western Wayne Co., MI
Thomas P. Bovis	Br. 114	Duluth, MN
Ernest J. Sciaroni	Br. 343	St. Louis, MO
Richard L. St. Mary Jr.	Br. 343	St. Louis, MO
Trisha Plevka	Br. 203	Springfield, MO
Ezio Ongnissanti	Br. 89	Fremont, NE
Thomas J. Zygmund	Br. 444	Garden State Mgd., NJ
John M. Duffy	Br. 38	New Jersey Mgd.
R. B. Rockefeller	Br. 396	Plainfield, NJ
Frank D. Kotlowski	Br. 3	Buffalo-Western NY
Joseph J. Sikorski	Br. 3	Buffalo-Western NY
Charles Tarpey	Br. 294	Flushing, NY
Edward L. Joubert	Br. 36	New York, NY
Natividad D. Vazquez	Br. 36	New York, NY
Thomas Spinelli	Br. 210	Rochester, NY
Francis J. Wahl	Br. 210	Rochester, NY

Donald W. Howard	Br. 302	Watertown, NY
John W. Purgason	Br. 630	Greensboro, NC
Robert A. Fouts	Br. 238	Canton, OH
Robert T. Sisco	Br. 284	Erie, PA
Leroy S. Schilling	Br. 491	Johnstown, PA
Ralph R. Perez	Br. 542	Norristown, PA
Kevin J. Martonik	Br. 84	Pittsburgh, PA
Elmer P. Disanti	Br. 725	Southeast PA Mgd.
Anthony J. Dipadua	Br. 2158	W. Warwick, RI
Leland W. Hermerding	Br. 491	Sioux Falls, SD
Wilbert E. Schneider	Br. 181	Austin, TX
Brittany U. Lewis	Br. 226	Fort Worth, TX
John E. Richards	Br. 226	Fort Worth, TX
Elvin H. Harris	Br. 283	Houston, TX
Bernardo M. Nacino Jr.	Br. 283	Houston, TX
Lois D. Stringer	Br. 283	Houston, TX
Leroy K. Cleveland	Br. 1203	San Angelo, TX
Merlin J. Stephenson	Br. 111	Salt Lake City, UT
L. A. Potvin	Br. 521	Burlington, VT
Wallace E. Banks	Br. 609	Newport News, VA
Herman J. Crawley	Br. 609	Newport News, VA
Randall Drew Jr.	Br. 609	Newport News, VA
William A. Jones	Br. 609	Newport News, VA
Douglas F. Wright	Br. 609	Newport News, VA
Robert S. Leid	Br. 79	Seattle, WA
Joseph E. Niesz	Br. 619	Green Bay, WI
Jerome J. Banaszynski	Br. 2	Milwaukee, WI
Harold J. Batt	Br. 2	Milwaukee, WI
Kenneth M. Franz	Br. 2	Milwaukee, WI
Lorie K. Ross	Br. 2	Milwaukee, WI
James F. Talbot	Br. 2	Milwaukee, WI

Edward Joubert was erroneously listed as a member of Branch 35 in a previous issue of *The Postal Record*. We regret the error; he has been re-listed under the correct branch.

Honor Roll

NALC recognizes its brothers and sisters for their long-term membership

NALC members who have completed 50 years of membership in NALC are awarded a Life Membership Gold Card that entitles them to all privileges of membership in NALC without payment of dues. To receive a gold card and 50-year lapel pin, the branch secretary must write to the NALC secretary-treasurer and request the award for the member. This is in accordance with Article 2, Section 5 (a) of the *NALC Constitution*.



branch requests for lapel pins. Accordingly, the secretary-treasurer's office can only provide suitable lapel pins "when receiving proper notification by the Branch Secretary" in the year when a member is to complete the following number of years as a member: 25 years, 30 years, 35 years, 40 years, 45 years, 50 years, 55 years, 60 years and 65 years. Special plaques are available for members who complete 70 years and 75 years. This is also per Article 2 of the *NALC Constitution*.



All requests must come from the branch secretary. Longtime members are encouraged to inform their branches when they reach a longevity benchmark.

Additionally, the national secretary-treasurer's office handles

Below is a list of those NALC members who have received an award in the past month:

65-year pins

Keith E. Barnes	Wheeling, IL	Br. 4739
Earl Shaler Jr.	Saginaw, MI	Br. 74

60-year pins

Dean R. Willey	Torrance, CA	Br. 2207
William Engram Jr.	Washington, DC	Br. 142
Allen C. Bergadine	Belleville, IL	Br. 155
Paul W. Schultz	Frankfort, IL	Br. 4016
John P. Kranz	Mt. Prospect, IL	Br. 4099
Warren F. Anderson	Havre, MT	Br. 1425
Morris L. Detore	New Jersey Mgd.	Br. 38
Carl F. Bockman	Cincinnati, OH	Br. 43
Harold W. Burns	Cincinnati, OH	Br. 43
Robert R. Caldwell	Cincinnati, OH	Br. 43
Thomas A. Feist	Cincinnati, OH	Br. 43
Raymond P. Layman	Cincinnati, OH	Br. 43
Albert W. Matheus	Cincinnati, OH	Br. 43
Herbert Mitchell	Cincinnati, OH	Br. 43
William E. Murphy	Cincinnati, OH	Br. 43
Melvin E. Paul	Cincinnati, OH	Br. 43
William C. Price	Cincinnati, OH	Br. 43
Thomas M. Rouse	Cincinnati, OH	Br. 43
Ronald D. Sharp	Cincinnati, OH	Br. 43
Lester V. Weber	Cincinnati, OH	Br. 43
Robert L. Wendell	Cincinnati, OH	Br. 43
Wayne A. Vorpapel	Kenosha, WI	Br. 574

55-year pins

Ralph L. Lucas	Washington, DC	Br. 142
Robert B. Howard	Decatur, GA	Br. 2225
Ronald F. Reville	Baltimore, MD	Br. 176
Lawrence J. Selley	Saginaw, MI	Br. 74
Cecile M. Sumera	Saginaw, MI	Br. 74
Warren F. Anderson	Havre, MT	Br. 1425
Thomas R. Delaney Jr.	New Jersey Mgd.	Br. 38
John T. Thomas	Westchester Mgd., NY	Br. 693

50-year pins and gold cards

James M. Szumski	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Ronald J. Alonzo	Auburn, CA	Br. 3060
Hal J. Handelman	Auburn, CA	Br. 3060
James L. Lynch	Auburn, CA	Br. 3060
Sidney V. Stoffels	Auburn, CA	Br. 3060
Victor K. Bakunas	Beverly Hills, CA	Br. 2293
Joseph Fiumefreddo	Beverly Hills, CA	Br. 2293
Bertha M. Houston	Beverly Hills, CA	Br. 2293
Sidney E. Lipson	Beverly Hills, CA	Br. 2293
Raymond V. Menzhuber	Beverly Hills, CA	Br. 2293
Edwin S. Newman	Beverly Hills, CA	Br. 2293
Clyde A. Ravenscroft	Beverly Hills, CA	Br. 2293
Peter H. Stengel	Beverly Hills, CA	Br. 2293
Robert J. Ward	Beverly Hills, CA	Br. 2293
Sidney R. Brumfield	Merced, CA	Br. 1340

David M. Love	Merced, CA	Br. 1340
A. M. McHenry	Merced, CA	Br. 1340
Abraham L. Ochoa	Merced, CA	Br. 1340
Alan S. Rankin	Merced, CA	Br. 1340
Alan D. Abbott	Palm Desert, CA	Br. 4149
Manuel Duran Jr.	Palm Desert, CA	Br. 4149
James R. Goffinet	Palm Desert, CA	Br. 4149
Pedro Hernandez	Palm Desert, CA	Br. 4149
Thomas B. Ronda	Palm Desert, CA	Br. 4149
Rachelle L. Smith	Palm Desert, CA	Br. 4149
Harriet B. Sharver	Palm Desert, CA	Br. 2207
Larry D. Sipe	Torrance, CA	Br. 2207
Richard H. Sison	Torrance, CA	Br. 2207
Bertram E. Smith	Torrance, CA	Br. 2207
Russell L. Snyder	Torrance, CA	Br. 2207
Ronald A. Summers	Torrance, CA	Br. 2207
Danny R. Tyler	Torrance, CA	Br. 2207
Patsy A. Walsh	Torrance, CA	Br. 2207
David C. Newman	Panama City, FL	Br. 3367
Raymond A. Niemiec	Panama City, FL	Br. 3367
David Bennett	South Florida	Br. 1071
Billy P. Bolton	Decatur, GA	Br. 2225
Billy E. Buchanan	Decatur, GA	Br. 2225
William J. Bynum	Decatur, GA	Br. 2225
Louis W. Crawford	Decatur, GA	Br. 2225
Ruther M. Dewitt	Decatur, GA	Br. 2225
Douglas E. Faith	Decatur, GA	Br. 2225
Alfonsa C. Gardner	Decatur, GA	Br. 2225
Eddie T. Harvey	Decatur, GA	Br. 2225
Louis Johnson Jr.	Decatur, GA	Br. 2225
George A. Mason	Decatur, GA	Br. 2225
Wilbur R. Mills	Decatur, GA	Br. 2225
John E. Mitchell	Decatur, GA	Br. 2225
Gordon D. Phillips	Decatur, GA	Br. 2225
William L. Sosebee	Decatur, GA	Br. 2225
Herbert L. Taylor	Decatur, GA	Br. 2225
Robert W. Thomas	Decatur, GA	Br. 2225
William H. Thomas	Decatur, GA	Br. 2225
John I. Chaney III	Lilburn, GA	Br. 1537
James O. Everett	Sandersville, GA	Br. 2894
Robert D. Bowen	Mt. Prospect, IL	Br. 4099
Walter E. Drummond	Mt. Prospect, IL	Br. 4099
William J. Proksa	Mt. Prospect, IL	Br. 4099
Raymond J. Stauner	Mt. Prospect, IL	Br. 4099
Richard F. Stefan	Mt. Prospect, IL	Br. 4099
Robert G. Burns Jr.	Oak Brook, IL	Br. 825
James E. Carey	Oak Brook, IL	Br. 825
Robert P. Dreksler	Oak Brook, IL	Br. 825
Dennis B. Hebda	Oak Brook, IL	Br. 825
Bruce C. Hill	Oak Brook, IL	Br. 825
Lanny R. Jakubowicz	Oak Brook, IL	Br. 825
Jeffrey M. Kneiss	Oak Brook, IL	Br. 825
John W. Morris	Oak Brook, IL	Br. 825
Charles S. Moss	Oak Brook, IL	Br. 825
James A. Potter	Oak Brook, IL	Br. 825
Mary A. Poynor	Oak Brook, IL	Br. 825
James A. Rausch	Oak Brook, IL	Br. 825

