

Volume 135/Number 11 December 2022

The Postal Record

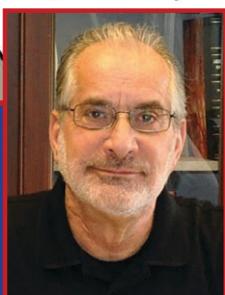
The monthly journal of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS

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The spirit of the season

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President Rolando thanks letter carriers for their support during his tenure—PAGE 1



Install the free NALC Member App for your iPhone or Android smartphone

As technology increases our ability to communicate, NALC must stay ahead of the curve. We've now taken the next step with the NALC Member App for iPhone and Android smartphones. The app was developed with the needs of letter carriers in mind.

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Go to the App Store or Google Play and search for "NALC Member App" to install for free

A farewell message: The members are never wrong



**Fredric V.
Rolando**

Over the past 21 years, I've written a monthly officers' column in *The Postal Record* as your director of city delivery, executive vice president and, for almost 14 years, as your national president. I spent the 23 years before that serving as a regional administrative assistant in Region 9, as director of education for the Florida State Association of Letter Carriers, as branch president in Branch 2148, as shop steward in Branches 2148 and 1071, and of course delivering mail in Sarasota and Miami. As I write this column, it's hard to believe that it will be my last one as I retire from my 44-plus-year career in the National Association of Letter Carriers. It may be the most

difficult column to write because it is literally impossible to fully convey the gratitude and love I feel toward the NALC and its members. My days in leadership in our great union are coming to an end, but I will remain a proud letter carrier—and active member in the NALC—for as long as I live.

We have faced various challenges together since I assumed the presidency in 2009. The wonderful retrospective article prepared by the NALC Communications Department (without input from me!) provides a summary of these challenges. It is generous to me beyond measure, though I am certain that all the credit for whatever successes we have had over my years as president are due to the 94 percent of all letter carriers who voluntarily belong to NALC, the thousands of activists who have stepped up to work together for our common benefit, and the countless officers and friends who have served with me over the years. Together, with the assistance of hundreds of current and former staffers of the NALC, our work has made the power of solidarity real in hundreds of thousands of households across the country. I can think of no better way to have lived my working life—for which I will be eternally grateful to all of you.

Of course, NALC will continue to face challenges in the future. In three short months, we will once again enter into negotiations with the Postal Service on a new collective-bargaining agreement with ambitious goals, most notably: better wages and an all-career workforce in order to achieve and maintain proper staffing levels sufficient to ensure that all routes are delivered every day without exceeding contractual work-hour limits. We also will continue our current discussions with the Postal Service regarding measures to protect the safety of letter carriers in the face of a rising wave of on-the-job robberies—with the goal of preventing such robberies, not just investi-

gating them after the fact. Meanwhile, we will continue the work of a variety of NALC/USPS joint task forces dedicated to reforming the USPS's workplace culture, ensuring contractual compliance, maintaining joint route evaluations, reducing new-employee attrition, prioritizing letter carrier safety, monitoring and enhancing delivery operations, and improving the grievance/arbitration process.

Next year, we will have to renew our push to achieve legislation that repeals the Windfall Elimination Provision and Government Pension Offset provisions (which gained majority support in the House of Representatives this year), and that allows federal employees to make retirement deposits to win pension credit for prior non-career service.

Administratively, we will continue our work with the Biden administration to adopt fair allocation methods for the Postal Service's Civil Service Retirement System liabilities via executive action, and to nominate the right people to serve on the USPS Board of Governors and other agencies that affect our members.

I will not be here to lead these efforts, but I am confident that we have the leaders in place to successfully advance them. NALC recently elected new officers, either by consent at the Biennial Convention in Chicago or by voting in the recent mail ballot election. The members' selection of the 28 elected officers for the next four years confirmed what I've always believed: The members are never wrong. Each of these women and men is fully aware of the challenges we face, and each of them is eager and more than qualified to move our union forward.

One of the most important duties of leadership in any organization is to prepare others to lead. I have taken this responsibility seriously—indeed, I have had the opportunity to personally mentor and/or work with each of the newly elected officers over the years, and I couldn't be prouder that the members have selected each of them to serve you in the future. Congratulations to each of them.

Also serving our members is an amazing staff of letter carriers and professionals who work side by side with our officers, along with our dedicated bargaining-unit employees. I want to thank each of them for their friendship, support and commitment to the NALC.

All there is left to do is to say farewell—but not goodbye. It has truly been an honor and a privilege to serve as your national president these past 13-plus years. I've made an enormous number of friends throughout the country in my union life. I truly appreciate the hospitality you've always shown me in my travels. We've been able to accomplish a lot through some trying times, and none of it would have been possible without your support. I want to thank the hundreds of members who have sent kind words and well wishes, the thousands for your friendship, and the tens of thousands for your activism and resolve as we've navigated through our working lives together.

I wish all of you the best of health and look forward to crossing paths in the future. Thank you.



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

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Cover illustration by Jorge Blas of Clearwater, FL Branch 2008

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FVR: Message, media and members



Philip
Dine

There is much one could say about what NALC President Fredric V. Rolando brings to the table: from expertise in all matters postal to an unwavering focus on the mission and never on personal recognition, from a leadership style that inspires those around him to do their best to an ability to simultaneously consider both the granular and the big picture. All that has led to an array of triumphs as he faced—and faced down—daunting challenges during his tenure, which ends this month.

I certainly have my stories on those counts. But I learned in my time as a journalist to focus on what you know best.

What I know best about Fred Rolando

is how his various traits coalesced to help NALC—on his watch and under his direction—save the United States Postal Service, a national treasure based in the Constitution.

When he assumed our union’s presidency 13 years ago, the USPS was hurtling toward financial ruin as the result of the absurd—and unique—congressional mandate that it pre-fund future retiree health benefits, a ticket to oblivion for an agency that gets its resources not from taxpayers but rather by selling stamps.

The odds against our remedying this were high, for two reasons.

First, the clout of those aggressively using this artificial crisis to denigrate, degrade and downsize the Postal Service—numerous lawmakers, administrations of both political parties, privatization advocates, even some postmasters general tasked with shepherding the USPS. Second, the misleading conventional “wisdom” that reinforced their efforts, bolstered by news outlets that, sometimes intentionally but often through astonishingly superficial coverage, misled the public. The Postal Service, the story went, was losing money hand over fist because it was rendered obsolete by technological progress; taxpayers couldn’t afford to fund it, especially given the Great Recession; so postal services needed to be cut back, if not cut entirely.

President Rolando, whose analytical bent gets him directly to the core of an issue, knew that rebutting the false narrative that served as the anti-postal rationale was key.

Despite not craving the limelight, he embarked on a media offensive. An early venture gave me initial pause. Arriving at the CNN news desk for his live interview, tension tangible, I said with the utmost earnestness, “Hello, this is Fredric Rolando, president of the National Association of Letter Carriers”; whereupon he quickly inquired, “Where do you keep the candy?”

Moments later, before a national audience, he knocked it out of the park, driving home his points in concise and compelling fashion. He proceeded to do so week after week in radio, TV or print interviews, whatever the reporters’ angles or attitudes. I soon realized that the way he related to those skeptical, often dour, folks known as journalists was part and parcel of his effectiveness—especially when he followed a light-hearted remark with his razor-sharp grasp of the facts and his messaging discipline. I also realized he was educating journalists every bit as much as their audiences, which would help us moving forward.

Equally important, he unleashed NALC’s rank-and-file letter carriers, activists and local leaders to change the national conversation—a daring move in a labor movement that too often tightly controls communications from the top. Given the obstacles NALC faced, Fred Rolando knew intuitively that we had no choice. But there was more to it. He doesn’t just say that our strength derives from our members. He believes it. And, in our hour of peril, he put that belief into practice.

These twin actions, by altering public opinion and thus influencing legislators to address flawed public policy, helped produce this year’s landmark postal reform.

Over the years, at key intervals, something else played a role: wisdom and perspective. It wasn’t just what he said, but how he said it and when he said it. The message he expressed, the example he set, was calm and devoid of invective. His tone was constructive, not accusatory; understated, not shrill. He explained, he never merely asserted. And he weighed in only when strategy dictated.

That approach lent credibility and impact to his words.

Three years ago this month, I asked a top postal reporter why he frequently included Fred’s comments in his stories. He cited the reflective nature of those comments.

“I definitely do think that hearing from President Rolando always provides valuable context,” he replied, adding that this gave readers a “broader understanding” of postal issues.

Fred Rolando has proven to be an indispensable leader for a demanding period in our nation’s history. The 290,000 letter carriers NALC represents, the Postal Service and the hundreds of millions of Americans who rely on the mail are better off for his service.

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The Postal Record (ISSN 0032-5376) is published monthly by the National Association of Letter Carriers. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Membership Department, NALC, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144.

Subscription included in membership dues. First-class subscription available for \$20 per year (contact Membership Department).

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Circulation: 287,000. Union-printed using soy-based inks.

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Renfroe elected 19th NALC president

The National Election Committee, appointed at the 72nd Biennial Convention in Chicago to conduct the election of national officers for NALC, has announced the results.

Here are the results, listed in ballot order. Winners are highlighted in italics. The terms are four years each. Note that voting for the regional national business agent offices was limited to NALC members from the respective regions:

President

—*Brian L. Renfroe, Hattiesburg, MS Br. 938: 31,415*

—David Noble, Washington, DC Br. 142: 11,293

Executive Vice President

—Maureen Valadie, Central Florida Br. 1091: 12,269

—Kenneth R. Gibbs Jr., South Florida Br. 1071: 8,846

—*Paul Barner, Roswell, GA Br. 4862: 21,206*

Secretary-Treasurer

—Cie Sharp, Long Island Mgd., NY Br. 6000: 7,887

—*Nicole Rhine, Lincoln, NE Br. 8: 34,454*

Director of Retired Members

—Linda Kellam Mann, Minneapolis, MN Br. 9: 14,852

—*Daniel Toth, Lorain, OH Br. 583: 27,348*

Director of Life Insurance

—William E. Boone, Greater East Bay, CA Br. 1111: 13,017

—*James W. Yates, Long Island Mgd., NY Br. 6000: 29,019*

Director, Health Benefit Plan

—Matthew Webster, Cleveland, OH Br. 40: 9,569

—*Stephanie Stewart, Central Iowa Mgd. Br. 352: 32,652*

National Trustees (three positions)

—*Charles P. Heege, New York, NY Br. 36: 24,124*

—*Lawrence D. Brown Jr., Los Angeles, CA Br. 24: 27,367*

—Dorothy Kay Hall, Wenatchee, WA Br. 1350: 17,503

—*Sandra D. Laemmel, Detroit, MI Br. 1: 27,927*

—Rolando Rodriguez, Indianapolis, IN Br. 39: 13,087

—Francisco Jose Cabrera, Greater East Bay, CA Br. 1111: 11,116

Region 1 NBA

—*Markeisha Lewis, Garden Grove, CA Br. 1100: 2,911*

—Calvin Brookins, Van Nuys, CA Br. 2462: 2,011

Region 9 NBA

—*Eddie Davidson, Durham, NC Br. 382: 3,070*

—Don Lyerly, West Coast Florida Br. 1477: 1,796

The election was conducted by mail ballot and administered by an independent party, following the requirements of the *NALC Constitution* and the regulations of the U.S. Department of Labor, and subject to oversight by the NALC National Election Committee.

Official election instructions were included with all ballots mailed to eligible NALC members.

To be eligible to vote, a person was required to have been a regular member of NALC and in good standing as of June 1, 2022.

Preparation and mailing of ballots began on Tuesday, Sept. 20. Returned ballots were picked up by the Election Committee at 5 p.m. Eastern time on Friday, Oct. 21. Counting of ballots began the following day.

Candidates for vice president, assis-



President-elect Brian Renfroe

tant secretary-treasurer, director of city delivery, director of safety and health, and 13 of the 15 national business agent (NBA) positions were unopposed and therefore elected by consent at the Chicago convention. The installation of NALC's 28 elected national officers will take place in Washington, DC, on Saturday, Dec. 17.

The Election Committee, as appointed by President Fredric Rolando, is made up of Paul Roznowski, Royal Oak, MI Br. 3126 (chairman); Christa Abraham, Minneapolis, MN Br. 9; Eric Lomax, Jamaica, NY Br. 562; Rod Holub, Manhattan, KS Br. 1018; Delano Wilson, Silver Spring, MD Br. 2611; Antonia Shields, Birmingham, AL Br. 530; Ethel Ford, Houston, TX Br. 283; Tom Dlugolenski, Syracuse, NY Br. 134; Jeannette Triana, South Florida Br. 1071; Brian Wiggins, Seattle, WA Br. 79; and Andy Weiner, Jamaica, NY Br. 562. **PR**

Contribute through Combined Federal Campaign

Letter carriers never stop giving to help others. One important way they support their preferred charities is through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC).

Since its inception in 1961, the CFC has raised more than \$8.5 billion for charities and people in need. Federal and postal employees participate in the CFC by choosing from a list of charities to support through automatic deductions from their paychecks.

The open enrollment period for CFC began on Sept. 1 and ends on Jan. 14, 2023.

All active letter carriers can participate in the CFC through payroll deduction. (For retirees, see the next paragraph.) To make recurring donations, participants may use payroll deduction, a credit or debit card or a bank account. They also may make a one-time donation using



any of these methods except payroll deduction. Participants can even volunteer for the charity and count the value of the hours as a donation. The easiest way to sign up to make automatic donations is through the CFC Donor Pledging System at cfcgiving.opm.gov or through the CFC Giving smartphone app, available on the App Store and Google Play.

Retired letter carriers may make a one-time or recurring e-check or credit card contribution to the CFC through the CFC Donor Pledging System.

Letter carriers can choose from among more than 2,000 nonprofit charitable organizations to support through CFC—including the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA), NALC’s official charity since 1952. MDA 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 research projects worldwide, as well as camps and activities for children who have one of these diseases. For more information, go to mdausa.org.

“Every day on the job, we see what we can accomplish when we pull together,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “CFC works the same way. Let’s all make the world a better place by giving through CFC.”

For more information, go to nalc.org/cfc. **PR**

Five appointed as regional office assistants

President Rolando appointed five regional office assistants (ROAs) to provide administrative support to regional offices.



Richard Byrne

Richard Byrne was appointed an ROA for Region 4 (Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Oklahoma and Wyoming). After serving in the Army, Byrne joined the Postal Service in 1998 and joined Greeley, CO Branch 324. He served as a steward, then as vice president and president of his branch. Byrne also served the Colorado State Association in several roles, including as executive board member, vice president and director of education. He also was an arbitration advocate. Byrne graduated from the NALC Leadership Academy in 2017.

President Rolando appointed **Rachel Janecek** as an ROA for Region 3 (Illinois). Janecek started as a carrier in 2015,

joining DeKalb, IL Branch 706. Before her appointment as an ROA, she served her branch as steward and president.

Mary Beth Lloyd of Southeast Pennsylvania

Merged Branch 725 was appointed an ROA for Region 12 (Pennsylvania and southern New Jersey). After joining the Postal Service as a part-time flexible in 2005, Lloyd served as steward, chief steward and financial secretary for her branch. She also served as a Carrier Academy instructor. Lloyd graduated from the NALC Leadership Academy in 2019.

Rolando appointed **Felicie Strong** as an ROA for Region 9 (Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and South



Rachel Janecek

Carolina). After joining the Postal Service in 1988, Strong served as a steward and secretary for her branch, Marietta, GA Branch 1119. She retired as a carrier in 2019 and worked as a field secretary for the region until she was named an ROA.

Kyle Turner was appointed an ROA for Region 5 (Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska and Kansas). After serving in the Navy, Turner joined USPS in 2000 and joined Hazelwood, MO Branch 5847. He served his branch as steward, vice president, OWCP representative and president, and also served as treasurer for the Missouri State Association. Turner graduated from the NALC Leadership Academy in 2015. **PR**



Kyle Turner



Felicie Strong

News from Washington

Midterm results, a divided Congress and looking ahead at the 118th Congress



The 117th Congress is in a busy lame-duck session, even as the results from November's midterm elections—which will determine the composition of the 118th Congress—are still being tabulated. As this magazine was going to press, what was clear is that there will be a divided Congress, with the Republicans wresting control of the House from the Democrats and the Democrats retaining control of the Senate.

In both cases, the margins are extremely narrow. The Republicans, as of this writing, have reached 218 seats in the House, the magic number for control, with the Democrats standing at 211 and a half-dozen races yet to be called.

In the Senate, Democrats have 50 seats (including two independents who caucus with the Democrats), and Republicans stand at 49, with one seat to be decided in a runoff election this month. Depending on the runoff's outcome, Democrats will hold either 51 or 50 seats; either way, they would have control, because Vice President Kamala Harris has the tie-breaking vote.

Overall, Democratic candidates defied many experts' predictions and outperformed their projections. The president's party often suffers substantial losses in the president's first midterm election; Democrats lost far fewer seats this year than many polls had indicated they would.

A week after the midterm elections, House Republicans held elections for their party's leadership roles in the House. Current House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) was elected as the Republican leader. (The election for Speaker of the House will be held in January, with all 435 members of

the chamber eligible to vote.) Rep. Steve Scalise (R-LA), current minority whip, was elected majority leader. Rep. Tom Emmer (R-MN), current chairman of the National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC), was chosen to serve as majority whip. Rep. Elise Stefanik (R-NY) was elected as GOP conference chairwoman, and Rep. Richard Hudson (R-NC) was elected to replace Rep. Emmer as NRCC chairman.

Democrats, meanwhile, had yet to hold their elections at press time; however, the party's leadership will change in the 118th Congress. On Nov. 17, Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-NY) and Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD) announced that they would not seek reelection to their leadership positions, though they will remain in Congress. Pelosi's decision leaves the party's top House leadership position open to a new member for the first time since 2002. Democratic Caucus Chairman Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY) is expected to be elected minority leader, with Rep. Katherine Clark (D-MA) as minority whip, Majority Whip James Clyburn (D-SC) as assistant Democratic leader, and Rep. Pete Aguilar (D-CA) as chairman of the Democratic caucus. As this magazine was going to print, it was unclear if any of them would face challengers in the leadership elections.

An election year also means changes to committee leadership posts. The House Committee on Oversight and Reform (COR) is the primary committee of jurisdiction for the Postal Service and federal issues. Current Ranking Member James Comer (R-KY) is expected to serve as chairman of the committee. The committee's current chairwoman,

Penalty Overtime Exclusion

As referenced in Article 8, Sections 4 and 5 of the USPS-NALC National Agreement, the December period (during which penalty overtime regulations are not applicable) consists of four consecutive service weeks. This year, the December period begins Pay Period 26-22, Week 1 (Dec. 3, 2022) and ends Pay Period 01-23, Week 2 (Dec. 30, 2022).

Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-NY), lost in a primary election and it is unclear who will serve as the panel's lead Democrat.

The Democrats' margin of control in the Senate will be determined by the Dec. 6 runoff in Georgia. In November's election, neither Democratic Sen. Raphael Warnock nor Republican challenger Herschel Walker reached the 50 percent threshold required by Georgia law to win the seat outright.

At press time, the only Senate seat to flip parties was in Pennsylvania. Democrats celebrated a major win with the election of John Fetterman, the state's current lieutenant governor. Fetterman defeated Republican candidate Dr. Mehmet Oz to fill the open seat left by Republican Sen. Pat Toomey, who is retiring at the end of the year.

Another retiring Republican is Ohio Sen. Rob Portman, current ranking member of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee (HSGAC), the Senate committee with oversight of the Postal Service. Chairman Gary Peters (D-MI) is expected to lead the committee again, and Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY) is expected to replace Portman as the top Republican.

The newly divided Congress will undoubtedly present new challenges. Regardless, the role of NALC members remains the same—to continue engaging with lawmakers on both sides of the aisle. It is critical, regardless of party, to get to know your representatives and educate them on the issues that are most important to letter carriers, our work and our union. With these ongoing efforts, we can continue to reach our goals in the halls of Con-

gress with pro-letter carrier representatives by our side.

Lame-duck session underway

Following the midterm elections, Congress reconvened for a lame-duck session, the final session of the year and of the 117th Congress. The lame-duck session often is a time for lawmakers to address outstanding issues from the past two years.

Overall, Democratic leaders have signaled that they would like to address the debt limit and pass a government-funding package. The deadline for the latter was Dec. 16.

Regarding labor, there are several key items that still need to be taken up this Congress. These include additional funding for the National Labor Relations Board, which has not received an increase in funding since 2013, and reinstatement of the expired Trade Adjustment Assistance, which supports workers who are threatened with job loss or who become unemployed due to the effects of international trade.

A House vote is needed on the VA Employee Fairness Act of 2021 (H.R. 1948). This legislation, which has 215 co-sponsors, would give collective-bargaining rights to Veterans Health Administration employees, who include nurses, physicians, dentists and physician assistants who care for veterans. Similarly, a Senate vote is needed on the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (H.R. 1065). This bill, which passed in the House in May 2021, would protect pregnant workers from workplace discrimination.

For lame-duck session updates that could affect letter carriers, check the "Government Affairs" section of nalc.org.

Social Security Fairness Act update

With 305 co-sponsors, the Social Security Fairness Act of 2021 (H.R. 82) has a supermajority of bipartisan support in the House. In September, the House Committee on Ways and Means approved the legislation, leaving a full floor vote as the final hurdle for the legislation in the House.

However, with a busy lame-duck agenda set and party control of the House changing next year, movement on the legislation is stalled and the bill is unlikely to receive a vote in this Congress. For years, legislators have tried to pass this bill, which would repeal the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) titles of the Social Security Act, which unfairly reduce or sometimes eliminate Social Security benefits for millions of federal annuitants, including former Civil Service Retirement System letter carriers.

The bill is expected to be reintroduced early in the 118th Congress. The bill's longtime lead, Rep. Rodney Davis (R-IL), lost in a primary election earlier this year. NALC appreciates his work and his continued dedication to the issue and is committed to working with whoever replaces him as Republican lead on the bill, and with the expected co-lead, Rep. Abigail Spanberger (D-VA).

Repealing the WEP and the GPO remains a top priority for NALC, and we will continue lobbying members of Congress on the matter to help our affected members receive the retirement benefits they have earned. **PR**

Recognizing the NALC Disaster Relief Foundation contributors



NALC Disaster Relief Foundation

Make a donation by sending a check or money order to NALC:

Disaster Relief Foundation
100 Indiana Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20001-2144

Below is a list of contributors to the DRF in 2022

Every year, nature brings reminders of the importance of letter carriers helping each other recover from natural disasters. This year, the hurricanes that struck Puerto Rico, Florida and the Carolinas damaged or even destroyed the homes and possessions of a number of letter carriers in their paths. The NALC Disaster Relief Foundation (DRF) was ready to help.

DRF staff and volunteers, led by NALC Assistant to the President for Community Affairs Christina Vela Davidson, identified carriers who had been affected by the storms and brought them aid as soon as possible. (See the last issue of *The Postal Record* for more information.)

The aid included supplies such as water, food, clothing and postal uniform items. Working closely with local branch leaders, DRF helped members whose homes were uninhabitable find temporary housing and transportation, as well as apply for DRF grants.

NALC created the DRF in 2018 to ease the process of helping members. Many branches had asked NALC to establish a mechanism that would facilitate getting donations, grants and other assistance to carriers affected by disasters.

As the year's end approaches, letter carriers may want to donate to DRF, NALC President Fredric Rolando said.

"Our brothers and sisters affected by disaster need our immediate help, and DRF is a great way to provide it," Rolando

said. "The foundation is always ready."

The foundation provides aid in the form of supplies or grants, and it maintains a trained volunteer network to respond quickly to disasters. Grants are provided for property damage sustained to a primary residence, automobile or to personal property from causes such as hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, wildfires, earthquakes or severe storms, and are provided only to NALC members.

Donations can be sent to NALC Disaster Relief Foundation, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144; or by credit card at nalc.org/nrdfdonate. The foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization; contributions to the DRF may be tax-deductible. It is recommended that you consult your tax advisor.

Donations go directly to individual carriers or to branches needing assistance—no administrative costs are deducted.

Members do not have to wait for emergency relief or insurance claims to be settled to apply. Applications must be received within 120 days from the date of the natural disaster, unless the applicant can provide sufficient reasons for a delay. The application for a relief grant is on the foundation's website, nalc.org/disaster.

"The Disaster Relief Foundation is a significant step forward in our efforts to help each other through disasters," Rolando said. "Let's donate to DRF now to ensure that we are ready when disaster strikes." **PR**

NALC Disaster Relief Foundation donors

Adele Sowinski of Br. 434
Alan H. Oxley of Br. 246
Alexander J. Maroda of Br. 100
Alfonse Figarelli of Br. 38
Alice Nopola of Br. 9
Allison D. Tyszko of Br. 2
Alvin R. Williams of Br. 3864
Andrew Sabol of Br. 115
Andrew Lykos of Br. 608
Anita Franklin of Br. 30
Anita Guzik of Br. 24

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Ann R. Rude of Br. 373
Anna Mudd of Br. 14
Arthur J. Lisanti of Br. 754
Barbara Glasnap of Br. 2148
Benjamin M. Kayser of Br. 373
Benjamin P. Zayac, Jr. of Br. 29
Benjamin Porcello of Br. 693
Beverly A. Anderson of Br. 2902
B.F. Costello of Br. 6000
Bradley Jasper of Br. 387

Bruce Calhoun of Br. 576
Bruce M Bier of Br. 6000
C.T. McDonald Jr. of Br. 704
Cameron McFarlane of Br. 5384
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Carmine Chester of Br. 3671
Carroll J. Champagne of Br. 2464
Catherine & John Bodnar of Br. 580
Cecelia Cason of Br. 1
Christina & Cliff Davidson of Br. 382
Christine Check of Br. 115

Christopher Grinnell of Br. 51
Christy Bowers of Br. 458
Cindy L. Foster of Br. 122
Craig & Karen Westrum of Br. 718
Cynthia Connors of Br. 513
Dale Verette of Br. 2
Dan Versluis of Br. 704
Daniel Brauchle of Br. 343
Daniel E. Chavis of Br. 5996
Daniel Mugavin of Br. 43
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NALC Disaster Relief Foundation donors



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 David Mudd of Br. 14
 David Reiter of Br. 6000
 David Smith of Br. 246
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 Dennis Bonilla of Br. 4234
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 Jason R. Cobbs of Br. 780
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 Jefferson P. Crawl of Br. 214
 Jeffrey Hartman of Br. 5996
 Jeffrey Lee of Br. 1100
 Jerry Phillips of Br. 2207
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 John & Kelli Robles of Br. 5996
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 John A. Mitchell of Br. 30
 John Baginsky of Br. 34
 John Bouzios of Br. 4016
 John C. Cornea of Br. 2184
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John Domack of Br. 12
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 John J. Rogers Jr of Br. 32
 John K. Peavler of Br. 825
 John Nusbaum of Br. 3
 John P. Murphy of Br. 41
 John R. Yadisernia of Br. 18
 John W. Wellen of Br. 1100
 Joseph Liskosky of Br. 115
 Joseph A. Garza of Br. 133
 Joseph A. Hanlon of Br. 4317
 Joseph Garza of Br. 133
 Joseph M. Trotter of Br. 62
 Joseph Mullen of Br. 825
 Joseph Politte of Br. 343
 Josephine Gryskewicz of Br. 115
 Judith Willoughby of Br. 689
 Julie Turney of Br. 52
 Ken Daws of Br. 6441
 Kenneth Richter of Br. 181
 Kevin Conroy of Br. 34
 Kevin Payne of Br. 4819
 Kimberly Lane of Br. 934
 Kimberly Smith of Br. 176
 Kyle Inosencio of Br. 56
 L. M. Kogler of Br. 6000
 L.L. Rhonehouse of Br. 5955
 L.M. Kinsey of Br. 6000
 Larry V. Tondy of Br. 385
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 Lee M. Kinsey of Br. 6000
 Leon Irvin of Br. 324
 Leon H. Irvin of Br. 324
 Leonard Gehlhaus of Br. 38
 Lisa Melancon of Br. 44
 Lloyd P. Lear, Jr. of Br. 124
 Louis Marino of Br. 425
 Luisa A. Duran of Br. 1427
 Manuel Peralta Jr of Br. 1100
 Marilyn Green of Br. 214
 Marilyn Smith of Br. 181
 Mark DeBelts of Br. 491
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 Mark Montoya of Br. 2171
 Mark Orzeck of Br. 157
 Marlene Vaughn of Br. 1
 Marlin D. Fordham of Br. 1902
 Mary Benjamin Freeman of Br. 73
 Mary Kurrel of Br. 318
 Mathai Abraham of Br. 41
 Matthew Slivinski of Br. 115
 Michael A. Roulette of Br. 619
 Michael B. Mullen of Br. 148
 Michael Bordonaro of Br. 40
 Michael E. Weiland of Br. 22
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 Michael Isbell of Br. 100
 Michael J. Brubaker of Br. 820
 Michael Manley of Br. 115
 Michael Oneill of Br. 38
 Miguel A. Baez of Br. 36
 Mike Ely of Br. 60
 Milton Becher Jr of Br. 1100
 Miriam R. Thomas of Br. 1291
 Nick Boston of Br. 347
 Norman Davidson of Br. 92
 Norman Zimney of Br. 2942
 Patricia A. Madamas of Br. 46
 Patrick Dougherty of Br. 43
 Patrick J. Pansini of Br. 5996
 Paul D. Derby of Br. 286
 Paul G. Boyd of Br. 52
 Paul Montesi of Br. 2008
 Paul Simmons Jr. of Br. 142
 Paula Cardran of Br. 25
 Penny S. Crosby of Br. 978
 Peter & Gail Marutiak of Br. 504
 Peter Duffy of Br. 4229
 Peter Mascaró of Br. 34
 Philip & Louise Jordan of Br. 421
 Phillip T. Jaeger of Br. 825
 R. Rahmel of Br. 540

R.G. Ruebling of Br. 506
 Rafael Figueroa of Br. 869
 Rafean Mercado of Br. 157
 Ralph F. Otte of Br. 2902
 Raymond E. Butler of Br. 530
 Raymond Kuhl Jr. of Br. 115
 Reginald L. Young of Br. 11
 Rene Cassano of Br. 252
 R.H. Michael of Br. 4364
 Ricahrd King of Br. 2502
 Richard Louie of Br. 3520
 Richard McCullough of Br. 45
 Rick Hubert of Br. 6000
 Robert Gravel of Br. 86
 Robert A. Jackson of Br. 40
 Robert Cain of Br. 66
 Robert Cook of Br. 18
 Robert E. Herrod of Br. 27
 Robert E. Slivka of Br. 164
 Robert G. Spurlock of Br. 531
 Robert H. James of Br. 791
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 Scott Via of Br. 518
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 Ted Babiy of Br. 148
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 Theresa Stamatates of Br. 20
 Thomas Scibor of Br.
 Thomas G. Garrison of Br. 204
 Thomas Givens of Br. 3902
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William E. Stone of Br. 82
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 William R Scarola of Br. 2128
 Yatzie Roysden of Br. 1395
 Yolanda Sarmiento of Br. 294

Branches, state associations, regions and others

Br. 10 Topeka, KS
 Br. 17 Scranton, PA
 Br. 24 Los Angeles, CA
 Br. 38 New Jersey Merged
 Br. 40 Cleveland, OH
 Br. 47 Denver, CO
 Br. 79 Seattle, WA
 Br. 86 East Hartford, CT
 Br. 88 Galesburg, IL
 Br. 100 Northwood, OH
 Br. 115 Wilkes-Barre, PA
 Br. 132 Dallas, TX
 Br. 134 Liverpool, NY
 Br. 176 Baltimore, MD
 Br. 183 Santa Rosa, CA
 Br. 203 Springfield, MO
 Br. 219 Aurora, IL
 Br. 246 Kalamazoo, MI
 Br. 263 Augusta, GA
 Br. 317 Decatur, IL
 Br. 323 Logansport, IN
 Br. 426 Hamilton, OH
 Br. 439 Greenville, SC
 Br. 530 Birmingham, AL
 Br. 576 Phoenix, AZ
 Br. 579 Adrian, MI
 Br. 645 Fort Dodge, IA
 Br. 780 New Bern, NC
 Br. 828 South Central Indiana
 Br. 849 Fort Collins, CO
 Br. 1197 Southern Illinois Merged
 Br. 1537 Lilburn, GA
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 Region 8
 Region 9
 Region 10
 Region 15
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FREDRIC V. ROLANDO

18TH NALC PRESIDENT
JULY 2009–DECEMBER 2022



A LEGACY OF FOCUS, RESOLVE—AND ACHIEVEMENT— DURING AN ERA OF UNCERTAINTY AND CASCADING CHALLENGES

During the last 14 years, the United States Postal Service has lurched from one historic challenge to the next: the Great Recession, the pre-funding crisis, the decline in letter mail volume, a push by postal management and then Congress to eliminate Saturday delivery, a U.S. president tweeting out postal disinformation, the same president's stealthy attempt to privatize USPS, the most mail-intensive election the country has seen, and the perils inherent in delivering during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Not only was each of these difficult to deal with; they often interacted in ways that created truly monumental challenges for the postal service and its letter carriers.

Through it all, the National Association of Letter Carriers' 18th president has steadfastly guided his fellow letter carriers to protect their jobs, pay and benefits, and to carry out their increasingly essential work. He also mobilized them to help preserve the Postal Service itself.

At national and state conventions, rap sessions, state trainings, branch meetings and everywhere in between, President Fredric Rolando has reminded members that the strength of NALC derives from representing letter carriers from every part of the country and across the political spectrum. Rolando's calm and steady approach to leadership—listening with an open mind to all perspectives, positions and suggestions; examining a variety of

options and taking into account factors from key details to the big picture; striking a balance between seeking consensus and exercising decisiveness; deploying a unique sense of humor to relax members and officers so they can focus on the mission at hand or to disarm others ranging from negotiating partners to journalists—has allowed NALC to not only weather this era of uncertainty, but to accomplish the seemingly impossible.

