

The Postal Record

The monthly journal of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS

In this issue

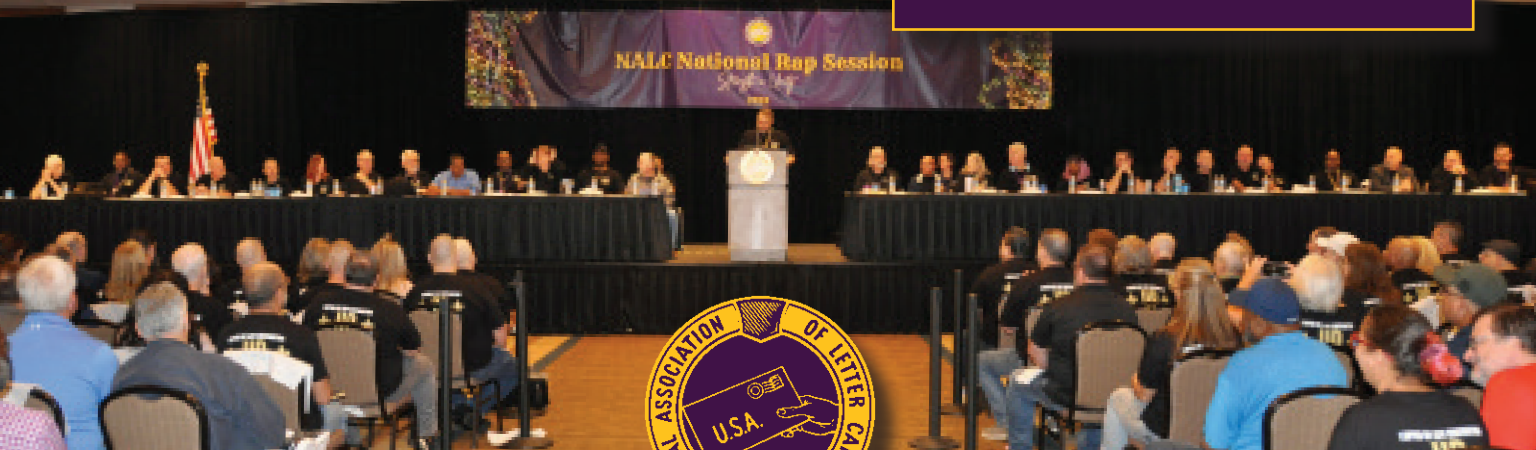
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At NALC rap session, President Renfro updates state and branch leaders on:



- **Contract negotiations**
- **Crimes against carriers**
- **Heat safety**
- **Improving representation**
- **Legislation and politics**
- **New initiatives**

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DOHERTY & DONELON SCHOLARSHIPS

Deadline: This form must be returned to NALC Headquarters no later than December 31, 2023.

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, 2023.

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, 2024. (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, 2024.

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 2023-24 school year.

I am the _____ of _____
• 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 branch officer

Signature of NALC parent member
(or spouse if deceased)

Printed name of branch officer

Last 4 digits of Social Security No. _____

Title _____ Date _____

This form must be returned no later than Dec. 31, 2023, 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.

New initiatives



Brian L. Renfroe

Last month, more than a thousand branch leaders from across the country gathered in New Orleans, LA, for our national rap session. It was a busy weekend full of training, education, productive conversation and camaraderie among our members. I am confident that this year's rap session attendees have returned to their branches, regions and state associations energized, motivated and eager to share what they learned.

I appreciate Branch 124 and the Louisiana State Association for welcoming everyone to their home city and state. We kicked off the rap session in true New Orleans fashion with a traditional second line band, perhaps a first in NALC history.

As NALC president, I am fortunate to travel across the country year-round to be with our members at regional rap sessions, state conventions and branch events. Wherever I am, it is always a pleasure to be with our members, but little compares to bringing us all together for one occasion.

At the rap session, I was struck by the professionalism, attentiveness and dedication of all our members. The attendees were taking notes, asking questions and gathering all the information available to take back to their members. Commitment and leadership at the branch level is what makes our union strong, and I appreciate everyone who took the time to attend.