Gregory F. Small	Oak Brook, IL	Br. 825
Kerry A. Stone	Oak Brook, IL	Br. 825
Robert L. Rumbold	Peoria, IL	Br. 31
John J. Ferro	Rockford, IL	Br. 245
Charles E. Schultz	Brazil, IN	Br. 670
Stephen E. Duncan	Indianapolis, IN	Br. 39
Clinton A. Burlage	Lawrenceburg, IN	Br. 1395
Marion Cook Jr.	Bossier City, LA	Br. 4617
Paul O. McKenzie Jr.	Bossier City, LA	Br. 4617
Gerald M. Melton	Bossier City, LA	Br. 4617
M. D. Shoemake	Bossier City, LA	Br. 4617
James E. Stewart	Bossier City, LA	Br. 4617
Leonard L. Anderson	Marrero, LA	Br. 4323
Charles T. Berger	Marrero, LA	Br. 4323
Donald W. Cardinal Sr.	Marrero, LA	Br. 4323
Carl Custard	Marrero, LA	Br. 4323
Jesse M. Galatas	Marrero, LA	Br. 4323
James R. Gibson	Marrero, LA	Br. 4323
Nicholas D. Kindrick Sr.	Marrero, LA	Br. 4323
Jeffrey J. Leblanc	Marrero, LA	Br. 4323
Roy J. Legendre Jr.	Marrero, LA	Br. 4323
Florencio F. Loyola	Marrero, LA	Br. 4323
Roy A. Rogers	Marrero, LA	Br. 4323
Leroy J. Talamo	Marrero, LA	Br. 4323
Calvin A. Walters	Marrero, LA	Br. 4323
Ronald F. Reville	Baltimore, MD	Br. 176
Lowell A. Greig	Iron River, MI	Br. 2846
Edwin R. Baker	Cloquet, MN	Br. 1243
Greg M. Erickson	Cloquet, MN	Br. 1243
Victor G. Viebahn	Cloquet, MN	Br. 1243
Robert C. Boyer	Hibbing, MN	Br. 1058
Kenneth R. Bryant	Hibbing, MN	Br. 1058
James F. Flanagan	Hibbing, MN	Br. 1058
Robert A. McCarty	Hibbing, MN	Br. 1058
Robert M. Modlisz	Hibbing, MN	Br. 1058
Robert H. Nyrhinen	Hibbing, MN	Br. 1058
Arthur R. Ohmann	Hibbing, MN	Br. 1058
John E. Rafinski	Hibbing, MN	Br. 1058
Allan F. Souder	Hibbing, MN	Br. 1058
Ronald D. Tolonen	Hibbing, MN	Br. 1058
George D. Breland	Drew, MS	Br. 4597
George J. Boes	Montgomery City, MO	Br. 3442
Curtis D. Peery	Montgomery City, MO	Br. 3442
Ernest T. Coppedge	Lewistown, MT	Br. 1160
Warren F. Anderson	Havre, MT	Br. 1425
Larry L. Schultz	Lincoln, NE	Br. 8
Michael A. Aguirre	Elko, NV	Br. 2862
Humberto L. Arroyo	New Jersey Mgd.	Br. 38
Joseph R. Cutaia	New Jersey Mgd.	Br. 38
Florian Czaplinski	New Jersey Mgd.	Br. 38
James L. Davis	New Jersey Mgd.	Br. 38
Daniel DiDomenico	New Jersey Mgd.	Br. 38
Franklin W. Garrison Jr.	New Jersey Mgd.	Br. 38
Russell Gentile	New Jersey Mgd.	Br. 38
Gerald R. Kaznosky	New Jersey Mgd.	Br. 38
John J. Lynch	New Jersey Mgd.	Br. 38
Thomas G. Nathan	New Jersey Mgd.	Br. 38

Below is a list of those NALC members who have received an award in the past month:

Robert J. Paladino	New Jersey Mgd.	Br. 38	Gary B. Payne Sr.	Cuyahoga Falls, OH	Br. 1629	Joseph M. Harbrecht	Irving, TX	Br. 4240
Joseph J. Ruane	New Jersey Mgd.	Br. 38	James F. Soyk	Cuyahoga Falls, OH	Br. 1629	Fred T. Harrington	Irving, TX	Br. 4240
Frank M. Schown	New Jersey Mgd.	Br. 38	Steve Streharsky	Cuyahoga Falls, OH	Br. 1629	Dennis G. Hinkle	Irving, TX	Br. 4240
Choyce H. Schwartz Jr.	New Jersey Mgd.	Br. 38	Valentine S. Gavlick Jr.	Mentor, OH	Br. 4195	Charles E. Jones	Irving, TX	Br. 4240
Perry D. Sutphin	New Jersey Mgd.	Br. 38	Richard Z. Mordus	Mentor, OH	Br. 4195	Joseph M. Letart	Irving, TX	Br. 4240
Stephen M. Totin	New Jersey Mgd.	Br. 38	Richard J. Pentek	Mentor, OH	Br. 4195	Robert J. Lowery	Irving, TX	Br. 4240
Melvin Winters	New Jersey Mgd.	Br. 38	Joseph R. Plovock Jr.	Mentor, OH	Br. 4195	Harold G. McDonald	Irving, TX	Br. 4240
Haywood C. Brown Jr.	Willingboro, NJ	Br. 5801	Robert R. Schneider	Mentor, OH	Br. 4195	Wendell E. Moseley	Irving, TX	Br. 4240
Wilfredo Flores	Willingboro, NJ	Br. 5801	James P. Webster	Mentor, OH	Br. 4195	Alfred L. Pfaff	Irving, TX	Br. 4240
Dave C. Hartzell Jr.	Willingboro, NJ	Br. 5801	Carol R. Austin	Mentor, OH	Br. 4195	Robert A. Rejkowski	Irving, TX	Br. 4240
Chas E. Murphy	Willingboro, NJ	Br. 5801	Charles W. Austin	Mentor, OH	Br. 4195	Charles D. Rosenbaum	Irving, TX	Br. 4240
George W. Page	Willingboro, NJ	Br. 5801	Thomas A. Boyadjis Jr.	Mentor, OH	Br. 4195	Don A. Sproles	Irving, TX	Br. 4240
Angel Rodriguez Jr.	Willingboro, NJ	Br. 5801	Donald S. Brown	Mentor, OH	Br. 4195	Millard F. Turner	Irving, TX	Br. 4240
John E. Taggart	Willingboro, NJ	Br. 5801	Dennis L. Cavallaro	Mentor, OH	Br. 4195	Jamie C. Boyd	Temple, TX	Br. 643
Theodore A. Vesaki	Willingboro, NJ	Br. 5801	Vincent A. Cavallaro	Mentor, OH	Br. 4195	Roger D. Cone	Temple, TX	Br. 643
Ross A. Lopez	Los Alamos, NM	Br. 4112	Anthony J. Dipadua	W. Warwick, RI	Br. 2158	Lawrence E. Erne	Temple, TX	Br. 643
Elmer Martinez	Los Alamos, NM	Br. 4112	Paul C. Leblanc	W. Warwick, RI	Br. 2158	Lawrence E. Graves III	Temple, TX	Br. 643
Edward E. Smith	Brooklyn, NY	Br. 41	Bobby W. Boulware	Arlington, TX	Br. 2309	Melvin B. Lange	Temple, TX	Br. 643
Rudy W. Ristau	Long Island City, NY	Br. 357	Charles L. Daron	Arlington, TX	Br. 2309	Rondel W. Robbins	Temple, TX	Br. 643
David Rodriguez	Long Island City, NY	Br. 357	Kenneth E. Dillard	Arlington, TX	Br. 2309	W. W. Robbins	Temple, TX	Br. 643
Alan M. Belofsky	New York, NY	Br. 36	Charles E. Grant	Arlington, TX	Br. 2309	Roy K. Sanders	Temple, TX	Br. 643
Luis A. Hernandez	New York, NY	Br. 36	Heriberto Guerrero	Arlington, TX	Br. 2309	Harold A. Schneider	Temple, TX	Br. 643
Robert A. Lessin	New York, NY	Br. 36	James R. Keel	Arlington, TX	Br. 2309	Louis D. Vrana Jr.	Temple, TX	Br. 643
James L. Marshall	Westchester Mgd., NY	Br. 693	Lewis A. Land	Arlington, TX	Br. 2309	Ruben Yepez Sr.	Temple, TX	Br. 643
Gretchen A. Morton	Westchester Mgd., NY	Br. 693	Ronald N. Moore	Arlington, TX	Br. 2309	Alvin Flowers Jr.	Hopewell, VA	Br. 2153
Fred H. Bridges	Kings Mountain, NC	Br. 3145	Fred P. Pennington Jr.	Arlington, TX	Br. 2309	Robert N. Swift Jr.	Hopewell, VA	Br. 2153
John R. Ross	Kings Mountain, NC	Br. 3145	Alfredo Perales Jr.	Arlington, TX	Br. 2309	Paul F. Burgess	Woodbridge, VA	Br. 5921
Freddie M. Marshall	Kinston, NC	Br. 1044	Leonard D. Richardson	Arlington, TX	Br. 2309	Asa B. Gardiner Jr.	Woodbridge, VA	Br. 5921
Roger A. McDaniel	Kinston, NC	Br. 1044	John C. Schmeisser	Arlington, TX	Br. 2309	Harold W. Haycraft	Woodbridge, VA	Br. 5921
Leon C. Coker	Kinston, NC	Br. 1044	James E. Shearer Sr.	Arlington, TX	Br. 2309	W. J. Heaser	Woodbridge, VA	Br. 5921
John M. Smith	Kinston, NC	Br. 1044	Ronald J. Tarrant	Arlington, TX	Br. 2309	Jeter B. Holloway Jr.	Woodbridge, VA	Br. 5921
Gregory A. Behrmann	Cincinnati, OH	Br. 43	Robert G. Auston	Irving, TX	Br. 4240	Herbert R. Lucas	Woodbridge, VA	Br. 5921
Sandra L. Copenhaver	Cincinnati, OH	Br. 43	Robert O. Clark	Irving, TX	Br. 4240	James M. Newman	Woodbridge, VA	Br. 5921
David R. Durbin	Cincinnati, OH	Br. 43	Francisco C. Cortez	Irving, TX	Br. 4240	Barney R. Rish	Woodbridge, VA	Br. 5921
Robert E. Gavin	Cincinnati, OH	Br. 43	James T. Cox	Irving, TX	Br. 4240	A. A. Taylor	Woodbridge, VA	Br. 5921
Paul L. Heger	Cincinnati, OH	Br. 43	Robert L. Day	Irving, TX	Br. 4240	Henry J. Terrell Jr.	Woodbridge, VA	Br. 5921
Michael B. Kleintank	Cincinnati, OH	Br. 43	Romulo M. Delgado	Irving, TX	Br. 4240	Walter C. Christman	Kenosha, WI	Br. 574
Gerald J. Mees	Cincinnati, OH	Br. 43	John A. Eckert	Irving, TX	Br. 4240	Gale C. Gibson	Kenosha, WI	Br. 574
Dennis J. Murphy	Cincinnati, OH	Br. 43	Joe R. Estrada	Irving, TX	Br. 4240	Gary F. Rozinski	Kenosha, WI	Br. 574
Charles G. Deremer	Cuyahoga Falls, OH	Br. 1629	Fredrick L. Everett	Irving, TX	Br. 4240	Orville E. Cussins	Cheyenne, WY	Br. 555
Cecil M. Gross	Cuyahoga Falls, OH	Br. 1629	Oral K. Griffis	Irving, TX	Br. 4240			
Ella M. Harviliic	Cuyahoga Falls, OH	Br. 1629	Claude M. Griffith Jr.	Irving, TX	Br. 4240			

Retiree Reports

New Orleans, Louisiana

“It ain’t over till it’s over.” —Yogi Berra
The retirees’ Christmas party had to be canceled due to the resurgence of COVID-19. I’m at a loss as to why there is such carelessness or foolishness, and a total disregard for others by not adhering to protocols established by medical professionals. As a respiratory therapist at a V.A. hospital and in the military, I’ve seen what happens when someone fails to wear a seat belt and is involved in automobile accidents; that lesson stays with me to this day. COVID fatigue is real, but I’ll take fatigue over death. Wear your freaking mask, and observe protocols so that we can have a return to a new normalcy. Failure to adhere to COVID protocols is causing harm to the economy and an unnecessary loss of life. Please, please wear your mask, wash your hands and social distance. This too shall pass.

The cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for Social Security annuitants and disabled veterans is 1.3 percent. For retirees under the Civil Ser-

vice Retirement System (CSRS) or the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), it’s also 1.3 percent.

Congratulations to Branch 124’s newly elected shop stewards, executive board members and delegates.

Even though in 2020 the better angels of our nature prevailed in preserving democracy, our job is far from over. The Biden administration hopefully will be more willing to alleviate the funding of the Postal Service and find a way to get a Board of Governors and postmaster general that will operate in the country’s and postal employees’ interest. Stay involved, as the next four years will be as rocky as the last four, minus the rampant Twitter lunacy. Stay tuned for Georgia senatorial outcome.

Hoping 2021 is better with distribution of vaccines. Stay involved, and ramp up contributions to the NALC political fund. I need my pension.

V.I.A.: victory is assured. We as a union and nation are imperfect, but we strive to be better—that’s the American way!

Stanley Taylor, Branch 124

Paterson, New Jersey

As of the writing of this article, the next projected president of the United States of America will be Joe Biden. This election, although showing the most amount of votes, tells how heavily divided this nation is at this time.

President-elect Biden will have the task of attempting to unite most (if not all) of its 50 states in order to move forward. This can be accomplished in a number of ways, which include not isolating anyone from being included in the decision-making process, and including different and innovative ideas that have other points of view in an attempt to represent all of the inhabitants of the United States of America.

A record number of votes were tallied, which shows a representation of the American public. Hopefully, once this unification is attempted, we can truly state and live in the *United States of America*.

Joseph Murone, Branch 120

Branch Items

Albany, New York

The branch offers our condolences to the families of our departed letter carriers Joe Powazi and Frank D'Agostino.

Joe had 53 years in our union and Frank was a 48-year member. Joe worked out of the Cox-sackie Post Office. Frank was my shop steward in the late 1990s. I worked with Frank many years at the GMF. He was a kind man who had many great friends.

Rest in peace, brothers.

Jay Jackson, Branch 29

Anchorage, Alaska

Congratulations to the newly appointed mid-term Branch 4319 officers: Tommy Devros, vice president; Alison Harpe, recording secretary; and Andrew Grant, trustee. These are highly qualified individuals who will provide branch members with dedication and professionalism.

The appointments came about as one of our trustees, Marie Azevedo, reluctantly resigned from the Postal Service. And then the loss of our vice president, James Frankford, who transferred to Vancouver, WA. While we are sorry to see James leave, NALC will benefit as a whole. We expect he will be working in the NBA's office, and thus his knowledge and skills as an advocate will benefit many carriers.

Before James left us, he arbitrated two removal cases that had been pending for more than a year as the pandemic caused hearing dates to be canceled nearly monthly. I'm happy to report that the arbitrators sustained both grievances and put the carriers back to work with full back pay and benefits. Not a bad going-away present James gave to those two carriers.

James's success carries on an outstanding record our branch has maintained for decades. It was 28 years ago that our branch lost a removal at arbitration. The grievant was found to be lying and it was proved at the hearing. It would be another 23 years before a second removal case was denied at arbitration. In that case, the grievant was found to be lying, and then later in court, the grievant admitted to his crimes. Not a bad record of representation that in nearly three decades, we were able to overturn all removals and get carriers their job back with the exception of two cases. If you're going to come after letter carriers, you better be prepared to go against the best union, and its advocates, in the land.

Jim Raymond, Branch 4319

Appleton, Wisconsin

Hello, new year, and same old issues from 2020.

Attendance, payroll, restrictions, short staff, short staff, payroll—sorry I'm repeating, but it keeps happening over and over each week. Did you work your day off and take no lunch? Check your virtual time card. Did you go to a medical appointment and come to work and then work OT? Check your virtual time card. Payroll issues from being charged sick leave when you were on annual leave and charged LWOP when you were on vacation and then waiting weeks for the pay adjustment, and in the meantime, multiple

other payroll mistakes happen when a supervisor with no regard for our hard work just enters numbers so their report is done.

Attendance has been a hot topic. If you have a condition that would be a FMLA-covered condition, please, please, please do yourself a favor and take the time to fill out the FMLA paperwork with your doctor and get it submitted, and then keep it updated as needed.

COVID-19 hasn't magically left our home life or our work life. Thousands of postal employees have contracted COVID-19 and, unfortunately, many have died. We remember our brothers and sisters and their families, friends and co-workers whose lives have been forever changed because of this.

Branch 822 has entered a new year still seeking members to step up to be stewards, help with the food drive, organize the branch Muscular Dystrophy Association events, write *Postal Record* articles, edit a newsletter to the members and be our branch health benefit representative. The list is long, but if you can, please volunteer to help out your union.

Upcoming will be local negotiations and the need for carriers from every office we represent to be involved on the committees to negotiate the local contract.

Kay Hanke, Branch 822

Boston, Massachusetts

As of Dec. 7, the Boston District has had 251 positive cases of COVID-19. Management decided to zero out the positive tests on Oct. 1 for the new fiscal year. The positive testing number was 256 on Oct. 2, so the Boston District is in excess of 507 cases for the calendar year 2020. We are currently averaging approximately 35 new cases per week. Cleaning of the affected offices is still an issue, but has taken a back seat to issues with contact tracing. Contact tracing is running behind or not being investigated properly. There is also a concern that omissions are being made as to not financially affect a co-worker or friend. This should not be happening and can lead to more cases and possibly a super-spreader event.

The occupational nurses who are hired by the Postal Service need additional help—another nurse or an administrative person to assist in this task of contract tracing. I have asked upper management to remedy this issue and only time will tell. The branch is in a holding pattern in all meetings and other events until after this second wave of COVID-19 is contained.

I would like to congratulate and welcome the three recently converted Woburn CCAs over the past 30 days. Additional congrats go out to our recent retirees: Mark Addivinola, Emily Caner, Jimmy Costello, David Devoe, Rico Petrucelli (favorite Red Sox/SS) and Peter Zinna. Enjoy your well-deserved retirements! The branch would also like to express our condolences to the families of retired letter carriers Jeff Gorden and Vincent "Alfred" Maglio. Rest in peace, my brothers.

Jerry McCarthy, Branch 34

Camden, New Jersey Merged

Branch 540 just held our year's end meeting and we ended the year with a bang. We were extremely honored to have Rep. Andrew Kim, congressman from New Jersey's 3rd Congressional District, log onto and address our branch's December general meeting. Also joining us as special guests were New Jersey State Association Vice President Nelson Gaskil and Region 12's newly appointed NBA Brian Thompson and new RAA Steve Wiley.

The congressman just won his second term in office this November. It has been a very long time since a Democrat won this conservative district two elections in a row. Rep. Kim thanked the members of our branch for our friendship and support and he spoke on the respect and admiration he has for us and all letter carriers. He pledged his continued support on our issues and we thanked him for his efforts fighting for us in Washington, DC. We reminded him of the Postal Service's need for financial relief due to the drop in revenue from the pandemic. The congressman said there were still talks going on in Washington for a COVID-19 relief bill.

The congressman said he works hard to represent all of the people in his district, not just the people who voted for him. He said he likes to consider himself a workhorse and not a show horse. Rep. Kim went on to say that he hopes to bring civility back into politics. The congressman has gotten to know some of our members who live in the 3rd District who attend his town hall meetings. Our members put in a lot of time and effort campaigning for candidates, making phone calls and even educating the candidates on our issues. It's nice when you get to see the fruits of your labor.

Chuck Goushian, Branch 540

Carmel, Indiana

NALC has done it again! The new tentative agreement has been worth the wait. The 24-month automatic conversion of CCAs will hopefully go a long way in helping to improve the disastrous CCA retention rate. Every CCA hired will definitely see the bridge to career if they stick it out for 24 months. This automatic conversion is a big win for NALC.

The other good news is that hopefully this will lead to improved staffing levels in many of our installations. In Branch 888, it looks like there will be 11 CCAs converted to career if and when we ratify the tentative agreement. This will allow the Postal Service to hire more CCAs, and this should lead to improved staffing, which we all know is desperately needed in many installations.

Our friends and neighbors might have a hard time understanding how we are receiving four general wage increases with seven additional possible COLAs and a new top Step P when the USPS is reporting losses in the billions of dollars. It is quite simple—you want higher pay? Join a union. You want better benefits? Join a union. You want above-average benefits with affordable health care? Join a union. Our good friend and president of the coal miners, Cecil Roberts, calmly explained all this to us during his speech at a national convention. I just

wished Cecil would have told us how he really felt! He was just a little too calm and soft spoken!

I urge everyone to vote “yes” on the tentative agreement, and we should all appreciate the hard work of our union to achieve such a quality contract in 2020. This was not the most ideal time to be looking for money when millions of our fellow Americans are struggling because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Knowledge is power!

Ronnie Roush, Branch 888

Charlotte, North Carolina

We here at Branch 545, first and foremost, hope that all of our members and their families had a wonderful New Year’s and were able to spend some much-needed time with loved ones after the busy holiday season. With the start of the new year, we look forward to the renewed hope and optimism of the coming year, especially with the ratification of the much-anticipated new contract coming. Also, this year, we also like to continue to grow our branch membership, educate our members and better communicate with one another to make our branch even stronger.

The branch would like to recognize our fellow members who recently retired: Gregory Chavez, Richard Gamble, Kenan Bulut and Jeffrey Parker. We thank you so much for your support of this union and we wish you all the best in the next phase of your lives.

The union partnership would also like to let everyone know that we are continuing to work within the parameters established by our local government leaders in regard to COVID-19. We are hopeful that we can resume in-person union meetings as soon as possible in accordance with established guidelines.

Justin Fraley, Branch 545

Emerald Coast, Florida

Locally, management is cracking down on attendance and tardiness. Just as a reminder, please remember that sick leave is for when you are sick or when a family member is sick and under dependent care. Repeated tardiness is difficult to overcome when you get disciplined. Please use your sick leave only as needed.