This month, as Rolando prepares to perform his last official duty on Dec. 17, swearing in his successor, Brian Renfroe, and the rest of the newly elected Executive Council and AFL-CIO delegates, *The Postal Record* takes a look back at the man and at some of his major accomplishments in the face of such daunting obstacles.

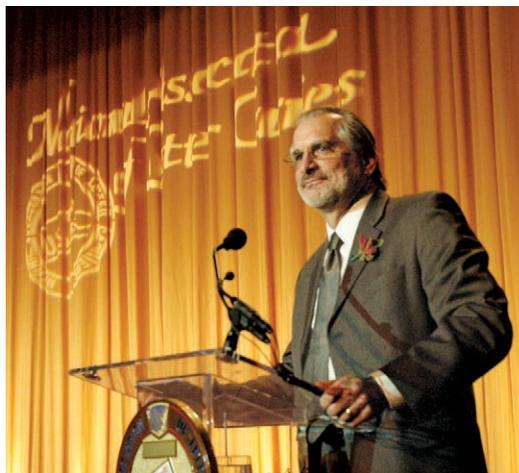
43 YEARS OF UNION SERVICE

After receiving a Bachelor of Science degree in criminology and psychology—studies that Rolando has joked came in handy during his time with the Postal Service—Rolando became a letter carrier and a member of South Florida Branch 1071 in 1978. It didn't take him long to stand up for others.

"I got active in the union because of the antagonistic way management treated letter carriers," Rolando explained. He served as a shop steward for the branch from 1979 until 1984. In 1984 he moved to Sarasota and soon became Branch 2148's chief steward. He was elected president in 1988 and served in that role for 11 years.

Opposite page: President Rolando leads members in a "U.S. Mail is not for sale" rally on Oct. 8, 2018.

Below: Rolando thanks members for electing him president during his installation in December 2010.



FREDRIC V. ROLANDO

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President William H. Young swears Rolando in as president on July 2, 2009.

From 1992 to 1999, Rolando also served as a part-time regional administrative assistant (RAA) for Region 9, and he was director of education for the Florida State Association of Letter Carriers from 1993 to 1999.

In 1999, NALC President Vincent Sombrotto appointed him as a full-time RAA for the region, and in February 2002 as director of city delivery, a national officer position. He was elected by acclamation to the same post at the 63rd Biennial Convention in Philadelphia later that year.

As director of city delivery, Rolando had an opportunity “to become familiar with many of the specific issues that affect letter carriers, both common and unique to different areas of the country,” he said. He took a leading role in preparing the union for “future city delivery issues, which will likely include transitions necessitated by changes in the Postal Service itself,” he said upon his appointment.

At the 65th Biennial Convention in Las Vegas in 2006, Rolando was elected executive vice president by acclamation, serving alongside President William Young. Rolando used his time as executive vice president to continue working with USPS to jointly evaluate and adjust delivery routes in a manner that protected contractual rights while adapting to the changing mail environment.

When Young retired on July 2, 2009, Rolando became the president of the union and mailed a letter to all members, saying, “As I begin my tenure as your president, I want every member to understand that our great union will have to be better than ever to meet the challenges we face. I therefore ask for your support and your commitment to do what you have always done: join together and stay together to defend our rights while serving the country we love.”

That unity of purpose would prove to be NALC’s underlying strength, al-

lowing it to accomplish all that it did under Rolando’s stewardship.

UNWAVERING FOCUS ON MEANINGFUL POSTAL REFORM

Rolando assumed the presidency at a pivotal juncture for the Postal Service—the economic fallout of the Great Recession was worsening even as the mandate to pre-fund retiree health benefits contained in the 2006 Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act (PAEA) required USPS to shell out annual payments ranging from \$5.4 billion to \$5.8 billion. This was an unfair and unaffordable burden borne by no other entity, public or private.

Over the course of the next 13 years, under Rolando’s leadership, NALC defended the Postal Service from attack after attack while advancing solutions that would allow the Postal Service to position itself to continue to serve the nation well into the future.

Though the pre-funding obligation accounted for the bulk of postal red ink, many observers and much of the media attributed USPS losses to the internet and the diversion of mail—a misunderstanding or, in many instances, an intentional ploy that created a false narrative. As a result, many in the public, the press or political office viewed the Postal Service as the victim of technological progress, about which little could be done, rather than of flawed public policy, which could be addressed. In fact, the Postal Service realized operating profits for many years, made possible in part by the dedication of letter carriers across the country.

The artificial financial crisis opened the Postal Service and its employees to relentless attacks from members of Congress and other politicians, and from think tanks and groups looking to privatize whatever they could; as well as to efforts by USPS management to cut back services to the public. In response, Rolando



Rolando explains why cutting Saturday delivery is the wrong way to save the Postal Service during a rally in 2014.

mobilized tens of thousands of NALC activists, encouraged members to change the national conversation by getting the facts out, and solidified our common bonds with sister postal unions.

The central battle line was drawn during Rolando's first week in office, when then-Postmaster General Jack Potter proposed to slash Saturday delivery as a way to find savings. Rolando rallied NALC activists to get the message out that reduced service would diminish the value of mail, that eliminating Saturday delivery would reduce mail volume and hence revenue, and that additional cuts would likely follow, sending USPS into a death spiral.

Potter's successor, Patrick Donahoe, took the challenge to Saturday delivery to a new level in 2013, by declaring that USPS would unilaterally eliminate Saturday delivery. NALC quickly engaged its legislative operation, contacting key members of Congress, asking them to quickly thwart the PMG and to request that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) investigate Donahoe's legal authority to take such action. Donahoe should have known that he stood little chance of receiving authorization from Congress, given that for several years, Rolando had made it a priority that NALC activists work to educate lawmakers about the need to retain Saturday delivery. Long before Donahoe's announcement, NALC activists had helped bring a bipartisan House majority to co-sponsor a resolution calling on USPS to maintain Saturday delivery.

The skirmishes continued in the House, with Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA) and others taking every opportunity to try to eliminate Saturday delivery or door-to-door delivery, and in the Senate, which passed a bill in 2014 that included eliminating Saturday delivery.

Rendering the challenge Rolando and NALC faced all the more dire was the fact that the Obama administration also favored eliminating Saturday delivery.

Even while playing defense, Rolando led NALC in effort after effort on bills that would alleviate the manufactured financial crisis and give USPS the ability to serve the needs of the American people. NALC's president played the long game, keeping the fires for consensus legislation going for years, until the timing was right.

After fighting off an effort by PMG Donahoe to unilaterally end USPS participation in the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program, NALC wisely left open the door to a joint health care task force. Ultimately, this led the bargaining parties to develop a consensus approach to Medicare integration that was eventually adopted in H.R. 3076, the postal reform bill that became law earlier this year.

NALC faced a new challenge with the 2016 election of Donald Trump as president. During his tenure, Trump turned increasingly hostile to the Postal Service. In 2018, his administration called for the privatization of USPS. A postal task force established by the administration proposed repealing the collective-bargaining rights of postal workers—eliminating NALC's right to directly negotiate pay and

Called upon to give testimony, President Rolando urges senators to work on consensus postal reform in 2010.



FREDRIC V. ROLANDO

18TH NALC PRESIDENT

JULY 2009–DECEMBER 2022



benefits that had been won in 1970 and thereby exposing letter carriers to the political whims of Congress with the return of “collective begging.” The task force further called for gutting the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), contracting out postal worker jobs and enacting massive service cuts, while sharply raising postage rates for packages.

And, yet again, Rolando led NALC activists to step up when called upon and convinced a bipartisan majority in the House to co-sponsor a resolution opposing privatization. By the time the task force released its report, the proposals were dead on arrival in Congress. The work of these activists halted the administration in its tracks and forced it to abandon its postal plans.

Despite noisy calls by others to oppose newly appointed Postmaster General Louis DeJoy at every turn, Rolando wisely started extensive conversations with DeJoy in 2020 centered around the need to jointly rally behind an agenda that included six-day delivery, repeal of the pre-funding mandate, and prospective maximization of Medicare. Those conversations paid off in the current Congress, with the bipartisan leadership of the House Committee on Oversight and Reform, Chairwoman Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) and Ranking Member James Comer (R-KY), agreeing to work with their counterparts on the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, Chairman Gary Peters (D-MI) and Ranking Member Rob Portman (R-OH), to fashion a narrow, consensus postal reform bill, the Postal Reform Act (H.R. 3076).

While not a solution for all of the Postal Service’s challenges, the Postal Reform Act allows USPS to step out of the shadow created by the artificial financial crisis stemming from the PAEA’s pre-funding mandate. It’s an accomplishment that President Rolando called on NALC activists to take pride in.

“We have worked long and hard on postal reform,” he said. “We have sought to foster a broad coalition of stakeholders as well as office holders, Democrats and Republicans alike, to strengthen the Postal Service and its employees, and to serve the common good. There is more that we can and will accomplish, but passage of this legislation is real and important progress.”

PROTECTING LETTER CARRIERS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

When you are president of a labor union, you need to be ready for the unexpected, and few could have foreseen the COVID-19 pandemic. The World Health Organization declared the global pandemic on March 11, 2020, and nearly all Americans found themselves staying away from offices, businesses and schools to avoid the virus.

Though always critical to the functioning of the country’s social and economic life, the Postal Service became a lifeline overnight. Letter carriers ensured that the nation still received prescription drugs, public health information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and essential household goods that residents ordered online rather than frequenting stores. In essence, letter carriers performed their new role so tens of millions of Americans could shelter safely at home and help prevent the spread of the virus.

Later, as Congress passed coronavirus stimulus packages, letter carriers delivered relief checks to households in great need. The U.S. Census Bureau conducted the 10-year census, which included hundreds of millions of mailings to and from American households. In the 2020 primary and general elections, the Postal Service was integral to the smooth delivery of tens of millions of mailed ballots as many states adopted emergency measures to make voting by



Rolando thanks President Biden for signing the Postal Reform Act into law earlier this year. The signing ceremony capped 12 years of struggling for meaningful postal reform legislation.



A letter carrier shows off a thank-you note from a patron on the cover of *The Postal Record* in 2020.

mail more accessible, partly to prevent long lines at the polls that posed a dangerous public health risk. And the Biden administration partnered with USPS to mail hundreds of millions of free, at-home rapid COVID-19 tests to make testing more accessible.

For letter carriers, the crisis was particularly challenging—both personally and professionally. As front-line “essential” workers who had to remain on the job to deliver vital mail and packages to keep our country going, letter carriers were asked to risk their health and even their lives—and the well-being of their loved ones—to do this essential work, all while struggling with the same inconveniences and anxieties that everyone else was facing.

Through his calm and steady demeanor, his inspiring words about the importance of what carriers were doing, and his behind-the-scenes work with postal officials to improve safety measures, Rolando helped keep members’ spirits up during the trying times.

“Letter carriers have a long history of serving the United States in times of crisis,” he said. “Our service in difficult times transcends the delivery of mail. By delivering our routes, we bring a sense of normalcy and stability to anxious customers. And by showing up to do our jobs in the face of uncertainty and danger, our members were truly heroic, overcoming fear to serve our country. I have never been prouder to represent letter carriers.”

In the face of this unprecedented public health crisis, which already had tragically killed 13 active city letter carriers by the end of April 2020, the attention of President Rolando and the other NALC leaders necessarily focused on responding to the health and safety threat to the men and women they represent.

At the beginning of the pandemic, Rolando had two overriding and immediate goals: First, NALC was

dedicated to protecting the health and safety of letter carriers—and therefore the health and safety of their families and patrons. Second, NALC fought to ensure that the Postal Service had the resources to continue operations.

Rolando and other NALC leaders had to navigate ever-changing public health guidelines, mask mandates and social-distancing policies. Staffing shortages due to the absence of colleagues who had contracted the virus, or who needed to stay home to care for family members or to take care of children whose schools and child care centers had closed, exacerbated this stress. By January 2022, thousands of letter carriers had contracted COVID-19 and thousands more were forced to quarantine.

Over several months in the spring and summer of 2020, Rolando spoke dozens of times with Postmaster General Megan Brennan, her successor Louis DeJoy, and the Postal Service’s top executives, to find ways to reduce the threat of infection among active letter carriers. NALC worked to set up a system to acquire and distribute personal protective equipment (PPE) to every postal employee—including masks, gloves, sanitizing wipes and hand sanitizer—sharing daily information on workplaces facing shortages and identifying COVID-19 hot spots. Under Rolando’s leadership, NALC worked with USPS leaders to get information from the CDC to postal workers.

Rolando and other national officers negotiated a number of memorandums of understanding (MOUs) and protocols aimed at: promoting safe working practices by requiring face masks; initiating programs to test and quarantine those

President Rolando unveils a special display at NALC Headquarters to honor letter carriers who died while on duty.



FREDRIC V. ROLANDO

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President Rolando delivers a fiery opening statement to Postmaster General Donahoe during the 2011 round of negotiations.

exposed to the virus; providing sick leave for city carrier assistants (CCAs) with COVID-19-related issues; implementing new liberal leave and leave without pay (LWOP) policies to allow letter carriers to handle gaps in child care coverage caused by school closings and other COVID-19-related family issues; staggering work starting times of letter carriers; reconfiguring carrier workplaces (where possible) to maximize social distancing; and ensuring the delivery of mandatory stand-up talks on COVID-19 policies. NALC and the other postal unions also negotiated with postal management to help deal with operational bottlenecks and service failures resulting from staff shortages caused by COVID-19.

All through the summer of 2020, Rolando and the other national officers worked with the national business agents and branch leaders to identify service problems caused by the growing staff shortage due to the pandemic, as well as pre-existing managerial failures that contributed to improper staffing. This work continued when Postmaster General DeJoy took office in June 2020, as NALC and USPS renewed and improved the COVID-19-related MOUs.

Speaking about the pandemic overall, Rolando said, “Looking back on this period, we can take legitimate pride in how we used our collective-bargaining role to keep letter carriers as safe as possible during perhaps the scariest and most dangerous period in the history of the Postal Service. I have no doubt that our efforts saved lives.”

BARGAINING HIGHLIGHTS

A chief task for any NALC president is negotiating national agreements to advance the protections, pay and benefits for every letter carrier in the craft. While the 2011 round of bargaining had to be resolved in interest arbitration that concluded with an award by arbitrator Shyam Das, Rolando and the NALC bargaining

team were able to successfully negotiate voluntary deals in both the 2016-2019 and the 2019-2023 National Agreements.

The 2016 agreement saw two wage increases and a pay upgrade/pay scale consolidation for all letter carriers. Career carriers received wage increases of 1.2 percent and 1.3 percent for the first two years. In the third year of the agreement, all Grade 1 letter carriers were upgraded to Grade 2 (an average increase of 2.1 percent) and all carrier technicians also received a 2.1 percent wage increase. The cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) clause was maintained for career carriers, giving them seven COLAs over the span of this contract.

CCAs have never received COLAs, so they got an additional 1 percent increase on the effective dates of the three general increases, for a total of 2.2 percent, 2.3 percent and 1 percent plus the upgrade in November 2018. Additionally, the CCA pay scale included two step increases.

In a move to help former transitional employees (TEs), under Rolando’s leadership, NALC negotiated that qualifying former TEs would receive pay step credit as career employees or when they became career employees. CCAs also received holiday leave pay for six holidays per year and the local parties were required to include provisions in their local memorandums of understanding allowing CCAs to be granted annual leave selections during the choice vacation period and for incidental leave.

Several new MOUs were agreed to as part of this contract, including continuing the process for filling residual vacancies and incumbent-only full-time regular opportunities through CCA conversions and transfers, which led to tens of thousands of CCA conversions. There also was a one-time conversion to career status for CCAs with 30 months of relative standing and employed in an installation that had 100, 125, or 200 or



Rolando and the NALC Executive Council exchange opening statements with USPS during the 2019 round of negotiations.

more workyears of employment.

The 2019 agreement included four wage increases of 1.1 percent, 1.1 percent, 1.3 percent and 1.3 percent. Seven COLAs were included for career letter carriers, and CCAs received an additional 1 percent increase on the four general wage increases in lieu of COLAs. The CCA Step CC was eliminated and new CCAs started at the higher-paying Step BB.

One of several new and improved MOUs provided that CCAs who have not been converted to career after 24 months would be automatically converted to a new PTF career status (Step AA) in their installation, providing full fringe benefits and peace of mind to non-career carriers. Another allowed CCAs to take leave after 90 days of employment as a CCA rather than as a career letter carrier. Additionally, letter carriers now had the option to elect to receive annual leave instead of holiday pay.

The agreement also created the City Delivery and Workplace Improvement Task Force, which jointly seeks methods to improve the cultural and operational environment in city delivery offices. MOUs on improving the new employee experience and staffing, including a pilot program for CCA mentoring, were some of the many ways this task force works to develop solutions and to test alternative procedures in city delivery offices related to creating a positive work environment/culture where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

NALC members overwhelmingly approved of the contracts negotiated under Rolando's leadership, ratifying both the 2016 agreement and the 2019 agreement by more than 95 percent.

Unsurprisingly, Rolando deflects much of the credit.

"Our recent experience—both with responding to COVID-19 and securing

a decent contract in difficult circumstances—shows the power of collective bargaining," he told convention delegates in Chicago in August.

GIVING LETTER CARRIERS THE ASSISTANCE THEY NEED

Though not as high-profile as postal reform or a pandemic, under President Rolando's leadership NALC has strengthened the representational abilities of branch and regional leaders by creating new positions to assist members in a number of areas. While there are a lot more acronyms to remember—RWCA, RGA, LPO—the benefits are paying off for the membership and for the letter carriers taking on these new roles.

First, giving members added resources helps protect their rights and their clout, whether in workers' compensation, in the legislative process or in arbitration. But creating these new positions also enables letter carriers to develop the highly specialized skills—such as in negotiating the rules of workers' compensation or focusing full time on the ins and outs of being an advocate—that help them grow as leaders in the union.

In 2015, President Rolando made a serious commitment to assist and protect NALC members who are injured on the job when he created several full-time regional workers' compensation assistant (RWCA) positions. This new position was created to provide members with direct Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP) representation.

While some branches already provided such representation to their members, other branches did not, for one reason or another. Though branches are required to represent all letter carriers in the grievance procedure,

MDA's Jerry Lewis thanks letter carriers for their contributions during the Labor Day Telethon in 2008.



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One of Rolando's favorite duties as NALC president was joking with MDA ambassadors, as he did at the 2018 Biennial Convention.

Rolando gives his keynote address at the 2010 Biennial Convention.



there is no such requirement to provide OWCP assistance to members who have on-the-job injury claims, and the level of knowledge about the process ranges widely from branch to branch.

The assistance and protection afforded to injured members has been much more effective than in the past. RWCAs' existence ensures that every member who needs help with an OWCP claim receives it.

In 2017, President Rolando created the position of legislative and political organizer (LPO) to assist NALC state associations. LPOs help develop and implement plans specifically designed for the challenges within each state. They then train other letter carriers, officers and rank-and-file activists to help carry out the plans and recruit new activists while advancing NALC's legislative and political agenda in each state.

The scope of the LPOs' work has included interacting with LCCLs to develop better relationships with members of Congress, increasing Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF) participation, recruiting new activists in each state, and using branch, state, and national events to educate and mobilize members to better position each state association to be successful.

In 2019, Rolando created the position of regional grievance assistant (RGA) to make sure that all letter carriers are represented in the grievance procedure, no matter how big or small their branch is. While most branches are fortunate enough to have the local resources necessary to fully represent their members' needs, that is not always the case. Some branches may have only a few members and therefore have minimal financial resources to obtain training. Other branches may have the financial resources but lack volunteers willing to take on the role of union representative. Still other branches may have the resources they need but require help keeping up with the workload. In all these instances, RGAs can step in to help.

In 2022, Rolando created the full-time advocate (FTA) position. Arbitration is the final step in the joint grievance-arbitration procedure established by NALC and the Postal Service, and it is the battleground where the union fights over the most difficult and contentious issues. All decisions by an arbitrator are final and binding, and neither management nor the union has any further avenues in which to take their dispute.

NALC is fortunate to have hundreds of active and retired letter carriers throughout the country who serve as arbitration advocates representing other letter carriers. Although they spend hours studying the case file, researching, interviewing witnesses scheduled to testify, and presenting the case at a hearing, they generally perform this work on a part-time basis.

The FTA position was created to further increase NALC's representational abilities in arbitration. In addition to presenting cases before an arbitrator, FTAs also work directly with the NALC vice president's office and the 15 NALC regions to review grievance files, conduct pre-arbitration sessions with USPS to try to resolve cases, and strategize on the best way to present certain issues in arbitration.

Also in 2022, Rolando created the regional office assistant (ROA) position as a result of the vacancies of several regional field secretary positions throughout the country. Regional field secretaries are vital to the capacity of our union to provide clerical, organizational and operational support to their respective NALC regions. The vacancies gave President Rolando an opportunity to once again increase the representational abilities of NALC by hiring experienced union representatives to fill those positions. These representatives not only possess the skillset necessary to provide such support for their regional offices, but they



also provide additional contractual and representational support to the regions and the members. And since they are letter carriers themselves, they have the unique ability to relate to the everyday issues of the NALC members who call the regional offices on a daily basis. (For more on the recent appointment of five ROAs, see story, page 5.)

On top of all these efforts to strengthen the NALC's capacity to provide excellent representation in the workplace, Rolando took action to create the NALC's Disaster Relief Foundation to help members whose lives are disrupted by natural disasters. Over the past several years, the Foundation has raised money from NALC members to provide emergency assistance to other members victimized by wildfires, tornados, hurricanes and other disasters. As he leaves office, the Foundation has been providing essential aid to carriers in Florida, the Carolinas and Puerto Rico suffering from the impact of hurricanes.

SERVING THE PUBLIC, PROMOTING DEMOCRACY

Over the course of his presidency, Rolando promoted the broader mission of the Postal Service to serve the evolving needs of the American public. This meant celebrating and promoting all the ways letter carriers serve their communities, from long-standing efforts like the annual Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive and the Carrier Alert program to new initiatives like the NALC Veterans Group, which not only provides information, assistance and support for former members of the armed

forces who now work as city letter carriers, but also mobilizes those carriers to serve America's military vets in general.

NALC also launched the National Vote at Home Institute (NVAHI) in 2017 to make voting easier by spreading the practice of voting by mail across the United States. Prompted in part by a growing wave of voter suppression unleashed by the Supreme Court's gutting of the Voting Rights Act in 2013, Rolando worked with activists in several western states (Oregon, Washington and Colorado) where elections are conducted entirely by mail to create an organization to promote its use in other states. Thanks in part to NVAHI's efforts, no-excuse absentee voting and other vote-by-mail reforms quickly spread eastward, most notably in Virginia, Michigan and Pennsylvania.

The timing of these efforts could not have been more propitious as the COVID-19 pandemic led dozens of states to turn to vote-by-mail in 2020, aiming to give Americans a safe way to vote during a public health crisis. NVAHI was there with the expertise to help election officials across the country establish or expand mail voting operations.

But President Rolando's pro-democracy efforts didn't stop there. Concern over President Trump's invective against vote-by-mail and DeJoy's appointment on the threshold of the national elections in 2020 led Rolando to propose and help guide a multi-union task force with postal management to safeguard the entire process of voting by mail through the postal

The spirit of solidarity is in the air at the 2018 Biennial Convention as Rolando leads a Letter Carrier Cheer for AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka.

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Delegates cheer for Rolando at the Biennial Convention this past summer following the announcement of his pending retirement.

Presidents Emeriti (from l) James Rademacher, William H. Young and Vincent R. Sombrotto join Rolando at the 2011 Rap Session.



network. This joint task force helped calm public fears and was vindicated when absentee ballots were delivered overwhelmingly on time both to the voting public and back to balloting locations.

A LEADER IN THE AMERICAN LABOR MOVEMENT

Rolando also used his position of leadership in the AFL-CIO to both advance the cause of letter carriers and serve all of America's trade unionists. He served as a vice president of our national union federation and as a member of its Executive Committee. Thanks to his efforts, the entire labor movement got behind NALC's campaigns to save Saturday delivery and to enact postal reform legislation. In 2010, AFL-CIO President Rich Trumka made six-day delivery a central plank in the federation's jobs campaign. In 2017, the AFL-CIO convention adopted a resolution drafted by NALC and the American Postal Workers Union (APWU) to embrace universal vote-by-mail. And in 2020, postal reform was included in the AFL-CIO's Five Economic Essentials—its COVID-19-relief lobbying campaign—which led to \$10 billion in financial relief for the Postal Service.

President Rolando is admired by trade unionists around the country. He is a valued member of the Legislative and Political Affairs Committees of the AFL-CIO, and he serves as vice chairman of the federation's Finance Committee—helping the AFL-CIO navigate some of the most difficult economic times in recent history. As AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler observed, "Fred is one of the most respected leaders of America's labor movement."

PREPARING NALC FOR THE FUTURE

It's easy to get lost in the details of postal reform efforts or the suddenness of the COVID-19 pandemic, but taken

as a whole, it's also easy to see one of the driving forces behind President's Rolando overarching accomplishments as he makes way for a new generation of union leaders: All of his efforts have been driven by a desire to leave NALC, its members and its employer in a better place than he found them.

By fostering consensus on postal reform legislation and negotiating beneficial contracts, by protecting letter carriers during a frightening pandemic and empowering a large group of capable letter carriers, and through countless decisions made day in and day out after careful consideration and extensive consultation, Rolando has strengthened the union in important ways. Most notably, he has left the union's finances in perhaps the strongest position in our history by working closely with the Board of Trustees and leaders of the NALC's Health Benefit Plan and the Mutual Benefit Association to responsibly manage the union's resources. Rolando is especially proud of the financial and operational turnaround achieved at Nalcrest during his time in office—investing in its refurbishment, eliminating its vacancies, and leaving office with a healthy waiting list for new residents.

But President Rolando, ever humble, gives credit for the accomplishments of the last 13-plus years to the members. That humility, of course, is not merely a positive trait; it is well known that leaders who willingly share credit, and who care more about the success of a mission than about who gets the applause for it, are more likely to achieve success for their organization because the strength of a committed team is greater than that of a single person. Nowhere is that more true than in the case of a union, where collective action—and the energy of an engaged membership—are difficult to beat. Add to that the diversity of NALC, and Rolando says, "I have nothing but optimism about the future of our great union." **PR**

DOHERTY & DONELON SCHOLARSHIPS

Deadline: This form must be returned to NALC Headquarters no later than December 31, 2022.

Eligibility

- Applicant must be the son, daughter or legally adopted child of a letter carrier NALC member in good standing—active, retired or deceased. Stepchildren and grandchildren are eligible if they live with the letter carrier in a regular parent-child relationship.
- Applicant's parent must be a member in good standing of NALC for at least one year prior to making application.
- Applicant must be a high school senior when making application and must submit the form provided at right, signed by the NALC member and an officer of the member's NALC branch. This form must be returned to NALC Headquarters by December 31, 2022.

Requirements

- All applicants must take the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) or the American College Test (ACT) in either their junior or senior year. A copy of the official scores from the administering organization must be received at NALC Headquarters by midnight, March 31, 2023. (Computer-generated print-outs of test scores will not be accepted.)
- All biographical questionnaires and secondary school reports must be received at NALC Headquarters by midnight, March 31, 2023.

Regulations

- Scholarship is to be used toward pursuing undergradu-

ate degree at an accredited college of recipient's choice.

- Winners may accept other college scholarship assistance in addition to the NALC award.

- Any change of schools or course of study must be done only with the permission of the NALC Scholarship Committee.

- A transcript of grades must be forwarded to the committee at the end of each school year.

- If winner suffers certified serious illness, scholarship will be held in abeyance for not more than one year.

- If unusual conditions are going to require an interruption in schooling, recipient must state reason(s) in writing to the Scholarship Committee and request that the scholarship be held in abeyance. Request(s) will be reviewed by the Committee and a decision rendered.

- If the NALC member is suspended by his/her local NALC branch or enters supervision, scholarship will be canceled.

Terms of awards

- The official scholarship judges will award one William C. Doherty Scholarship in each of the five USPS Regions and one John T. Donelon Scholarship. Winners are judged on the basis of secondary school records, personal qualifications and test scores. As in the past, the scholarship judges will consist of experienced persons in the educational field. Decisions of the judges will be final.

- Doherty Scholarship awards will be \$4,000 per year and the Donelon Scholarship award will be \$1,000 per year. Each scholarship is renewable for three consecutive years thereafter providing the winner maintains satisfactory grades. Award money will be deposited annually with the college. It will be credited to the winner's account to be drawn upon under the rules and regulations which the college has established for handling scholarship funds. Award money is to be used for required college fees, including room and board and transportation fees.

- Children of NALC national officers are not eligible.

In honor of NALC's president from 1941 to 1962, the **William C. Doherty Scholarship Fund** will again award five \$4,000 scholarships to children of members in good standing. The **John T. Donelon Scholarship Fund** will award one scholarship in honor of Donelon, longtime NALC assistant to the president. Applicants must be high school seniors and must meet all of the following eligibility criteria to be considered.

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

Date _____ (PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY)

Please send instructions as to how I can compete for a scholarship award. I am a senior in the 2022-23 school year.

I am the daughter son active
 *stepdaughter *stepson retired
 *granddaughter *grandson deceased

letter carrier _____

of Branch No. _____ City _____ State _____

My name is _____

My address is _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone No. _____

Signature of NALC parent member
(or spouse if deceased)

Last 4 digits of Social Security No. _____

Signature of branch officer

Printed name of branch officer

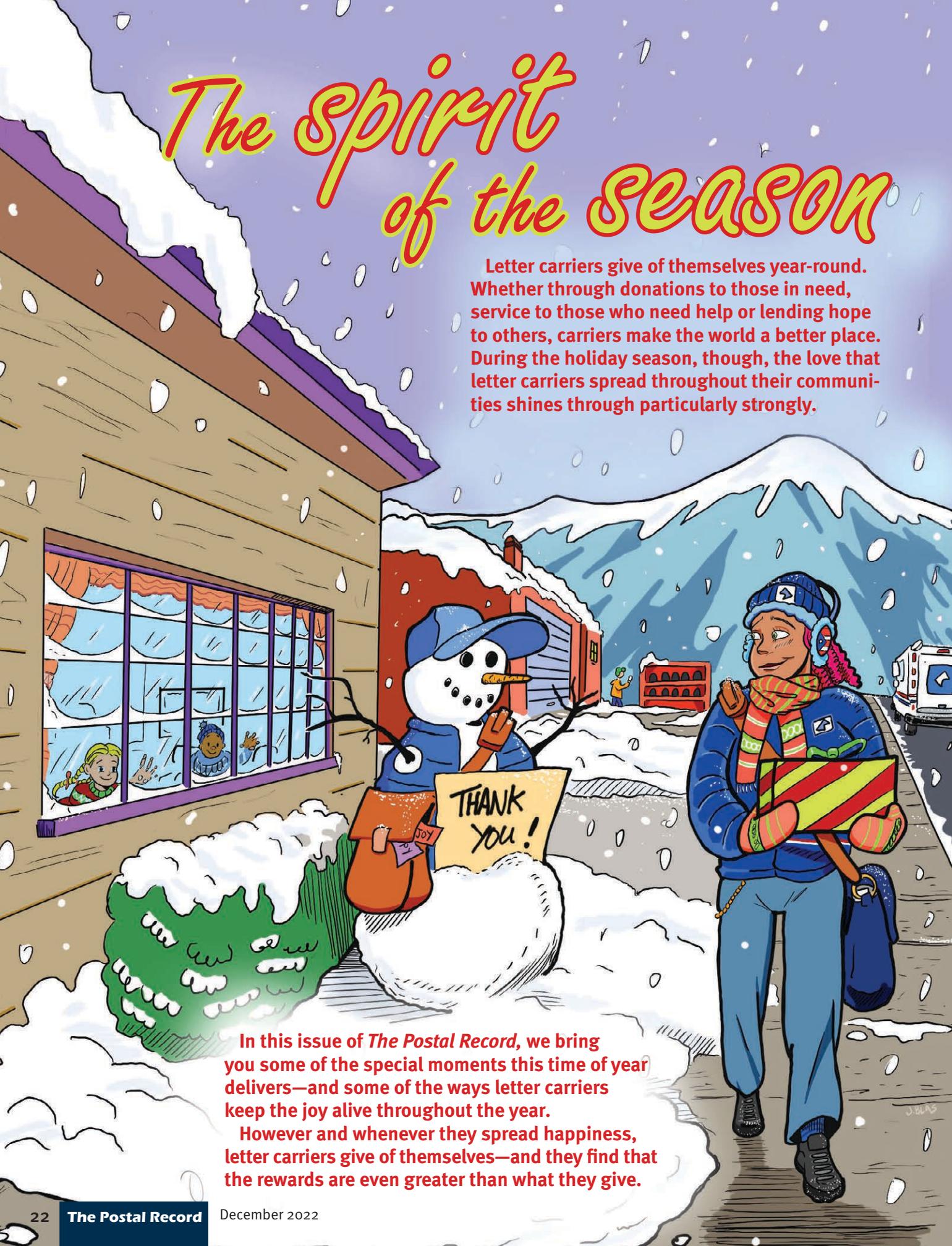
Title _____ Date _____

This form must be returned no later than December 31, 2022, to the NALC Scholarship Committee, in care of the National Association of Letter Carriers, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144.

* Stepchildren and grandchildren are eligible if they live with the letter carrier in a regular parent-child relationship.