The cover story of this month's magazine includes detailed information on the topics covered during the rap session. There were extensive conversations on collective bargaining, crime issues, our workforce and more, which you can read about on page 4. I also announced some new programs and initiatives that are in the works, and I'd like to use this column to expand on those.

eLearning training platform

First is a new type of virtual training for our activists. We are developing a platform that will offer a series of comprehensive training courses in a virtual format. While this would not replace in-person training, it would expand opportunities for those who want to get involved but might be unable to make it to training in person, while providing activists the opportunity to learn and further develop their skills on their own time. This will be an excellent resource allowing more members to get trained, ultimately continuing to improve representation for our members.

Emergency response support program

Second is an emergency response support program to assist our members who have been affected by a traumatic incident

on or off the job. We are all aware that far too many letter carriers have been victims of crime, assault and other traumatic incidents on the job. Outside of work, some of our members have witnessed mass shootings, natural disasters and other life-altering events.

In March, we will hold our first emergency response support program training for individuals who have been selected to help their brothers and sisters in this program. This training will teach NALC members how to best support other NALC members who have suffered from a traumatic event. Our members are always willing to stand up to help each other, and we believe that there is an opportunity through a program like this to provide much-needed support and assistance for our members in need. I know this for sure—when given the knowledge and opportunity to help their brothers and sisters, they always step up to do so.

This is only the first phase of our emergency response support program. In the future, we plan to offer education on and assistance with suicide prevention, substance abuse and mental health. The goal of the program is not to replace medical or professional help, but to serve as a peer-to-peer support program that can help someone get the initial help they may need.

Women's mentoring program

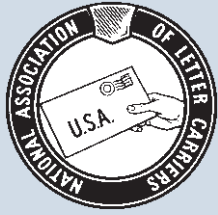
It is undeniable that women who take on or wish to take on a new responsibility or leadership role face different challenges than men. We are putting together a women's mentoring program to help our current and future female leaders. It is important to ensure that we as a union do everything possible to make it easy and accessible for all of our members who want to step up in their branches, particularly those who face challenges simply as result of who they are, as many women do around the country. This program will have experienced mentors who can help other women navigate their roles as NALC leaders. With the support of other women, we hope it will result in more women serving in leadership roles at the branch level and beyond.

Standing committee on diversity and inclusion

We also are forming a standing committee on diversity and inclusion. One of our union's greatest strengths is our diversity. This committee will help us maximize the impact of that strength by embracing and celebrating the diversity of our membership. The main goal of this committee is to improve access and make it as easy as possible for anyone, regardless of their race, gender, religion, sexual orientation or anything else, to get involved and fulfill the mission of our union—to fight for city letter carriers.

I have never been more excited about the future of NALC. These new programs and initiatives will make our union stronger, allow us to better support our members, and give us leadership nationwide that reflects the diverse union that we are.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brian L. Renfroe'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light blue background.



National Association of Letter Carriers, AFL-CIO

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

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The rallies



Philip
Dine

In the spring of 2022, after an historic fight against great odds, letter carriers succeeded in overturning the pre-funding mandate, which together with the artificial financial crisis it produced threatened the future of the Postal Service, imperiled our jobs and harmed the Post Office's ability to deliver for a public that relies on us.

The key behind that achievement was a whole-of-NALC effort marked by seamless coordination among our national leaders at Headquarters, our regional and branch officers, and activists and rank-and-file letter carriers around the country. An effort, moreover, built around a strong legislative push and a persuasive message delivered at all levels of our union.

Now we face another crisis, far different in nature but equally critical—and every bit as daunting. As you know all too well, robberies and assaults targeting letter carriers are now commonplace. This is not—as I tell journalists who want to dwell on the percentage change year to year—a matter of an incremental increase. Rather, this is a case of something exceedingly rare in the entire country suddenly exploding to the tune of multiple attacks sometimes occurring in the same city on the same day.

And once again, America's letter carriers are responding effectively, with your "Enough is enough" rallies around the country. It is too soon, much too soon, to know what their impact will be, but the signs thus far are encouraging. As with pre-funding, where you changed the national conversation, you are delivering a powerful message to the public, the press and the politicians—showing them why decisive action is required. Now.

As I write this, we have held eight rallies, with a couple more already scheduled. As before, the effort to combat the surging criminal activity aimed at carriers involves a whole-of-union approach. Each rally has featured local branch leaders as well as national business agents or state presidents, often a local letter carrier or two relating their own experiences, and President Renfro, who outlines both the national picture and our demands that the Postal Service protect its workers and that federal prosecutors prosecute these crimes against federal employees.