Carriers are reminded that when you (not management) determine that you need overtime, you must fill out Form 3996. Turn it in, request a copy and keep it. If it is denied, then request Form 1571 to curtail, turn it in, request a copy and keep it. If management tells you not to curtail and deliver all without overtime, then request a steward. If management does not give you a copy, ask to see a steward. Always remember to follow instructions first and grieve later, unless the instruction puts your safety in jeopardy. If you are told that you used unauthorized OT, then ask for a steward.

Management has a habit of placing carriers on an unauthorized overtime sheet and not telling you. Then they try to discipline you for it. If that happens, be sure to see your steward.

NALC has published a guide for CCAs; it is a good idea to read it to know your rights. You can

also go to the NALC website for questions and answers. Understanding your rights makes your job a whole lot easier.

With the summer months approaching, let’s all be mindful of the heat. *The Postal Record* has information as well as the website, under safety.

Please note:

There will be no Branch Items, State Summaries or Retiree Reports in the February 2021 *Postal Record*. That edition will be the special annual tribute issue honoring contributors to LCPF during 2020.

Congratulations to the NALC negotiation team for its hard work reaching tentative agreement with the USPS. It was a long journey, but hopefully, with the ratification by the members, it’s done.

Percy Smith, Branch 4559

Evansville, Indiana

We had a delightful lady letter carrier retire at the end of November at our River City Station, complete with the postmaster presenting her with a retirement certificate in front of her fellow carriers.

Frankly, I was glad to see her go. What? That wasn’t a very nice thing to say, you say. Perhaps an explanation is in order.

Yes, the postmaster extolled her many virtues; yes, she was one of his favorite employees; yes, she had a terrific work ethic, something that some of our newer employees know nothing of; yes, she came to work every day, properly dressed, always with a smile—which wasn’t there in the afternoon; yes, she was a professional letter carrier.

But Karen Weinzappel has had serious problems with her feet for many months now. She finally had to get on the eight-hour list, not that doing so did her any good with mandatory overtime assisting other routes.

During our hot, humid summer here in Evansville, I drove around the city with a cooler full of iced-down bottled water and Gatorade, and Ziploc bags of Posey County watermelon slices—cold, wet and a sugar energy boost. I always tried to hit Karen’s route on my rounds.

It pained me to see Karen as she approached her vehicle after a split, to see her painful walk and the pain and despair on her face as she approached. It was a race to her retirement eligibility date versus becoming disabled. She turned 56 on Nov. 7, and retired Friday, Nov. 27.

Perhaps I misspoke earlier. I should have said that I was happy for Karen to have made it to retirement while still able to walk—a very well-deserved retirement after 32-plus years. Enjoy, Karen.

Al Griffin, Branch 377

Fargo-West Fargo, North Dakota

The past year has been challenging at the Post Office. We faced package volumes like never before, delivered mail to customers while trying to socially distance, worked many hours, often covering for carriers home quarantining with COVID-19 or having had close contact with someone who had it, and delivered election ballots that some doubted we could do. Throughout the whole year, we did what we do best, and no matter what was thrown our way, we delivered everything for our customers. To all carriers nationwide, great job and thank you!

Earlier this year, we got new scanners. They obviously didn’t test them on park-and-loop routes in North Dakota weather conditions. When snow melts on the screen, unwanted inputs are entered. Using a glove with touch features doesn’t work well, the buttons on the side are extremely small and slow, and the stylus as well is small and tough to use when you have DPS and flats in your arms. It’s impractical to need to remove your glove in below-zero temps and difficult to get it back on. In the future, carrier input from all regions should be considered.

Congratulations to Amy Steffens and John Kloeckner on their recent retirements. We are losing two seasoned and well-respected carriers who took pride in their jobs and did them well. Amy, thank you for your years of serving as branch president and other important roles, including training. Thank you both for your support of the union. Good luck, Amy and JK; we hope you enjoy your retirements.

Due to the rise in COVID-19 cases, the decision was made to move our monthly branch meetings online for the time being. Any retiree or member who would like to attend, please let Rich know and he will send you a link.

Congratulations to Marc Sundstrom on converting to regular.

Brian Prisinzano, Branch 205

Fresno, California

Aug. 15, 2016. During the NALC national convention in Los Angeles, the NALC president spoke about how Republicans in Congress wanted to bankrupt the Postal Service, then void our national agreement.

An anti-union, anti-working people and anti-workers’ rights person by the name of Donald Trump won the presidential election. In 2020, he denounced the Postal Service several times. He vowed not to approve a single dollar to our struggling Postal Service. He then appointed a new PMG who openly was trying to sabotage the

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Postal Service's survival. He is a very wealthy supporter of the president. Not hard to see the plan. Yet, some of our membership still voted for four more years of this president. It makes no sense. But the former vice president won the election to be our 46th president starting on Jan. 20. However, 20 Republican senators are committed to not giving a single penny for any stimulus. We shall see how this all plays out.

With the help of Congress, President-elect Joe Biden, NALC and other labor unions, we can better ensure the survival of our Postal Service. What will become of our new PMG? Will we get newer, safer delivery vehicles? This is no time to let our guards down. NALC congressional lobby trips are planned for 2021. Our jobs are still to provide the best delivery service in the world, at the best prices. Take pride in the service you provide, and be united as one. The only question as of this writing is whether or not the Democrats will control the Senate. That is a must if we are going to stop hundreds of much-needed bills dying in the Senate because of Sen. Mitch McConnell. He has refused them to even be discussed in the Senate.

Jesse Dominguez, Branch 231

Greensboro, North Carolina

Vote by mail led to record turnout of voters and to Biden's victory.

Trump actually lost the Electoral College vote to Biden by 306 to 232, the same "landslide margin" (Trump's words) by which he defeated Hillary Clinton in 2016! But Clinton received 3 million more votes than Trump in her election "loss." In 2020, Biden received 7 million more votes than Trump, winning the popular vote along with the Electoral College.

Yet, more than a month after the election, Trump still publicly denies that he lost! During the election, we were key in overcoming Trump and PMG DeJoy's illegal disruption of the Post Office. Once Biden was declared the winner, and even after all 50 state election officials certified Biden's win, Trump still refuses to concede.

Even worse, when a major kidnapping plot targeting Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer was thwarted by state and federal authorities, Trump had nothing bad to say about the criminal right-wing plotters who seriously threatened the Michigan governor and her family.

But Trump's tactic of voter suppression failed, so he's now attempting to coerce Republican state leaders to set aside the popular vote and call on Republican-led legislatures to appoint Trump Electoral College delegates so he can steal the election that way.

In recent days, with Republican election authorities in key swing states honestly certifying their states for Biden/Harris electors, Trump viciously attacked these Republicans (who themselves had voted for Trump!). In Georgia, Trump verbally condemned Republican Secretary of State Raffensperger and then Gov. Kemp, Trump's former "best bud." Finally, Georgia's voting implementation manager, Gabriel Sterling, who works directly under Raffensperger, publicly addressed Trump: "Mr. President, ... you need to step up and stop inspiring people to commit potential acts of violence...."

Evidently, our role as defenders of the people's vote is still needed.

Richard A. Koritz, Branch 630

Hagerstown, Maryland

Ever since the CCA position was created with the Das arbitration award in 2013, NALC has been focused on improving work life and com-



Buffalo-Western New York Br. 3 awarded Norman Matuszewski a 25-year NALC membership pin.

pensation for CCAs. For the 2017 agreement, NALC entered into negotiations with the stated objective of closing the gap between career and non-career employees. Several key provisions were achieved in that contract, including two step increases, six paid holidays, credit for additional steps on the pay scale for former TEs, improvements in health care coverage to include family and self-plus-one coverage and significant salary increases that were retroactive.

In the most recent negotiation, assuming it is ratified, CCAs will be converted to career in 24 months, and will no longer have to wait 90 days after converting to use annual leave. CCAs will again receive solid raises retroactively. While there is still room to close the gap between career and non-career carriers, we have come to a place where we can start to talk about fairness. The discussion with a brother or sister CCA moves from when they *might* be converted to when they *will* be converted. A new CCA just entering the workforce now knows they *will* be a career employee once they put in their time. For the first time, there is a carrot on the end of the stick.

CCAs are the backbone of the carrier workforce. They do the work no one else wants to do, for longer into the day than anyone wants to. They suffer the consequence of not having a set schedule. And when we don't need them, we leave them at home, not earning an income. I am proud that our union has focused on the needs of CCAs and hope that our membership will continue to ratify contracts that help elevate their status.

Larry Wellborn, Branch 443

Hartford, Connecticut

Branch 86 said goodbye to an active member and union steward at Thanksgiving. Amanda Munro was our steward in the Farmington, CT, post office for more than three years. Amanda feared nothing when protecting our contract and meeting with management. She would not hesitate to question management *and* union authority in her pursuit to represent the Farmington carriers. Amanda has accepted a transfer to St. Petersburg, FL. We all wish Amanda the best in this new endeavor! Branch 86's loss is St. Petersburg's gain.

With the new contract having been settled (pending ratification), this writer considers its value not as a stand-alone agreement, but in context of every national agreement I have worked under since 1980. While some can argue that some contracts are better than others, we must also consider whether or not it stands to continue the objectives of NALC. The agreement must also be weighed in contrast to the political and societal times in which we live. Will one consider this contract in a vacuum, or will it be viewed as a viable stepping stone for our next contract?

For many years, beginning in 1971, a Joint Bargaining Committee (JBC) existed in which all four postal unions negotiated together. I was not a fan of the JBC being broken up. I did not view the JBC as "being strength in numbers," rather, I viewed it as being able to "keep an eye on our enemies." The other three unions now negotiate or bargain separate of each other. We always seem to go last because we are the strongest. I am not a fan of these other unions setting a pattern of acceptance by which we must overcome when it is our turn.

Is there an answer to this?

A happy, healthy 2021 to all NALC members and their families!

Michael L. Willadsen, Branch 86

Kansas City, Missouri

This was the year NALC was to celebrate the Great Postal Strike of 1970. A unified group of letter carriers in New York, led by future NALC President Vincent Sombrotto, felt enough was enough and decided to fight for the rights of letter carriers by going on strike. Beginning in Branch 36, then up the East Coast, the movement for better pay and conditions grabbed traction and spread across the nation. Then President Richard Nixon did all he could to legally break the strike. Failing to do so, letter carriers received better pay and got the right to collective bargaining, which paved the road to our current way of life.

Fifty years later, a nationwide pandemic has created chaos, and caused death, mass unemployment and a crisis developing within the Postal Service. Branches curtailed monthly in-person meetings for conference calls. MDA bow-lathons and golf tournaments, state conventions and, most notably, the national convention set for Hawaii were canceled or postponed. Many members got stiffed by the airlines regarding ticket refunds, resulting in non-payment of advanced travel pay. The dagger in the heart was PMG NoJoy, acting on orders from the Resident,

attempted to disrupt mail service with the sole intent to disenfranchise millions of Americans from voting in the national election.

NALC, led by President Fredric V. Rolando, felt enough was enough and decided to fight for America by going to work as letter carriers across the nation, refusing to be made scapegoats to a coup d'état, donned masks and assured the delivery/return of innumerable mail-in/absentee election ballots. Our actions saved a democracy, but not without a cost, as some lost their lives to preserve freedom.

Many challenges remain even as a new administration assumes control of the White House with a hope for better days ahead. Until then, pray.