The spirit of the season

Letter carriers give of themselves year-round. Whether through donations to those in need, service to those who need help or lending hope to others, carriers make the world a better place. During the holiday season, though, the love that letter carriers spread throughout their communities shines through particularly strongly.



In this issue of *The Postal Record*, we bring you some of the special moments this time of year delivers—and some of the ways letter carriers keep the joy alive throughout the year.

However and whenever they spread happiness, letter carriers give of themselves—and they find that the rewards are even greater than what they give.

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 mail at 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001.

Branch adopts a family each year to share joy

Each holiday season, Cherry Hill/Haddonfield, NJ Branch 769 adopts a family in need and makes its Christmas special. It's been a branch tradition for a decade or more, Branch Vice President **Michele Galda** said.

The branch rotates among its three postal offices each Christmas to find a suitable family, Galda said. "We go to the local schools or the local churches and ask if a family needs help." Sometimes a letter carrier who knows a family in need makes a nomination. In some years, the branch adopts more than one family. A few years ago, the carriers helped the family of a city carrier assistant in the branch who was a struggling single mother.

For 2022, the branch found a father of two who had lost his wife to cancer. The branch members devoted money, time and love to ensure that the children had a great Christmas.

Every year, the branch makes sure that the children in the families they adopt get what they want from their Christmas wish lists. The branch asks the parents for a list and posts it at each office. Postal employees either buy gifts on the list or donate money to buy them. This year, their fundraising effort raised more than \$1,000.

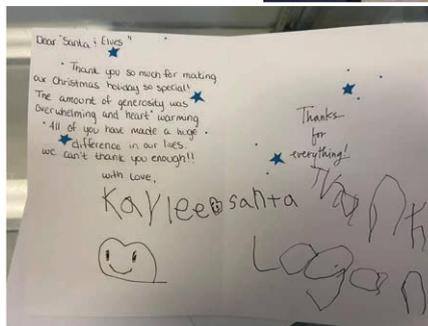
A quartet of Branch 769 carriers usually does the shopping for gifts on the list that were not donated directly: Galda, Branch Secretary-Treasurer **Jennifer Schwartz**, and carriers **Melonie Shellcross** and **Loraine Rigler**. They use left-over funds to buy gift cards for the parents. The carriers wrap the gifts and deliver them, with dinner from a local restaurant, to the chosen family a few days before Christmas.

Galda said the annual tradition brings a tear to her eye because she grew up in a struggling family with four sisters and a brother, so she knows what these families are experiencing. "I get a lot of joy from it," she said. "I like to give back to unfortunate families because I know what it was like." **PR**



Left: Two of the kids Branch 769 has provided gifts to and the thank-you note the branch received

Below: More gifts to be given away



Keeping kids happy for the holidays



Right: Anthony Picariello
Above: The mailbox Picariello sets up for children's letters to Santa



Anthony Picariello does his part to ensure that children enjoy what are probably the two favorite holidays among young folks: Halloween and Christmas.

Branch 157 carriers in Philadelphia, PA, where he has delivered the mail for 27 years, know Picariello as “Stitch.” He got the nickname as a young child when he had open-heart surgery, and then earned a reputation as an accident-prone boy. Years later, his own newborn daughter had surgery at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP), followed by 24 days of recovery time in the neonatal intensive-care unit.

After that experience, he teamed up with another carrier to collect Halloween costumes for children in the oncology unit of the hospital. The daughter of the other carrier, who has since left the Postal Service, had died of cancer at CHOP on Halloween, her favorite holiday, a few years ago. Since that carrier left the job, Picariello has carried on the work of bringing Halloween to the kids at CHOP.

“At the hospital, they set up a make-shift store,” he said. “A lot of the cancer patients, the kids can’t leave and their families pretty much live there.”

The in-house costume store allows the children to choose their costumes without parents having to worry about logistics. “The kids get to pick out their

costume and trick-or-treat at the hospital,” Picariello said.

Picariello set up a box in the Bustleton Post Office, where he works, to collect donated costumes from postal employees and the community, and he also gathered cash donations to buy more. For Halloween 2022, the effort yielded 337 costumes of all kinds and sizes; many more were bought with the cash donations.

Once Halloween is over, many children’s thoughts soon turn to Christmas. For the last two years, Picariello, who has two young children of his own, set up a special mailbox in the post office lobby for letters to Santa, and answered each one.

At a table next to the box, he offered children little gifts such as stickers and candy, and included templates and pens to make writing to Santa easy. He personalized each response from Santa to match the child’s wishes—though he was careful never to promise that a child would get the gifts requested. He fancied up the letters from Santa with a special North Pole wax seal and sent them by mail.

When word got out about the mailbox, he was swamped with letters—151 last Christmas. But that didn’t slow Picariello down. “I was up until 2 or 3 in the morning almost every night writing back to them,” he said. **PR**

Sharing the bounty

Harrisburg, PA Branch 500 has a good problem: too much generosity from its members.

The branch ended up with more than enough money to support its Christmastime charitable activities, so it looked for new ways to help the

community, Branch President **Richard Wilson** said.

The branch had long supported Toys for Tots, the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank and the Bethesda Mission in Harrisburg, along with adopting families to bless with Christmas gifts.

But donations from branch members seem to keep growing—last year, the branch raised nearly \$2,000 for holiday charitable support, its high point thus far. “Since we had so much money coming in from the branch, all due to member donations,” Wilson said, “we started picking up a couple of retirement homes.”

One of the nursing homes has since closed, but the branch has delivered special gifts to residents of the other one—The Gardens at Gettysburg—every year for nearly two decades. Responding to requests from the nursing home, the branch brings joyful packages all

year to delight residents, including bingo prizes, candy and calendars. The branch brings several 50-pound bags of birdseed for the bird feeders outside the residents’ windows—enough to last through the winter—and carriers even fill the feeders sometimes.

“The residents are happy to receive such wonderful gifts each year,” the nursing home’s activity director, Donna Thorpe, said.

“Everybody doesn’t have family and [some] can’t provide for themselves,” Wilson said. “This gives us an opportunity to make somebody have a smile on their face.” **PR**

Making the Halloween parade special

Larry Scrubbs Jr. fits right in with the letter carrier’s spirit of giving back to his community. As a supporter of the annual Halloween parade in his hometown of Baton Rouge, LA, Scrubbs helps to pass on the delights of the holiday to all of the community’s children.

When he’s not on his route in Port Allen, just across the Mississippi River from downtown Baton Rouge, Scrubbs volunteers with the 1031 Consortium, a community organization that stages the town’s annual Halloween parade. With this being the Gulf Coast of Louisiana, it is no ordinary Halloween parade—the event involves floats, marching bands, a Halloween court with a king, queen, prince and princess, and elaborate costumes. Scrubbs works on the side as a DJ, and a gig with the 1031 Consortium—he played music on a float—led to his involvement.

Since then, Scrubbs has served on the board of the organization and as a volunteer. In addition to the parade, the group spreads Halloween joy by donating costumes and providing treats to ensure that everyone has access to the fun, including kids in disadvantaged neighborhoods.

“[We] do costume drives for kids who can’t afford costumes, and trick-or-treating initiatives for certain neighborhoods,” Scrubbs said. To bring the spirit of Halloween to a new generation, the 1031 Consortium is making trick-or-treating accessible for all. “The average price of a Halloween costume is \$40 to \$45,” he said, “and with things being the way they’ve been, some parents can’t afford that—especially if you have a house with multiple children.”

The carrier’s love for Halloween extends beyond the parade—he likes to play scary characters in the annual 13th Gate haunted house in Baton Rouge, which has been ranked top haunted house in the nation by *Hauntworld Magazine*. “I love dressing up and doing goofy stuff,” he said. His roles have included butchers and zombies.

Scrubbs recently began putting his love of acting to use as a volunteer for the 225 Theatre Collective, a non-profit troop that brings theater to the community. Part of its mission, Scrubbs said, is “to broaden what theater looks like, because so many times you don’t really see a lot of people of color. It’s all-inclusive theater for everybody.” **PR**



Larry Scrubbs Jr. at the Halloween parade



Scrubbs gets into character

Carrier donates kidney to friend



Richmond Henderson

In the spring of 2021, Richmond Henderson received a phone call from Yvonne Collins, a friend he had grown up with in Lewisville, TX.

She had been battling lupus—an autoimmune disease that can produce inflammation and pain in any part of the body and can cause organ damage—for about a decade, and the time had come that she needed a new kidney. Hers were failing and she had been undergoing hours-long dialysis treatments multiple times a week for years.

Collins’s family launched a search for a donor and reached out to Henderson. Would he be willing to get tested?

For the Dallas, TX Branch 132 member, it was a no-brainer.

Henderson soon got tested. Some of it, such as blood work, a tissue type test and weight checks, were done locally. As luck would have it, he and Yvonne were a match.

The carrier soon traveled to Houston for some more extensive in-house testing to diagram his anatomy and see how his kidneys are aligned. “Some people might have one smaller or larger, but mine are pretty much equal size,” he said. Organ sizes from donor to recipient have to be comparable for the best long-term outcome.

Although most people have two kidneys, the National Kidney Foundation says that people with just one kidney can live normal, healthy lives.

The transplant surgery was initially scheduled for late 2021, but things kept getting pushed back due to Collins becoming ill, and because of COVID-19 concerns, Henderson said.

The two friends, along with the help of the hospital coordinator and Henderson’s postal supervisors, eventually settled on Feb. 11 at the Houston

Methodist J.C. Walter Jr. Transplant Center, and the carrier checked in for pre-op on Feb. 7.

Even though this was his first surgery, “I was pretty cool, calm and collected the whole experience,” Henderson said, which was a little different than his family’s reaction.

“It was understandable,” he said of their apprehension, adding that “they all had justifiable concerns of somebody going under the knife.”

Prior to the surgery, most communication between the two took place through the surgery coordinator, but he did talk to Yvonne throughout the process “to keep an eye on each other and check in,” the carrier said.

For the four-hour transplant procedure, surgeons used a three-prong machine that had a camera and tools to move past the abdominal wall to make an incision and remove the organ, a process Henderson found fascinating. “The doctor is at a computer screen with a camera and almost like a huge remote control,” he said.

“I got to see her before and after the surgery,” Henderson said of Collins. Hospital staff rolled her into his room. Though she was dealing with some pain, her surgery went exactly as hoped.

“I woke up with pure joy in my heart seeing Yvonne getting rolled in next to me, realizing the magnitude of the moment,” he said.

Henderson called himself “relaxed and blessed” post-operation. He stayed in the hospital for two days and then recuperated at his aunt’s house in Houston for two weeks before getting the “all clear” from his doctors at a two-week checkup. Soon after, he headed home to the Dallas area.

Henderson, a city carrier assistant who began delivering mail a year and a half ago, had unfortunately not been with the Postal Service long enough to be eligible for the Postal Service program that provides administrative leave for those who donate organs.

Instead, several carriers in his station stepped up to donate leave for his recovery, which he combined with his own accrued leave to stay home for six weeks. “It was very special for them to do that,” he said of his co-workers.

The carrier was eager to get moving and was quickly back up to speed at work after hitting the gym to prepare during his recovery. “It was trying to figure out what I could handle,” he said, adding that he tried to simulate walking, carrying and lifting. “It was like I had never left.”

The carrier makes sure to drink one to two gallons of water a day to stay hydrated and watches his diet, but otherwise feels that he’s back to normal.

“It was special for me to realize that I had a purpose to help out a friend,” he said.

Collins has been doing well post-transplant with her quality of life improved, and she and her family have been appreciative. “She’s healthy and gaining weight,” Henderson said, adding that the kidney is working as it’s supposed to.

She’s monitoring her health closely, but “other than that, she’s driving, walking [and] working,” Henderson said.

His co-workers have all been supportive, and Branch 132 President **Kimetra Lewis** called the carrier’s act noble as well as “a selfless sacrifice and precious act of love.”

The carrier has no regrets about his experience and simply wanted to help out a friend. “She needed a donor, and I considered it, and we were matched,” he said, “and from there, it took off.”

Henderson would encourage anyone to consider organ donation. “If you’re healthy enough [and] in the position to do so, I would definitely recommend blood donation, organ donating, any form of that,” he said. **PR**

Sharing a postal love

Carlene Simmons and young Lainey Estrada have something special in common—they share a love for the letter carrier job. Lainey is a little girl on Simmons’s route in Alice, TX, and every day she waits for her “mail lady,” as she affectionately calls the Corpus Christi Branch 1259 member, to show up. According to Lainey’s mom, she loves everything from the truck to the outfit to the mail being dropped off.

With Halloween approaching, Lainey’s mother informed Simmons

that Lainey wanted to dress up as a letter carrier. “I got this idea,” Simmons said. “I had an old shirt and shorts, and they told me that her grandma could fix the clothes to make them smaller for her. I gave her a baseball cap, too.” Upon giving Lainey the shirt, her parents took a photo of them, posted it on Facebook—and it went viral.

The eight-year carrier was shocked by the attention. “It’s funny to me, because I don’t do limelight stuff,” she said. “This is just what I do. It’s noth-



Carlene Simmons and Lainey Estrada





ing fancy. I'm a mom, I'm a grandma, I'm just out here doing my job."

When Simmons delivered to Lainey's house on Halloween, the little girl was wearing a store-bought letter carrier costume. Her parents had saved Simmons' generous gift for when Lainey grows up and may want to wear it in its original size. "They bought a costume online, and she had a satchel and everything," the carrier explained. "My heart just melted. She's so cute. She's just this little sweetheart of a girl."

"We're out here every day on the street; you see people every day," Sim-

mons, who also served in the Army, added. "I've seen pregnant moms, people giving birth, graduating, moving away, passing. I've been invited to weddings and *quinceaneras* [Spanish for a girl's 15th birthday celebration]; people treat me like family. They stop me on the street and say, 'Hey, you need a drink,' or 'You need some snacks.'"

She noted that her uncle was a letter carrier for more than 30 years in Montana. The job runs in her blood, and with her gift to Lainey, she may have had a hand in passing the love for her craft to a whole new generation. **PR**



Levan "Van" Singletary

Happy surprises for child with cancer

As Levan "Van" Singletary was going about his rounds delivering mail on Dec. 20, 2021, a customer, Jamie Hayward, approached him on his route.

The woman's 6-year-old son Jacob—who since March 2020 had been battling stage 4 kidney cancer that had spread to his lung—was excited about the mail and his biggest dream was to become a letter carrier one day. She asked if there might be an opportunity for him to see the inner workings of the post office through a tour prior to his seventh birthday on Dec. 24. That was the only thing he wanted.

The Garden Grove, CA Branch 1100 member had delivered the route in Laguna Niguel for decades and had known Jacob's father, Jared, for years, but rarely saw Jacob and his 5-year-old sister Ava.

"I would see them in passing playing, but not very much, because I think

a good majority of the time after age 4, he was in and out of the hospital," the carrier said.

With the holiday season in full swing amid security concerns due to the ongoing pandemic, Singletary was initially unsure of what he could do.

"I felt like it was something that could happen, and should happen," the carrier said. "I immediately got in touch with my supervisor [and] postmasters. I set up the following day for them to come in and do a tour of the post office."

The family came to the post office on Dec. 21. "He got to put a piece of mail in the case. He was all excited and overjoyed with that," Singletary said. "He had his own homemade postal satchel made and was carrying it around." The carrier also gave Jacob a miniature LLV toy.

While the Haywards were at the station, "The family shared the story

with my entire office,” the carrier said, adding that Jacob’s plight moved everyone.

“It was during the pandemic time; it was really tough,” Singletary said. “It was a good, emotional uplift for each and every one of my co-workers. Everybody’s tired, everyone is worn out, and we just needed a story like that to help motivate us through the rest of the holiday season.

“And from there, the postmaster just felt like we could have done more,” Singletary said.

So management got to work planning a larger event for Jacob on Jan. 24. “The post office put together a media day,” Singletary said. “They brought in a postal vehicle, made him an honorary postal carrier, all of the upper management in the Postal Service showed up for a photo op, and it just took off from there.”

The parents were forewarned, but it was a total surprise for Jacob. The youngster was gifted a mini ride-on electric LLV, a postal uniform and his favorite treat of chocolate doughnuts, and got a custom stamp for the event. (Ava wasn’t left out—Jacob’s younger sibling was part of all the fun and also received some Minnie Mouse presents.)

His parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles and neighbors were there to cheer the birthday boy on. “This is so sweet of you. I don’t know what else to say,” Jacob told the USPS representatives in gratitude.

The event received a lot of media coverage and began to go viral on social media.

Because the time period coincided with the end of the Combined Federal Campaign’s giving period, Singletary explained that they wanted to draw attention to organizations like Children’s Health of Orange County children’s



Singletary delivers an electric LLV to Jacob Hayward

hospital, where Jacob received hours of chemotherapy and radiation and more than 50 transfusions as part of his cancer treatment.

Jacob had recently been in isolation for five weeks while having a bone marrow transplant. To keep up his spirits, a mailbox was set up outside of his hospital room to have letters sent and delivered to him.

The Haywards wanted to do something to bring their son joy on his birthday, and Singletary helped them to deliver. “It’s just a moment where they got the opportunity to uplift their child who has gone through so much,” the carrier said.

And Jacob’s ecstatic reaction to the surprise couldn’t have been better, Singletary said: Jacob put his hands on his cheeks like Kevin McCallister in “Home Alone” and “was like, ‘this is awesome!’ ”

Singletary was happy to play the role of facilitator to provide a special birthday for his young patron.

“It was good giving back to the community that has given to me all these many years,” the carrier said. “I’ve been on the same route for 34 years, so I have that interaction with a lot of my customers out there. I felt it was a small thing [to do]. I just made it happen.”

Singletary recently received news from Jamie that Jacob has been declared cancer-free. He’s doing well and back in school full time, and after his big surprises, he loves the mail more than ever—thanks to his letter carrier.

“What he did will be something we remember for the rest of our lives,” Jared told local media. **PR**

Drawn to make COMICS



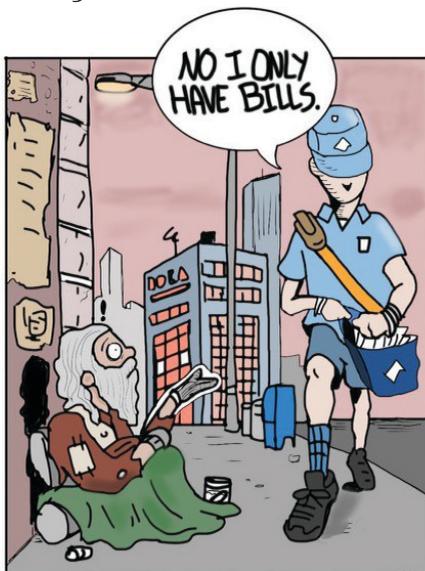
Jorge Blas

"There's something about when you're drawing," says **Jorge Blas**. "You're connected to your art, and there's nothing else at that moment that comes in your way."

During his childhood in Aguadilla, Puerto Rico, the carrier taught himself to draw, and he continued to develop his skills over time.

"I grew up with comics and cartoons. They became part of my life and it stayed with me," he said, adding that newspaper comics, comic books and television cartoons were a way to connect him to the U.S. mainland by exposing him to pop culture and helping him to learn English.

The Clearwater, FL Branch 2008 member entered the Postal Service as a casual 15 years ago in his hometown delivering to the west coast of the island, and eventually settled in Florida, where he applied to be a city carrier assistant in 2013.



JB13

A co-worker knew of his drawing talent and the following year recommended him to the branch's newsletter as someone who could contribute comics. He created a recurring comic strip about postal subjects called "Junk Mail."

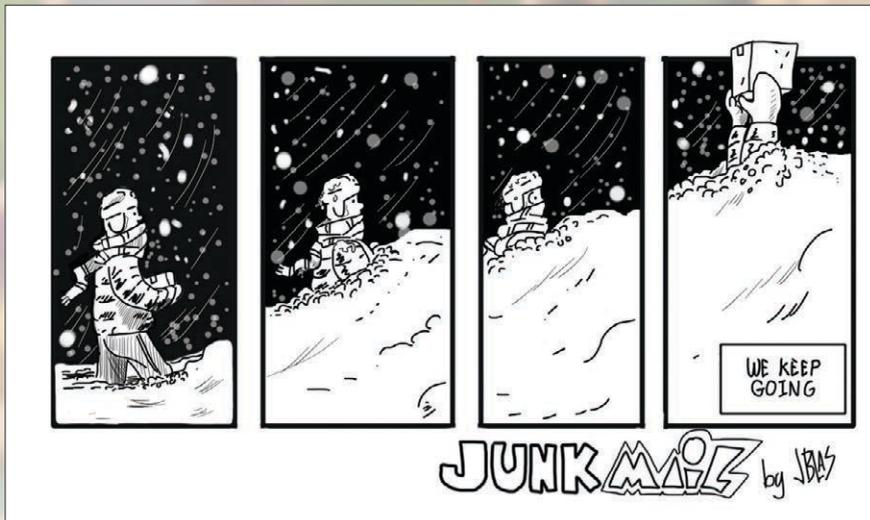
A few years later, he began contemplating a public Facebook group. After some encouragement from carriers at NALC's 2018 national convention in Detroit, the Facebook group "Junk Mail Comics" went live that summer.

It was a way to share his work drawing and parodying carriers' daily struggles, but also to connect to others across the country. Blas soon began receiving suggestions from members for his comics. "I was getting little stories of funny things that would happen to different carriers," he said, "and all of a sudden, the group started growing."

The first year, he was drawing pretty much non-stop, he said, but he hit some speed bumps when the pandemic hit and he was working more when his office was short-staffed. He also got married, so "a little bit of life got in the way," Blas added.

These days he generally does a monthly comic to share on the 12,000-member group or in the branch newsletter. How long it takes to produce depends on a variety of factors, including whether it's a single- or multiple-panel comic strip, what he's drawing and what he's trying to express. "I could be really in the zone and I could pretty much finish it between an hour, an hour and a half, and I'm talking about have it all even in color," he said.

In October, he teamed up with fellow letter carrier comic artist **Terry Flippo** of Rockville, MD Branch 3825 to do an



event called “Inktober,” where they would take paid commissions to do spooky postal-themed comics. “He’s drawing some characters, and I’m drawing some characters,” Blas said.

Over time, the Junk Mail group evolved to become an outlet for carriers where people can post their own humorous TikTok videos and memes as well, Blas said.

He tries to keep it enjoyable and to avoid focusing on politics, though he does allow some posting of frustration with management. “It’s kind of like a constructive negativity,” he says—that way people can be like, “it’s not only my station.”

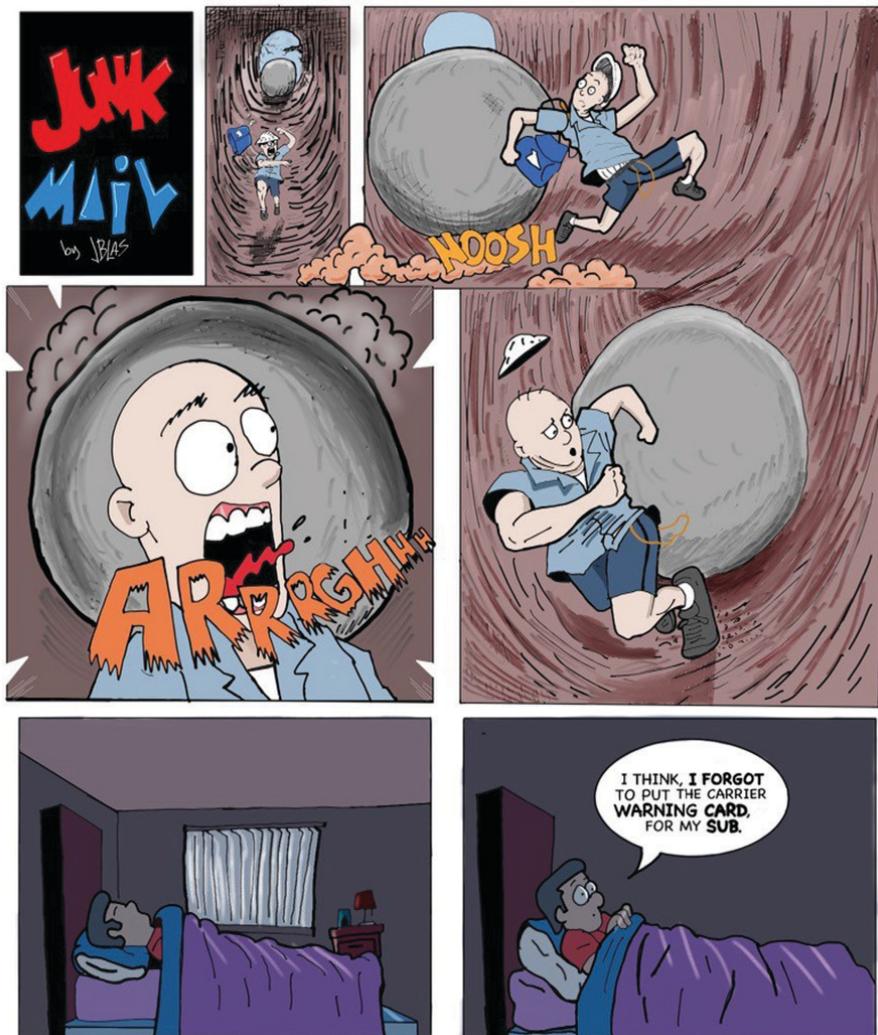
Blas served as a steward for seven years until 2020 and he bases some of his drawings on those experiences. He hopes that carriers sharing through the group feel comfortable and might even want to step up and become stewards to attempt to change any hostile work environment in their stations.

When Blas has frustrations about whatever happened at work, “I use my art to try to create something positive out of it,” he said.

Blas cites Marvel and DC Comics as being huge influences on his art. And someone from his branch once gave him a book of postal comics, *Out There* by Bakersfield, CA Branch 782 member **Fred Acedo**. “That was one of the inspirations to get me to draw post office cartoons,” Blas said.

“One of the things that I’ve noticed going through the history of the NALC is, ever since the Post Office was created, there were some type of cartoonists,” Blas said, adding that he and Flippo are just carrying on the tradition.

Inspiration for his comic strips can come from multiple sources. “I would say that 75 percent are stuff that happens to me,” said Blas, such as customer interaction or something that management would say. “I did a drawing one time where there was a service talk about not having toilet paper.”



Drawn to make comics



The other 25 percent is people reaching out to him with suggestions about events that happened to them. At times, Blas has to imagine something he's never experienced, such as wintery settings. "I started in Puerto Rico and then I moved to Florida, so I never really carry in the snow," he said.

He draws on his days off, or whenever he finds the time. If he's at work and comes up with an idea, he'll note it and start drawing it when he gets home.

"I work mostly with my iPad," he says, adding, "I can do traditional work, but because of my schedule, working digitally just makes me work faster."

As a kid, his dream was to draw comics, but it was a hard industry to get into. After turning to his Plan B of becoming a letter carrier, he now says that the two professions go "hand in hand."

One major goal Blas had was to draw a cover for *The Postal Record*, which he

achieved this month—readers can check out his festive artwork on the front of this magazine.

The carrier has many ideas of where to go with his art in the future, and he wants to continue to publish his work. "I will always try to look into other ventures," Blas said.

He hopes to further develop some of the characters he's worked on for his "Junk Mail" strip for years, either online or in a book.

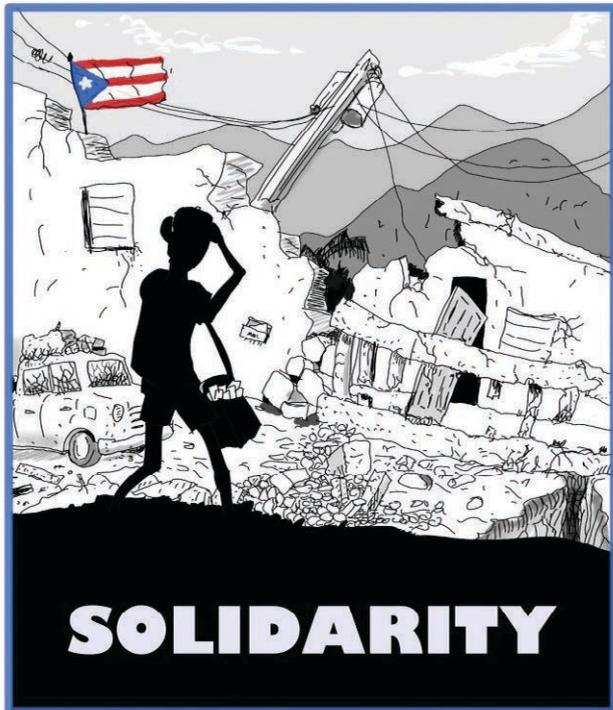
The sci-fi lover has two other projects in the works as well: monsters in the post office and a post office from outer space. "I'm designing the characters, working on the stories," he said.

Blas is exploring starting a Patreon—a platform that allows artists and creators to be compensated by subscribers—exclusive to postal cartoons, "so that way I'll be able to maybe get to do a book and have that available to any carrier," he said.

"I love to do this for free all my life, but art is art and at some point, you've got to get paid for your work," he added. That would help him to be able to produce a full-color book of his art.

In the meantime, Blas and his wife would like to transfer back to Puerto Rico to be near family and be of help in the community, although they are not sure when. "If that happens, it would be full circle," he said. **PR**

JUNK MAIL





Veterans' legislative update

During the 118th Congress, several pieces of legislation have been introduced and moved through Congress that would affect NALC's veteran members. Below is a sampling of some of these bills as well as legislative news.

Enactment of the PACT Act

History was made earlier this year when President Biden signed the PACT Act into law. This is the first law to offer care and benefits through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for veterans exposed to toxic fumes through burn pits.

An estimated 3.5 million veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan have been exposed to toxic smoke from burn pits, which included the burning of medical and human waste, jet fuel, chemicals, metal, plastics and more. This exposure has been tied to the development of many diseases, including several types of cancer. The PACT Act expands what is classified as a presumptive condition and streamlines access to health care benefits for those who served in areas known for toxic exposure.

As part of the law's implementation, veterans who are now making an initial visit to a VA health facility will receive a toxic exposure screening. This check serves to identify any signs of illness and inform veterans of any benefits they may qualify for.

On Jan. 1, 2023, the VA will begin processing benefit claims filed under the law. When doing so, the agency will prioritize claims filed by veterans with cancer. Presumptive conditions under the law are listed below.

Presumptive cancers:

- Brain cancer
- Gastrointestinal cancer of any type
- Glioblastoma
- Head cancer of any type
- Kidney cancer

- Lymphatic cancer of any type
- Lymphoma of any type
- Melanoma
- Neck cancer of any type
- Pancreatic cancer
- Reproductive cancer of any type
- Respiratory (breathing-related) cancer of any type

Presumptive illnesses:

- Asthma diagnosed after service
- Chronic bronchitis
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Chronic rhinitis
- Chronic sinusitis
- Constrictive bronchiolitis or obliterative bronchiolitis
- Emphysema
- Granulomatous disease
- Interstitial lung disease (ILD)
- Pleuritis
- Pulmonary fibrosis
- Sarcoidosis

For more information on the PACT Act or to file a claim, visit va.gov/pact.

Bipartisan legislation supporting veterans reentering civilian workforce introduced in House

On Veterans Day, Reps. Troy Carter (D-LA) and Nancy Mace (R-SC) introduced the bipartisan Warrior Training Advancement Course of the Veterans Benefit Administration (WARTAC) Improvement Bill.

WARTAC is a program within the VA that aims to provide veterans returning to the civilian workforce with career opportunities that support other veterans. The program is underutilized and served only 373 veterans out of more than 200,000 who made the transition to civilian life last year.

The bill would help veterans receive their benefits more efficiently by increasing staffing at the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA). It would also improve data records on the number of eligible participants, enrolled

participants, and participants who complete the program.

Looking ahead to 118th Congress

As this magazine was going to print, votes from the midterm elections were still being counted and the 117th Congress was wrapping up its time in Washington by completing work on the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) and numerous individual pieces of legislation aimed at making improvements at the Department of Veterans Affairs. While many of the bills we have reported on have not been enacted into law, we can expect the 118th Congress to remain focused on advancing bills to support our veterans and their families.

Looking ahead to the 118th Congress, so far 81 veterans have won seats. Again, dozens of veterans will serve in Congress crafting the legislation that will affect their fellow veterans.

Since taking office, President Biden has signed more than 25 bills that address issues facing veterans.

In the House, both leaders of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Chairman Mark Takano (D-CA) and Ranking Member Mike Bost (R-IL), won reelection. Chairman Jon Tester (D-MT) is expected to lead the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee again. He has indicated that he wants to take up legislation focused on veterans' mental health, homelessness and education programs. Sen. Jerry Moran (R-KS) is the current ranking member.

Stay tuned to the "Government Affairs" section of nalc.org for any future updates on NALC veterans issues.

Join the NALC Veterans Group

If you are interested in joining the group, complete the sign-up card at nalc.org/veterans.

Letter carriers and the mail on social media

Various news stories and interesting anecdotes that celebrate letter carriers and the mail have been appearing on social media. The following are some that have come to the union's attention. If you come across a story you'd like us to consider featuring, send it to social@nalc.org.

California carrier retires after 42 years of service

On Nov. 3, Pittsburg, CA, letter carrier **Lawrence Chui** retired after 42 years with the Postal Service.

Chui signed on with the Post Office because he was interested in the process of delivering mail, and because he enjoyed exploring the community. Over the course of his career, the Greater East Bay Branch 1111 member earned the Million Mile Award, marking his achievement in driving a million miles to deliver the mail without an accident.

Chui told the local CBS television affiliate that what he would miss most are the customers on his route. "I've seen them all—I mean, you know,



Lawrence Chui



Johnnie Bell

when they were little kids, and then they grow up and then get married, and then move out. I just kind of feel regret to leave them."