In solidarity—

Calvin Davis, Branch 30

Knoxville, Tennessee

Abelated happy holidays to all carriers who survived the annual Thanksgiving-Christmas nightmare; with COVID-19, it has been even more stressful. Above of all, stewards must be diligent and investigate all contractual violations. Management is flouting the collective-bargaining agreement by delivering mail on city carrier routes, and more so by not enforcing the 12- and 60-hour violations and by flouting Article 8.5 with the forcing of eight-hour, work assignment and medical restriction violations throughout East Tennessee.

As stewards, you have the right to be treated as an equal by management when performing union work, and you must exercise your best judgment when investigating a possible contractual violation. It is a rare situation where the facts point to a clear-cut, unimpeachable decision. You have the right to make the call based on your best reading of the situation and should not have to suffer endless second-guessing by others. If you are in doubt, call President Love, Vice President Campbell, Branch Steward Matt Haggard or the undersigned. We can and will help all city carriers who have a question. One gets good at what one practices.

Tony Rodriguez, Branch 419

Lima, Ohio

Hello, members.

Been a while since I've written an article, so here we go.

We can start with stacks of parcels. Crafts crossing crafts and management not following the contract. Forced overtime, OT list not being maximized, OT not distributed correctly, favoritism and a ton of other issues that make me want to call MTV to make a new TV series!

The bottom line is that we are all in it together. The Postal Service has been set up to fail, with a hiring freeze in September when we needed to be training new hires. We as carriers have been through a lot since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic; our office has maintained very well and I feel safe in our work environment. All I can ask is that we all continue to work together like the Post Office family that we are, maintain the standard that sets Lima apart from other offices. Stay safe and happy holidays!

Thank you.

Jeffery Steegman, Branch 105

Minneapolis, Minnesota

“With the new day comes new strength.” This quote from Eleanor Roosevelt is one of hope and assurance. It could easily be adapted and applied to 2021: “With the new year comes new strength.” We were not sad to say goodbye to 2020. As the new year approached, we saw hope and assurance that there would be a vaccine for COVID-19 and that eventually we would return to normal life.

While things remain under the shadow of a pandemic, the stability of our jobs and the sense of normalcy our presence provides to our customers is an opportunity for us to be a part of new strength for our nation.

This month we will see the presidential inauguration after the most contentious and contested election in more than a century. The chasm between political parties is deep. The American public remains antagonistic. The question is obvious: Do we continue down the path of division and deterioration, or do we collectively embrace the new year with new strength?

I'm not speaking of digging in our heels or doubling down on our differences. As a country, we now have the chance to prove we can not only co-exist but thrive despite our differences. Cooperation and compromise do not require abandoning your beliefs or signify defeat and weakness. It only requires a conscious decision and resolve to focus on our similarities, not our differences. It necessitates a common goal of a better life for everyone. It requires recognition that rigidity and divisiveness have no place in a country that declares “freedom and justice for all.” We are bigger than our differences. We are better than we have been. We have been given a new day. Let our new strength be one of civility, conciliation and understanding. Let's resolve to make our world a better place.

In solidarity—

JoAnn Gilbaugh, Branch 9

Monterey, California

Anew year is upon us. Many questions remained unanswered about the coronavirus and millions wait for a chance at a vaccine. I remain hopeful that our nation can be healed and the virus will be contained.

The holidays brought long hours and exhausted carriers. All of you rock and know you've done an amazing job through all types of obstacles.

As the pandemic rages, it becomes increasingly challenging to get through a day. One phone call telling you someone you've seen has been exposed and you now find yourself under quarantine and waiting for the 14 days to pass by.

As my sister lies in a hospital bed, the uncertainty of her days ahead and the importance of caring for one another has become even more evident. If you haven't called someone who means something to you to let them know, you might think about it. We can't negotiate from the grave.

Congratulations to Louis Hill on his nomination and acclamation as Branch 1310 president. Louis is highly knowledgeable and knows the contract. Also congratulations to the rest of the

electd officers: Vice President Gary Piffero, Secretary Scott Bedell and Treasurer Conrad Ellaga. All of the officers elected deserve a round of applause and thanks for stepping up. Monterey was the first post office in the state of California, and the branch is more than 100 years old. It would be a shame to lose that identity.

Happy New Year, and let's make this the best one yet. I, for one, am ready to bid 2020 goodbye. Support each other and don't be afraid to stand up for a fellow letter carrier.

United we bargain; divided we beg.
Peace!

Patty Cramer, Branch 1310

New Orleans, Louisiana

My fellow letter carriers—

As I pen this article, I hope all is well with you during this festive holiday season. Although we are in a global pandemic with COVID-19, we can enjoy being festive if we wear masks, socially distance and wash our hands. Please, please stay vigilant and protect yourself as well as others. We have a new incoming Congress; maybe they can have continuity and finally agree to agree for the sake of the American people! We can only be hopeful. That being said, we must persevere, and continue to press on. Do what it takes to be successful.

Congratulations to our board of trustees members and to all of the delegates for state and national conventions. Carriers, we have a job to do, and do it we will. Stick close to your union, make meetings, continue to grow strong. Soon we should have a vaccine. When—who knows? But until that happens, practice hand washing, mask wearing and social distancing, even after a vaccine. If all fares well, we will have a state convention in early June. No more cabin fever!

Let us remember all of our members who we have lost during this pandemic and due to other causes not relating to COVID-19. We have a lot to be thankful and grateful for—the gift of life, good health, gainful employment and family. Let us remember to give to LCPF! Here's wishing each and every one of you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year!

Yours in unionism—

Marshall Wayne Smith, Branch 124

Norristown, Pennsylvania

America has spoken and has picked Joe Biden as our next president. Unfortunately, the Tangerine Toddler is calling foul. He's saying that in the states or cities he's lost, there had to be cheating, but not in the ones that he won, saying there is no way he lost. So he has his so-called lawyers tying up the courts with frivolous lawsuits, then have no evidence to back it up. This is his M.O. in life. Anytime someone came after him, he would try to outlast them in the courts and hope they go away. Sorry, TT, this time it ain't workin'!

Since the vote came back, he has turned his back on the American people to play golf and ignore the pandemic that is taking over our health care system. If any of our members have family

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members who work in the health care field, tell them I said “thank you.” Speaking of a change in leadership...soon, our branch president will be retiring and I wish him the best. JL has given up his own time to do what’s best for the branch and the members he represents. Thank you! Soon after, our V.P. will be retiring, and I wish him the best also. Dan was a union rep when I first started 26 years ago and he has guided me well. I appreciate both of these guys. Thank you!

What that means is we need members to step up and help keep our branch afloat. Right now we are OK, but the future creeps up very quickly and we have to plan ahead. Unfortunately, with COVID-19, our meetings have been put on the back burner, but it doesn’t mean we aren’t working for you. Really think about what you can do to help all of us! Goodbye, 2020!

Joel Stimmler, Branch 542

Northeastern New York

It has been a very difficult year, to put it mildly. The virus, national elections and uncertainty of our contract have put undue stress on all NALC members. Recently, there has been some optimism.

With some positive news about vaccines, there is hope for the future, even though there will be some difficult months ahead. Negotiations for the new contract are completed and await ratification from our members. Letter carriers I have spoken to are pleasantly surprised with this contract. Our national leadership should be commended.

With the presidential elections over, we have an ally. Hopefully, the Postal Service can receive some relief. I am hopeful in the new year.

I would like to commend Bob Order on his retirement from his officer position from Branch 358. Bob was a steward at Heritage Station when I became a letter carrier. He was also an employee facilitator and assistant RAA for Region 11. He was our branch treasurer for a number of years. He was our director of retirees until he recently stepped down. Bob has served our union for more than 45 years. Branch 358 salutes Bob for all of his efforts. Happy retirement!

Frank P. Maresca, Branch 358

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

The trajectory of the spread of COVID-19 is raging out of control. On Dec. 9, more than 3,000 Americans lost their lives in a single day. The following day, another 3,000 citizens perished. In the Philadelphia District, the number of infected employees outpaced what we experienced back in April, May, and June by a factor of three to four times greater, daily.

To a certain degree, perhaps many of us has become coronavirus-fatigued. Perhaps we have become too lax or weary with doing what we know ought to be done. Human nature will trick us into becoming complacent over time. We must avoid these tendencies. Please, wear your mask when social distancing is not possible. Wash your hands frequently. Do not bring your work shoes into your home. Wash your uniform and shower immediately. We simply must get

back to following all of the guidelines mandated by the CDC.

Unfortunately, the availability of a vaccine is still months away. Many will lose their battle to this terrible infectious disease before any remedy is obtainable. Medical professionals are warning us of the dark months ahead. Despite the fear and anxiety, we must keep things in their proper perspective. COVID-19 is temporary. Hopefully soon, it will not be the killer it is today. But for now, as I write this, it is the leading cause of death in the United States, and we must act accordingly.

Regrettably, Keystone Branch 157 lost retired member J.R. Parker to COVID-19 on Nov. 10. The



Above: Rochester, NY Br. 210 President Kenny Montgomery awarded a 60-year membership pin to Joseph Bianchi. Below: Past Br. 210 president Art Muoio received a 50-year gold card.



officers and members of the branch will always remember J.R. as a devoted member of our fraternal family. He participated in the Great Postal Strike of 1970 and risked everything while fighting to improve the lives of letter carriers and their families, forever. Rest in peace, our beloved friend. We will never forget you!

Joe Rodgers, Branch 157

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Well, that was fast. It’s amazing—management goes from adamantly wanting arbi-

tration to a tentative agreement on the turn of an election dime.

I’ve discussed the tentative agreement with several fellow carriers in my station, and I have yet to find one in love with it. Things I’ve heard range from, “the only CCAs who benefit from the 24-month conversion are ones in tiny offices,” to “original Table 2 carriers are left in the middle with minimal immediate difference,” and “ending MSPs will promote more running.”

I’m of two minds: On one hand, this contract looks great compared to the millions of out-of-work Americans in 2020. On the other, how is it fair to get similar language to crafts that can complete an entire shift in gym clothes when we’re bundled up in three-plus layers? We do more physical labor in more challenging conditions, and that is worth at least something. Plus, PSEs under six years got automatic layoff protection grandfathered for the life of the contract. CCAs get no such thing?

One of the carriers told me that this looks like the “Trump got re-elected” contract and it’s unacceptable. I don’t disagree. The 2006-2011 National Agreement showed annual pay increases of between 1.8 percent and 1.9 percent each year. Remember that *this was before the Great Divide of 2013* when a giant wedge was driven between us. The Postal Service was given flexibility to raise rates by the PRC recently and was shown to have \$15 billion in cash on hand in August, plus is set to offer EAS retirement incentives, for God’s sake!

Fifty years ago, real men and women had the internal fortitude to strike; we should at least consider using the gift of unionization, plus the election, to our advantage. Wherever you fall, make sure that *you* do the research and have all of the facts before making your decision.

John Conger II, Branch 84

Portland, Oregon

It is interesting to witness how a group of people can slowly slip into near delirium together—high functioning while just barely hanging on. Such was my office in December. It is also noteworthy how one office can be drowning in unwanted overtime while at another office just across the river, carriers are getting eight-hour days and their ODLers are wondering where the peak OT is. We are all on the same team, but also, we are not.

If the CCAs in your office survived this pandemic peak season, please continue to cheer them on. Hopefully, things are easier and better now, and they will stick around. While it has never been ideal to have new employees start so late in the year, I think we can agree that the ones who did it in 2020 had it especially hard. They earned a pat on the back, a gold star and a cookie. I am really looking forward to when we can all gather together again to vent and laugh and share and commiserate. We all deserve a drink!

Thank you to all of the carriers far and wide who weathered that storm of a year and went to work every day to serve the public. Thank you to all the stewards who helped to keep it all together. Happy January, and happy New Year! Cheers to 2021, and best wishes from beautiful Portland.

Suzanne Miller, Branch 82

Providence, Rhode Island

As coronavirus numbers continue to spike and cases are becoming more common here throughout our Providence stations, our state and our country, I again want to use a portion of this article to encourage everyone to do their part. This is a real, serious virus that is difficult to track and data is delayed due to the number of asymptomatic cases. That means that we have to continue social distancing, mask wearing and frequent hand washing to try to help slow the spread of the virus.

Also want to encourage everyone to make sure to take a look at the tentative National Agreement. The significant features of the contract are summarized in the November *NALC Bulletin*, which can be found on the NALC Member App, NALC website or on your NALC board in your station. Some exciting things that are highlighted are: non-career employees, after 24 months of relative standing, will now be automatically converted to career status; Article 11, Sections 3 and 4 have been modified to now allow full-time employees who work their holiday to elect to have their annual leave balance credited with up to eight hours of annual leave in lieu of receiving holiday pay; and doing away with MSP scans on the street along with wage increases and COLAs; and in 2022, a new step (Step P) will be added to the career letter carrier pay scale. Details about the tentative agreement, along with projected pay charts, other contractual changes, and information about new and amended memorandums of understanding (MOUs), were presented in the December issue of *The Postal Record*, so make sure to check it out!

National is in the process of working out the mechanics for safely convening a ballot committee to oversee contract ratification during a pandemic. Stay tuned.

Anthony Turcotte, Branch 15

Racine, Wisconsin

I had an article written about the lack of rubber bands. It was touch and go for a while. Those dirty break-on-impact rubber bands nestled in the far corners of LLVs and Pro Masters were starting to look pretty good. Just like that, they showed up and killed my article. I'll get 'em next time.

Have you tried paying it forward? Unfortunately, we are still so stubbornly divided as a country that maybe random acts of kindness are all that's needed. It doesn't need to be monetary. A compliment or a thank-you would work just fine.

Our CCAs were working what seemed like 24/7 non-stop. So the call went out asking for volunteers to work Amazon on Veterans Day to give our CCAs a break. So I volunteered. I'm sorry, I just couldn't figure it out. I didn't understand the scanner setup, which numbers go on the parcels and in what order, or the turn by turn. Thankfully, my supervisor noticed the deer-in-the-headlights look and said just work parcels on my string. Perfect, I'm a T-6. I don't need turn by turn; it's all in my head. It was then that I realized I am very set in my ways. So to all of you Amazon workers, I humbly take a knee,

tip my hat and pledge, "never again." I was just in your way. I worked one Sunday delivering three Expresses as a PTF; I still remember those three houses and I was home by 8.

Our office is understaffed on the clerk side. What clerks we have are taking on more duties and working longer. Please remember to thank them—a good "pay it forward" act of kindness moment. And why aren't there any prizes in cereal boxes anymore?

Chris Paige, Branch 436

Rockville, Maryland

Biden and Harris have won the Electoral College 306 to 232, and thus, will be inaugurated on Jan. 20. It's also important to note that Biden and Harris have won the popular vote by more than 7 million! Trump and his Republican cronies are trying to steal the election with every dirty trick imaginable. Some have called them delusional scum! I couldn't agree more. *This was the most important election in our lifetimes.* Trump and the White House had advocated for privatizing the USPS and eviscerating collective bargaining. Through collective bargaining, NALC has achieved more than 140 pay increases since 1970.

But all of organized labor, in fact, all of the poor and working people in this country, were under attack from Trump. We better study how 74 million people could have voted for such a monster. It can't be as simple as telling a big lie and saying it over and over again until millions of people believe it.

On the local scene, we won a huge arbitration in early 2020, paying our branch \$2,500 for untimely pay adjustments in Gaithersburg. And, it was a representative case for three other grievances, so the total payment to our branch was \$10,000. I want to thank Adam Cline and Charles Clark for the excellent job they did in preparing and arbitrating this case.

Please visit our website, set up by union brother Chuck Clark, at nalc3825.com. We now have more than 311,322 hits. We have important information concerning COVID-19 and lots of information on CCA rights and benefits. We have escalating remedy settlements and arbitrations.

We have added important Step B decisions and Formal A resolutions, as well as arbitration decisions on numerous issues.

In the struggle—

Kenneth Lerch, Branch 3825

St. Louis, Missouri

In October and November, St. Louis Branch 343 conducted an election of officers. We are proud to announce the winners of the respective officers who were either elected or were unopposed for their specific office. Each member will serve a three-year term:

President John McLaughlin; Executive Vice President/Treasurer Brian Litteken; Vice President/Financial Secretary Marvin Booker; Recording Secretary Tina Hunt; Sergeant-at-Arms Richard Thurman; MBA Representative Saronda Sutherland; Health Benefits Representative Barry Linan; Board of Trustees Frank Enlow, Latecse Litteken, Steven Powers, Pamela Stepney and Darlene Tate; Correspondent to *The Postal Record* Tom Schulte; Member-at-Large Negotiating Committee Jerry Cantrell, Andre Perkins, Joseph Regan and Kiesha Wiley; Delegates to the St. Louis Labor Council Pamela Stepney, Frank Enlow, Mike Weir, Bill Lister, Barry Linan, John McLaughlin and Steven Powers.

We congratulate all of the newly elected officers and wish them well as they prepare to take on the challenges of their respective offices. Each of these members has progressively worked their way up through the ranks. We look forward to their leadership as they guide this branch through the next phase of its history. We ask providence to guide their decisions as they seek to fulfill the mission of always doing what is best for all our members.

We also would like to take this opportunity to thank outgoing officers President Robert Rapisardo, Vice President/Treasurer Brad Layton and Health Benefits Representative Chet Drain. Each of these officers has tirelessly given of their time and resources. Thank you all for your perseverance and sacrifice for the good of all the members of this branch. Each of you has played an integral part in the success of this union. We salute you for your vision, leadership

COLA: Cost-of-living adjustment

- ▶ Following the release of the July 2019 Consumer Price Index (CPI), the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) under the 2016-2019 National Agreement is **\$624 annually**. This COLA is based on the change in the CPI from the base index month to July 2019, with the previous six COLAs subtracted.
- ▶ The 2022 projected COLAs for the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) and the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), which are based on the CPI's increase between the third quarter of 2019 and third quarter of

2020, is **0.2 percent** and will be finalized with the publication of the September 2021 CPI in October 2021.

- ▶ The 2021 COLA under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA) is projected to be **1.3 percent** following the release of the November 2020 CPI. This COLA is based on the change in the CPI between December 2019 and December 2020 and will be finalized with the release of the December 2020 CPI this month.

Visit nalc.org for the latest updates.

Branch Items

and work ethic. Thank you, and best wishes for the next stage of your careers.

Tom Schulte, Branch 343

Saint Paul, Minnesota

I was out delivering on Wednesday, Dec. 2, when the tornado sirens went off. I thought, “What an appropriate end to 2020—winter tornadoes in the Twin Cities.” As it turns out (tornado pun) it was just another Wednesday alarm test, but it showed just how much the difficulties of 2020, and expecting the worst, has taken hold in the minds of letter carriers over the past year.

Even with a vaccine, I can’t imagine that we will get over this year soon enough. I’m not sure that I know what “normal” is anymore. We’ll just have to keep putting one foot in front of the other, I guess.

There are some things to look forward to, though. The last few days have produced a tentative agreement for a national contract. I know that many of us are sick of anything having to do with “elections,” but we must keep in mind that this is the first national agreement that anyone hired as a CCA will ever get to vote on. Push yourselves to understand the proposed contract and please (yes, you’ve heard it too much over the last few months), please vote. For or against, take the ownership that you can of your agreement and working conditions in these crazy times.

Until I am once again going to matinees on my SDO, I want to express, on behalf of the officers of Branch 28, just how proud, impressed and amazed we are by every carrier, CCA, family member, customer and friend of letter carriers enduring the challenges of 2020. Without exception, you have gone above and beyond. Be proud.

Colin Walker, Branch 28

San Antonio, Texas

Greetings, brothers and sisters.

Happy New Year 2021. Hopefully, everyone had healthy and enjoyable holiday season. The big news is that we have a new contract. For members with four years or less service, this is a golden opportunity for you to get in on the important work of reviewing the contract changes and then voting it up or down. And just like in politics, if you do not vote, you have no right to complain. This is your contract, so be a part of the process and make your voice heard.

The construction on our new union hall is on schedule to be completed on or about Feb. 21. When we can start using it will depend on the status of the coronavirus pandemic. Rest assured, though, when that time comes, a *serious* branch party is coming for our members!

Thanks to Kathy Ruffo for organizing our annual adopt-a-child Christmas toy drive and to everyone who donated money or a toy. Your generosity put smiles on the faces of children who may not have otherwise received a Christmas gift.

New stewards will also enter the contract enforcement arena in 2021. Thanks for stepping up. Invest time in educating yourself on the con-

tract, writing grievances and how to effectively represent your members.

Congratulations to our new branch officers for the 2021-2024 term. Richard Gould will become the new branch president and Louise Jordan will be the new vice president. Having worked with both of them, I am supremely confident they will do a great job. Me? I am retiring and going to work hard on my golf game and relaxing. Thank you for the honor and privilege of serving as a full-time officer for the last 12 years for Branch 421. NALC for life.

Tony Boyd, Branch 421

Seattle, Washington

The degree of difficulty for a CCA today, as they attempt to learn the letter carrier craft, is beyond anything I can imagine. And I’ve got a pretty fertile field, all plowed and planted, from my salad days as a carrier from which to pick. The only rumblings I get from the boots on the ground are what I can glean from my mailman, who is himself within sniffing distance of retirement. Hence, what is bothersome for a CCA is mostly none of his concern. After 30 years of imbibing mugs of bitter tears from managerial miscues, “my man” has become somewhat jaded. He sees it. We all see it. We have all seen it for years, but the most we can contribute is an all-knowing shrug of the shoulders. “What can I tell you?”

Well, here’s what I can tell you. Find the guy with the badge! Get to know your shop steward. Explain your day to the “sheriff”; bend his ear. The shop steward is mostly someone who has been there, done that, and can enlighten a CCA when they may be overburdened. “It looks like a lot, but it goes off fast.” One of those oft-heard supervisory maxims; it looks like a lot because it is a lot! Being new is difficult; you live, you learn, but not everything needs to be learned the hard way.