Chui's colleagues said they would miss his positive attitude. "In the mornings, he says, 'Welcome home' when you arrive," co-worker Chabliish Robinson said.

However, Chui says that he won't miss the early wake-up or the location monitoring system.

He plans to spend most of his retirement relaxing with his family. "I'll probably get up a little bit late and have a nice breakfast, and start from there," he said.

Oklahoma City letter carrier is longest-serving at 66 years

In August, 90-year-old **Johnnie Bell** of Oklahoma City, OK, Branch 458 celebrated his 66th year with the Post Office, marking him as the current longest-serving letter carrier in the country, according to the Postal Service. His co-workers presented him with a red, white and blue cake and a certificate at the post office before he left to complete his route.

Bell's federal service has lasted an extraordinary 70 years, including four years in the Navy prior to the Postal Service. Since starting as a letter carrier in 1956, Bell has spent his entire

career in Oklahoma City. A USPS spokeswoman described his route as mostly mailrooms and cluster boxes, and noted that Bell walks the whole route.

"It's been a great experience to work with him. Seventy years is a blessing," co-worker Willie Taft told KOCO-TV, the local ABC affiliate. "He knows this job inside out. It's clockwork for him."

"This is just something I do because I enjoy doing it," Bell said.

Letter carriers reminisce about their oddest deliveries

A recent BestLife article compiled reports from letter carriers on their oddest deliveries. One carrier said his winner was a potato—he thought it was a joke, but a clerk told him that it was likely a veiled threat (reflecting a humorous perception about potatoes decades ago).

Several other users claimed to have delivered a coconut, and one spoke of delivering a lone banana, complete with stamps and a delivery address.

Another carrier said that there was a time period when he had constant deliveries of bees—entire colonies. "No one else would handle them but me," he wrote. One carrier claimed to have delivered an axe wrapped in a few grocery bags.

In 2014, Ripley's Believe It or Not! actually had a contest with these limits—attempting to mail the strangest package without wrapping it up in a box. Pat Moser, of King, NC, won—he mailed a tree stump.

Pennsylvania woman creates wall of postcards from late father

Lauren Rosa Miller of Philadelphia, PA, found an interesting way to me-



David Dury on his historic route in East Setauket

New York carrier's route brims with history

David Dury of Long Island, NY, Branch 6000 has a special assignment—a route rich with historical landmarks.

East Setauket, a census-designated place on New York's Long Island Sound, is—to name a few notable designations—the site of a Revolutionary War battle; a center in that war's Culper spy ring; a route served by a post office listed on the National Register of Historic Places; and home to Roe Tavern, where President George Washington stayed on April 22, 1790.

East Setauket was founded in 1655, and Dury feels nothing but gratitude to be delivering on this route, even after two decades. "The whole town makes this a nice place to work. Every day is a good day," he told USPS's Link.

Dury, a 21-year carrier, is a participant in "We Go Everywhere," a USPS communications campaign that sends readers on a journey through some of the most fascinating places where letter carriers deliver mail. About the campaign, Dury says, "It was an honor to be chosen."

Beloved Minnesota carrier retires

St. Paul, MN Branch 28 member Joel Meline became a mailman by chance. He was studying chemical engineering in college, when he ran out of tuition money.

He decided on a whim to take the postal carrier exam, and passed. His plan was to go to night school, but instead, he never left the post office for the next 41 years.

"The best part is the customers," Meline, of White Bear Lake, MN, told the *Pioneer Press*. "That's the whole

morialize her late father, Dave Miller Sr. She created a display out of framed postcards he had sent to her in the mid-'90s during her childhood, along with a framed proclamation recognizing her father, in the living room of her house.

Dave was often traveling, as he owned a consulting firm, and as a result much of his communication was done via the mail.

"He wrote postcards from dinner with Nelson Mandela, from the Million Man March and just to tell me 'I love you,'" Miller told USPS's Link. As she grew, she began sending postcards of her own to her father.

Her father was actually the one to initially gather these postcards

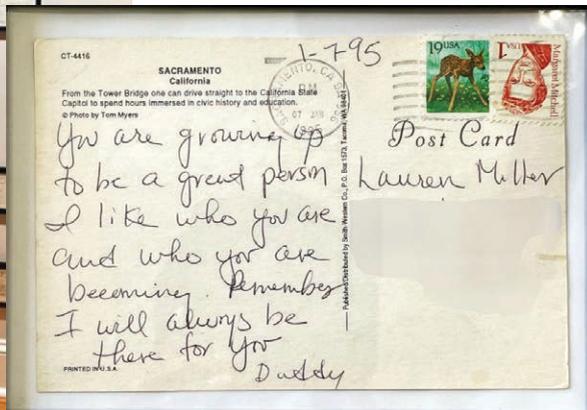
together—before his death in 2018, he gave her a collection of all of their mail.

The pandemic gave Lauren an idea—she figured that if she was going to be spending so much time alone at home, she might as well handle her grief in a positive way.

Throughout the process, she made a video of herself creating the wall and posted it on Instagram, receiving more than 3 million views and coverage on major news outlets, including ABC's "Good Morning America" and NewsNation's "Morning in America."

"I'm very satisfied and happy with the way it looks. Now when I feel like I'm missing him, I walk by and feel his presence and love. I look at them when I'm in need of inspiration," Miller said. "They are a tremendous blessing."

Left: Lauren Rosa Miller and her display of postcards to honor and remember her father
Below: One of the postcards her father mailed to her before he died



Social media (continued)

point—your customers. When you're on a route for a long time, you see kids going from kindergarten to high school and graduating. Customers are the *raison d'être*. They're the reason that we do this."

Meline's customers spent his last week decorating their mailboxes with balloons and giving him notes, treats and goodbyes. His customers recall how Meline always gave the dogs on his route a treat. "He has been the best postal carrier ever," patron Kerri Kolstad said.

"He's very consistent," customer Mike Duesenberg said. "When I hear him, I like to come out and see him and say 'hi.' He's an extra set of eyes in the neighborhood. It's comforting to know that he can look out for us in the event that we are gone. We're going to miss him dearly."

Meline spent many years doing all of the new carrier training in White Bear Lake. "It's not an easy job. It's a



Stanley Covington Jr. (l) moonlights as a fashion designer, with his work (above) being showcased at New York Fashion Week.

simple job, but there are lots of pieces to it," he said. "Brand-new people would come to tears trying to just do the job."

"It's time to go," he said of his retirement. "The repetitive motion of twisting and turning and lifting, it catches up to you." His wife, Kim, died in May, and Meline plans to spend his retirement finishing his degree.

"Everyone has just been great," Meline said. "I don't feel like I work for the post office as much as I work for my customers. A good mail carrier is a treasure. They're an asset to your neighborhood, and I tried to be that."

Oregon carrier has adorable friendship with cat

Ryan Gray of Portland, OR, has spent the past year befriending a cat on his route, and a lot of people have noticed. Every day, the Branch 82 member plays with the cat, Zeppelin, by sliding the mail back and forth through the slot in the front door while the cat bats at the letters. The feline's owner, Marisa Jaffe, calls this "the best part of our morning."

"Zeppelin has become accustomed to waiting by the window, and when



he sees my mailman coming down the street he runs to the door to 'play' with the mail," Jaffe said.

Jaffe posted a video of one of the interactions on TikTok recently and received 1.1 million views, with viewers fawning over both the cat and the mailman.

A New York letter carrier's artistic secret

You would never know it by his predictable postal uniform, but letter carrier **Stanley Covington Jr.** is an aspiring fashion designer.

"The clothes that I design are so far away from my job," the Long Island Merged, NY Branch 6000 member told *Newsday*.

On Sept. 10, his work was featured in a showcase for independent designers at New York Fashion Week. The clothes ranged from green sequined shorts to bold painted jackets to frocks with peekaboo cutouts.

His brand is called "IMOYA," meaning "in memory of you always." He dedicates that title to his family, who encouraged him to feed his self-expression, namely his mother and sister. When both of them died in 1997, he soothed his grief by further exploring his art. His main designer inspirations are Marc Jacobs and Balmain.

Covington's major involvement is in the design—after a sketch is finished, he brings it to Moussa Sow, a local tailor in Brooklyn. This arrangement has been ongoing for seven years, and each piece takes about two to three weeks to complete. **PR**

When an active letter carrier dies...

- Notify the employee's immediate supervisor, postmaster and Human Resources Shared Service Center (HRSSC) at 877-477-3273. HRSSC will advise about any benefits payable, and how to apply for them. It will provide and render assistance in completing the application for death benefits under the employee's retirement system, as well as the claim for death benefits—Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) and claim for unpaid compensation.
- Notify the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) at 877-968-3778.
- Notify the letter carrier's NALC branch.
- If the employee was a veteran, notify Veterans Affairs at 800-827-1000.
- Call the Social Security Administration at 800-772-1213.
- Notify banks and other financial institutions.
- Notify insurance companies (life, health, home, automobile, etc.). If the employee had a policy with NALC's Mutual Benefit Association (MBA), call 202-638-4318 between 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. EST, or write to MBA, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Suite 510, Washington, DC 20001-2144.
- If the employee had health insurance through the NALC Health Benefit Plan, call 888-636-6252. If the employee had health insurance through a different Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) plan, call the number on the back of the insurance card. Health insurance coverage for a surviving spouse and dependent children continues automatically if the employee had family coverage at the time of death and if a monthly survivor annuity is payable.
- Obtain a sufficient number of death certificates for your needs from the mortuary.

When a retired letter carrier dies...

- Notify the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). This should be done as soon as possible through its website, by email, by phone or by mail. To report the death of a deceased annuitant to OPM, do one of the following:
 - Visit servicesonline.opm.gov and click on "Report an Annuitant Death." This will take you to an online form to complete and submit.
 - Send an email to retire@opm.gov and include the following information pertaining to the annuitant and survivor(s): Retired letter carrier's full name, CSA number, date of birth, Social Security number, survivor's full name, relationship to the deceased, Social Security number, date of birth, address and phone number.
 - Call OPM at 888-767-6738.*
 - Write to OPM at Office of Personnel Management, P.O. Box 45, Boyers, PA 16017. Provide the information on the deceased and survivor(s) as above.
- *Calling OPM can sometimes take several attempts due to high call volumes. Callers may be on hold for 20 minutes or longer. The NALC Retirement Department staff is familiar with OPM and is well-versed in explaining OPM's processes. Upon request, the NALC Retirement Department will report the death of a retired member to OPM and answer any questions. To contact the NALC Retirement Department, call toll-free at 800-424-5186 on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 10 a.m.-12 p.m. and 2 p.m.-4 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. The NALC Retirement Department also can be reached Monday-Friday from 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. at 202-393-4695. Long distance charges may apply.
- Once the death of an annuitant has been reported to OPM, the OPM will stop payment of the monthly annuity and mail the applicable claim forms to the survivor. In most cases, two forms will be included in the packet:
 - application for death benefits under the retirement system (death benefits include survivor benefits and/or any unpaid annuity balance) and
 - application for Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FEGLI)
 - The packet also includes pre-addressed return envelopes, color-coded pink and blue, to facilitate rapid distribution and processing within OPM.
- Notify the bank where annuity payments are deposited, as well as any other of the retiree's financial institutions. Any annuity payments deposited after the date of death will be reclaimed by OPM. Return any uncashed annuity checks to the address on the accompanying Treasury Department envelope.
- Obtain enough death certificates for your needs from the mortuary.
- Notify the retired letter carrier's NALC branch.
- If the retiree was a veteran, notify Veterans' Affairs at 800-827-1000.
- Call the Social Security Administration at 800-772-1213.
- Notify insurance companies (life, health, home, automobile, etc.).
- If the retiree had a policy with NALC's Mutual Benefit Association, call 202-638-4318 between 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. EST, or write to MBA, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Suite 510, Washington, DC 20001-2144.
- If the retiree had health insurance through the NALC Health Benefit Plan or any other FEHB plan, the OPM will inform the health plan. When a spouse is entitled to survivor benefits, he or she will receive continuous health insurance coverage as long as they were covered under their spouse's FEHB plan at the time of death. The health plan will automatically change to self-only and be switched to the surviving spouse's name.
- If the retiree participated in the Thrift Savings Plan, contact the TSP at 877-968-3778.

If the spouse of a retired letter carrier dies, call the NALC Retirement Department for instructions on how to restore annuity to full amount, switch health coverage from family to self (unless you have dependent children) and change beneficiaries.

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.



From l: Rochelle Spratling, Angel Caban, Richie Snowden and Jenice Williams

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.

Co-workers come to the aid of collapsed carrier

On a spring day at Emerald Station in Las Vegas, 35-year letter carrier **Farrell Chenin** collapsed without warning on the workroom floor. Fellow Branch 2502 members **Angel Caban, Charletha Marzett, Richard Snowden Jr., Rochelle Spratling** and **Jenice Williams** sprang into action to

help their stricken colleague.

Marzett was the first to discover Chenin lying on the floor of the station. "I called his name and rolled him over," but got no response, she said. She called for help and assisted the other carriers with performing CPR. Snowden and Spratling readied Chenin. "I just cleared his airway and held his head back," Snowden said. "I didn't want him to choke, so I elevated his head," Spratling said.

Caban, who was certified in CPR through USPS, began chest compressions. "When I saw him on the ground, I just jumped," Caban, a 28-year carrier, said. Marzett assisted with mouth-to-mouth breathing. Williams, a former medical assistant in a physician's office, monitored Chenin's pulse and talked to him. "It was nerve-wracking" seeing her colleague in distress, she said, "because it's someone you see every day. Everyone who works here is family."

Snowden and Williams monitored Chenin's pulse, which came and went, and his breathing, and helped keep him comfortable. Paramedics arrived and took over chest compressions and rushed Chenin to the hospital. Thanks to his brothers and sisters, Chenin survived his ordeal and left the hospital for a rehabilitation center; however, he died a few months later.

New carrier stands up to man with knife

Out delivering the mail in her truck in Torrington, CT, in August, city carrier assistant **Christine Cambizaca**—who had started the job only a month earlier—was approached by a barefoot woman, who was crying, afraid and struggling to speak.

"She had blood on her nose and bruises on her face," Cambizaca said.

"Are you OK?" Cambizaca asked her. "Are you being followed?"

The woman nodded. Cambizaca, a

member of Connecticut Merged Branch 20, called her supervisor, who told her to call 911, which she then did.

The carrier then spotted a man who seemed to be looking for the woman, so she let the victim wait inside her truck while she stood outside. The man approached the truck and yelled at her and the woman inside the truck, demanding to be let in, but Cambizaca refused, despite the danger.

"I got scared because I saw a knife in his pocket," she said.

Cambizaca tried to get into the truck through the back door, but the man noticed and tried to get in the truck that way, so she shut the door again to protect the woman inside. A neighbor heard the commotion and came outside, distracting the man and allowing Cambizaca to get in the truck.

From the truck, she saw the man throw the knife at the neighbor, who was not injured. The neighbor picked up the knife and continued to distract the man until police arrived. They arrested the man, and an ambulance took the woman to the hospital. After telling officers what happened, Cambizaca continued on her route.

"I was calm," she said of the incident, "but I was scared."

Thought many hailed her as a hero, Cambizaca had a different take. The victim, she said, "could have been anybody's daughter or sister. No matter who it was, we should always look after each other."

Carrier aids crash victim

Delivering her route in Anaheim, CA, in May, **Esther Perez** saw a car hit another vehicle and then veer off the road and hit a tree. The Garden Grove, CA Branch 1100 member, who has delivered the mail for 29 years, immediately took charge. She ran to help the car's driver, but he was unconscious and locked inside the car. "I could tell he wasn't breathing," she said.

Help on the way

On a Sunday in July, Fresno, CA Branch 231 member **Dylan Diaz** was delivering packages at an apartment complex when he encountered a lost child. "I saw this little girl, maybe 2 or 3 years old at most," Diaz said. "No shoes, no clothes—just in a diaper." The child was crying and saying she was lost. Diaz, who began carrying the mail this year, picked up the child and calmed her as he searched the apartment complex for her home. After carrying the child while searching for her parents, Diaz reunited her with her father. The carrier called his supervisor to report the incident and returned to delivering the mail. When he saw the child, "I instantly thought of my daughter," who is 5, Diaz said. **PR**

Fire & rescue

Three-year carrier **Justin Possinger**, a T-6, was delivering a route from the East Stroudsburg, PA, post office in June when he saw an elderly couple on their porch. The woman told him that something had struck their house. He saw no evidence of that—but then he smelled smoke. Possinger, a member of Lehigh Valley, PA Branch 274, called 911 and helped the couple get away from the home as they waited for firefighters to arrive. However, the husband, after coming out the front door, began to go back inside. “The husband was a little more stubborn,” Possinger said. “He wanted to go inside and find the fire with a flashlight.” The carrier convinced him to come back outside with his wife. When fire units arrived, Possinger quickly got his truck out of the way and continued on his route. The next time he walked that route, the couple told him that the fire had been caused by an electrical problem, but that their home was safe thanks to his quick action. “It’s not something you expect,” Possinger said of saving the couple’s home and perhaps their lives, “but you’re happy to know you could make a difference.”



Justin Possinger

John Fitzgerald, a carrier at the Saugus, MA, post office who has delivered the mail since 2005, turned a corner on his route in August and saw something unusual. “The air was yellow,” he said. He wondered if someone was burning leaves. Then he saw the source of the smoke—a house. “There was smoke pouring out of every part of it,” Fitzgerald said. He banged on the door and heard a dog barking inside, but nobody came to the door, so he opened it. He went inside through the smoke just far enough to find a woman. He urged her to come out to safety, with her dog. Firefighters arrived to try to quell the blaze, which he later learned took several hours. The house was heavily damaged, but no lives were lost. “I was just in the right place and the right time,” Fitzgerald, a member of Lynn, MA Branch 7, said. “Just doing my duty.” **PR**

Esther Perez



Perez asked others who had stopped for something to break the window with, and someone handed her a 2-by-4. After telling someone to call 911, Perez broke the glass, unlocked the doors and checked on the man.

She managed to open his airway and get him breathing again as paramedics arrived. Perez then continued on her route. She later learned that the man had made a full recovery, and that the cause of the accident was his malfunctioning pacemaker.

The experience of saving the man’s life was particularly meaningful to Perez. “I had just lost my father” despite trying to revive him with CPR, she said. “My dad died in my arms. I felt like I redeemed myself—I couldn’t help my father, but I was able to help this man.”

Brave carrier rescues snakebite victim

Dashawn Spratley, a city carrier assistant in Port St. Lucie, FL for the last year and a half, was driving in his mail vehicle on his route in May when he heard a call for help.

He couldn’t see where the voice was coming from, so he drove down the street toward it until he found a woman lying in her driveway behind her car. The woman had been bitten by a snake and fallen and broken her shoulder.

“There was blood coming out of her foot” at the site of the bite, Spratley said.

The snake was still there. The carrier told the woman not to move so she would not attract the attention of the snake and risk another bite. He ran in her house to get a mop, which he used to chase the

snake away. After he called 911 and paramedics arrived, he continued on his route.

He later learned that the woman was recovering from her injuries and the snake was not venomous.

Spratley was humble about his actions. “I did what I hope anyone in my position would do,” he said.

Detecting a fire, carrier helps police investigation

Spokane, WA Branch 442 member **Jeffery Patterson** was delivering the mail in Spokane Valley in August when he smelled something burning. The 24-year carrier and Army veteran looked around and noticed smoke coming from one of the units of a nearby apartment building.

Patterson knew that a woman with health issues who was housebound lived in the apartment. He banged on the door and windows and tried to get inside, but could not, so he went to a neighboring unit and asked if they had a phone number or key for the unit that was on fire, but they did not.

“The neighbors didn’t know the house was on fire,” he said. They quickly left their unit.

Patterson called 911 and told the dispatcher about the woman inside. When firefighters arrived, he continued on his route.

Patterson later learned that the woman inside had been murdered and the fire apparently had been set to cover up evidence. While his actions could not save her, it did preserve evidence that could lead to the arrest of her killer.

Patterson did not consider his actions particularly heroic. “I did it; the fire department came; I went back to doing my job,” he said. **PR**



Dashawn Spratley

Gratitude



**Brian
Renfroe**

For my last column as executive vice president, I feel it is important for me to share what I have witnessed from a unique perspective that I've been privileged to have. For the last 11 years, I've had the pleasure of working at NALC Headquarters—and I've had the pleasure of working with President Fred Rolando. This magazine includes an excellent retrospective on Fred's presidency that covers many of the accomplishments of our union under his leadership. Rather than repeat many of those accomplishments, I want focus on the characteristics and qualities I've seen from him.

“On behalf of all of NALC, I'll end with a simple message. Thanks, Fred.”

I worked as a letter carrier staff member at NALC Headquarters from 2011 to 2014. I served as director of city delivery from 2014 to 2016 and I've been executive vice president since 2016. During this entire time I have seen firsthand a remarkable level of consistent leadership from Fred. There are many words that I can use to describe him and his leadership—steady, intelligent, patient, calm, humorous, honest, compassionate and genuine are a few that come to mind. The one theme of every decision, directive and action from Fred is always doing what is best for the members of NALC.

Fred took office as president during one of the more difficult periods in our union's modern-day history. The way he navigated the effects of the 2009 recession and fought off numerous threats was emblematic of what I witnessed for the last 11 years—the ability to develop the right vision and patiently work to achieve the outcome that is best for the members of NALC. Fred has always remained calm and has methodically assessed each situation. Every single time.

Anyone who has spent even a few minutes around Fred knows that he likes humor. His jokes have always been pretty bad, but his humorous nature contributes

to a quality that I can speak to—people enjoy working with him. Officers, staff and members have always had a great experience working with Fred. I've been fortunate to work directly with him on countless issues over the years, and I have never had anything other than a positive experience.

Compassion is an important part of being a successful leader. Fred is one of the most compassionate people I've ever known. Many NALC members who have experienced tragedy can attest to this, as can many NALC officers and staff that have worked at Headquarters during his presidency.

Fred is as genuine as a person can be. That quality shines through in everything I've seen him do the last 11 years. It is uncommon for an individual to have the opportunity to affect thousands of lives in a positive way. Fred has taken full advantage of that opportunity he was given by being elected NALC president.

I could write a book about all the things I've learned from him the last 11 years. But in addition to what I've mentioned, the most important lesson I've learned is the importance of a strong work ethic. I've seen his work ethic permeate throughout NALC Headquarters and beyond.

I am extremely excited for Fred and his family to be able to enjoy a well-deserved retirement. I will forever be grateful for all he has done to strengthen our union. As we move into this transition, there is one thing I know for sure about Fred. Even in retirement, he will do what he has done for the last 44 years—anything he can to help the members of NALC.

I've had the privilege of writing dozens of *Postal Record* columns over the last eight years. I've never enjoyed writing one more than this one. On behalf of all of NALC, I'll end with a simple message.

Thanks, Fred.



'Tis the season



James D. Henry

As we all enter into the holiday season, most of us look forward with great anticipation toward good food, good gifts and a good time. We anxiously await the joy on our loved ones' faces when their hearts fill with gratitude for the love shown during this time of year. As letter carriers, it is common for customers to also sow seeds of appreciation for the service their carrier has provided without fail throughout the year.

Letter carriers are unique among professions in regard to the impact we have on our customers' lives.

During this time of year, a letter

carrier's job goes beyond delivering the mail. Along with delivering that much-anticipated letter, card or package, we often deliver to our customers expressions of love. I distinctly remember while deployed overseas as a Marine, the best part of my day being that of receiving a letter and/or a care package from my friends and family. I also remember seeing the joy in my customers' eyes when I carried mail and delivered communications they were awaiting. What a sense of fulfillment.

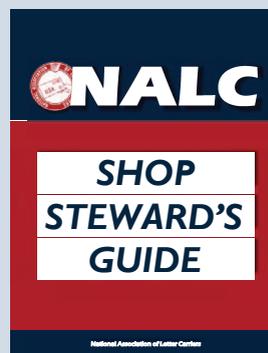
Despite this time of the year being traditionally the most labor-intensive for letter carriers, it is a job we all take pride in doing. Carrying your routes and performing the inordinate amount of work during this season is a labor of love. We all know that it is hard work sometimes, but necessary work that only a special breed of men and women do willingly and cheerfully. Sometimes, the letter carrier is viewed as the joy of the season for certain customers. Our customers can depend on their carrier looking out for their well-being, providing a receptive ear and being the one constant visitor when there are few. It's a responsibility we undertake proudly.

Not only do our customers have reason to be grateful for their letter carriers, we similarly have absolute reason to be grateful. The unfortunate reality is that not all can say they have a job that is able to put food on the table, clothes on our backs and a roof over our heads, in addition to providing our families with most, if not all, of their needs and wants. I'm proud to be a letter carrier and a member of the NALC. We care and help, not only the public, but each other. I encourage all to not be wea-

ry of doing good, but to continue to make a difference in each other's and your customers' lives.

“'Tis the season for us all to take a little extra time and make just a little more effort during this time of the year to be a bit more compassionate, thoughtful, considerate, caring and aware of our ability to help someone in any capacity we can.”

Letter carriers display care for others, and engage in caring activities throughout the year. 'Tis the season? Yes! 'Tis the season for us all to take a little extra time and make just a little more effort during this time of the year to be a bit more compassionate, thoughtful, considerate, caring and aware of our ability to help someone in any capacity we can. To put a smile on someone's face. To be good to each other. To reaffirm that we are always here for one another. 'Tis the season to be grateful and thankful. 'Tis the season for me to wish you all a Merry Christmas and happy new year!



The NALC Shop Steward's Guide, along with many Grievance Starters, are now available on the Members Only portal. The *NALC Shop Steward's Guide* is written for every NALC member who handles grievances at the Informal Step A and/or Formal Step A of the grievance procedure.

Any other versions of the *Shop Steward's Guide* or Toolkit are obsolete and will no longer be available. The guide will only be available through the Members Only portal. This will allow NALC to update the guide in real time and ensure that all stewards, activists and members have access.

To access the guide from the NALC website, log on to the Members Only portal and click the "Members Documents" button, where you will find the *Shop Steward's Guide* and the available Grievance Starters in a drop-down menu.

Dues increase and Branch Officers Training



**Nicole
Rhine**

There will be a biweekly dues increase for 2023 due to the two cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) and the general wage increase achieved with the National Agreement. The dues change will take place in Pay Period 1 of 2023 (Dec. 17, 2022-Dec. 30, 2022) and will be reflected beginning with the Jan. 6, 2023, paycheck.

The minimum dues structure set forth in Article 7, Section 2 (a) of the *NALC Constitution* is the equivalent of two hours' base pay for an NALC Step D letter carrier in the consolidated career city carrier grade level (Table One) per month. Since dues are deducted *biweekly*, this amount will be \$30.88 for 2023.

National retains one-third of this amount, \$10.28, and remits the other two-thirds to the local branch (with some withheld for state associations and remitted by NALC Headquarters to the state associations monthly).

Some branches may have dues that are higher than the minimum dues structure. Also, branches may increase local dues during the year.

Branch Officers Training

As previously announced, a Branch Officers Training will be held Jan. 30 to Feb. 2 in Los Angeles. Registration forms were included in the *NALC Bulletin*.

Branch Officers Training consists of three and a half days of educational seminars tailored to assist branch presidents, vice presidents, treasurers, recording secretaries, financial secretaries and trustees in the performance of their duties.

As a reminder, branches must use the registration form to register for the class, and no travel plans should be made until an acceptance letter is received.

These sessions cover the basics for financial officers: taxes, proper controls, reporting to the Department of Labor (DOL), fiduciary duties under the Landrum-Griffin Act, bonding of branch officers and IRS reporting requirements. Here's an overview of what it covers:

Constitution and bylaws—This session will cover what is required in branch bylaws and common errors.

DOL reporting—This session reviews the history of the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRDA) and how it affects the activities of unions and

union officers. Participants will learn about each title of the LMRDA and the reporting requirements under the law.

Travel, reimbursements and per diem—This session is designed to help branches comply with the tricky IRS and DOL rules involved in travel payments.

Handling MDA funds and PAC funds—This session will cover the rules for collecting and remitting these funds.

Preparing LM forms and 990s—Participants will get into the nitty gritty about completing these required filings.

Auditing branch records—This session is for trustees and will teach how to ensure a complete audit.

What am I signing?—This session is for branch presidents/vice presidents and will cover the responsibility that goes along with signing certain documents.

What policies should your branch have?—This session is designed to identify policies that every branch should have in place.

Why minutes matter—This session will assist recording secretaries in maintaining accurate and complete minutes.

Member notification requirements—This session will cover required notifications and the proper way to make them.

Payroll and wage Issues—This session will cover the ins and outs of payroll.

Recordkeeping—This session provides an overview of the proper way to keep records consistent with DOL guidelines.

Dues and membership—This session is intended to guide branch officers through membership issues that they deal with daily, and to go over how to read a dues roster.

Fiduciary issues and practices—This session is designed to give participants practice applying what they learned in the DOL reporting and *Constitution* and bylaws segment.

Managing branch finances and creating transparency—This session is designed to provide guidance on the day-to-day aspects of running the financial affairs of a branch.

Fraud prevention and detection, internal controls—This session is designed to identify the biggest risks of fraud and how branches can establish procedures to prevent it.

Branch elections—This session covers the *NALC Regulations Governing Branch Election Procedures*.

I was just elected, now what?—This session is focused on helping officers learn more about branch operations.

Risk management and cyber security—This session is focused on helping officers identify possible exposures and ways to address them.

Introduction to QuickBooks—This session is designed to provide guidance on how to use QuickBooks.

Innovations—This session will focus on new programs made available to branch offices through the Members Only portal.

Celebrate the season of giving



**Paul
Barner**

Once again, the holiday season is upon us; a time when family and friends come together to celebrate. The season is filled with reflections of the past, hopes for the future and expressions of care and love. Along with this season of giving comes an opportunity for self-reflection and re-dedication of values. The National Association of Letter Carriers strives to maintain an emphasis on ideals of service and care for not only our members, but also the communities we serve. And we, as a union, celebrate the season of giving all year long.

The Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive completed its 30th year of existence this year. Over the past 30 years, the food drive has helped countless people bridge the gap between hunger and sustenance. Without this gift of care, many would be faced with an unconscionable hardship. The adage that "a picture speaks a thousand words" is never more poignant than when you see the enormous amounts of food collected by caring letter carriers with an undying devotion to those who live in the communities they serve. Despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which halted the traditional food drive due to safety concerns, NALC continued on its mission to serve those in our communities by establishing the Stamp Out Hunger Donor Drive. Through the donor drive, NALC members and branches were able to provide much-needed monetary relief to local food banks in their communities.

In 1952, NALC joined with the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) as the first corporate sponsor in the fight against muscular dystrophy. Throughout the years, branches and members alike have held events and have participated in fundraising efforts, all in the name of delivering hope to people with neuromuscular diseases. The efforts of our members have raised awareness and provided much-needed financial assistance to MDA. One only need attend an MDA Summer Camp to fully appreciate the gift our efforts provide to the campers and their families.

The Postal Service is the largest civilian employer of military veterans. As such, almost a quarter of all letter carriers are veterans of our country's armed forces. In 2015, the NALC Veterans Group was founded as a way to

thank our veteran members by providing resources and information specific to their service. Since its beginnings, the group has grown to more than 18,000 members. NALC veterans graciously accepted the group and immediately began giving back to other veterans in need.

In response to an overwhelming desire by NALC branches and members to develop a means to assist members affected by natural disasters, the NALC Disaster Relief Foundation was formed. The purpose of the foundation is to assist in alleviating the suffering of those members and their family members living in the same household who have been affected by a natural disaster. Since being formed in 2018, branches and members have responded in force by gifting hundreds of thousands of dollars in donations to the foundation, providing relief to members affected by several storms, fires and an earthquake.

Often, letter carriers are referred to as the eyes and ears of the communities they serve. Routinely, they go above and beyond in their public service by rescuing customers, stopping crimes or providing support to those in need. Many times, tragic outcomes would have resulted had the letter carriers not intervened. And frequently, the letter carriers involved place their own safety at risk on behalf of others. Annually, NALC holds a luncheon to recognize several letter carriers for their acts of heroism and compassion carried out in the service of their communities.

These are but a few of the examples of the ways NALC branches and members extend the season of giving throughout the year. The dedication of letter carriers to their communities and to each other extends far beyond that of mere acquaintance. Those ideals of service and care are on full display as much as the uniforms they wear while delivering America's mail. Letter carriers, in so many ways, truly make a living by what they get but make a life by what they give.

I wish everyone safe and happy holidays, and I thank you for the gift you give to your communities and your fellow letter carriers through your dedicated service and membership in the National Association of Letter Carriers.



eBike pilot testing



Christopher Jackson

speedometer is located below the handlebars. Carriers

In 2021, the Postal Service began testing electric bicycles (eBikes) in two Florida locations, Miami Beach and St. Petersburg, on existing bicycle routes. An in-depth explanation of the test can be found in my September 2021 *Postal Record* column.

Each Freighter eBike has an alarm, two key locks, headlight, rearview camera, speedometer, cupholder, two USB ports and a holder for a handheld device. The eBike has a maximum gross weight of 950 lbs. The bike has one front wheel and two rear wheels, requiring the rider to make wide turns to prevent tipping over. The bike's

On Aug. 13, the Postal Service expanded its testing of the eBikes to two walkout routes in Fredericksburg, VA. The test in Fredericksburg is anticipated to last for three months.

Because the two routes involved in the current test are walkout routes, the line of travel had to be changed before the test began. A carrier on a walkout route is not assigned a vehicle, so the carrier does not transport the mail to the street for delivery. After carriers case their mail and pull the route down, they place the relays in containers, which then are taken to the street by a relay driver who deposits the mail into the relay boxes. The carrier will move to the street and either walk or use public transportation to reach the first delivery point. Each walkout route was assigned a Freighter eBike, and the line of travel was changed to park-and-loop delivery method during this pilot program.