This brings me to contact No. 2—the T-6. If, say, a CCA is given four swings of mail, and four different park points, you can bet there’s some iffy strategy being applied. A CCA wouldn’t know, but a T-6 could. So, brain-picking is something a CCA needs to learn. Essentially, a noob needs to be part Hannibal Lecter if they want to avoid trudging around in the dark like a zombie.

Don Nokes, Branch 79

Silver Spring, Maryland

Congratulations to the NALC leadership for somehow negotiating a very decent tentative agreement during the tumultuous reality we find ourselves in. Avoiding arbitration (where we have virtually no control and is usually a 50/50 split that inevitably creates chaos for us) was a very good move. I can’t understate the fact that this endeavor is a result of tremendous bargaining skill, and I encourage our membership to appreciate it.

Unfortunately, we are still left with a corrupt PMG and mostly corporatized BOG. If they intend to be the dishonest sellouts it seems they are, maybe they should try not to be so obvious about it. There is also a widespread misunder-

standing of the basic purpose of the USPS: to provide a universal service that the American people desire, even if it comes down to a tax subsidy. There is no place at USPS for the PMG’s “shrink to survive” strategy. It is simply not appropriate or acceptable. I picture the PMG with a hatchet above our heads ready to start chopping away once the peak holiday season ends.

There was some other, even if it was more subtle, good news that the incoming administration has established a USPS transition team headed by Ron Stroman, the former deputy postmaster general who resigned over the hiring of our current crooked PMG. The NALC’s own Jim Sauber is one of the four members of this team. Hopefully, this will provide some much-needed oversight of the PMG’s crazy postal dismantling tactics.

We have a good (tentative) contract that means nothing if we are apathetic about our political situation. There are reasons to be optimistic, but securing long-term postal job stability will not be easy. The lack of participation in our political fund is our weakest link. Please do your part in this fight.

Lee Taylor, Branch 2611

Southeast Pennsylvania Merged

Happy New Year! 2020, haul A\$\$!

2020 was a challenge to everyone. But if we are reading this, we are here, dammit! I am so proud of how we all handled this unprecedented challenge. Branch 725 moves on to the next great challenges that will undoubtedly present themselves. And President Les Dillman and his executive board will do their best to meet those challenges.

But COVID-19 is still rearing its ugly head. So, let us finish strongly to protect the health and welfare of our membership. You are and will always be heroes! No one can take that away from you. So, let’s use this strength as body armor for the things that we know the company will throw at us.

A long journey led to us having a proposed new contract. Let us move forward in unity to strengthen our resolve for future challenges. So now when management does their driver observations, etc., they should seem so minor compared to COVID-19. When management tries to take advantage of us during a walk, let’s think about COVID-19. Whatever they will try to bring to us, we are armored in knowing that we were there when the country needed us. And now, do not play with us. But you know they will.

Thanks to Les Dillman and his leadership along the way. And to all of the thankless work that your shop stewards put in. We love you, shop stewards! And to the members. The executive board could not be prouder to serve such deserving people! You are why we are here. And we will never lose focus of that.

But keep this in mind: We have a new district manager. POOMs have been moving around. So, you know what that means....

#Let’sStayTogether #TogetherWeCanMoveMountains #AMountainWithoutFissuresWon’t-Break

Let’s just love!

Eric Jackson, Branch 725

Springfield, Ohio

COVID-19 arrived in Springfield with a bang. Depending on who you ask, between five and 12 employees have tested positive so far. Nine of 13 clerks, and some carriers (including Branch President DeWell) were asked by the district to quarantine for preventative measures.

The lack of clerks gave the carriers a chance to show what we are made of. Carriers quickly stepped up and have been sorting flats and letters, distributing the mail, and sorting parcels. Carriers come in up to two hours early, do the clerk work, and then carry their own routes.

With the dearth of clerks and the mountains of parcels we are receiving, many carriers have been working 12 hours a day for weeks. To all of the carriers who helped in any way, thank you. A special thanks to Jerry Martens, Michael Case, Tre McIntosh and Tony Salyer. It seems like you guys are living at the post office, because you're always there.

And let's not forget our support—all of the husbands, wives, girlfriends and boyfriends who are taking care of the kids, meals, schooling, COVID-19, etc., without much help from us. Sometimes we feel sorry for ourselves about the hours and working conditions here, but it can be just as hard on those at home supporting us. Many thanks to anyone who supports a letter carrier.

So how does management thank us for all this extra effort? By changing our starting time from 7:30 to 8:15. It gets dark earlier, so let's



Stamford, CT Br. 60 member Paul Pierrat (l) with Region 15 Larry Cirelli at a testimonial lunch honoring him. Pierrat recently died.

start carriers later. Amazing.

Our branch elections were canceled at the last minute due to COVID-19. A new election notice will be posted soon.

Branch meetings are the second Thursday of each month in Room 221. Pizza at 6:15 p.m.; meeting at 6:30 p.m. Show up. Listen. Ask questions. Knowledge is power.

Brian Gourilis, Branch 45



Tacoma, WA Br. 130 donated \$10,000 to a local food bank. Pictured (l to r) are Branch President Maleah Smitham (wearing a clear mask), steward Mark Nissen, Emergency Food Network CEO Michelle Douglas, Volunteer and Activities Coordinator Samantha Cooke, steward Terry Munson, Branch Treasurer Ric Wolf, stewards Kimberly Martin and Leorn Drewrey, Br. 130 member Bernadette Sun and food drive volunteers Bella Smitham and Kayla Montgomery.

Stamford, Connecticut

I was saddened to learn of the passing of Paul “Frenchie” Pierrat. His longstanding membership as well as service as an officer in Branch 60 was second to none. He walked the picket line in 1970 and fought for the rights of letter carriers ever since. He was an inspiration to me personally as well as the branch officers.

His quiet demeanor at union meetings was sometimes interrupted by a strongly worded message to our membership on the topic of the month. He would end his message with a “God bless the United States and God bless the NALC.” His passion toward NALC and its members was unwavering. It's people like him who paved the way for today's leaders.

I'm glad that in 2018 we had the opportunity to honor him for all of his efforts to advance the agenda of the NALC and his union brothers and sisters.

He truly will be missed.

Mike Ely, Branch 60

Tacoma, Washington

The individuals in the photo above took a lunch break on Tuesday, Dec. 1, to make an official donation to the Emergency Food Network (EFN). We were happy to see Bernadette Sun delivering the mail and able to make a stop for a quick picture. At the Nov. 5 branch meeting, the members of Branch 130 passed a motion to make a donation of \$10,000 to EFN. I guess the print on our “fake” check wasn't big enough to read.

With NALC matching the branch donation, EFN will be able to assist approximately the same number of people it has in the past. For every \$1 donated, EFN provides five meals for our neighbors in need. This donation will be a real help to EFN in place of the food normally collected during the Letter Carrier Food Drive the second Saturday in May, which was unable to happen this year due to many COVID-19 restrictions.

If you wish to make a financial (or food) donation to EFN, please visit its website at efoodnet.org and click the “donate” button at the

top of the page; there are many ways to make a donation.

Maleah Smitham, Branch 130

Toledo, Ohio

In the middle of November, we said farewell to yet another postmaster. This one lasted just more than six months. His replacement is in an acting status, so who knows how long he will be here.

Not that grievance payouts had anything to do with management's decision to remove our previous postmaster, but in the first six months of 2020, the dollar amount paid to carriers reached nearly \$2 million. There were more grievances filed so far this year than ever before. As a branch, we don't want the money; we would rather management comply with the contract.

The fundamental reason is supervisors not following the contract. Let me give you a hypothetical example. A station has 10 carriers on the overtime desired list. The top five in hours are 30 hours ahead, for the quarter, of the remaining five. On a given day, there are 10 hours of overtime needed to cover open routes. Instead of giving that overtime to the lower-hours carriers, the supervisor gives the overtime to the top five carriers. Doing this on a daily basis for days in a quarter exacerbates the problem. The larger the difference between top and bottom on the list, the larger the payout for failing to make the overtime equitable for the quarter. Multiply this example by 20 stations and the payouts start adding zeroes.

It looks like multiple vaccines will be distributed after the first of the year. I would hope postal employees would be high on the list to receive inoculation as soon as possible. Experts have said vaccines will be available for everyone by June. I pray that all goes well and we can finally put this pandemic behind us.

Ray Bricker, Branch 100

Auxiliary Update



Cythensis Lang
President

National Auxiliary Board

News and updates from the officers



Cynthia Martinez
Vice President



Crystal Bragg
Secretary



Linda Davis
Asst. Secretary



Pam Fore
Treasurer

From the President

Happy New Year from your National Association of Letter Carriers Auxiliary!

There is always hope for good things to come at the start of the new year.

The year 2021 will be no different.

We all have hope for our new president and vice president, hope for a vaccine to help with this coronavirus, hope that we can once again get together with family and friends, and the hope that 2020 left us with the knowledge about what is important and what is not.

This union and this auxiliary are so important to all of us, and we need to do all we can to make sure that both of these great organizations continue to thrive in 2021.

You should be receiving your 2021 membership forms very soon. We are also sending forms to each state president to reach as many people as possible. If you have not received a form or a request to become a member, contact Secretary Crystal Bragg.

Happy New Year once again, and we hope that our membership will be larger in 2021!

Cythensis Lang



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sdpfore@aol.com

NALC Member App

Available for free in the Apple App Store and the Google Play Store



Include me in the fight for letter carrier rights

Sign me up as an Auxiliary member!

Branch No. _____ Branch City _____ Auxiliary No. _____

Name _____ Phone No. (____) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

I am a family member of NALC member _____ of Branch _____

Return form with membership fee of \$20 to a local Auxiliary member or mail to:

NALC Auxiliary
Crystal Bragg, Secretary
835 Westland Drive
Mt. Zion, IL 62549



From the Trustees

2021—a new year and an anticipated fresh start with the new calendar.

So with that in mind, the question could be, What is growing near the Nalcrest fire station? No, not a beanstalk, but a tower to provide the entire complex with a WiFi signal. Yep, that's right; every resident will have free WiFi in their apartment.

There also will be some “hot spots” throughout the community for additional access by the residents.

The trustees are so pleased to make this announcement and provide what we believe is a major addition to the amenities that are part of living in Nalcrest.

Another big change for 2021 will occur in April, when our contract with Spectrum cable will expire.

This means providing television programming will cease to be part of the amenities package that comes with living at Nalcrest.