For the duration of the test, the delivery method on the routes involved was changed to park-and-loop delivery. To deliver a park-and-loop route, a carrier parks at a park point and delivers the mail down one side of the street, then crosses over to deliver the mail in the opposite direction, returning to the park point. This change allows the carrier to deliver the route using the eBike.

Carriers participating in the test received training from a driver safety instructor (DSI) and had to pass a test prior to operating the eBike. In Fredericksburg, the two regular carriers assigned to the former walkout routes and five CCAs were trained to operate the eBike. Each eBike has a quick-start guide affixed to the inside rear door of the cargo area. The guide outlines the operation of the bike and includes a QR code that carriers can use to access the guide electronically.

Just as they should do when operating a motorized delivery vehicle, carriers should complete a daily safety inspection check before operating the eBike. This ensures that the bike can be operated safely. Any issues that affect the operation of the bike should be reported immediately. The



can increase the amount of battery-powered assistance by using the device located on the left handlebar. They can select from the lowest setting to the highest setting by using the plus or minus keys.

The eBike requires two batteries to operate—a 500 Wh battery located behind the seat on the cargo unit, and a 12-volt battery lower and to the right on the cargo unit. The Postal Service provides each carrier with two of each battery per day. It is the carrier's responsibility to charge the eBike's batteries daily by placing the batteries on the charging station located in a designated area on the workroom floor.





Postal Service has contracted with an outside company to perform routine maintenance and repairs. The rider must wear a safety vest while operating the bicycle and, upon request, will be provided a bike helmet. See the national-level grievance settlement in case number Q06N-4Q-C 81135613, dated March 16, 2016 (M-01872). This settlement is available in the Materials Reference System at nalc.org/workplace-issues/resources/materials-reference-system.

The eBikes are stored and loaded on the workroom floor in a designated area. Carriers load the vehicle from the rear and side. For safety reasons, carriers should unload only from the side of the bike while on the street to avoid being hit from behind. This model of the eBike can hold about 12 775 tubs (plastic tubs that usually hold flat-sized mail) or 12 Flat Sequencing System (FSS) trays when loading from the side. There also is a rear compartment divided by two shelves that can fit half letter trays on the bottom level and approximately six FSS and/or six 775 tubs. It can accommodate only medium-sized or smaller packages. The Freightier eBikes are about 9¾ feet long and almost 4 feet wide and hold the majority of the daily route volume, allowing the carrier to deliver the mail. Larger parcels might have to be delivered by a carrier in a traditional delivery vehicle, if they do not fit in the cargo container on the eBike. The eBikes eliminated the use of relay boxes and the delay associated with carriers waiting for the mail drop-off at the relay box.

Due to the width of the eBikes, they may be restricted from being driven on the sidewalk. In addition, they are wider than most bike lanes, forcing the carrier to oper-

ate them on the city streets with automotive traffic. To park on the street, carriers must pull directly into a spot, as the bike's pedals will not allow the carrier to move in reverse. To parallel park, or if they need to go in reverse, carriers must dismount the bike and physically push the bike in reverse.

Unlike the delivery area in Florida, which is mostly flat, the Fredericksburg terrain consists of hills and valleys. Carriers in Fredericksburg reported that the eBikes worked well on flat ground but encountered problems when going up or down hills. The eBikes were difficult to get moving when stopped at a stop sign or a stoplight on an incline. Carriers also reported the bike shaking when going downhill and when braking at certain speeds.

My staff and I visited the Fredericksburg Main Post Office recently to review the eBike pilot program. One benefit that carriers reported was the reduction of the amount of time they spent waiting for the relay drivers to deliver the relays. Negatives they reported included the problems starting and stopping on hills, ponchos

“One benefit that carriers reported was the reduction of the amount of time they spent waiting for the relay drivers to deliver the relays. Negatives they reported included the problems starting and stopping on hills, ponchos flying up in front of their face on windy days, difficulty finding parking, and vehicles passing at too close a distance when operating the eBike at a slow speed.”

flying up in front of their face on windy days, difficulty finding parking, and vehicles passing at too close a distance when operating the eBike at a slow speed. NALC will continue to monitor the test in Fredericksburg and gather feedback from the carriers involved about the pros and cons of the eBike. Once testing is complete, we will meet with the Postal Service to discuss the results of the test and management's future plans for the eBike.

Emergency action plans



Manuel L. Peralta Jr.

In January, my column listed a number of references to the employer's obligations as defined through the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA), which are referenced in the *Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM)*. Adding to that information we find management's responsibility spelled out as follows in §852.1 of the *ELM*:

Each Postal Service facility with more than 10 employees on the rolls must maintain an emergency action plan (EAP) in writing. If there are 10 or fewer employees, the plan may be communicated verbally...The plan must include actions specifically designated for management and for employees to take to

ensure employee safety and protection of property from fire and other emergencies (e.g., tornadoes, earthquakes, and hazardous materials (HAZMAT) spills). Management Instruction EL-810-2006-3, Response to Hazardous Materials Release, provides guidelines for setting up standard operating procedures (SOPs) for releases and describes the relationship of the SOP to the EAP.

Combine the above with the responsibilities of the Installation Safety Committee. *Handbook EL-809* (12 pages) details the duties and responsibilities of the Local Safety Committee, which includes the following item:

Determine program areas to receive increased emphasis and make recommendations regarding them.

This passage places an overall responsibility on the members of the Installation Safety and Health Committee. Think of all that falls under this umbrella. For example, we have weathered a number of hurricanes over the last few years. We know that there will be more. We know that we will have to react. And yet, each and every year, there is a scramble at the installation and district (division) level to make sure we are reacting appropriately. Adding to this anxiety is your need to protect your families. Were we all prepared?

The above quote from the *EL-809*, when read together with the obligations from §852 of the *ELM*, put us all on notice to prepare for the worst. Prepare for the disasters that we can expect in our area. If you live and work in an area that experiences tornados, hurricanes, earthquakes, flooding rains or any other weather-related disasters, then you should be evaluating all that is known so that we can determine if we are following the sound advice of

the experts. In your evaluation, you should dive into the last events and determine if all was done as planned.

For example, look at how your area reacted to the last disaster:

- Did your installation have an emergency action plan in writing? If not, why?
- Was the plan known by all employees? If not, why?
- Was it followed by all employees (craft and management)? If not, why?
- Did the existing plan address all the events experienced? If not, what do we have to revise to make sure we have those issues covered next time?

EL-809 continues with the following responsibilities of the Installation Safety Committee:

Monitor the progress of accident prevention and health activities, and, when necessary, make recommendations for improvement to the installation head. Membership on a safety and health committee does not entitle the members to have access to individual employee medical records without the employee's consent.

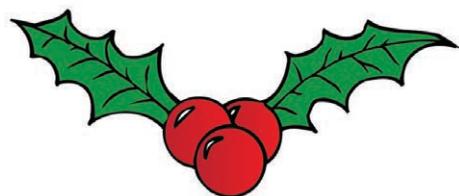
Review Forms 1767, Report of Hazard, Unsafe Condition, or Practice, and responses or corrective action taken. These two simple duties can make a world of difference in changing how we do our jobs and how we make our workplace safer.

These two additional items, tied in with the above, make clear that the committee's responsibility is to look for what to expect, create a plan, and then evaluate the plan's effectiveness.

This month, the elected national officers of the NALC take the oath of office for the 2022-2026 term of office. I want to thank you for your support, your friendship and your confidence in me, and the team that you have elected, as we begin our next term of office. I also want to thank those of you who exercised your democratic right to determine the national and regional officers of this wonderful union.

As I close, my family and I wish you a very merry Christmas and a happy new year. May we embrace each other's beliefs and continue to serve this great country.

Stay strong. Stay safe. And keep an eye on each other.



Retirement potpourri



**Dan
Toth**

On a monthly basis, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) tracks and publishes the number of retirement applications it receives, the number of cases processed, and average processing time. OPM sets its inventory goal at 13,000 cases.

Back in March, OPM had more than 36,000 cases in its inventory, almost triple its goal. It has since been able to reduce the backlog ahead of the year-end retirement rush, but as of the release of the October data, the backlog was still more than 25,000 cases.

I point this out to make retirees aware that OPM is not living up to its goals and that they should be ready for potential processing delays. This means that OPM might take multiple months to finalize a retirement application and begin regular annuity payments. As interim payments are not always enough or as much as retirees hope for, proper retirement preparation should include setting aside savings to keep the bills paid in the meantime.

Processing delays also are affecting survivor annuities, which are taking as long as three to four months, based on the calls received by the NALC Retirement Department. Delays with survivor annuities are especially troubling, as the affected spouse just lost their loved one, usually unexpectedly, and now has to go several months without the annuity.

Retirees should be sure to let their spouses know of their potential benefits as well as how to claim those benefits if the need arises.

Cost-of-living adjustments

Active letter carriers have received some large cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) in the last year or two as a result of rising inflation. These COLAs, as well as general wage increases, and the addition of Step P that became effective Nov. 19, will increase employees' high-3 average salaries and therefore increase their future annuities.

However, there sometimes is confusion about the specific impact that a raise has on the high-3 average salary. A good way to think about it is to consider your base wage over 1,095 days (three years). Receiving an increase for a single day will affect the average by a very

small amount, because we still need to consider wages from the other 1,094 days.

For example, let's take a top-step letter carrier who had a high-3 average salary of \$68,442 and gets a raise to \$70,000 on the final day of their career. We will also assume that like most letter carriers, the carrier's high-3 will be the final three years. That single day of work would increase the high-3 average salary by approximately \$1.42. Every additional day at the new rate would slowly raise the average, but it would take the full 1,095 days before the high-3 average salary would get all the way up to \$70,000, assuming there are no other increases.

“I point this out to make retirees aware that OPM is not living up to its goals and that they should be ready for potential processing delays. This means that OPM might take multiple months to finalize a retirement application and begin regular annuity payments.”

In 2023, annuitants will be receiving the largest COLA in decades. Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) annuitants will receive 8.7 percent while Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) annuitants will receive 1 percent less, coming in at 7.7 percent, because FERS COLAs are reduced. If the change in the CPI is greater than 2 percent and no more than 3 percent, the COLA will be reduced to 2 percent. If the change in the CPI is greater than 2 percent and less than 3 percent, the COLA will be reduced to 2 percent. If the CPI increase is greater than 3 percent, the COLA will be the change in CPI minus 1 percent.

If eligible, FERS and CSRS annuitants' first COLA will be prorated based on the number of months from the annuity commencement date to the effective date of the first COLA after the annuity commencement date. Retirees receive one-twelfth of the applicable cost-of-living increase for each month that they are in receipt of an annuity before Dec. 1, not to exceed 12 months.

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Insurance solicitations



**James W.
"Jim" Yates**

any statement whose purpose is to undermine the MBA, encourage a rival to it, or bring about a violation of its legal or contractual obligations.

The MBA sells a variety of products to NALC members and their families, including term and whole life insurance, hospital confinement insurance and annuities. Additionally, MBA offers short-term disability insurance to active carriers who are members of the NALC.

While there are insurance products sold by other companies that MBA does not offer, these companies most likely also sell the same or similar products as the MBA. This would make them a rival of the MBA. Even if the salesperson limits the scope of their pitch to products that are not offered by the MBA, a branch's allowing of access to its membership constitutes an endorsement of that company. Once insurance companies gain access to potential clients, they can offer all types of insurance products, even those that are offered by the MBA.

We also often hear of insurance companies being allowed on Postal Service premises to solicit employees regarding their products. It is the obligation of local Postal Service management to prohibit solicitations on postal premises.

Solicitations of this type on Postal Service property are prohibited by *Postal Operations Manual (POM)* 124.54 a., which states:

a. Soliciting alms and contributions, campaigning for election to any public office, collecting private debts, commercial and nonprofit soliciting and vending (including, but not limited to, the vending of newspapers and other publications), the display or distribution of commercial advertising and soliciting of signatures on petitions, polls, or surveys on postal premises (except as authorized by 39 CFR part 259)

The Mutual Benefit Association (MBA) often receives questions concerning outside insurance companies being given the opportunity to address NALC members in an attempt to sell their products at branch meetings or in branch publications. Branches should not allow this to happen, as they would be in violation of the *Constitution and General Laws of the United States Letter Carriers Mutual Benefit Association (USLCMBA)*.

Article 8 of the *USLCMBA Constitution* states:

No State Association or Branch of the NALC, or officer or member of the NALC, shall take any action or make

or impeding the access to or egress from Post Offices are prohibited. This prohibition does not apply to the following:

- (1) Commercial or nonprofit activities performed under contract with the Postal Service or pursuant to the provisions of the Randolph-Sheppard Act.
- (2) Posting notices on bulletin boards as authorized by 39 CFR 243.2(a).
- (3) The solicitation of Postal Service and other federal military and civilian personnel for contributions by recognized agencies as authorized by the Manual on Fund Raising Within the Federal Service, issued by the Chairman of the United States Civil Service Commission under Executive Order 10927, March 13, 1961.

The three exclusions regarding solicitations are not applicable to these outside insurance companies. The first exclusion cites the Randolph-Sheppard Act, which allows licensed blind persons to operate vending facilities on any federal property. The second exclusion is covered by Article 22 (Bulletin Boards) of the National Agreement. The third exclusion allows for fundraising through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC).

The prohibition against solicitations conducted on postal property is also referenced in the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations, specifically at 39 CFR 232.1 (h)(1), and can also be found on USPS Poster 7 *Rules and Regulations Governing Conduct on Postal Service Property*, which must be posted on postal property for all those entering to view. Poster 7 is a mandatory posting required by the *POM*, Section 125.342.

More often, letter carriers are solicited by mail at their employing office. This type of solicitation is also prohibited and should not be allowed by local management. *POM* 124.54 c. states:

c. Solicitations and other actions that are prohibited by 124.54 a when conducted on Postal Service property should not be directed by mail or telephone to postal employees on Postal Service property. The Postal Service will not accept or distribute mail or accept telephone calls directed to its employees when such contacts are believed to be contrary to 124.54 a.

Again, this prohibition comes directly from federal law, at 39 CFR 232.1 (h)(2).

If these solicitations are happening in your location, please notify your national business agent's office.

The MBA has been providing benefits to letter carriers and their families since 1892. These benefits are specifically designed for letter carriers, by letter carriers.

For more information about any of the MBA products, call the MBA toll-free at 800-424-5184, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 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 Standard Time.

I'd like to take this time to wish everyone and their families a happy holiday season and a happy and healthy new year.

NALC High Option Plan— Aetna Medicare Advantage



**Stephanie
Stewart**

In this month's article, I would like to discuss the Health Benefit Plan's new enhanced benefits offered through the NALC High Option Plan—Aetna Medicare Advantage.

Since the announcement of the 2023 benefits, we have received an influx of questions, comments and concerns from our members regarding why the NALC would add a Medicare Advantage Plan. Pertinent questions that we hear frequently include:

- Is the NALC Health Benefit Plan trying to get rid of members with Original Medicare?
- Why is the NALC sending our members to Aetna?
- Will the NALC Health Benefit Plan have any authority over this plan and the benefits?
- Although there is a lot of positive information, what is the hidden catch that you are not telling us about?
- If I opt into the program, am I stuck until the next Open Season?
- If I enroll in Aetna, where do I find information about the preferred network of doctors that I must use?

It is my intent to provide background about the Plan's decision to create a Medicare Advantage Plan, and I also want to reassure our membership that this action has not changed our vision, mission or loyalty to all letter carriers.

First and foremost, the NALC Health Benefit Plan values our members, and we will always strive to keep the best interest of our membership as our priority. Every benefit or program under consideration involves a great deal of thought, planning and deliberation. We want the best for our members, retired and active. We are not seeking to “get rid of” anyone. To the contrary, we continue to seek out new benefits that will elevate our plan and further encourage all letter carriers to consider the NALC Health Benefit Plan. Introduction of the enhanced benefits we can offer through the High Option Plan—Aetna Medicare Advantage is another way for our health plan to stand out in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program.

Our union has a long and rich history of representing our members. For more than 70 years, the NALC Health Benefit Plan has been there for letter carriers as well. Our health plans are created uniquely for letter carriers, and we continually evolve to meet the needs of our mem-

bers and provide the exceptional service you have come to know from the NALC. Introduction of the High Option Plan—Aetna Medicare Advantage is no exception.

For many years, the Plan received requests from our annuitants to add programs and benefits, such as a Medicare reimbursement or access to programs such as SilverSneakers, but it was unable to deliver. After congressional passage of the Postal Reform Act earlier this year, the NALC Health Benefit Plan was keenly aware that Medicare integration would change future health care decisions for our members. We had to do better. Taking these factors into consideration, we regrouped. It was essential for the NALC to continue the pursuit and find a way to do more for our Medicare primary enrollees. These are the reasons we created the NALC High Option Plan—Aetna Medicare Advantage.

Through this partnership with Aetna, we are able to offer enhanced benefits that we feel have significant value to our members and can make a positive impact on their well-being, such as:

- \$900 per year (\$75 monthly) Medicare Part B premium reduction for eligible members
- SilverSneakers® fitness program
- \$0 deductible and coinsurance for medical care
- Unlimited physical, occupational and speech therapy visits
- Dental coverage
- Vision coverage
- Meal benefit program—up to 14 meals after discharge per patient
- Routine transportation to medical appointments—24 one-way trips up to 60 miles each

I would also like to clarify the last question listed at the beginning of the article, regarding which network of doctors our members must use. Keep in mind that members are not required to use Aetna's network of doctors; however, the provider of service must accept Medicare and be willing to bill Aetna.

Now, let me be clear: Although the name Aetna appears in the title, this Plan was created by the NALC. Everyone who chooses to take advantage of this opportunity is still a member of the NALC High Option Plan, but will be opting to be part of a subsection we created within the High Option Plan. This subsection, which Aetna will administer, is what enables us to offer enhanced benefits to a specific group of members.

Let me explain this further, to clarify why Aetna is administering these benefits for the NALC. The NALC Health Ben-

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NALC High Option Plan— Aetna Medicare Advantage (continued)

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enefit Plan is not licensed to administer Medicare benefits. We needed a partner to help us that was willing to work with the NALC to create a plan of benefits that would be unique and that would match or exceed the benefits our High Option members with Original Medicare already had. We also needed a partner that would have the same standards, values and commitment to our membership that we have. The process to create a Medicare Advantage Plan was long and thorough. We requested information and interviewed several Medicare Advantage candidates before making any decisions. This is how our relationship with Aetna started.

In addition to the benefits, it was extremely important that our members have the ability to opt into the program at any time—and the right to opt out and retain their High Option original Medicare structure if they decided that the program was not the right fit for their needs. Creating this safeguard for our members was essential for any program we would consider. Lastly, we understood that we needed an option not based on a one-size-fits-all approach. The satisfaction of our members and our ability to meet everyone's needs meant that all members and their dependents needed the right

to make individual decisions to opt in (or not), with no impact on the other members on their policy.

Although it does sound too good to be true, there is no catch or hidden agenda. Our only agenda, if you want to call it that, is to make sure that our members receive the benefits they deserve at a cost they can afford, and that all letter carriers are encouraged to choose the NALC Health Benefit Plan.

Although we believe in this program, any new implementation is not without its hurdles. If you have any concerns or questions, or if something doesn't seem right, please reach out to us so we can address it. Although Aetna is our partner, the Plan is still here to aid our members who opt into the program. I want to emphasize that we are committed to maintaining your confidence during this Open Season and, more generally, in all that we do. I truly appreciate the comments I have received so far, and I hope I have addressed all of the concerns that have recently come to my office about this new option.

In closing, I would like to take some time to thank each of you for your dedication to the NALC Health Benefit Plan. Together, we have accomplished many goals in 2022 and we won't stop in the upcoming year. Best wishes to each of you for a safe and healthy holiday season and a happy new year.

Director of Retired Members

Retirement potpourri (continued)

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Generally, FERS annuitants under age 62 are not eligible for COLAs, except those with a disability or survivor annuity. For FERS annuitants who are not eligible to receive a COLA during their first year or more, the initial COLA they receive after becoming eligible is the full COLA. CSRS retirees are eligible for COLAs at any age.

Carryover limit

Since the impact of the pandemic started hitting us in early 2020, the NALC and the Postal Service have agreed to temporarily increase the annual leave carryover limit. This agreement has been extended several times so far.

Generally, separating employees receive a lump-sum

terminal payment for a balance of annual leave up to 440 hours. Leave in excess of 440 hours would be forfeited. However, MOU Re: Annual Leave Carryover for Leave Year 2023 (M-01979 in NALC's Materials Reference System) provides that for leave year 2023, regular workforce career employees may carry over 520 hours of accumulated annual leave from leave year 2022 to leave year 2023. Because this memorandum temporarily expands the carryover limit, the maximum terminal leave in accordance with the *Employee and Labor Relations Manual*, Section 512.732, is also increased to 520 hours. This memorandum is set to expire Dec. 31, 2023, at which time the carryover maximum will return to 440 hours, unless the NALC and the Postal Service agree otherwise.

Contract Administration Unit

Brian Renfroe, Executive Vice President
James D. Henry, 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

Protecting letter carrier work

With staffing issues existing in many parts of the country, NALC has received numerous reports of management utilizing employees from other bargaining-unit crafts to perform city letter carrier work. There also have been reports of city letter carriers being forced to work in other crafts. Protecting the work in the letter carrier craft is important, and local branches must carefully monitor cross-craft assignments both inside and outside of the letter carrier craft. While the Postal Service does have the ability to assign employees across craft lines, there are contractual limitations. This article will review these prohibitions and exceptions to the assignment of city letter carrier work.

Articles 1 and 7 of the National Agreement protect city letter carrier work and are vital to the craft. Specifically, Article 1 prohibits supervisors, including bargaining-unit employees serving in a temporary supervisor (204b) position, from performing bargaining-unit work.

The 2022 *Joint Contract Administration Manual (JCAM)*, on page 1-5, explains how these provisions also apply to carriers serving a detail as a 204b or acting supervisor, stating:

The prohibition against supervisors performing bargaining unit work also applies to acting supervisors (204b). The PS Form 1723, which shows the times and dates of the 204b detail, is the controlling document for determining whether an employee is in a 204b status. A separate PS Form 1723 is used for each detail. A single detail may not be broken up on multiple PS Forms 1723 for the purpose of using a 204b on overtime in lieu of a bargaining unit employee. Article 41.1.A.2 requires that a copy of the PS Form 1723 be provided to the union at the local level.

An acting supervisor (204b) may not be used in lieu of a bargaining-unit employee for the purpose of bargaining unit overtime. An employee detailed to an acting supervisory position will not perform bargaining unit overtime immediately prior to or immediately after such detail on the day he/she was in a 204b status unless all available bargaining unit employees are utilized.

The language prohibiting supervisors from performing bargaining-unit work in offices with 100 or more bargaining-unit employees, except in certain circumstances, is found in Article 1, Section 6.A, which states:

A. Supervisors are prohibited from performing bargaining unit work at post offices with 100 or more bargaining unit employees, except:

1. in an emergency;
2. for the purpose of training or instruction of employees;
3. to assure the proper operation of equipment;
4. to protect the safety of employees; or
5. to protect the property of the USPS.

JCAM page 3-1 explains that an emergency is defined as an unforeseen circumstance or a combination of circumstances that calls for immediate action in a situation that is not expected to be of a recurring nature.

“Articles 1 and 7 of the National Agreement protect city letter carrier work and are vital to the craft. Specifically, Article 1 prohibits supervisors, including bargaining-unit employees serving in a temporary supervisor (204b) position, from performing bargaining-unit work.”

Article 1, Section 6.B prohibits supervisors from performing bargaining-unit work in offices with fewer than 100 bargaining-unit employees except under the circumstances described under Section 6.A, or when the duties are included in the supervisor’s position description.

It is important to note, as explained on page 1-6 of the *JCAM*, that in offices with fewer than 100 bargaining-unit employees, no matter what appears in a supervisor’s job description, it does not authorize the supervisor to perform bargaining-unit work as a matter of course every day, but rather to meet established service standards. Additionally, the Step 4 settlement in case number H7N-2M-C443, dated May 17, 1988 (M-00832 in NALC’s Materials Reference System), specifically explains that phrases found in the supervisor’s position description such as “distribution tasks” or “may personally perform non-supervisory tasks” does not mean casing mail into letter carrier cases.

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Protecting letter carrier work (continued)

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Branches that need to determine whether a post office has 100 or more bargaining-unit employees should contact their national business agent. Keep in mind that determining whether an office has more than 100 bargaining-unit employees is different than calculating the workyear designation of a facility. When counting the number of bargaining-unit employees, all craft employees—both career and non-career—are counted. When determining the workyear designation of an office, only career bargaining-unit employees, excluding rural letter carriers, are counted. Therefore, an office may be designated as a less than 100-workyear office for other contractual provisions while having more than 100 bargaining-unit employees as defined in Article 1.

“Branches that need to determine whether a post office has 100 or more bargaining-unit employees should contact their national business agent. Keep in mind that determining whether an office has more than 100 bargaining-unit employees is different than calculating the workyear designation of a facility.”

For cross-craft assignments, Article 7, Sections 2.B and 2.C define the limited circumstances when management is permitted to assign employees to work in another craft.

Article 7, Section 2.B allows management to assign an employee, such as a full- or part-time regular employee, to perform work in another craft if there is insufficient work to maintain their guaranteed hours in their own craft. This section permits management to avoid paying an employee for not working. The language states:

B. In the event of insufficient work on any particular day or days in a full-time or part-time employee’s own scheduled assignment, management may assign the employee to any available work in the same wage level for which the employee is qualified, consistent with the employee’s knowledge and experience, in order to maintain the number of work hours of the employee’s basic work schedule.

Article 7, Section 2.C deals with exceptional workload imbalances. This section permits a cross-craft assignment where one craft has an exceptionally heavy workload while another craft has a light workload. This section states:

C. During exceptionally heavy workload periods for one occupational group, employees in an occupational group experiencing a light workload period may be assigned to work in the same wage level, commensurate with their capabilities, to the heavy workload area for such time as management determines necessary.

A decision by National Arbitrator Richard Bloch in case number A8-W-0656, dated April 7, 1982 (C-04560), addresses these two provisions. Found on page 7-14 of the *JCAM*, Arbitrator Bloch writes:

Taken together, these provisions support the inference that Management’s right to cross craft lines is substantially limited. The exceptions to the requirement of observing the boundaries arise in situations that are not only unusual but also reasonably unforeseeable. There is no reason to find that the parties intended to give Management discretion to schedule across craft lines merely to maximize efficient personnel usage; this is not what the parties have bargained. That an assignment across craft lines might enable Management to avoid overtime in another group for example, is not, by itself, a contractually sound reason. It must be shown either that there was “insufficient work” for the classification or, alternatively, that work was “exceptionally heavy” in one occupational group and light, as well, in another.

Inherent in these two provisions, as indicated above, is the assumption that the qualifying conditions are reasonably unforeseeable or somehow unavoidable. To be sure, Management retains the right to schedule tasks to suit its need on a given day. But the right to do this may not fairly be equated with the opportunity to, in essence, create “insufficient” work through intentionally inadequate staffing. To so hold would be to allow Management to effectively cross craft lines at will merely by scheduling work so as to create the triggering provisions of Subsections B and C. This would be an abuse of the reasonable intent of this language, which exists not to provide means by which the separation of crafts may be routinely ignored but rather to provide the employer with certain limited flexibility in the fact of pressing circumstances.

As Article 3 provides management with the exclusive right to hire and retain employees, it is logical that inadequate staffing does not allow management to circumvent Article 7, Section 2. If a grievance is filed and management takes the position of invoking cross-craft assignments due to inadequate staffing, shop stewards

should be sure to reference Arbitrator Bloch's analysis from the *JCAM*.

Although Article 7, Sections 2.B and 2.C do allow management to make cross-craft assignments in limited circumstances, there is one important exception. Assignments made between the letter carrier craft and the rural carrier craft are prohibited. The memorandum of understanding (MOU) Re: Article 7, 12 and 13 – Cross Craft and Office Size explains that assignments across craft lines would continue as they were under the 1978 National Agreement. Since the rural letter carrier craft was not covered under this agreement, cross-craft assignments between the city and rural carrier crafts are prohibited, except in emergency situations. This is addressed on page 7-16 of the *JCAM*, which states:

Rural Carriers Excluded. Paragraph A of this Memorandum of Understanding (National Agreement page 145) provides that the crossing craft provisions of Article 7.2 (among other provisions) apply only to the crafts covered by the 1978 National Agreement—i.e., letter carrier, clerk, motor vehicle, maintenance, and mail handler. So cross craft assignments may be made between the carrier craft and these other crafts, in either direction, in accordance with Article 7.2. However, rural letter carriers are not included. So cross craft assignments to and from the rural carrier craft may not be made under Article 7.2. They may be made only in emergency situations as explained below.

The Step 4 settlement in case number H90N-4H-C 92041282, dated March 3, 1994 (M-01188), specifically addresses delivery of First-Class and Priority Mail within the boundaries of established city delivery to clerks and special delivery messengers. This settlement states, in part:

During our discussion we mutually agreed that the delivery of first class and priority mail on a route served by a letter carrier is letter carrier work. The propriety of a cross craft assignment can only be determined by the application of Article 7.2.

The MOU Re: Delivery and Collection of Competitive Products, addresses the delivery and collection of products that may fall outside of the normal definition of letters, flats or parcels. This agreement, found on page 167 of the National Agreement, states in relevant part:

The collection and delivery of such products which are to be delivered in city delivery territory, whether during or outside of normal business days and hours, shall be assigned to the city letter carrier craft. The Postal Service will schedule available city letter carrier craft employees in order to comply with the previous sentence. However, the parties recog-

nize that occasionally circumstances may arise where there are no city letter carrier craft employees available. In such circumstances, the Postal Service may assign other employees to deliver such products, but only if such assignment is necessary to meet delivery commitments to our customers.

This non-traditional work includes Sunday parcel delivery, grocery delivery, evening or early morning delivery, and any current or future products delivered or collected within city delivery territory.

“In general, the appropriate remedy when management improperly performs bargaining-unit work or makes a cross-craft assignment is a make-whole remedy involving the payment at the appropriate rate for the work missed to the available, qualified employee who should have performed the work. A cease-and-desist request should always be included to prevent future violations.”

In general, the appropriate remedy when management improperly performs bargaining-unit work or makes a cross-craft assignment is a make-whole remedy involving the payment at the appropriate rate for the work missed to the available, qualified employee who should have performed the work. A cease-and-desist request should always be included to prevent future violations.

When management improperly assigns a city letter carrier to work outside of the craft, the carrier typically is paid at the appropriate rate for the work performed. In this case, a cease-and-desist may be the appropriate remedy without an additional monetary remedy. If the employee or craft is harmed, shop stewards should be sure to document the harm to support the requested remedy.

If you have questions about these or other provisions, speak to your shop steward or branch president.

Monthly CSRS annuity payments for letter carriers who retire on Feb. 1, 2023

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 Feb. 1, 2023. Estimates are computed by using the given high-3 aver-

ages, which are based on the basic pay earned by full-time Step 0 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 : \$68,961			CC Grade 2 / High-3 Average ¹ : \$70,409		
	Basic Annuity	Max. Survivor Deduction ³	Max. Survivor Reduced Annuity ⁴	Basic Annuity	Max. Survivor Deduction ³	Max. Survivor Reduced Annuity ⁴
20	\$2,083	\$186	\$1,897	\$2,127	\$190	\$1,937
21	2,198	197	2,001	2,244	202	2,042
22	2,313	209	2,104	2,362	214	2,148
23	2,428	220	2,208	2,479	225	2,254
24	2,543	232	2,311	2,596	237	2,359
25	2,658	243	2,415	2,714	249	2,465
26	2,773	255	2,518	2,831	261	2,570
27	2,888	266	2,621	2,948	272	2,676
28	3,003	278	2,725	3,066	284	2,782
29	3,118	289	2,828	3,183	296	2,887
30	3,233	301	2,932	3,300	308	2,993
31	3,347	312	3,035	3,418	319	3,098
32	3,462	324	3,139	3,535	331	3,204
33	3,577	335	3,242	3,652	343	3,310
34	3,692	347	3,346	3,770	354	3,415
35	3,807	358	3,449	3,887	366	3,521
36	3,922	370	3,552	4,004	378	3,627
37	4,037	381	3,656	4,122	390	3,732
38	4,152	393	3,759	4,239	401	3,838
39	4,267	404	3,863	4,357	413	3,943
40	4,382	416	3,966	4,474	425	4,049
41	4,497	427	4,070	4,591	437	4,155
41+11 months & over ⁵	4,597	437	4,160	4,694	447	4,247

1. High-3 averages for both grades (formerly levels) are for carriers who have worked full-time on a continuous basis between Feb. 1, 2020, and Jan. 31, 2023, at Step 0 (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 \$523.75 per month if for self plus one (code 323), \$457.82 if for self and family (code 322), or \$223.12 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 CSRS rules, the maximum allowable yearly annuity cannot exceed 80 percent of an annuitant's high-three average. This limit is reached when an annuitant's years of service amount to 41 years and 11 months. Individuals with more than 41 years and 11 months of service will not get a higher annuity based on additional service, but may get slightly more than 80 percent of their high-three average on the basis of unused sick leave accumulated under CSRS.

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

Monthly FERS annuity payments for letter carriers who retire on Feb. 1, 2023

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 Feb. 1, 2023. 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 : \$68,961			CC Grade 2 / High-3 Average ¹ : \$70,409		
	Basic Annuity	Max. Survivor Deduction ³	Max. Survivor Reduced Annuity ⁴	Basic Annuity	Max. Survivor Deduction ³	Max. Survivor Reduced Annuity ⁴
20	\$1,149	\$115	\$1,034	\$1,173	\$117	\$1,056
21	1,207	121	1,086	1,232	123	1,109
22	1,264	126	1,138	1,291	129	1,162
23	1,322	132	1,190	1,349	135	1,215
24	1,379	138	1,241	1,408	141	1,267
25	1,437	144	1,293	1,467	147	1,320
26	1,494	149	1,345	1,526	153	1,373
27	1,552	155	1,396	1,584	158	1,426
28	1,609	161	1,448	1,643	164	1,479
29	1,667	167	1,500	1,702	170	1,531
30	1,724	172	1,552	1,760	176	1,584
31	1,781	178	1,603	1,819	182	1,637
32	1,839	184	1,655	1,878	188	1,690
33	1,896	190	1,707	1,936	194	1,743
34	1,954	195	1,758	1,995	199	1,795
35	2,011	201	1,810	2,054	205	1,848
36	2,069	207	1,862	2,112	211	1,901
37	2,126	213	1,914	2,171	217	1,954
38	2,184	218	1,965	2,230	223	2,007
39	2,241	224	2,017	2,288	229	2,059
40	2,299	230	2,069	2,347	235	2,112
Each additional year ⁵	57.47	5.75	51.72	58.67	5.87	52.81

1. High-three averages for both grades (formerly levels) are for carriers who have worked full-time on a continuous basis between Feb. 1, 2020, and Jan. 31, 2023, 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 \$523.75 per month if for self plus one (code 323), \$457.82 if for self and family (code 322), or \$223.12 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.

October Branch Challenge



Christina Vela Davidson



Brothers and sisters, October was quite a month! The October Branch Challenge was the third and final Branch Challenge of 2022, and it was our most successful challenge since we began hosting them in 2020! Thanks to all of you for your efforts to help MDA Deliver the Cure.

NALC October 2022 Branch Challenge recap:

- More than \$166,000 was raised in October from online donations and events around the country.
- An incredible 67 branches and state associations were actively fundraising that month.
- Nine Branches raised \$13,999 with purely online fundraising campaigns (see list below).
- These branches or state associations embraced online fundraising, each raising more than \$500 online (with special prizes are heading their way):
 1. Minnesota State Association of Letter Carriers
 2. Br. 358, Northeastern New York
 3. Br. 1902, Arizona Merged
 4. Br. 3126, Royal Oak, MI

Please mail NALC Headquarters a copy of any receipts or checks along with a copy of the NALC/MDA allocation so that your branch can be properly recognized. *Also remember, NALC/MDA allocations must be turned in the same calendar year of the event (no later than Dec. 28) in order to qualify for the NALC Honor Roll for that year.*

Locally raised funds *must* be sent to the national MDA office in Chicago:

Muscular Dystrophy Association Inc.
Attn: NALC
P.O. Box 7410354
Chicago, IL 60674-0354

October 2022 Branch Challenge results

Branch	Amount
Minnesota State Association	\$8,453
Branch 358, Northeastern New York	\$3,645
Branch 1902, Arizona Merged	\$837
Branch 3126, Royal Oak, MI	\$604
Team NALC	\$175
Branch 685, Fredericksburg, VA	\$115
Branch 609, Newport News, VA	\$100
Branch 86, Hartford, CT	\$65
Branch 290, Santa Barbara, CA	\$5
Grand Total	\$13,999

Members who have joined the NALC Veteran Group since the publication of the list in the November *Postal Record*:

Aaron J. Osterman of Br. 3
Andre R. Howard of Br. 3
Anthony Selvaggio of Br. 3
Barry W. Eeley of Br. 3
Brian R. Aldinger of Br. 3
Carl Nowakowski of Br. 3
Carl R. Lapadura Jr. of Br. 3
Charles E. Morrison of Br. 3
Charles J. Spiesman of Br. 3
Charles L. Thompson of Br. 3
Chester M. Isaacs III of Br. 3
Christopher M. Ormond of Br. 3
Corey J. Gleeson of Br. 3
Demari L. Robinson of Br. 3
Donald R. Rudzinski of Br. 3
Douglas C. Faircloth of Br. 3
Douglas C. Minter of Br. 3
Douglas C. Wigren of Br. 3
Douglas M. Sentouktsi of Br. 3
Edward E. Getz of Br. 3
Edward F. Lynch of Br. 3
Eric M. Booker of Br. 3
Francis H. Emmerling of Br. 3
Frank E. Konklin of Br. 3
George R. Ramos of Br. 3
Gerald R. Cope of Br. 3
James Tyrrell of Br. 3
James W. Krakowiak of Br. 3
Jeffrey L. Carr of Br. 3
Jeremiah I. Smith of Br. 3
John F. Goodlander of Br. 3

John N. Falkowski of Br. 3
John W. Peterson of Br. 3
Jonathan E. Heimerle Jr. of Br. 3
Joseph Ruisi of Br. 3
Joseph Carmack of Br. 3
Joshua R. Gates of Br. 3
Kenneth A. Manczak of Br. 3
Kenneth P. Lauer of Br. 3
Lawrence A. Fuchs of Br. 3
Mark D. Kratzke of Br. 3
Mark H. Farinacci of Br. 3
Mark R. Decker of Br. 3
Martin M. Zelaski Sr. of Br. 3
Matthew M. Cody of Br. 3
Melvin R. Force of Br. 3
Michael D. McCulloch of Br. 3
Michael J. George of Br. 3
Michael J. McDonald of Br. 3
Natale Nastasi of Br. 3
Paul M. Oczek of Br. 3
Rajah Johnson of Br. 3
Randall M. Baran of Br. 3
Raymond G. Geska of Br. 3
Reeve R. Tower of Br. 3
Richard W. Miller of Br. 3
Robert I. Ross of Br. 3
Robert W. Smith of Br. 3
Ronald C. Miller of Br. 3
Ronald J. Howard of Br. 3
Ronald J. Pawinski Jr. of Br. 3
Salvatore L. Gruttadauria of Br. 3

Thomas M. Walsh Jr. of Br. 3
Thomas Pyszczynski of Br. 3
Tizo C. Maduro of Br. 3
Weston P. Hause of Br. 3
Billy R. Stevens of Br. 5
David A. Miller of Br. 5
Herbert J. Hess of Br. 9
James G. Nemeth of Br. 19
Michael V. Arnold of Br. 39
Kendrick T. Clark of Br. 53
Mitchell McCormack of Br. 53
Steven T. Miller of Br. 53
Tellisha King of Br. 53
Alejandro Jacobo of Br. 70
Justin A. Kieffer of Br. 82
David J. Mansfield of Br. 116
Henry J. Gaspard of Br. 124
Laquita M. Ellison of Br. 129
Eric A. Carrola of Br. 133
John P. Clarke of Br. 133
Kaiser B.I. Santos of Br. 133
Kristi C. King of Br. 133
Michael T. Sipusic of Br. 133
Natalie E. Bolds of Br. 133
Steven P. Labrie of Br. 133
Vernice M. Jackson of Br. 133
Fontarius Fortenberry Jr. of Br. 155
Joseph Fortenberry of Br. 155
Bradley J. Perrou of Br. 187
Creig W. Monohon of Br. 271
Stacy Strait of Br. 271

Anthony L. Tran of Br. 283
David K. Carson of Br. 283
Jose I. Casas III of Br. 283
Kelly Harris of Br. 283
Stephen J. Hoke of Br. 284
Daniel R. Brewer of Br. 323
Curtis G. Hill of Br. 343
Darrin L. Harsh Sr. of Br. 385
Gary L. Peruchetti Jr. of Br. 385
Melina M. Lambert of Br. 407
Kenneth M. Martin of Br. 439
Evin Johnson of Br. 458
John A. Kenning IV of Br. 458
Robyn E. Bradford of Br. 496
William Tyler Jr. of Br. 496
Marcel T. Trice of Br. 529
Demarco C. Caruso of Br. 580
Anthony Anzalone of Br. 661
Joshua D. Diericks of Br. 704
Bryan Kling of Br. 828
Edwin Otero of Br. 869
Zachary A. Pamer of Br. 1091
Linda L. Eagen of Br. 1100
Andrew J. Inlow of Br. 1197
David Cornwell of Br. 1197
Burt T. Krivanec of Br. 1427
Holly A. Purdy of Br. 1539
Anthony E. Galli of Br. 2248
Flimmon B. Frazier of Br. 3126
Marvin E. Zinn of Br. 4723
Anthony Scelso of Br. 6000

NALC Disaster Relief Foundation



Assistant to the President
for Community Services
Christina Vela Davidson

This year, much of the country has been cleaning up, from the derecho and flooding in the Midwest to Hurricane Ian in Florida and the Carolinas, and to Hurricane Fiona in Puerto Rico. In the past few months, the NALC Disaster Relief Foundation (DRF) has assisted at least 45 members in need, and as we can see, the weather is not slowing down. And every time that I hear my computer ding, I pray it is not another member in need, because it is so painful and tragic.

But I work my hardest every day to make sure all members in need receive some form of assistance. What the DRF gives cannot solve everything, but I pray that it helps the member in need. We can't replace what was lost, but I want you to know we are always here for our members and their families.

With so many disasters affecting our members, contributions to the foundation are as important now as ever. Knowing that you contribute to something that directly aids our fellow sisters and brothers in their time of crisis and need is extremely rewarding. Donations of money, rather than of goods, are usually the best way to help, because they are more flexible and can readily be redirected when needs change.

To be able to return to the field was heartwarming and eye-opening. Letting the members know we are here, physically making a difference. Being able to hug our members and shed some tears with them was the highlight of my travels.

The foundation has been set up to function in two ways: by providing hands-on relief and by receiving donations as a means to offer financial grants. With natural disasters increasing in frequency, the DRF is receiving grant applications daily. DRF relief grants can be considered for property damage sustained by a primary residence, vehicle or personal property from a hurricane, flood, tornado, wildfire, earthquake or severe storm. Damage declared by the applicant will be verified by the branch president or a designee. The following are the eligibility criteria that members must understand and follow.

Members must fill out the grant application, which lists all items that members must provide to the DRF if they are an owner or a renter:

5. Items needed for a complete file:

Own: 1. Complete Grant Application 2. Proof of home-ownership or vehicle ownership (if damaged) 3. Clear-cut photos of damaged property (Home [show house address number], vehicle [if damaged], personal) 4. List of items damaged and estimate cost 5. Hotel receipts (if applicable), repair estimates (if available), insurance quotes (if available), Etc. 6. president or designee verification

Rent: 1. Complete Grant Application 2. Clear-cut photos of damaged property (vehicle [if damaged], personal) 3. List of items damaged and estimate cost 4. Renter Insurance quotes (if available) 5. Hotel receipts (if applicable) 6. Copy of deposit on new place (if applicable) 7. President or designee verification

As NALC President Fredric Rolando stated, "We hope that the foundation will become an invaluable lifeline for our sisters and brothers in need, in the true spirit of solidarity."

“With so many disasters affecting our members, contributions to the foundation are as important now as ever. Knowing that you contribute to something that directly aids our fellow sisters and brothers in their time of crisis and need is extremely rewarding.”

Remember, the application for DRF assistance is not an application for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) aid, or any other federal disaster assistance. *Again, please make sure that the grant application and all pictures of the damage are clear, complete and legible.* You can find the DRF grant form at nalc.org under the Community Service tab.

Donations can be sent to NALC Disaster Relief Foundation, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144; or by credit card at nalc.org/ndrfdonate. The foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization; contributions to the DRF may be tax-deductible. It is recommended that you consult your tax advisor. Donations go directly to individual carriers or to branches needing assistance—no administrative costs are deducted.

Brothers and sisters, thank you. Please stay safe and God bless each of you and your families.

OWCP publishes expectations for claimant representatives



Assistant to the President for Workers' Compensation
Kevin Card

The Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA) allows claimants to authorize an individual to represent them in claims with the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP). The implementing regulations for representation are found in 20 CFR, Part 10.700. The regulations state, in part, that:

(a) The claims process under the FECA is informal. Unlike many workers' compensation laws, the employer is not a party to the claim, and OWCP acts as an impartial evaluator of the evidence. Nevertheless, a claimant may appoint one individual to represent

his or her interests, but the appointment must be in writing.

(b) There can be only one representative at any one time, so after one representative has been properly appointed, OWCP will not recognize another individual as representative until the claimant withdraws the authorization of the first individual. In addition, OWCP will recognize only certain types of individuals, however if the representative is an attorney, OWCP may communicate with any member of that attorney's recognized law firm.

(c) A properly appointed representative who is recognized by OWCP may make a request or give direction to OWCP regarding the claims process, including a hearing. This authority includes presenting or eliciting evidence, making arguments on facts or the law, and obtaining information from the case file, to the same extent as the claimant.

A claimant may authorize any individual to represent him or her in regard to a claim under the FECA. Union representatives, defined as any officially sanctioned union official, can provide representation as long as no fee or gratuity is charged.

Earlier this year, OWCP rolled out the Entity program, where attorneys, union representatives and non-attorney representatives can register and claimants can request representation. (See the March 2022 *Postal Record*.) Many NALC branches registered in Entity and are currently representing injured letter carriers. Representing injured letter carriers can be rewarding and frustrating for both claimants and representatives.

On Nov. 7, OWCP published *Expectations for Representatives Appearing Before the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs*, a formal notice of expectations of conduct in the Federal Register. The notice is a formal set of expectations regarding the conduct of representatives who interact with OWCP staff. The intent is to respond to inappropriate behavior on the part of a small percentage of representatives for OWCP claimants.

The notice recognizes that:

[w]hile the vast majority of individuals who interact with Federal workers during the processing of claims do so in an appropriate

manner, there have been recurring instances of improper and abusive conduct directed at OWCP's employees by a small minority of individuals representing parties/claimants.

The notice explains how OWCP strives to treat all claimants and their representatives with courtesy and respect, to prohibit discrimination and/or harassment against their employees, and expects that claimants and their representatives will extend that same courtesy and respect to OWCP employees.

OWCP expects all attorneys and other persons acting on behalf of a claimant to both provide competent assistance to the claimant and recognize OWCP's authority to lawfully administer the process.

The notice then lays out guidelines for representatives regarding OWCP's expectations of affirmative conduct, and specific conduct they find unacceptable, including:

- Disrespectful and obstructive behavior that does not benefit claimants and interferes with proper administration of the claims process.
- Communications with OWCP or other parties or representatives in a threatening or disrespectful manner.
- Conduct that in any manner or by any means, threaten, coerce, intimidate, deceive or knowingly mislead a party/claimant or prospective party/claimant regarding the availability of benefits or other rights under the FECA.

Having represented injured letter carriers for many years, I understand the problems encountered by claimants and their representatives. Unanswered or unreturned phone calls, as well as poorly written claim denials, are frustrating for myself and the claimants I represent.

When OWCP nationalized the claims process a couple of years ago, claims examiner workloads were adjusted and OWCP increased accountability for claims examiners' work. Many senior claims examiners quit, retired or moved to other agencies. That led OWCP to hire 280 new claims examiners in the last year.

As a result, many of those claims examiners are still learning how to do their jobs. OWCP budgets no overtime for its staff, meaning that claims examiners have a lot of work to do in an eight-hour day. Every angry phone call from claimants or their representatives unnecessarily adds to the claims examiners' workload.

NALC members who choose to represent injured letter carriers need to be mindful of how they communicate with OWCP. Always be respectful. Focus your phone calls on asking specific questions rather than on airing complaints.

To improve customer service, the Biden administration recently reached out to the NALC to ask what concerns we had regarding the Entity program. It's refreshing to have an administration that is interested in improving customer service at OWCP.



Branch presidents from Arizona attended a cookout at the Anchorage, AK Branch 4319 union hall while attending the 2022 Committee of Presidents meeting. Pictured (l to r) are NALC Executive Vice President Brian Renfro, NALC Director of Health Benefits Stephanie Stewart, NALC President Fred Rolando, Arizona State President Jeff Clark, Phoenix, AZ Branch 576 President Cynthia Staley and Arizona Merged Branch 1902 President Carlos Villalobos.

Arizona

On Oct. 7, this NALC member since April 14, 1984, achieved his dream and accepted his invitation from the National Association of Letter Carriers to go to the White House to represent Arizona, the NALC and “The Impact of the American Rescue Plan on Arizona.” President Biden is the most pro-worker, pro-union president in history, and the Inflation Reduction Act builds on that legacy.

In relation to the U.S. Postal Service, the Inflation Reduction Act includes \$3 billion for the agency’s vehicle fleet, with \$1.29 billion for purchasing zero-emission delivery vehicles and \$1.71 billion for installing the necessary infrastructure to support the vehicles at USPS facilities nationwide. In the early days of the Biden administration, President Fred Rolando and the NALC lobbied to include a provision in the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to ensure that the Office of Workers’ Compensation Programs (OWCP) approved the Federal Employees’ Compensation Act (FECA) benefit claims of those infected by COVID-19. President Rolando made sure that the provisions for Emergency Sick Leave and Emergency Family Medical Leave would apply to postal employees (Title 39 in the U.S. Code), and not just to non-postal federal employees (Title 5 in the U.S.C.). The NALC worked with staff members of the House Committee on Oversight and Reform, as well as the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee, to ensure that NALC members were covered. On March 11, 2021, Biden signed ARPA into law.

Thank you to everyone at the White House, Kellie McManamon, Julie Rodriguez, Jessica Mejia

for politicians who support your collective-bargaining rights and a strong United States Postal Service, thank you.

Now to those who went out and walked and/or made phone calls for NALC-backed candidates, an even bigger thank you. One thing I’m frequently told each election cycle is that letter carriers make the best precinct walkers. Why? Because you do it every day! There are two close Senate races, Nevada and Arizona, where letter carriers walked and made phone calls on behalf of two of our friends, Sens. Catherine Cortez Masto and Mark Kelly. And as a result, both of them may win reelection and, as a result, keep the Senate in Democratic hands.

Now, for those of you who contributed to the Letter Carrier Political Fund as well as voted for our friends and participated in get-out-the-vote events, you have my vote for all-star. The LCPF paid for retired letter carriers to be on the ground in these battleground states to get our brothers and sisters in union households to vote for our friends. And those efforts paid off handsomely.

If Republicans end up taking control of the House, we need to be vigilant. Last time, they pushed proposal after proposal to tank the USPS and slash your benefits. They succeeded in upping the contribution rate for new employees under the Federal Employees Retirement System to 4.4 percent of their base salary with nothing in return. So, yes, elections have consequences.

The 2022 midterm elections could have turned out a lot worse, so again, many thanks to those who contributed in any way to electing our friends.

Eric Ellis

of the Department of Treasury, Professor and Historian Erika S. Dinkel-Smith (“yes, you are!”), Dr. Ashish Jha, Ambassador Susan E. Rice, Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms, Secretary of the Interior Debra Ann Haaland! Gracias, Kori! Thank you, Mr. B.A. Eddie Davidson! Gracias, El Jefe Renfro! Fred Rolando—love you, man!

In unity—

Jeff Clark

California

As I write this, control of both the House and Senate is still undecided. Most of our Democratic and Republican friends in both chambers won reelection. Did you vote? If you voted

Kentucky

Post-midterm elections, KYSALC and NALC will continue to lobby our congressmen and senators for our legislation. Our legislation appeals to all because we are nonpartisan. We want a strong and efficient USPS. This benefits our customers, who are also voters who elect the federal legislators. Kentuckians now more than ever trust and utilize U.S. Mail.

We do have one new U.S. representative, Morgan McGarvey. He succeeded John Yarmuth in KY-3, and supports us. John retired. He was an honorary member of Branch 14, Falls City Branch, Louisville.

While we need to get all new PTFs and CCAs to join NALC immediately, we have some veteran carriers who are getting a free ride. They either are not members of this great union, or do not give to the Letter Carrier Political Fund. With a new 1.3 percent general wage increase, and a new career Step P, which is \$444 greater than Step O, there can be no excuse for not donating. Members of all ages benefit from union membership. New members can learn ways to be safe and efficient in the job. Older carriers can be like old dogs that learn new tricks. Paying union dues is “job insurance,” and so is giving voluntarily to LCPF.

Happy holidays to all and their loved ones. Contact your state officers if you have a question or need assistance. NALC is there for all of us.

Bob McNulty

Please note:
There will be no Branch Items, State Summaries or Retiree Reports in the February 2023 Postal Record. That edition will be the special annual tribute issue honoring contributors to LCPF during 2022.

Retiree Reports

Centennial, Colorado

November was the month to honor and celebrate those men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice to defend our freedoms. Thank you, veterans, for allowing us to live in the best democracy on this planet. It is also the month that our political elections are decided and a new leadership has been selected. This was my sixth election as a ballot security judge and, although challenging, it makes me proud to be part of such a vital part of our democracy. Being an all-mail-in ballot state allows all registered voters the luxury of being able to research issues before making decisions that will have an impact on our future.

I attended our last monthly branch meeting and was astonished to learn that letter carriers are having such a difficult time obtaining uniform pieces. Between rising costs and uniform vendors consolidating, the uniform allowance is not able to keep up with the needs of carriers. And to make matters worse, if the allowance is not used, the Postal Service does not get that money back. My advice to all carriers is to use the money given to you to add needed clothing pieces, or subsidize your CCAs for their first few years. Let's work together to make each other look good as we represent USPS.

Also discussed was the safety concerns regarding assaults of letter carriers. At the national convention, this was a topic brought to the attention of our leaders. Delivery happens in all kinds of environments, but everyone who goes to work in the morning expects to return home in the same condition. So take the time to look around and make sure you are safe to make that delivery.

Let's make this holiday season shine!
In unity—

Barb Larson, Branch 5996

New Orleans, Louisiana

Retirement is the enemy of longevity."
—Dr. Howard Tucker, world's oldest practicing physician

Just when one is ready to give up on America, Amer-I-Cans come through for democracy. So Fred Rolando can maybe take partial credit with the slogan, "I'm voting for democracy in 2022." Round One goes to democracy; however, it ain't over yet. Voting does matter, as we will see in December in Georgia.

The Equal COLA Act will be considered in next year's legislative session, along with the unfair Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO). It ain't no secret which political party is going to be resistant to returning our money that, frankly, is being stolen. Retirees who retire under FERS have 1 percent less than CSRS retirees, which is just not right. Stay tuned and vote.

Health Benefit Plan representative Ronnie Torregano was present at the last retirees meeting to give us an overall view of the benefits that we have earned as it relates to our health benefits. We had a decent turnout, and Ronnie gave us some pertinent information to consider in the upcoming Open Season. Thanks, Ronnie.

Our annual Christmas party will take place on Dec. 14 at 12 p.m. Come out and have fellow-

ship with your fellow retirees at the union hall at 4200 Elysian Fields. Hope to see you there.

VIA—Victory is assured with participation in the union and political process.

Happy holidays, merry Christmas, happy Kwanzaa and a prosperous 2023. See ya!

Stanley L. Taylor, Branch 124

Paterson, New Jersey

At our 72nd Biennial National Convention, which took place Aug. 8-12 at McCormick Place in Chicago, IL, we were delighted to see a friend of Branch 120, Bruce Diriksen, nominated to National Association of Letter Carriers Region 15 as national business agent.

We at Branch 120 have known Bruce for many years now, and he has been very supportive of our branch by attending various functions, events and installations. At one time, Branch 120 was under the impression that this should have taken place long ago under the direction of our past national president, Bill Young. During those years we expected that our current NBA, Larry Cirelli, with his vast knowledge and expertise of computer skills, would have been shipped to Washington a long time ago.

As the saying goes, good things sure take their time. We wish Larry many retirement years of enjoyment, great health and happiness in the future. We just wish that our ol' friend Jules Cohen was here to see and hear a co-worker of his was nominated. We miss that guy! Goodbye, Larry; welcome, Bruce!

Joseph Murone, Branch 120

Election Notices

Burlington, North Carolina

This is official notice to inform all active and retired members of Branch 2262 that nominations for delegates to the spring seminar in Wilmington March 24-25, 2023, will be held at the regular stated monthly branch meeting on Jan. 17, and election of delegates will be held at the regular stated monthly branch meeting on Feb. 21 if needed. Election will be by secret ballot.

Mark Bare, Pres., Br. 2262

Danville, Virginia

This is to serve as the official notice to all members of Branch 595 of the nominations and elections of branch officers.

Nominations will be held at our regular branch meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 14, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. Candidates must accept nominations at the time made or, if absent, in writing. Candidates may accept nominations for only one office.

Nominations will be held for the following branch offices: president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, sergeant-at-arms, health benefits representative and three trustees. The terms of office will be for two years, beginning April 1. The candidates elected president, vice president, secretary and treasurer, by virtue of their office shall be automatic delegates to the national and state conventions during their term.

The election will be conducted by secret ballot at the regular branch meeting on Tuesday, March 14, at 6:30 p.m. Any member who, for any reason, will be un-

able to vote on March 14 may obtain an absentee ballot by writing to: Election Committee, NALC Branch 595, P.O. Box 10595, Danville, VA 24543. Requests for absentee ballots must be received by the election committee no later than Feb. 28. Write-in votes are not permitted.

David Robertson, Pres., Br. 595

Greenwood, Indiana

Branch 2421 approved for dispensation on Nov. 8 from President Rolando regarding Article 9, Sec. 1 of the NALC Constitution and nomination for delegates for the upcoming 2023 Indiana state convention.

All branch members and retirees will be notified in *The Postal Record* and by mail of nominations to be held at a special union meeting on Thursday, Dec. 15.

Election for delegates to the Indiana state convention will be held at the regular union meeting on Feb. 16.

Jennifer Fleming, Pres., Br. 2421

Kalispell, Montana

This serves as the official notice to members of Branch 948 for the nominations and elections for the following positions: president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, sergeant-at-arms, health benefits representative and all trustees.

Nominations were held at the regular monthly meeting starting at 7:30 p.m. on Dec. 13 at The Roadhouse, 2205 U.S. Hwy. 93 South, Kalispell.

Elections will be held at the same

time and location at the regular monthly meeting on Jan. 10, 2023.

Julie Quilliam, Pres., MTSALC

Longview, Washington

This is official notice to all members of Branch 2214 that nominations for all branch officers and convention delegates took place at our regular October and November meetings. Elections will be by secret ballot and will be held on the day of our December meeting.

Any member unable to vote during the regular December meeting may request in writing an absentee ballot. Absentee ballots must be requested after nominations have been opened, but at least three weeks before elections.

The polls will be open during the regular December meeting, and the ballots will be counted immediately following the regular meeting in December.

Wesley Manning, Rec. Sec., Br. 2214

Mentor, Ohio

This is an official notice to all members of Branch 4195. We will accept nominations for branch officers at the regular Jan. 12, 2023, union meeting.

Franklin Leonard, Pres., Br. 4195

Northern Virginia

Due notice is hereby given to all members of Branch 3520 of nominations and election of all elected officers for the term of office 2023-2025.

Nomination will take place at the reg-

ular meeting of the branch scheduled for Thursday, Feb. 9, 2023, at 7:20 p.m. at the Motel 6, Governor Room, 6654 Arlington Blvd., Falls Church (subject to COVID-19 restrictions).

Written acceptance of nomination must be received by the branch secretary-treasurer no later than 5 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 10, 2023, of those candidates nominated for office. This provision will be waived if a candidate has been unavoidably detained.

To be valid, ballots must be received at the post office box, rented for election purposes, no later than 10 a.m. on March 9, 2023. Election results will be announced at the regular branch meeting on Thursday, March 9, 2023.

Officers to be nominated are: president, vice president, secretary-treasurer, sergeant-at-arms, health and insurance representative and six trustees.

Brian Congleton, Sec.-Treas., Br. 3520

Palatine, Illinois

In accordance with the NALC Constitution and the branch bylaws, this is official notice to all members of Branch 4268 that nominations for branch delegates to the state convention in 2023 in Oak Brook, one treasurer and two trustees will be accepted from the floor at our regular branch meeting on Feb. 8, 2023, which starts at 6:30 p.m.

If an election is necessary, the voting will be by secret ballot via mail and announced at the April 12 meeting.

Mary Houman, Sec., Br. 4268

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*.



Additionally, the national secretary-treasurer's office handles

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.

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

75-year pins

Thomas F. Walsh	Rockford, IL	Br. 245
John S. Williams	Central CA Coast	Br. 52

65-year pins

Clair H. Deitering	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Hugh R. Cobb	Columbus, GA	Br. 546
James L. Cotter	Wichita, KS	Br. 201
Paul E. Bernard	Hagerstown, MD	Br. 443
Edward T. Fitzgerald	Western MA	Br. 46
Harry C. Kipfmiller	Ann Arbor, MI	Br. 434
William E. Heath	South Macomb, MI	Br. 4374
Robert J. Lacroix	South Macomb, MI	Br. 4374
Dwayne L. Everly	Marion, OH	Br. 280
Frank T. Lewandowski	Milwaukee, WI	Br. 2
Robert H. Zarder	Milwaukee, WI	Br. 2

60-year pins

Harry E. Mason	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Eugene A. Morales	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Lee M. Barry	Central CA Coast	Br. 52
David D. Longstaff	Central CA Coast	Br. 52
James A. Bussey Jr.	Columbus, GA	Br. 546
James B. Simmons	Columbus, GA	Br. 546
Albert T. Aiello	S. Suburban Mgd., IL	Br. 4016
Charles M. Buck	S. Suburban Mgd., IL	Br. 4016
Gerald L. Latimore	S. Suburban Mgd., IL	Br. 4016
Robert L. Barrow	Wichita, KS	Br. 201
Laverne R. Moss	Wichita, KS	Br. 201
Gary A. Nichols	Wichita, KS	Br. 201
Ronald D. Hollis	Baltimore, MD	Br. 176
Charles S. Brown	Western MA	Br. 46
William A. Helin	Western MA	Br. 46
David R. Adams	Ann Arbor, MI	Br. 434
Leon D. Hieber	Ann Arbor, MI	Br. 434
Patrick G. Murphy	Ann Arbor, MI	Br. 434
Robert P. Smith	Ann Arbor, MI	Br. 434
Donald C. White	Ann Arbor, MI	Br. 434
Gary A. Schroeder	Saginaw, MI	Br. 74
Robert Gonda	South Macomb, MI	Br. 4374
Gerald S. Gortat	South Macomb, MI	Br. 4374
Michael J. Lentine	South Macomb, MI	Br. 4374
Richard L. Morisset	South Macomb, MI	Br. 4374
Joseph F. Rey	South Macomb, MI	Br. 4374
Floyd R. Fehl	Duluth, MN	Br. 114
William H. Vance	New Jersey Mgd.	Br. 38
Lyman E. Baker	Binghamton, NY	Br. 333
Charles E. Little	Binghamton, NY	Br. 333
Donald D. Dodds	Marion, OH	Br. 280
Raymond A. Baril	Pawtucket, RI	Br. 55
Harold D. Dillon Jr.	Pawtucket, RI	Br. 55
Albert E. Gauthier	Pawtucket, RI	Br. 55
Norbert A. Balsewicz	Milwaukee, WI	Br. 2

55-year pins

Carmine P. Chester	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Arthur D. Martinez Jr.	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Ramon S. Vega	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Gerald E. Silacci	Central CA Coast	Br. 52
Nick D. Basirico	Fort Lauderdale, FL	Br. 2550
Robert A. Brave	Fort Lauderdale, FL	Br. 2550
Charles S. Elledge	Columbus, GA	Br. 546
William F. Hinson	Columbus, GA	Br. 546
Billy J. Jordan	Columbus, GA	Br. 546
Lonnie E. Whitten	Columbus, GA	Br. 546
Charlie W. Black	Gainesville, GA	Br. 1441
Leon W. Swindle	Gainesville, GA	Br. 1441
Joanne M. Behrens	S. Suburban Mgd., IL	Br. 4016
Rex B. Rackouski	S. Suburban Mgd., IL	Br. 4016
James P. Richter	S. Suburban Mgd., IL	Br. 4016
Joseph F. Broz	Wichita, KS	Br. 201
Lawrence A. Erker	Wichita, KS	Br. 201
Robert D. Lawrence	Wichita, KS	Br. 201
Richard W. Warren	Wichita, KS	Br. 201
Thomas R. Bemish	MA Northeast Mgd.	Br. 25
Thomas G. Sheedy	Western MA	Br. 46
Franklin D. Baldwin	Ann Arbor, MI	Br. 434
Daniel L. Briggs	Ann Arbor, MI	Br. 434
Harold R. Ceronsky	Ann Arbor, MI	Br. 434
William A. Dawson	Ann Arbor, MI	Br. 434
Jon T. Ehnis	Ann Arbor, MI	Br. 434
James M. McCleery	Ann Arbor, MI	Br. 434
William J. Royce	Ann Arbor, MI	Br. 434
James E. Sadler	Ann Arbor, MI	Br. 434
Richard D. Sadler	Ann Arbor, MI	Br. 434
Robert P. Smith	Ann Arbor, MI	Br. 434
Joann M. Thiel	Saginaw, MI	Br. 74
Chas F. Veitengruber	Saginaw, MI	Br. 74
Kenneth A. Johnson	South Macomb, MI	Br. 4374
Tom A. Parsons	South Macomb, MI	Br. 4374
Richard J. Ryan	South Macomb, MI	Br. 4374
Louis V. Visconti	South Macomb, MI	Br. 4374
Richard E. Moran	New Jersey Mgd.	Br. 38
William H. Vance	New Jersey Mgd.	Br. 38
Lyman E. Baker	Binghamton, NY	Br. 333
Jack E. Barton	Binghamton, NY	Br. 333
Paul W. Monska Jr.	Binghamton, NY	Br. 333
Lewis W. Redolphy	Binghamton, NY	Br. 333
David J. Riker	Binghamton, NY	Br. 333
Joseph T. Scaglione Jr.	Binghamton, NY	Br. 333
Frank E. Sczepanski	Binghamton, NY	Br. 333
Walter Utyro	Binghamton, NY	Br. 333
George Watkins	Binghamton, NY	Br. 333
Forrest E. Mccune	Marion, OH	Br. 280
Robert L. Pitchford	Marion, OH	Br. 280
Everett E. Domenici	Pawtucket, RI	Br. 55
Lynn R. Noonan	Milwaukee, WI	Br. 2
Wayne L. Sargent	Beloit, WI	Br. 715

50-year pins

James Alexander	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Ricardo Gonzales	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704

Arthur A. Macomber Jr.	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Lynn W. Munroe	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Peter G. Siqueiros	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Linda H. Wallace	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Cleveland Foreman	Fort Lauderdale, FL	Br. 2550
Jerry S. Hill	Fort Lauderdale, FL	Br. 2550
Claudia A. Hoffman	Fort Lauderdale, FL	Br. 2550
Martin H. Ireland	Fort Lauderdale, FL	Br. 2550
Andrew L. Jenkins	Fort Lauderdale, FL	Br. 2550
Richard R. Ketcham	Fort Lauderdale, FL	Br. 2550
Earl S. Kurtz	Fort Lauderdale, FL	Br. 2550
Alfred T. Migneco Jr.	Fort Lauderdale, FL	Br. 2550
John W. Petersen	Fort Lauderdale, FL	Br. 2550
Clement A. Puleo Jr.	Fort Lauderdale, FL	Br. 2550
Terry J. Randall	Fort Lauderdale, FL	Br. 2550
Bruce M. Simpson Jr.	Fort Lauderdale, FL	Br. 2550
Vincent J. Mastrogiacomio	W. Palm Beach, FL	Br. 1690
Albert Brooks	Columbus, GA	Br. 546
Michael S. Hall	Columbus, GA	Br. 546
Theodore Strange	Columbus, GA	Br. 546
James T. Strickland	Columbus, GA	Br. 546
Derrell L. Corn	Gainesville, GA	Br. 1441
Willie L. Hughley	Gainesville, GA	Br. 1441
Gerald M. Miklavcic	Gainesville, GA	Br. 1441
Harold W. Pass	Gainesville, GA	Br. 1441
Franklin E. Thompson	Gainesville, GA	Br. 1441
Russell A. Langston	Rome, GA	Br. 536
George W. Long	Rome, GA	Br. 536
John R. Abernathy Jr.	Ottawa, IL	Br. 316
Gilbert W. Bromberek	S. Suburban Mgd., IL	Br. 4016
Stephen L. Baker	Indianapolis, IN	Br. 39
Joseph E. Buckman	Clinton, IA	Br. 126
Moler A. Duff	Clinton, IA	Br. 126
John F. Goos	Clinton, IA	Br. 126
Michael D. Haan	Clinton, IA	Br. 126
Richard L. Peryman	Clinton, IA	Br. 126
Joseph H. Avonti	Western MA	Br. 46
William J. Byrnes III	Western MA	Br. 46
Anthony J. Bys	Western MA	Br. 46
Michael J. Carpentier	Ann Arbor, MI	Br. 434
Donald F. Kruger	Ann Arbor, MI	Br. 434
Steven J. Linton	Ann Arbor, MI	Br. 434
Paul A. Peterson	Ann Arbor, MI	Br. 434
Paul D. Phillips	Ann Arbor, MI	Br. 434
Thomas J. Scibor	Ann Arbor, MI	Br. 434
Adele Sowinski	Ann Arbor, MI	Br. 434
Larry Sparkling	Ann Arbor, MI	Br. 434
Sharon L. Canute	Saginaw, MI	Br. 74
Gary E. Bush	Binghamton, NY	Br. 333
James A. Muller	Flushing, NY	Br. 294
Gregory S. Beretics	Canton, OH	Br. 238
Richard L. Killian	Canton, OH	Br. 238
Thomas G. Collins	Pawtucket, RI	Br. 55
George M. Anderson	Richmond, VA	Br. 496
Wade A. Brown	Richmond, VA	Br. 496
Robert L. Jones	Richmond, VA	Br. 496
Danny L. Austreng	Sheboygan, WI	Br. 102

Nalcrest Update



From the Trustees

It's that time of year again at Nalcrest when things start to jump! The place is starting to fill up again, and neighbors are getting reacquainted. You have to get up a little earlier to get into the exercise room and get the equipment you want to work out on, but nobody complains because they're used to getting up early! The good fishing spots are seeing more action, too, and there is sometimes a wait for the tennis courts. The good part is that nobody complains. The horseshoe pits are always active, as are the bocce ball courts. There is plenty to do and plenty of friends and neighbors to do it with.