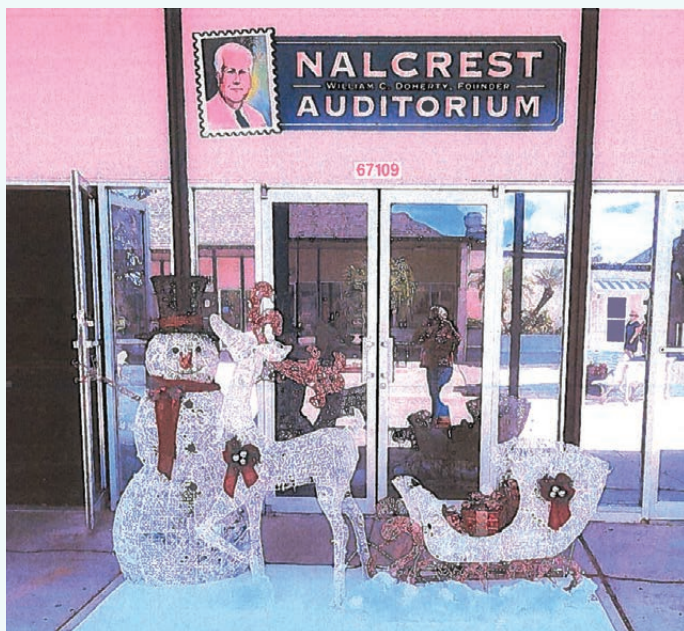
In large part, this change was precipitated by a continuing rise of the cost for the service. Signing a new contract would only increase

the cost burden for the next 10 years. For our residents, the provided WiFi will allow them to choose a streaming service that best suits their viewing preferences.

As an ongoing theme, Nalcrest continues to have a waiting list of letter carriers eager to move to Florida and enjoy the wonderful retirement lifestyle we offer. Do check us out.

From all of the Nalcrest trustees, have a wonderful, safe new year.

Tom Young



Apply to live at Nalcrest

For an application to live at Nalcrest, visit nalc.org/nalcrest, or call 863-696-1121.

Nalcrest Trustees

NALC President Fredric Rolando

NALC Secretary-Treasurer Nicole Rhine

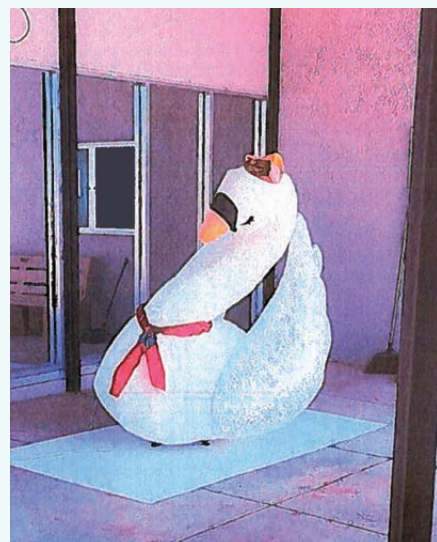
NALC Director of Retired Members Dan Toth

NALC Trustee Mike Gill

Nalcrest Trustees President Matty Rose

Nalcrest Trustees Vice President Tom Young

Nalcrest Trustees Vice President Don Southern



Nalcrest decorated its facilities with a winter theme.

Mutual Exchanges

CO: Grand Junction (11/13) to Murray, KY or surrounding areas. Regular carriers only. Two offices for bidding. Lots of sunshine, close to mountains. Moving to be closer to family. Lynette, 970-250-6718 or lynettond@aol.com.

FL: Bradenton (8/00) to Anderson, SC. Jerry, 941-932-6157 or

jerrymoden@yahoo.com.

FL: Fort Lauderdale (6/93) to Lynchburg, VA; Michigan City, IN or surrounding areas. Large office with OT. John, 561-329-0944 or jetorres01@yahoo.com.

FL: New Port Richey (6/11) to Knoxville, TN. Close to beaches, great fishing, boating, golfing.

OT available if desired. Hoping to move before next school year. Regular carriers only. Christian, 727-485-6737 (text or call) or palacios.c09@hotmail.com.

IL: Melrose Park (10/95) to Chicago, IL. Five bidding stations: Melrose Park, North Lake, Stone Park, Berkeley and Hillside, IL. Large

office with overtime if you want it. Eric, moovechi1@gmail.com.

WA: Tacoma (1/98) to Goodyear, AZ or surrounding areas. Union/management work well together. Nine bidding stations. Plenty of OT if desired. Jamie, 253-222-6985 (text only) or jamied75@comcast.net.

How to place a Mutual Exchange ad

The cost of Mutual Exchange ads is \$15 for up to 30 words and \$25 for 31-50 words per month.

Ads must be received by the 5th of the month preceding the month in which the ad will appear, e.g., January's deadline is for the February publication. Mail ad with check (payable to NALC) to: Mutual Exchange Ads, *Postal Record*, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144.

Ads are published for NALC members only. A branch officer or steward must endorse the ad to certify membership. Ads without endorsements

will be returned.

Include your name, address and branch number. Ads must be received in the same format and wording as they will appear in the magazine. Begin each ad with your state abbreviation, city and seniority date.

Ads should be typed in upper/lower case (or, if this is not possible, printed clearly) on a full sheet of 8.5 x 11" paper. Make certain the numerals 0 (zero) and 1 (one) can be distinguished from the letters O and I in e-mail addresses.

Note: Specific route information or mention of three-way transfers will not be published, nor any wording that offers cash or property to facilitate an exchange. Mutual exchanges must be approved by both postmasters involved. Seniority of carriers involved shall be governed by Article 41, Sec. 2E of the National Agreement. Carriers may not exchange assignments, since vacated positions must be posted for bids in accordance with local and national agreements.



MISSING

HELP BRING ME HOME

NCMEC: 1407111

Aliciana Pinkney



Missing Since: Nov 22, 2020
Missing From: Baltimore, MD
DOB: Jan 12, 2006
Age Now: 14
Sex: Female
Race: Black
Hair Color: Black
Eye Color: Brown
Height: 5'2"
Weight: 130 lbs

Extra Photo



Both photos shown are of Aliciana. She was last seen November 22, 2020.

DON'T HESITATE!

ANYONE HAVING INFORMATION SHOULD CONTACT

CALL 911 OR

1-800-8435678 (1-800-THE-LOST®)
Baltimore City Police Department (Maryland) 1-410-396-2359



MISSING

HELP BRING ME HOME

NCMEC: 1407727

Eliazar Viera



Missing Since: Nov 30, 2020
Missing From: Mcconnellsburg, PA
DOB: Jan 7, 2006
Age Now: 14
Sex: Male
Race: Hispanic
Hair Color: Black
Eye Color: Brown
Height: 5'0"
Weight: 108 lbs

Extra Photo



Both photos shown are of Eliazar. He was last seen on November 30, 2020.

DON'T HESITATE!

ANYONE HAVING INFORMATION SHOULD CONTACT

CALL 911 OR

1-800-8435678 (1-800-THE-LOST®)
Pennsylvania State Police (Pennsylvania) 1-717-264-5161

NEW Insignia Products



NALC Insignia Collection

	ITEM DESCRIPTION		PRICE EACH	QTY.	TOTAL AMOUNT
	INDICATE QUANTITY DESIRED NEXT TO SIZE				
1	Soft Heathered Grey T-Shirt	MD_LG_XL_2X_3X	\$10.00		
2	Men's Raglan Sleeve Sport Shirt	MD_LG_XL_2X_3X	\$38.00		
3	Men's Embossed Pattern Sport Shirt (Black)	MD_LG_XL_2X_3X	\$35.00		
4	Men's White Retiree Shirt	MD_LG_XL_2X_3X	\$35.00		
5	Ladies' Slub Pique Sport Shirt (White)	SM_MD_LG_XL_2X_3X	\$35.00		
6	Men's Tiger Stripe Sport Shirt (Blue)	MD_LG_XL_2X_3X	\$35.00		
7	Men's Black Fade Sport Shirt	MD_LG_XL_2X_3X	\$35.00		
	Men's Blue Fade Sport Shirt	MD_LG_XL_2X_3X	\$35.00		
8	Men's Charcoal Basket Weave Sport Shirt	MD_LG_XL_2X_3X	\$35.00		
9	Ladies' Tiger Stripe Sport Shirt (Blue)	SM_MD_LG_XL_2X_3X	\$35.00		
10	Ladies' Black Fade Sport Shirt	SM_MD_LG_XL_2X_3X	\$35.00		
	Ladies' Blue Fade Sport Shirt	SM_MD_LG_XL_2X_3X	\$35.00		
11	Cotton Mock Turtleneck (White)	MD_LG_XL_2X_3X	\$20.00		
	Cotton Mock Turtleneck (Navy)	MD_LG_XL_2X_3X	\$20.00		
12	Men's 1/4 Zip Slub Pullover Jacket (Navy)	MD_LG_XL_2X_3X	\$38.00		
	Men's 1/4 Zip Slub Pullover Jacket (Black)	MD_LG_XL_2X_3X	\$38.00		
13	Sweatshirt (Extreme Heavyweight, Navy)	MD_LG_XL_2X_3X	\$45.00		
14	Microfiber Sport Jacket	MD_LG_XL_2X_3X	\$60.00		
15	Ladies' White Zip	SM_MD_LG_XL_2X_3X	\$55.00		
16	NALC Winter Cap		\$10.00		
17	Navy Cap with Fashion Red Sandwich Visor		\$15.00		
18	Gold Medallion Pocket Watch		\$110.00		
19	Men's Medallion Watch w/ Steel Link Bracelet		\$85.00		
	Ladies' Medallion Watch w/ Steel Link Bracelet		\$85.00		
20	Men's Black Medallion Watch w/ Exp. Bracelet		\$85.00		
	Ladies' Black Medallion Watch w/ Exp. Bracelet		\$85.00		
21	Ladies' Charm Bracelet (Silver or Gold Finish)	SILVER _____ GOLD _____	\$20.00		
22	Veteran Challenge Coin		\$10.00		
23	Money Clip		\$15.00		
24	NALC Earring		\$15.00		
25	Veteran Drawstring Backpack		\$10.00		
26	Veteran Window Static Decal		\$1.00		
27	NALC Trailer Hitch Cover		\$10.00		



Completely fill out shipping instructions below. Please print or type

Name: _____
 Title: _____ Branch #: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____
 State: _____ Zip: _____
 Phone: (_____) _____

Attach check or money order made payable to Secretary-Treasurer, NALC and send with completed order form to: National Association of Letter Carriers, Supply Dept., 100 Indiana Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001-2144 Telephone: (202) 393-4695

You can order NALC products at nalc.org/store

Help your NALC family affected by natural disasters

The **NALC Disaster Relief Foundation** provides hands-on relief for carriers affected by natural disasters, such as wildfires, hurricanes, floods and tornados. It receives donations to be used to assist regular NALC members affected by natural disasters.

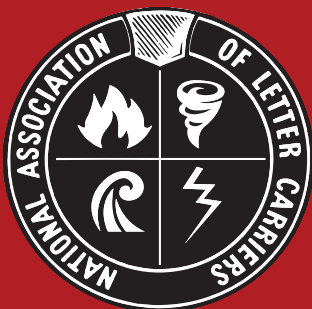
NALC response teams throughout the country are activated to go to disaster locations and offer assistance to NALC members and their families who live in the same household. Basic supplies, including uniforms and food, are available for those who need assistance.

Financial support may be available depending on the availability of funding and qualifying criterias. Any regular member of NALC who has faced hardship as a result of a natural disaster will be able to apply for assistance.

Make a donation by sending a check or money order to:

**NALC Disaster Relief Foundation
100 Indiana Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20001-2144**

The foundation is a 501(c)(3). Your contribution to the NALC Disaster Relief Foundation may be eligible for a tax deduction. It is recommended you seek further advice from your tax advisor.



**NALC
Disaster
Relief
Foundation**