Nalcrest hosts a "welcome home" and Veterans Day picnic every year, which serves as the unofficial start of the season for everyone. Nalcrest provides the food and the ladies' club supplies the entertainment. Annually, this is one of the most heavily attended events outside of the Christmas parade and lighting ceremony, which has nearly the entire community involved in some manner. The parade of decorated golf

Apply to live at Nalcrest

For an application to live at Nalcrest, visit nalc.org/nalcrest, call 863-696-1121 or fax 863-696-3333.

Nalcrest Trustees

NALC President Fredric Rolando

NALC Secretary-Treasurer Nicole Rhine

NALC Director of Retired Members Dan Toth

NALC Trustee Mack I. Julion

Nalcrest Trustees President Matty Rose

Nalcrest Trustees Vice President Tom Young

Nalcrest Trustees Vice President Don Southern

carts, bicycles, vehicles, motorcycles and fire trucks that circles around the entire community is an awesome sight to see, and brings out the talent in all of our residents.

The men's and ladies' softball teams are also back in action at the well-groomed softball field, which will host international teams periodically. Softball games are always well attended, and refreshments are served, setting the scene for many pleasant and exciting afternoons!

If you haven't checked out Nalcrest as a

place to spend your retirement years, you might want to before your retirement days are upon you. Very inexpensive units are available on a temporary basis to allow you to experience Nalcrest for yourself. Contact Nalcrest personnel at 863-696-1121 to obtain the information you will need.

The Nalcrest trustees and staff want to wish everyone a wonderful holiday season and a very happy new year!

Don Southern

Annual Nalcrest Halloween food drive



Nalcrest held a Halloween food drive, which was organized by resident Bruce McDowell. Volunteers were Lois Zellmann, Mike Papp, Jeff and Jan McConnell, Bob and Juanita Bannon, Jerry Bedillion and Charles Ellis. Residents left donations outside their doors, and volunteers came by via golf carts to pick them up. A total of 862 pounds of food was collected for a local care center.

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

Joshua Wasson	Br. 1902	AZ Mgd.	Kenneth E. Towne	Br. 92	ME Mgd.	Neil J. Heffernan	Br. 29	Albany, NY
Jon Shears	Br. 576	Phoenix, AZ	James C. Newcomb Jr.	Br. 1050	Cambridge, MD	Czsar Lewis	Br. 29	Albany, NY
Brian A. Clark	Br. 543	Hot Spgs. Natl. Park, AR	Vanessa N. Rivers	Br. 2611	Silver Spring, MD	Lewis W. Redolphy	Br. 333	Binghamton, NY
Norman K. Finney	Br. 3745	N. Little Rock, AR	Reynald F. Boisvert	Br. 34	Boston, MA	Kenneth E. Dukarm	Br. 3	Buffalo-Western NY
John T. Kauffeld	Br. 3671	Springdale, AR	Lawrence N. Burnett	Br. 34	Boston, MA	Thomas H. May	Br. 3	Buffalo-Western NY
Melvin R. Rose	Br. 348	Eureka, CA	Harold F. Conley	Br. 34	Boston, MA	George C. Tadt Jr.	Br. 3	Buffalo-Western NY
John E. Johnson	Br. 1111	Greater E. Bay, CA	Donald F. Cuddyer	Br. 34	Boston, MA	Jules Klein	Br. 357	Long Island City, NY
David M. Lory	Br. 1111	Greater E. Bay, CA	James W. Davis	Br. 34	Boston, MA	Anthony J. Barletto	Br. 36	New York, NY
C. W. McClure	Br. 1100	Garden Grove, CA	Michael A. Day	Br. 34	Boston, MA	Herbert Rosenberg	Br. 36	New York, NY
Charles E. Reilly Jr.	Br. 1100	Garden Grove, CA	A. T. Doyle	Br. 34	Boston, MA	Houssein Salameh	Br. 36	New York, NY
Charles Valverde	Br. 1100	Garden Grove, CA	George E. Flynn Jr.	Br. 34	Boston, MA	Jerry Legorius	Br. 358	Northeastern NY
Gary D. Lynk Jr.	Br. 4149	Palm Springs, CA	Chalres J. Innis Jr.	Br. 34	Boston, MA	Jim A. De Carr	Br. 134	Syracuse, NY
Richard F. Carnahan	Br. 2200	Pasadena, CA	George J. Knox	Br. 34	Boston, MA	Anthony T. Joaquin	Br. 134	Syracuse, NY
Victor L. Bartholomew	Br. 133	Sacramento, CA	Robert C. Lowe	Br. 34	Boston, MA	James A. Perrotti	Br. 134	Syracuse, NY
Ralph A. Alessandra	Br. 70	San Diego, CA	Joseph F. Macaluso	Br. 34	Boston, MA	Vincent P. Di Taranto	Br. 693	Westchester Mgd., NY
Jack T. Dusthimer	Br. 193	San Jose, CA	Edward J. McCauley	Br. 34	Boston, MA	Vincent P. DiBernardino	Br. 693	Westchester Mgd., NY
Verner G. Wilhite	Br. 2902	Tri-Valley, CA	Robert E. McKeon	Br. 34	Boston, MA	Peter Monteleone	Br. 693	Westchester Mgd., NY
Dale D. Peters	Br. 5996	Centennial, CO	Louis R. Moore	Br. 34	Boston, MA	Thomas Valko	Br. 693	Westchester Mgd., NY
Robert Clay	Br. 20	CT Mgd.	William E. Moran	Br. 34	Boston, MA	Richard B. Sintic	Br. 40	Cleveland, OH
Edward J. Delaney	Br. 20	CT Mgd.	Angelo F. Paglia	Br. 34	Boston, MA	Anna M. Tamburro	Br. 40	Cleveland, OH
Julius J. Autunno	Br. 86	Hartford, CT	Andrew J. Puccino	Br. 34	Boston, MA	Suzanne K. Letner	Br. 182	Dayton, OH
Wallace H. Johnson	Br. 86	Hartford, CT	Angelo J. Scanzillo	Br. 34	Boston, MA	Albert W. Shock	Br. 182	Dayton, OH
Edward J. Kalentkowski	Br. 86	Hartford, CT	Thomas J. Sheridan	Br. 34	Boston, MA	Gerald A. Hawk	Br. 118	Mansfield, OH
O. C. Killens	Br. 86	Hartford, CT	Charles E. Wellington Jr.	Br. 34	Boston, MA	Walter R. Ashmore	Br. 385	Youngstown, OH
Albert W. Macmonegle	Br. 86	Hartford, CT	William E. Demand	Br. 25	MA Northeast Mgd.	Michael R. McClafferty	Br. 82	Portland, OR
Raymond D. Pape	Br. 86	Hartford, CT	R. G. Dichard	Br. 25	MA Northeast Mgd.	Robert Steirer Jr.	Br. 254	Bethlehem, PA
Victor E. Preissner	Br. 86	Hartford, CT	A. J. Lonergeran	Br. 25	MA Northeast Mgd.	George J. Baran	Br. 284	Erie, PA
Denny G. Varney	Br. 86	Hartford, CT	John J. Doolin	Br. 46	Western MA	William E. Yezzi	Br. 284	Erie, PA
John M. Gardner Jr.	Br. 2550	Fort Lauderdale, FL	Robert M. Mast	Br. 434	Ann Arbor, MI	Thomas J. Doherty	Br. 157	Philadelphia, PA
Max Baez	Br. 1477	West Coast FL	Gary D. MacDermid	Br. 3126	Royal Oak, MI	Carlos Cartagena	Br. 869	San Juan, PR
Wayne H. Moore	Br. 1477	West Coast FL	Donald N. Elliott	Br. 74	Saginaw, MI	Theodore Moskala	Br. 57	Newport, RI
James R. Hendersson	Br. 546	Columbus, GA	Lucile A. Ruonavaara	Br. 74	Saginaw, MI	Eugene A. Faminglietti	Br. 15	Providence, RI
Joseph Brown	Br. 11	Chicago, IL	Raelene M. Butkovich	Br. 4374	South Macomb, MI	William J. Nichols	Br. 15	Providence, RI
Leroy J. Harper	Br. 11	Chicago, IL	Samuel J. DeGeorge	Br. 4374	South Macomb, MI	Richard A. Oulousian	Br. 15	Providence, RI
James B. Johnson	Br. 11	Chicago, IL	Linda D. Hanley	Br. 4374	South Macomb, MI	Burnan B. Decker	Br. 27	Memphis, TN
Willie J. McMurray	Br. 11	Chicago, IL	Stephen Cody	Br. 9	Minneapolis, MN	Todd D. Parker	Br. 4210	Selmer, TN
Myrna J. Paige	Br. 11	Chicago, IL	Eugene R. Keyes	Br. 9	Minneapolis, MN	Gail D. Quine	Br. 1037	Amarillo, TX
Shabron D. Robinson	Br. 11	Chicago, IL	Gerald L. Brown	Br. 2202	Pontotoc, MS	C. L. Bray	Br. 132	Dallas, TX
Bernard S. Salone	Br. 11	Chicago, IL	Christophe M. Grafton	Br. 30	Kansas City, MO	Gary K. Holman	Br. 132	Dallas, TX
William J. Igoe	Br. 608	Oak Park, IL	Herman R. Ladner Jr.	Br. 30	Kansas City, MO	Ketia L. Thompson	Br. 132	Dallas, TX
Joseph F. Nunez	Br. 245	Rockford, IL	Armand E. Fitts	Br. 44	NH Mgd.	Ora N. Gray	Br. 283	Houston, TX
Stephen E. Kavich	Br. 4739	Wheeling, IL	J. M. Johnson Sr.	Br. 44	NH Mgd.	Kevin W. Ligon	Br. 283	Houston, TX
Tommy L. Fish	Br. 377	Evansville, IN	Gerald O. Philbrick	Br. 161	Portsmouth, NH	Frank G. Newsom	Br. 1227	Wichita Falls, TX
Bernard A. Stammis	Br. 580	Hammond, IN	George W. Carmelia	Br. 540	Camden, NJ Mgd.	Keith W. Guernsey	Br. 111	Salt Lake City, UT
Wallace C. Wisnieski	Br. 200	La Porte, IN	George D. Hutnick	Br. 924	Freehold, NJ	Charles H. Sargent	Br. 521	Burlington, VT
Thomas C. Allen	Br. 10	Topeka, KS	Rahn Barnes	Br. 2876	Linden, NJ	Waverl D. Clark	Br. 247	Tidewater VA
Robert S. Curneil	Br. 92	ME Mgd.	Samuel D. Pantoja	Br. 989	Santa Fe, NM	Henry H. Scites	Br. 359	Huntington, WV

Join the NALC Veterans Group

The NALC Veterans Group is designed to provide NALC members—both active and retired letter carriers—who are also military veterans the ability to connect with fellow NALC veterans and stay informed on issues of importance to letter carrier veterans. It is free to join.

Members receive a pin as a symbol of gratitude for your military service and membership in NALC.

If you are interested in joining the group, complete the sign-up card at right and mail it to the address included. A fillable version is also available at nalc.org/veterans.



You continue to serve your country—
THANK YOU!

NALC Veterans Group

Complete this form and mail it to:
NALC Veterans Group, c/o NALC,
100 Indiana Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20001-2144

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____

NALC BRANCH NUMBER: _____ BRANCH OF SERVICE: _____

I BELONG TO THE FOLLOWING VETERAN GROUP(S):

AMERICAN LEGION DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
 OTHER: _____

Free
to join

Branch Items

Albany, New York

As the dismal staffing continues in upstate New York with daily reports of full routes not delivered and forced overtime over contractual limits, carriers have sought out their doctor to help mediate the wear and tear on their bodies. Their doctor recommends less stress and less work. The doctor writes up a recommendation of working no more than 60 hours a week.

You would think a carrier willing to work a full 60 hours a week would be treated with some decency. Instead, they receive a letter in the mail from management that their medical documentation is not *ELM*-compliant. They need to provide new documentation within five days or else their restrictions will no longer be honored. Management never explains what “*ELM*-compliant” means, because they want you to work 14 hours a day, seven days a week until you break.

The *ELM* is available on nalc.org under “Workplace Resources.” Management often cites Section 513.364, which states: “The documentation should provide an explanation of the nature of the employee’s illness or injury sufficient to indicate to management that the employee was (or will be) unable to perform his or her normal duties for the period of absence.” Normally, medical statements such as “under my care” or “received treatment” are not acceptable evidence of incapacitation to perform duties.

Bring this language to your doctor. Ask them to write something like, “My patient is suffering from a serious medical disease that I have diagnosed, which affects their ability to work long, continuous periods and they are currently receiving medically appropriate treatment. They will be unable to work more than 10 hours a day, and/or six days in a week. This will continue for at least one calendar year from today, with the possibility of continuing past that.”

Norris Beswick, Branch 29

Anchorage, Alaska

I am closing in on being retired for one year. I haven’t regretted my decision and feel confident it was the right time. I still help out with the union, but on my schedule. It’s still rewarding and it gives me comfort that the branch continues to perform very well and at a high level of service to its members, which is a good thing because the Postal Service still is unable to comply with the contract and the branch holds them accountable.

The grievance report read at each meeting still astounds me to this day. There are tens of thousands of dollars in grievance payments each month, yet not one supervisor/manager is held accountable. Carriers are still working a tremendous amount of overtime even with a 50 percent increase in staffing. How is it possible that supervisors are given 50 percent more staffing, yet carriers are still being forced to work mandatory overtime on a daily basis and on their days off? Many of you have seen firsthand the incompetence on the workroom floor. I’ve found most of this is driven by upper management. Managers who sit in the ivory towers and make decisions that are unrealistic. They believe you can deliver 10 hours’ worth of work in eight hours and threaten carriers with disci-

pline when they don’t perform to unrealistic workloads.

Fortunately, our stewards are trained on how to represent carriers who are placed in this situation. And they are very good at what they do. I don’t recall a time a carrier who has been disciplined for their performance and it stuck. Management’s case is built up on assumptions, not facts. It’s comforting to know that in retirement, our members continue to receive the very best representation that our branch is known for. And management hasn’t gotten any smarter.

Jim Raymond, Branch 4319



Toms River, NJ Br. 2128 presented two retired carriers with 65-year pins. Pictured (l to r) are Branch President Ray Gianotti, pin recipients Cliff Vaughn and Joe Ranoff, Branch Secretary Ed Sedillo and Branch 1st Vice President Bob Ernst.

Atlanta, Georgia

Attention: all Branch 73 members.

The branch will return to in-person meetings Jan. 12, 2023.

Zoom meetings will still be an option until further notice.

Any questions, please call the union office at 404-284-4222.

Regal Phillips, Branch 73

Camden, New Jersey Merged

This may not sound like anything new, but management can’t get their act together. They keep repeating the same mistakes. I’m not even sure if you can call them mistakes anymore. None of the offices in our branch have any combination routes, yet instead of giving the office or street time to the appropriate route, management continues to instruct carriers to clock onto 737 time. We filed these grievances last year when management brought the carriers in early for parcel runs. We won these grievances, and now my postmaster is telling us they are doing it again this year.

Camden management can’t even get it together enough to have a functioning Article 15 process. It’s gotten so bad, the DRT mandated a meeting between the local parties, the DRT, the NBA and the area’s DRT lead. This meeting (I’m not confident it’s ever going to happen) will be a complete waste of time. The purpose of the meeting is to see where the breakdown is in our installation’s Article 15 process. We don’t need a meeting for this. It’s simple: Management is the problem. They just don’t care, and it shows in their lack of participation in the grievance

procedure. All we need is for local management to do their job. I won’t hold my breath.

Branch 540 says thank you, President Fred Rolando! Thank you for your stewardship and guidance over the last 14 years. You lead us through the most tumultuous times our union has faced since the Great Postal Strike. From pandemic to megalomaniac. From postal reform to one of the best contracts ever. Thank you for everything. We also congratulate Brian Renfroe and wish him success during his term as president of the greatest union in the land.

Chuck Goushian, Branch 540

Charlotte, North Carolina

Branch 545 would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and happy holidays. Also, we would like to thank everyone who attended our retiree and installation dinner. A great big thanks to the members of Region 9 who were able to attend as well, and a special thanks to Region 9 NBA Lynne Pendleton for conducting the swearing-in ceremony of all of our officers.

We would also like to recognize our fellow carriers, Randy Taylor and Steve Williams, on their recent retirements. Randy and Steve were both carriers at our Downtown Station, with Randy having 34 years of service and Steve having 24 years of service as well. We all wish you both the best in the next chapter of your lives.

The union leadership would like to let all our members know that we are continuing with our in-person local union meetings. We are holding our meetings the third Tuesday of every month for anyone who is interested in attending and we are continuing to work within the parameters established by our local government leaders in regard to COVID-19. We look forward to seeing all of our members who are able to make it out.

Justin Fraley, Branch 545

East Lansing, Michigan

I’m happy to report that fair and impartial redistricting works. A few years ago, Michigan voters passed a ballot proposal that outlawed partisan gerrymandering. Our voting districts were then redrawn by nonpartisan citizen committees, with the result that, after this election, for the first time in three decades, both the Michigan House and Senate will be controlled by Democrats. It was a long process, but gerrymandering can be defeated, and I encourage all of you to begin the process toward fair elections by promoting your own ballot proposals.

Further, all three current ballot proposals in this last election passed, two that improved voting procedures and one to codify reproductive freedom into the Michigan constitution. All were favored by Democrats and all passed by large margins.

So what went wrong for Republicans this past election? I think they broadly underestimated the voters. They went negative in a big way, with mega millions wasted in deceptive advertising that voters have finally learned to ignore. They criticized Democrats while offering no solutions of their own. And they were seriously hampered by the never-ending Trump distractions. Will we see Trump running in 2024? I’d say probably.

Republicans are learning, but they are notoriously slow learners.

Mark Woodbury, Branch 2555

Emerald Coast, Florida

I would like to start this article off by congratulating the newly and reelected national officers of this great union. It was a hard-fought election, and the membership has spoken on who they prefer. By the time you read this article, the national election will be over, and thank God it is.

Now let's get to the real reason I am writing this article. In a recent labor-management meeting, my VP brought to management's attention their responsibility to plan for unscheduled absences. We have attempted to assist management in using the resources they have to run a much smoother office, only to be rejected in our attempts. So we don't try anymore. One of the suggestions was to have all of the CCAs learn the routes in the office, only to be told, not on a Monday, well, what is the difference between Monday and any other day? They will have to learn the routes eventually.

The CCA, knowing the routes in the office, only helps management in planning for the day and back filling the down routes and keeping it moving. When I mentioned how it was when I started, I was told that was a different generation. This is the problem; it's not a generational thing, but how to effectively utilize your recourses and get more from having knowledgeable people performing for you and getting the mail delivered.

We are now starting to see CCAs wanting to step up and get involved, and I want to thank those who are willing and wanting to get involved with this branch and union. I also want to congratulate the newly and reelected officers of our branch and thank them for their continued dedication to the branch.

Percy Smith Jr., Branch 4559

Fargo-West Fargo, North Dakota

Like many other parts of the country, we continue to be short carriers in Fargo. We have been told there are a couple of transfers and a couple of new hires that will begin in the next week or so. Twelve-hour days for the OTDL carriers and forced overtime is the norm in Fargo, at least here at the Prairiewood Station. With the possibility of new carriers starting soon, I hope they are treated well. It is always tough, and at times stressful, starting a new job. They do not need to be barraged with negativity and complaints about other carriers when they are trying to learn the job. We need them to like the job and, hopefully, they will make it their career and help relieve these long days.

Recently some confusion occurred when an OTDL carrier from Trollwood was brought down to work at Prairiewood. According to our local, that is allowed when there are more than eight hours of forced overtime needed.

This holiday season is going to be a challenge with the staff we have. For the 25 years I have worked at the Postal Service, we have al-

ways gotten through it, but I suspect this will be one of the most challenging locally.

We have some changes in local management as longtime Postmaster Greg Johnson has retired this fall. Former carrier and most recently Prairiewood Station manager Pat Volk has been named Greg's replacement. Time will tell, but I have confidence that Pat will be fair to the union, as he has been as station manager in both stations.

Our annual holiday party will be at the Fargo Billiards and Gastropub on Jan. 21, with the social starting at 6 p.m. and dinner to follow at 7 p.m.

Brian Prinszano, Branch 205

Flushing, New York

In honor of our retirees, on Sunday, Oct. 30, Branch 294 held its annual brunch at the Douglaston Manor. Overlooking a breathtaking view of the scenic golf course, this year's celebration produced one of our largest turnouts. Everyone looks forward to this exciting event, and this year was extra special, with NALC President Fred Rolando joining us. Included in President Rolando's speech was a detailed breakdown of the Medicare and health care provisions of the Postal Service Reform Act of 2022.

Our new retirees are Julian Adams, Rakesh Bedi, Jane Choi, John Crimarco, Thomas Deste-fano, Linda Glick, Jean Claude Pauline, David Kump, Chi Chi Lang, Stephen Malits, Carolyn Minerly, Alan Oktausk, Broderick Rivera, Rodney Rogala, William Rosas, Gilberto Rugal, Thomas Ryan, James Silverstein, Jacqueline Smallwood,



Dave Graves (l) was presented with a 50-year gold card by Northeastern New York Branch 358 President Bill Cook.

Kathleen Williams and Elton Young.

Our 50-year members are Wesley Cooper, Herbert Hollander, Thomas Lyons, Dominic Milazzo, James Muller, David Rios and Robert Santino.

Our 60-year member is Gerard Rosato.

Congratulations to all, and thank you for your service, strength and wisdom. Special thanks to President Rolando, Region 15 NBA Larry Cirelli, Region 15 RAA Tom Matthews, LPO Marc Ashmon and New York State President George Mangold, along with our friends from Branches 562, 36, 41 and 6000 for joining us in celebrating this very special occasion.

Stay strong—

Tony Paolillo, Branch 294

Fresno, California

As of this writing, many of the 2022 midterm election results are not known yet. Some are, but many are not.

Times have changed on what a candidate running for public office can say and preach. Many candidates today say/preach things that years ago would keep you from being elected—things such as threatening violence if they do not win. Threatening to not accept the election results (only if they lose). Praising the leaders of Russia and North Korea over our own intelligence. Preaching racist themes, speaking in favor of domestic terrorist groups, and supporting a deadly attempt to overthrow our government. Stealing entire folders of Top Secret documents. Forcing child rape victims who become pregnant to give birth. Then the rapist can be granted visitation rights. These so-called candidates are proud of their disgusting plans on how to run elected positions. Some still talk of privatizing our Postal Service.

To make matters worse, some of our union brothers and sisters agree with them, getting excited when one of these slugs wins. Can you imagine if they get everything they want? Would our country be like North Korea or Afghanistan? For those on the ultra-right, it's destroy, destroy, destroy. All in the name of power and greed. Then they blame others. Ironically, the biggest loser of the midterm elections is our former president. That's a good thing. But he is still a cancer to our country. I thank those who voted him out of office.

We have plenty of work to do to help our country for the future. Voting for those who want to help, versus those who are corrupt, traitors and racists, is a must. Stay united in that cause. We are all safer that way.

Jesse Dominguez, Branch 231

Greensboro, North Carolina

At the 72nd NALC National Convention, I had the privilege of witnessing the generosity of spirit with which Brother Rolando shared three challenges that he sees for the NALC membership over the upcoming period, when he will no longer have NALC leadership responsibility. Moreover, none of the three issues is a "narrow, craft issue" affecting letter carriers only. For example, while expressing support for some elements of the PMG's 10-year plan, Fred encourages a critical eye, especially on DeJoy's unjustified proposal for deterioration of service standards with a shift away from air transport and toward more ground transport on what more narrow-minded union leaders might see as an APWU and/or mailhandlers issue rather than more broadly as an all-letter carriers, postal workers and postal public issue.

Secondly, Fred emphasized the need for the labor movement as a whole to collectively take up the challenge of organizing Jeff Bezos's Amazon corporate behemoth. Here again, he's preaching that organized labor needs to boldly come together in new ways to produce advances for the U.S. working class in the face of the overwhelming power of the U.S. financial and political ruling oligarchy of corporate billionaires.

Branch Items

And, finally, Fred eloquently calls for the NALC membership to participate in the defense of small “d” democracy against the ongoing threat of fascist violence and white supremacy terrorism that may wipe out any semblance of fair and free elections in the USA.

During Fred Rolando’s presidency, the NALC has indeed come a long way from the narrow craft union mentality of the largest single craft union in the country.

Let’s salute brother Rolando as he rides off into retirement. And let’s urge him to stay involved with the working class of the USA and the world as we continue the struggle for social justice everywhere!

Fraternally—

Richard A. Koritz, Branch 630

Hagerstown, Maryland

Happy holidays, all! Before addressing the holiday season, I would like to give a belated thank-you to Ronda Sisk for the fantastic retirement seminar she gave our branch in October. It was a tremendous seminar with a ton of information provided. While I may still have many, many years to go before my personal retirement, it was great to get an idea of where I was going and to be able to learn more to help those closer to retirement than myself. I would also like to congratulate Kylie Magnis for converting to full-time regular in October. I’m very happy for you and your newly attained status and look forward to working with you for years to come!

As we head into the holiday season, we’ve all surely noticed the massive increase in parcel volume. While I understand the daunting task, please don’t forget to take care of yourself and your safety during this season. Ensure that you are taking your breaks and during your time off doing what is needed to recover and prepare for the upcoming tasks. While it is only a month long, this is undoubtedly the most difficult and stressful month of the year for us. On the note of parcels, while they are plentiful, as always, please ensure that we are doing everything that our customers expect of us to ensure that they all receive their parcels—including writing up notifications if the parcels can’t be safely stored for the customer to retrieve. Parcel theft is always at its highest during the holidays, and it is our job and obligation to our customers to provide them the most security possible for their parcels.

In solidarity—

Jeremy Kessel, Branch 443

Hartford, Connecticut

Fifteen percent. This is the number of NALC members who voted in the recently concluded election of national officers. (I would love to see the breakdown of retirees, active and CCA members who voted.)

While the NALC has existed for 132 years, it was only during the tumultuous late ’60s and early ’70s that we switched from the “proxy system” of electing our national officers to the direct, one-man, one-vote system in the mid-’70s. Our members at that time were largely male,

and replete with WWII, Korean War and Vietnam veterans. Also, “one man, one vote” came on the heels of the 1970 letter carrier strike, an event whose benefits revolutionized are how we interact with our employer but sadly are taken for granted 50-plus years later.

William C. Doherty was NALC president from 1941 to 1962 and is/was regarded as its finest. He stepped down to become President Kennedy’s ambassador to Jamaica. His book, *Mailman U.S.A.*, was a detailed and historically accurate 308-page chronicle from pre-NALC amalgamation (1889) to present (1960). The volume could be found in every library in the country! In this book, President Doherty opined that the “proxy system” of voting was the most efficient and responsible way to elect our leaders, and he backed this up with fact and experience-based observations and examples.

When *only* 15 percent of the NALC membership votes in a national referendum, the following occurs: It disrespects the efforts of those who fought for one man, one vote; it could weaken our union when dealing with USPS management and Congress; it is patently unfair to those who wish to remain in office and those who aspire to serve; and it guarantees that state and branch officers and stewards *did not vote!*

Concomitantly, do only 15 percent of our members read *The Postal Record*?

Michael L. Willadsen, Branch 86

Jackson, Michigan

Mirror, mirror on the wall...
...why is anyone negative at all?

Have you ever looked at your colleagues at your hub and realized what type of people you’re working with? I have observed this for many years with students, but it also is true with adults. Negative Nellies or negative Karens are everywhere. Yes, classrooms, businesses, athletic teams, families—and yes, carriers for USPS! Usually the negative ones try to bring down others and it’s just laughable.

I ask you to look at who talks with who. See, you have your 75 percent who are positive and will laugh and get on with their day and try to make colleagues’ day a little better. You have 15 percent who mind their business, do their job, and are like the middle people. These individuals usually are the ones who do their job and stay on the fence when it comes to negative and positive vibes. Then there is the 10 percent who are called the squeaky wheel. These are the ones who gather and talk about anything and everything in a negative way. It’s funny: Those in this group are either in trouble or get fired. The real issue with the Negative Nellies/Karens are that they are so negative with each other, they honestly feel they are the positive ones and have all the answers.

So I challenge you to look around at your colleagues and see which categories some of your colleagues are in.

Try not to be in the squeaky wheel group. Wake up with a positive attitude and see how your day goes. You might be surprised!

Mark Raczkowski, Branch 232

Kansas City, Missouri

I must admit Branch 30 does very well when it comes to functions that demonstrate comradery at its best. The branch cookout is always a winner with the music, food, kids’ activities, and Chiefs football. While I don’t believe the Shamrock Golf Course wouldn’t allow me to



Retired members of Kansas City, MO Br. 30 gathered at the branch’s annual retirees dinner.

play for insurance reasons, this year’s MDA Golf Tournament was canceled. RUMor CONTROL has yet to confirm whether or not Region 5 NBA David A. Teegarden and his fellow duffers weren’t sent the trophy anyway. The Ed Gorman MDA Bowlation is always entertaining because of the skills demonstrated by Bert Robinson, Kenny Best, Bill Brown and Tommy Cooper—this year’s first-place team out of the 18 teams participating. And it goes without saying the Christmas party is off the chain! If you’ve never been, you’d better ask somebody.

By far, my favorite is the annual retirement dinner. It is like the time I got to shake George Clinton’s hand after a show at the Crossroads—priceless. A truly unforgettable experience. With it being Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Shirley Scott, mother of recent retiree Anita Franklin, was the keynote speaker. To be in the presence of those who made my lifestyle possible is truly a humbling experience. I had the honor of sitting with Kevin (Bettie) McNeil; former Branch 30 state Rep. Ernest Graham and former Region 5 NBA/Branch 30 President Dan Pittman were also in attendance. Branch 827 Independence carriers Wayne Henderson (Truman Station), and Gus Knisley and Steven Puterbaugh (Englewood) were present. Beth Horn, Elmer Harris, Mike Jarret and members of Auxiliary 4, along with other prior and newly retired branch members, enjoyed a delicious meal prepared by Carla’s Catering Company.

It is important to remember the past as we look to the future. Thank you, retirees, in unity.

Calvin Davis, Branch 30

Knoxville, Tennessee

Hail, carriers of the satchel! A favorable Step B decision (\$3,620) award is supposed to make management think twice about violating the contract. Or so

it seems. In this case, management was told to strictly comply with Article 7 concerning the use of city carrier assistants (CCAs) on rural carrier routes unless it met an emergency (Article 3.F). Fine, but “buyer beware.” What has happened is that CCAs are still working on the rural side, while eight-hour and work assignment carriers are still being forced to work 10 to 12 hours on or off their assignment, which is still a direct violation of Article 8.5 (Step 4 Decision Moo884). Management’s argument is that due to COVID-19, an emergency still exists. This Step 4 explained the requirement to use auxiliary assistance before requiring carriers not on the overtime desired list (ODL) or work assignment list to work overtime on their own route on a regularly scheduled day. So instead of saving money, management is willing to pay CCAs instead of rural carriers to carry their own routes and force work assignment carriers to work on and off their routes.

Who wins? Well, it isn’t ODL carriers who are working more than 60 hours and are leaving the ODL for eight-hour assignments. They are burning out earlier than expected, since most ODL carriers tend to switch over during the Christmas period. Now stewards must be more vigilant and check carrier clock rings and submit these grievances. If management wants to ignore a Step B decision and continue to violate Article 8, then make them pay! If you were forced on or off your work assignment, then let your steward know so they can submit the request for information to get the grievance started.

Tony Rodriguez, Branch 419

Minneapolis, Minnesota

I wanted to highlight something that happened at one of our stations here in Branch 28 around this time last year. All across the city, CCAs were getting pummeled with work. Management had been sending them back out to the street again and again, oftentimes late into the night, issuing direct orders to new CCAs they knew that they could intimidate when a steward wasn’t around. At this particular station, a pair of new CCAs were greeted upon their return by the night supervisor demanding they take yet another couple swings out. These swings were in a rough and unfamiliar area of their city and it was getting dark. Luckily for them, some regulars overheard what management was trying to pull, and they put a stop to it. They stood up to management and told them (likely using some words that can’t be printed here) that they would absolutely not be sending these overworked and overwhelmed brand new carriers back to the street. The regulars told the CCAs to go home, they would be taking out the swings as they were familiar with the area and would be able to get it done. The CCAs went home, the regulars got the mail delivered, and everyone made it home safely.

These carriers stepped up to say enough is enough, and that management isn’t allowed to take advantage of any of our brothers and sisters. In doing so, they showed some of the newest members of our branch what the union is all about—that it’s not just the National Agreement, and it’s not just the grievances that are filed, it’s the solidarity between all carriers no

matter if you measure your seniority in years and decades or in weeks and months. Take care of each other out there. Solidarity forever!

Kaylee Valerius, Branch 9

Monterey, California

The holidays are fast approaching and I’m certain you are gearing up for long hours. Be safe out there and be aware of your surroundings. There are just too many letter carriers being assaulted lately. There have been a huge increase in mailbox break-ins in Monterey. Sad state of affairs, but hopefully these perpetrators will be caught and prosecuted.

Congratulations to Steve Merrill, who was recently elected to be Branch 1310’s president. Great to hear that the new officers have met and are making a plan for the future of the branch. Since the Monterey branch is more than 100 years old and the first post office, the history is rich and hopefully will be preserved for a long time to come.

To all our veterans, we thank you for your service and sacrifice. I know this is a little late, but showing appreciation is appropriate at any time!

The elections were nail-biting and, at the time of this writing, still up in the air. We are hoping those who support the Postal Service will be successful. I’m hoping the windfall tax, which penalizes those who have worked under Social Security but are short of the qualifying quarters, will be overturned. It just isn’t fair. You work hard, at times working two jobs, and then if you are a little short, you get some of your Social Security taken away. It’s just not fair. No other corporation that has its own retirement plus Social Security is penalized. What a great thing it would be to get this removed and the funds back in the pockets of those who are harmed.

Enjoy your holidays, cherish the moments and hug someone you love. As they said in the ‘60s—peace and love!

United, we bargain; divided, we beg.

Patty Cramer, Branch 1310

Norristown, Pennsylvania

It’s Thursday and this is my sixth day of using FMLA to take care of family. I say this ‘cause I’m gonna talk about sick leave, which over my 28 years I used as necessary when I wasn’t able to perform my duties. And now I’m using it to make sure I’m still getting paid while takin’ care of family. A lot of the new carriers are using sick leave like it’s not necessary to have later in their career. (I know we are working a lot of hours cause our upper management is (fill in the blank), but the big picture is that if you last 28 years, your body is gonna be older and your energy will be less. (So if you’re runnin’ your route, now you’re gonna feel like this at 14 years, so work smart.) Ya wanna have a great career and retire comfortably when ya hit your MRA and are 30 years in.

Supposedly, our PM said that as of today we have 66 new hires, but it will take a few months for them to have an impact. We know that management will fire 20 of ‘em, 22 will quit after two

weeks of management mismanaging, and 10 will never show up after talking to other carriers about how management is and how the job itself is. That leaves us with 14. Four will try to go right into management and five will try another craft after they see that this job as a carrier is hard work. Leaves us with five carriers with 20 or more open routes, and this will be spread out over several months. So we are right back where started from—understaffed and overworked!

Second verse same as the first...insanity definition is doin’ the same thing over and over and expecting a different result.

Joel Stimmler, Branch 542

Northeast Florida

As I write this article, members of Branch 53 and a majority of other Florida branches are bracing for yet another hurricane. On Nov. 10, Hurricane Nicole entered Florida near Port St. Lucie with 15-foot seas, wind, plenty of rain and flooding within the 400-mile swath from the center. Offices from south to north Florida are all affected. Some offices are still dealing with the aftermath from Hurricane Ian and now we add this to it. Please make a donation to the NALC Disaster Relief Foundation to help those affected by these storms.

Branch 53 is affiliated with the AFL-CIO North Florida Central Labor Council. Working together, we have a voice getting people elected who best represent working families. We also get their support for our issues. Former Branch 53 President Maceo George was just elected as 4th vice president of the CLC. I know he will be excellent in that position. Congratulations to him.

Branch 53 wishes all NALC members and their families a safe and happy holiday season.

Bob Henning, Branch 53

Phoenix, Arizona

In conjunction with the Arizona State Association retirement seminar to be held at the NALC Branch 576 union hall, 3720 W. Greenway Road, Phoenix, on Sunday, Feb. 5 at 9 a.m., God willing, Branch 576 will be having a retirement luncheon Saturday, Feb. 4, at the same location at noon, God willing.

Please mark your union calendars for the Arizona State Association of Letter Carriers state convention at the Twin Arrows Casino Resort, 22181 Resort Blvd. (Exit 219, I-40), Flagstaff. (928-856-7145 or 855-946-8946, \$135 daily, rate good three days before and after convention. Hospitality Night Thursday April 27, at 7 p.m.; April 28 Friday registration at 7 a.m.; general session at 8 a.m.; Saturday, April 29 general session at 8 a.m. Please make reservations 30 days prior to convention. Check ASALC website: asalc.org. God willing.

At press deadline, the Arizona elections were too early to call. Thank you all, brothers and sisters, everyone who canvassed, phoned, emailed, texted, and talked the walk: Branch President Cynthia Staley for hosting the AZ/AFL-CIO/NALC Columbus Day of Action, AZ/AFL-CIO Executive Director Fred Yamashita, AZ/AFL-CIO Political Director Joe Murphy, AZ/AFL-CIO Campaign Manager Kieran Elia, AZ/AFL-CIO Com-

Branch Items

munications Director Alina Cordoba, Edmundo Sanchez ASALC/VP, Suzanne Valdez ASALC Recording Secretary, Eric Gregorovic ASALC/Treasurer, Robert Alaniz ASALC/Director of Education, Lorna Condley ASALC/Director of Retirees, Joshua Petty ASALC/Trustee, Irving Crespo ASALC/Trustee, Maria Crespo, Tom Paul ASALC/Trustee. Shout out to “Columbus Day Chef” Kelly Busalacchi ASALC/Trustee and Mike Boger ASALC/Trustee, Branch 704 President Kathy Walter, Branch 1902 President Carlos Villalobos, Branch 1902 VP Tim Fisher, Mary Halford, Bill Hoene of Branch 295, Jo Booth, Juan Padilla of Painters Local 86, NALC LPO John Beaumont, Kori Blalock Keller “Chief”, Mr. Eddie “BA” Davidson, Brian “Politico” Renfro. God bless Fredric V. Rolando.

In unity—

Jeff Clark, Branch 576

Portland, Oregon

I recently returned from our Region 2 regional assembly in Salt Lake City, UT. I appreciated that some of us wore masks and some of us did not, and nobody seemed to care either way. That felt like a pretty good place to be, all things considered. Salt Lake City was a superb host city; thank you!

I want to talk about pronouns, because women work here too. Women are letter carriers and stewards and officers in this union, and it's well past time for both the USPS and NALC to reflect that. If it's not referencing an old arbitration, it's going to the mic with some kind of an example for 12/60s or whatever, and it's always he/him/his. I'm ready for us to do better.

This isn't even about the non-binary-friendly *they*, which seems to terrify approximately half of any room. Well, baby steps. Start using *they* because women work here too, and as a bonus, you'll also be covering the non-binary issue. Inclusivity! Let's try it. Example: A carrier was drafted on their SDO, and they went to their steward for advice. Shucks, that was easy!

If you think this issue isn't important, I invite you to look around your office and your city, and see all the people you may be offending when you limit yourself and them to all male pronouns. It's almost 2023. When you know better, do better. NALC, it's time for us to do better.

Suzanne Miller, Branch 82

Providence, Rhode Island

Happy holidays!

First of all, due to the holidays, the January Branch 15 meeting will be on Wednesday, Jan. 4.

I want to start by giving a shout-out to all the CCAs, especially this time of year. I know we all had to do our time at the beginning of our careers, but it is a thankless job, and I just wanted to say thanks. I see how much you guys have to put up with, even more so than when I started. We've been short-handed regarding CCAs for a while now, and I know you all are working a ton and just wanted to encourage you all to stick with it if possible; it's worth it. We enter a time of year when we are all working more hours, in harsher conditions, with less daylight; it can get

stressful. But remember, safety and accuracy come first. We all want to get home how we left it, or as close as possible, so let us be extra conscious regarding our safety.

Finally, I wish everyone a happy, healthy holiday season. Hopefully, things go as smoothly as possible for everyone, and we can enjoy these special times while simultaneously making a little extra money.

Anthony Turcotte, Branch 15



Waco, TX Br. 404 Treasurer Brandon Brenner (l) and Branch President Everett Wylie display Post Office materials at a career fair for underprivileged children in Waco.

Racine, Wisconsin

Winter in the Midwest with no snow so far. The few of us left clinging to our shorts are hopeful of either prolonging summer or fighting back the inevitable winter.

I join the rest of my co-workers here and throughout the country celebrating the end of the political season. The sheer volume of political ads, oversized, glossy, upside down, back words, out-of-sequence razor blades were never-ending. What I wouldn't give for just one day of good old-fashioned regular fits in your hand without tearing it up letter mail.

Just when we got it down and were getting settled in a groove, when things are humming along nicely, somebody pumps the brakes. Someone way upstairs in the decision-making process thought a one-hour morning golden hour would be just the thing to get us motivated and ready for the holidays. The need for change is understandable and probably necessary. Trying an old idea under a new name is just pure trickery. Somebody must have thought attaching another name to a previously attempted thought might make it stick. We need time to properly and accurately set up our routes. No carrier wants to hit the street with a hastily set-up route that's going to be garbage on the street. Let carriers tackle the setup and delivery. It's what we do. It's what we're good at.

It's refreshing to see open communication and dialogue between craft and management here at 4 Mile. We have a pretty good team in place. Let's ride this wave and appreciate the moment.

Congratulations, Dan Zanella (Woody) and Jim Davis, on your recent retirements. Well deserved and definitely earned!

Chris Paige, Branch 436

Rockville, Maryland

Management has sunk to a new low. A carrier out of Rockville was involved in an accident and was injured. He was paid continuation of pay and by the Department of Labor for months. When he was cleared to return to full duty, management told him he was removed from the USPS rolls. He has been working for more than a month and has not been paid one cent!

Another new attack on us has surfaced. Management has decided to issue termination action via a Form 50. Management failed to issue a notice of removal. The grievance procedure is completely clogged in our region, so these types of egregious actions by management take months and months, if not years, to adjudicate.

In yet another appalling attack on us, management has decided to issue *psychiatric* fitness for duty exams after losing emergency suspensions (emergency placements). The Step B decisions state to make the grievant whole, but management refused to do this and keeps the employees out for more than half a year with these FFD exams. Some were sent twice for the same FFD exam just to keep the employee out of work longer and squeeze them financially. One employee is going on his fourth year without pay and was never issued a removal letter. He was issued an emergency suspension that was rescinded at Step B and made whole; however, management continues to keep the employee on LWOP!

I want to thank Jeannine Gasper and her technical advisor, Cindy Connor, for the fine work they did in a recent arbitration out of Gaithersburg. Your dedication and preparation of our case file is very much appreciated!

Please visit our website set up by union brother Chuck Clark at nalc3825.com. We have more than 331,430 hits! We have added many escalating remedies.

In the struggle—

Kenneth Lerch, Branch 3825

St. Louis, Missouri

I ran across a study conducted by Cornell University regarding lifetime earnings of union members as compared to the earnings of non-union members. The study points to the cumulative earnings advantages of long-term, persistent union membership.

Using a sample of men from the panel study of income dynamics from 1969 through 2019, the authors investigate how lifetime union membership contributes to earnings advantages. Their findings:

\$1.3 million—Unionization throughout one's career is associated with a \$1.3 million mean increase in lifetime earnings, larger than the average gains from completing college.

Lifetime—The lifetime earnings gains channeled entirely through higher hourly wages and occur despite earlier-than-average retirement for persistently unionized members.

Longevity—The union wage premium is not constant throughout a worker's career; instead, it increases with more years of union membership. The cumulative advantages of union mem-

bership for workers' economic well-being are far greater than point-in-time estimates suggest.

Surprising results: A worker without a college degree who has been in a union for 100 percent of their career is expected to make more than a non-union worker with a college degree.

The researchers identified workers who would have been in their late 20s in the 1960s and 1970s and tracked their earnings through retirement as well as whether they were union members. Workers who are never in a union were projected to earn around \$2.1 million their entire career while union workers earned \$3.4 million, a difference of \$1.3 million.

Is it worth it to join a union? Statistics would say yes. In fact, Generation Z workers (those born after 1995) have rallied to create unions to fight for benefits and rights for workers. A new Center for American Progress issue brief found that Gen Z is the most pro-union generation in America today.

Tom Schulte, Branch 343

San Francisco, California

Carriers confront PMG—Over the weekend, the workforce learned that Postmaster General DeJoy would be paying a visit to the 180 Napoleon St. postal facility the following Monday, Oct. 24. Special cleaning crews were hustled in to prepare for the boss's sudden visit. The drafty warehouse is where more than 200 workers in six carrier stations come every morning to prepare the mail for delivery.

But three off-duty letter carriers surprised management by showing up at Napoleon Street early Monday to pass out a leaflet with five urgent questions for their top boss, seeing as he was coming all the way from Washington, DC. (Of course, DeJoy didn't actually show up till 2 p.m.—five hours behind schedule—by which time all the carriers were out delivering their routes.)

At the November branch meeting, members unanimously endorsed the "Five Questions" for DeJoy, contained in the carriers' leaflet.

The carriers' leaflet with five questions for Postmaster General DeJoy:

1. Why are you deliberately delaying the mail? Why did you reduce service standards, so people get their mail days late?

2. Why are you severely short-staffing post offices, so workers have long hours of mandatory overtime, day after day, with no time left for our families?

3. Why do you plan to cut 50,000 postal jobs and close our post offices? Why are you moving the work to centralized "sorting & delivery centers"—often far away from carriers' delivery routes, and far from their homes?

4. Why are you constantly harassing, micro-managing and bullying the postal workers?

5. Is this a plan to destroy America's popular and efficient national Postal Service—worsening conditions for the workers and delaying our mail? Is this all to set the stage for privatization of the USPS?

Dave Welsh, Branch 214

Seattle, Washington

"You guys are doing a great job, but.. it's going to get worse." That's an attaboy quote from a recent Westwood Station stand-up. Gee, thanks, boss? Well, of course it's going to get worse, Christmas is coming and management's chasing the new hires back out the door as if they had tried to steal their Cinnabon. The term "churn rate" comes to mind. Churn rate is a measure of the number of employees who leave a company during a given period. Given the managerial motivational practice of fear, harassment and intimidation, and the constant exodus of newly trained employees, the churn rate has become, well—stomach-churning. Management personnel are so damned enamored of their numbers. They should be enamored with the number of new employees they can keep around. They should brag about that.

The USPS Office of Inspector General states: "Keeping an eye on employee turnover rates and what may be causing them to rise is generally a good business practice." What does that say about USPS management? They don't have good business practices! Evidently they're keeping a blind eye on employee turnover and its causes, as they keep bollixing things badly. Where do they find all these contentious, nasty people? Do they stockpile them? Is being a bully a prerequisite for making it into management? If an applicant fails to check the abuser box, do they flunk out? Is being indignant and pretentious mandatory, or must they attend classes? First, they teach you how to gnaw some unsuspecting, well-meaning worker's head off—that would be Harassment 101. Or maybe they're naturals. Maybe demeaning people is simply second nature to these managerial meanies. Whatever happens before, during or after the management training needs to change, or sadly, yes—it's going to get worse.

Don Nokes, Branch 79

Southeast Pennsylvania Merged

Happy holidays! This time of year injects happiness into most people. The emotional connection to our youth, that same energy seen in the eyes of our kids, and the sense of family it emboldens brings us to a place of positive vibes like no other time of the year.

For us letter carriers, we see this time of year as "parcel time." But let's remember the same feeling we got when we realized what heroes we were during the pandemic. It felt great, right? People were so genuine in their praise of us. The truth is we were/are always heroes. Not only do we bring them their mail and packages promptly, but we also do it better than our competitors. We also are part of the communities we serve in every way. We look out for our elderly, we collect food for the needy, and simply be ourselves. So, why not embrace our holiday season as "Letter Carrier Time."

Why do we always feel good during this time of year? In addition, it's a time when our customers feel it is necessary to tell us how much they appreciate us. Inevitably, the conversation comes back to you being there delivering all year long during the toughest of times. Why? Because sometimes you just don't know how much you mean to this ecosystem of ours. Letter carriers are a special breed.

Post-pandemic, I hope everyone can return to the "office holiday party." Some of our new carriers missed out on this. They have not been exposed to the full experience of being a letter carrier. We are a family!

The new year is just around the corner. Relax, enjoy the moment of being the best at what you do in the whole wide world!

#LetterCarrierPride #NALCandUSPS
makeAGreatTeam

Eric Jackson, Branch 725

Springfield, Ohio

"There are far better things ahead than any we leave behind." —C.S. Lewis.

Hallelujah! We finally have a new postmaster, Josh Baker. As a carrier supervisor, Postmaster

COLA: Cost-of-living adjustment

- ▶ Following the release of the October consumer price index (CPI), the projected accumulation toward the seventh cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) under the 2019-2023 National Agreement is **\$124 annually**. This COLA is based on the change in the CPI from the base index month to January 2023, with the previous COLAs subtracted.
- ▶ The 2024 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 2023 and third quarter of 2024, is **0.4 percent**. The 2024 COLA will be based finalized with the publication of the September 2023 CPI in October 2023.

- ▶ The 2023 projected COLA under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA) is **7.0 percent** following the release of the October CPI. This COLA is based on the change in the CPI between December 2021 and December 2022.

Visit nalc.org for the latest updates.

Branch Items

Baker has shown the aptitude, attitude and willingness to make positive changes for Springfield letter carriers and all craft employees.

For about the past seven years, we have had a procession of mostly incompetent, unwilling postmasters, including one who is banned from returning to Springfield without our branch president's permission.

But it has taken years of abuse from unfit, unskilled postmasters to get Springfield in the quagmire it has sunk into. Change will not happen overnight, nor fast enough for most carriers. No one can fix staffing, attendance, medical problems, morale, etc., overnight. But at least there is a flicker of light that we can focus on.

I hope everyone will show some patience and understanding as President DeWell and Postmaster Baker work closely together to improve the working conditions of Springfield letter carriers.

Thanks to everyone who showed up at the November branch meeting and volunteered to hold a branch officer position. It is great to see younger carriers wanting to get involved with their union.

A great union has young carriers with their fresh ideas and enthusiasm, as well as old carriers with their hard-earned knowledge and experience. Both work best when used together. Don't toss one for the other, or everyone loses.

Route inspections are currently scheduled to start in January. Scanners and carrier consultations will be used to determine most of the adjustments. Take your scanner when delivering all parcels.

Branch meetings 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

Staunton, Virginia

Congratulations! Once again, your hard work and dedication ensured that democracy prevailed and millions of ballots were delivered and counted. You did this while being short-staffed, buried in campaign mail and working long hours. No easy task, but you crushed it. Thank you.

How to submit items

Branch presidents or their designated scribes may submit Branch Items to *The Postal Record* by mail at 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144; email at postalrecord@nalc.org; or fax at 202-737-1540. The deadline is the 10th of the preceding month, or if it falls on a weekend or holiday, 9 a.m. E.T. the first business day after. For the January issue, the deadline is Monday, Dec. 12. The *NALC Constitution* limits items to 300 words. Photos should be in color; photos sent by email should be at least 150 dpi resolution. Please identify every person in the photo. *The Postal Record* reserves the right not to print every photo received. Hard-copy photos will not be returned.

We don't have all the results from the congressional elections yet, but my hope is that once the dust settles, we have a House of Representatives and Senate supportive of a vibrant, public Postal Service that values its employees and is prepared to provide timely service to its customers—a Congress that values all workers and takes action to improve their right to form and join unions so all workers can enjoy the protection, advocacy and unity that letter carriers enjoy.

Many thanks to our longtime president, Tom Miller, for his service to the branch. President Miller will be stepping down to help guide the transition of new leaders of the branch prior to his planned and well-deserved retirement next year. It's a testament to the branch that the members are working on a plan to move the branch forward together. On a personal note, I want to thank President Miller for his welcome and support when I moved to Staunton. Can't wait to work together again next year on the food drive!

A letter carrier's job is never done. You made it through the election season with just a week or two to breathe before the onslaught of the holiday season begins. Hang in there. Wishing you and yours safety, health and joy!

Solidarity—

Cindy Connors, Branch 513

Toledo, Ohio

Our branch nominations were at our October meeting. Our current officers had no opposition; therefore, no election was necessary. All members in attendance were selected as delegates to the national and state conventions for the next three years.

The revolving door in the postmaster's office continues to swing. Our new acting postmaster is Dave Curry, someone we are very familiar with.

Zone 17 at our Reynolds Corners Station was selected for the TIAREAP route inspection process. The inspection took place in October. The results are being compiled and it appears that three new routes will be added. We have not been notified of any future inspections, as of now.

On Thursday, Nov. 3, the branch hosted our retirees with a luncheon at the hall. There were more than 70 retired members in attendance. Thanks to Deb Pipes and Sam Yerg for decorating the hall. Chef Andy prepared the appetizers and helped with setup. Our last retiree luncheon was back in the fall of 2019. It was great to see everyone and return to normal activities.

We have scheduled our annual Christmas party for Dec. 10 at the union hall. Last year's was such a success, and we look forward to making this year's even better.

As in the past, we are again planning a night at "The Lights Before Christmas" at the Toledo Zoo on Wednesday, Dec. 21.

All of the officers of Branch 100 wish everyone a joyous holiday season and a happy and prosperous new year.

Ray Bricker, Branch 100

Tri-Valley, California

I, like many others, had the opportunity to work for NALC under the leadership of our national president, Fredric Rolando. His hard work and dedication provided excellence to the NALC brand. The definition of leader: 1) a

person or thing that leads; 2) a guiding or directing head, as of an army, movement, or political group; 3) a person who rules, guides or inspires others; head of association. I personally believe President Rolando fits this mode. He conducted union business in a profound manner that demonstrated tenacity that I admired and respected. Moreover, Rolando's team successfully negotiated a 44-month National Agreement that provided three wage increases per year, cost-of-living adjustments, and maintained protections against outsourcing and layoffs; all during the time of USPS's uncertainties. Additionally, the NALC under Rolando's leadership was instrumental in the passing of Postal Service Reform Act.

Furthermore, I want to thank our national president, Fred Rolando, for making a station visit to the Sylmar P.O. during the California wildfires back in 2017. The carriers and management staff enjoyed this rare opportunity to have our president visit our station to brighten the morning and help relieve some of the pain and stress that were endured from the local wildfires.

Our time at the Officer Retirement Dinner in Chicago for the NALC 72nd Biennial Convention was memorable. Branch EVP Albert Reyes and I attended the dinner for first time, and Rolando was the master of ceremonies. As usual, he was sharp and hilarious while sharing funny stories about the retirees.

The future success of our union is bright. And, for the reasons that I just stated above, I will always be grateful and thankful for Fred Rolando's leadership, and I wish him a happy and blessed retirement.

James C. Perryman Jr., Branch 2902

Western Massachusetts

As 2022 comes to a close, we can look back for the most part and say it was a good year. COVID-19 is hopefully in the rearview mirror and after 11 years of trying, we finally got comprehensive postal reform across the finish line, which, among other things, ended the onerous obligation to pre-fund retiree health benefits. Our uncapped COLAs protected us from high inflation and retirees' COLAs will get a big bump. None of this, however, can be taken for granted.

It can all change with the stroke of a pen by Congress. The portion of an active carrier's benefits not subject to collective bargaining and all of the benefits of our retirees are subject to the whims of Congress; a change in the law can have negative consequences for all of us. Think about some of the proposals that have been introduced in Congress in recent history: increasing employee retirement contributions, going to a high-5 average instead of the current high-3 to calculate retiree annuities, eliminating all COLAs for current and future retirees, and eliminating the annuitant supplement for those retiring before age 62.

Our membership and the Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF) have fended off most of these proposals, but they'll probably resurface in one way or another as a result of leadership changes in the House and possibly the Senate. We must be vigilant and contribute to the LCPF.

Branch 46 was finally able to hold our retiree brunch safely on Nov. 20, and it was great to finally see our retired brothers and sisters again. NBA Rick DiCecca was in attendance and a delightful time was had by all.

Lastly, Branch 46 would like to extend to all, best wishes for a merry Christmas, happy Chanukah and joyous holiday season!

Michael Harazmus, Branch 46



Cynthia Martinez
President

National Auxiliary Board

News and updates from the officers



Crystal Bragg
Secretary



Samantha Yerg
Treasurer

From the President

Christmas and holiday greetings to all of our sisters and brothers.

I am so excited it is time to buy pretty stamps for the holidays. Christmas cards and packages are so fun to send.

I want to sincerely thank our retiring officers: Cythensis Lang, president; Linda Davis, assistant secretary; and Pam Fore, treasurer. They have been a fine example for us to follow, and we truly appreciate all of their efforts and work these last eight years.

The NALCA Chicago convention totals for 2022 are: 27 Auxiliaries attending, 44 delegates

present, and 11 states represented.

There will be a few bylaw changes regarding our officers. Since the decrease in our membership, we voted to combine the offices of president and vice president. Next it was voted to combine the offices of secretary and assistant secretary. Along with that change, we voted to reduce the stipend for each officer. The president and secretary were reduced by 50 percent. The treasurer will be reduced by 33 percent. All stipends are presently suspended until the new year.

Tuesday was our memorial service. It is one of my favorite times. We honor the members we have lost and appreciate all that they did before

us. This year we recognized 59 special members with a personalized plaque. There were 18 members with a gold star, indicating 50 years or more of membership in the Auxiliary. Donna Beckwood from Birmingham, AL Branch 530 honored us with a song.

We had a significant number of our members sign up to be on a planning committee for the 2024 convention. It is very exciting; we will start early in 2023, using social media. I look forward to working with all of you these next two years.

Linda Kirby, past president, graciously installed our new officers on Thursday afternoon. Thank you, Linda!

Cynthia A. Martinez

2022 NALCA convention in Chicago



1. Auxiliary members from Texas (l to r): Carolyn Meredith, Minnie Requez, Margarita Castilleja, Gaye Meredith and NALCA Vice President Cynthia Martinez; 2. On the convention floor (l to r): Marianne Ward and Sharon Larkin, letter carriers and Aux. #377 members, and Arizona Merged Branch 1902 President Carlos Villalobos; 3. Martinez and Andi Cooley of Lubbock TX, old friends at the Chicago Auxiliary Convention; 4. An NALCA planning meeting over dinner (l to r): President Cythensis Lang, Martinez, Secretary Crystal Bragg and Assistant Secretary Linda Davis; and 5. Pictured (l to r) are Phoenix, AZ Branch 576 Director of Retired Members Rose White; Jana Maron, treasurer of the Arizona State Auxiliary and Local Aux. #377; and Martinez on the river cruise.

Mutual Exchanges

CT: Wallingford (6/21) to Miami, FL or nearby areas. Decent-sized office and friendly co-workers. Quiet and safe town. Natalie, 860-839-8033 or nnatalienunez97@gmail.com.

IL: Chicago (9/93) to Las Vegas, NV or surrounding areas, or any of the following states: TX, FL, GA. Regular carriers only. Large office with lots of overtime, if wanted. North Side of Chicago. Fifteen minutes from

downtown. Great routes. Tanny, 773-742-1197 (text or call) or reenae2@hotmail.com.

IL: Zion (9/90) to Spartanburg, SC or surrounding areas. Seeking mutual exchange. Nice area of Northern Illinois, close to Illinois State Beach. Short distance to most major conveniences and highway. Great office with lots of OT, if desired. Eugene, 224-545-6985 or ecxman1967@gmail.com.

NV: Las Vegas (9/20) to Spokane, Spokane Valley or northeast WA; will also consider OR and ID. No state income tax. Fourteen bid stations; lots of OT. Mike, 702-499-5577 or mzahm1701@cox.net.

NV: Reno (1/22) to Carson City, NV. My route is at Reno main office, curbside and park-and-loop. Great area. OT available. Mild winters; one hour from beautiful Lake Tahoe. Dan, 775-750-1852.

NC: Carrboro (2/20) to Indianapolis, IN or surrounding areas. Regulars only. One bidding office. Great weather. Good schools. Lian, 919-937-1965 (call) or hhtoonlian@gmail.com.

SC: Charleston (5/19) to Meriden, CT or surrounding areas. Seven bidding offices with plenty of OT. Mix of walking and mounted routes. For family reasons. Eric, 203-213-5056 or ejbarre@mail.com.

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., December's deadline is for the January 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: 1468917

Dekota Meeks



Missing Since: Sep 11, 2022
Missing From: Webster Groves, MO
DOB: Nov 21, 2009
Age Now: 12
Sex: Male
Race: Black
Hair Color: Brown
Eye Color: Brown
Height: 5'10"
Weight: 135 lbs

Dekota was last seen on September 11, 2022.

DON'T HESITATE!

ANYONE HAVING INFORMATION SHOULD CONTACT

CALL 911 OR

1-800-843-5678 (1-800-THE-LOST®)
Webster Groves Police Department (Missouri) 1-314-963-5402



MISSING

HELP BRING ME HOME

NCMEC: 1465105

Joanna Luna



Missing Since: Aug 20, 2022
Missing From: San Antonio, TX
DOB: May 2, 2009
Age Now: 13
Sex: Female
Race: Hispanic
Hair Color: Brown
Eye Color: Brown
Height: 5'3"
Weight: 110 lbs

Joanna was last seen on August 20, 2022.

DON'T HESITATE!

ANYONE HAVING INFORMATION SHOULD CONTACT

CALL 911 OR

1-800-843-5678 (1-800-THE-LOST®)
San Antonio Police Department (Texas) 1-210-207-7273

Looking for the latest NALC news? Give it a listen wherever you listen to your favorite podcasts!

NALC's podcast "You Are the Current Resident" is on Podbean and other popular podcasting venues, including iTunes, Spotify and Google Play.

During each episode, NALC President-elect Brian Renfroe and guests discuss vital topics affecting the letter carrier craft and the union. The show's format also includes interviews with other NALC leaders to talk in depth about issues affecting letter carriers and the union.



Accessing the podcast is easiest on Podbean



The Podbean app is available in the Apple App Store or Google Play Store

On smartphones, simply go to the Apple App Store or Google Play Store and download the Podbean Podcast App & Player. Once you have downloaded the app, open it and create an account (or sign on as a guest) and go to the search icon at the top and enter "You Are the Current Resident." From there, you can listen to the available episodes and can click "Follow" to receive updates when new episodes are released.

On your computer or mobile browser, go to the web address youarethecurrentresident.podbean.com and click on the play button of the episode you wish to listen to.

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**