The comparisons between how NALC handled these sharply divergent existential crises—one about finances, one about safety—are instructive. The rallies are more bottom-up—reflecting our union's flexibility in adapting to diverse challenges—with local branches scheduling and organizing the events as they see a need, with some regional and national

assistance. Meanwhile, as before, officers and staffers at Headquarters are working on the legislative front.

The messaging is a little more locally tailored, given that the frequency and nature of the criminal activity differ by location, but overall—as before—the message you are delivering resonates because it is concise, it is factual and it draws in folks by showing how everyone has a stake in this.

While our main focus is, of course, on protecting letter carriers—who shouldn't have to wonder whether they'll be attacked while delivering the public's mail—we also note that residents and businesses shouldn't have to worry about having their mail stolen. More broadly, these brazen crimes damage communities' quality of life. Because we deliver routes for years or even decades, know our customers, notice when something is amiss and often are first on the scene, we alert authorities to an elderly resident's health crisis, find a missing child, or put out a small fire before it engulfs a house. But it is more difficult to pay attention to the well-being of the neighborhood if we're constantly looking over our shoulders or wondering why someone is approaching us.

Including the entire community helps explain the thorough coverage of our rallies, from local TV affiliates of NBC, Fox, ABC and CBS to news-oriented radio stations, online news outlets to prominent display in some of the nation's largest newspapers, including the *Los Angeles Times*, *Detroit News*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Denver Post*, *Cincinnati Enquirer* and the *Houston Chronicle*, whose story ran on Page One.

That coverage informs the public of the urgency of ending these spiraling attacks; and the press/public engagement inevitably draws the attention of our elected representatives.

Speaking of the media, it's worth noting that while national-level journalism increasingly ignores the craft's principle of objectivity to instead engage in narrative-driven political advocacy, many journalists on local and regional levels aim simply to inform the communities they're part of. They don't think they know it all, rather they want to learn it all—a monumental distinction.

By the effort you are putting into these rallies, by your accessibility before and after the rallies, you are giving journalists in your respective communities much to work with—to the benefit of us all.

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At NALC rap session, President Renfroe updates state and branch leaders on:

- Contract negotiations
- Crimes against carriers
- Heat safety
- Improving representation
- Legislation and politics
- New initiatives



NALC President
Brian L. Renfroe

More than 1,000 letter carrier activists representing branches across the United States gathered in New Orleans to take part in NALC's 2023 National Conference. The *NALC Constitution* calls for the union to hold a national conference in non-convention, odd-numbered years, with the date set by the Executive Council.

NALC President Brian L. Renfroe called the meeting—commonly called a “rap session”—to order at 8 a.m. on Sunday, Nov. 19, after a rousing performance by an authentic New Orleans “second line” jazz band. Renfroe invited Branch 124 member **Charlie Bradford** to sing the national anthem. Branch 124 member **Troy Joseph** led the Pledge of Allegiance followed by Branch 124's **Harold John**, who delivered the invocation.

Renfroe then introduced the members of the NALC Executive Council before recognizing former national President Fredric Rolando and other retired national officers, regional administrative assistants, Headquarters letter carrier and professional staff, full-time advocates, legislative and political organizers (LPOs), regional grievance assistants, regional office assistants and regional workers' compensation assistants.

The president then thanked the leaders in the room and the members around the country who have reached out to him during his treatment for alcoholism this past spring. “It was almost overwhelming, the amount of support and encouragement that I received from our members,” he said. He encouraged the people in the room who might need help to seek it; or if they knew of someone who needed help, to offer it. “I share this for one primary reason—no matter who or where you are, or what your responsibilities may be, help is available. If hearing this encourages

a single individual to reach out and receive the help they need, it's worth me sharing,” he said.

Contract negotiations

Renfroe then moved on to the topic of contract negotiations. “That is always our top priority,” he said. “It's at the top of mind for me every morning, night and minute in between.”

He explained that NALC is working on dual tracks, finalizing preparations for interest arbitration even as it continues to engage at the table with the Postal Service for a negotiated agreement.

“We have been hard at work for some time in preparation for the possibility of us reaching the interest arbitration process, and we are not completely finished with that preparation, but we have a very strong case put together. And should that be where we ultimately end up, we feel very good about the case that we can put on,” Renfroe said.

The president said the parties are in the process of selecting a neutral arbitrator to chair the panel, and will schedule hearing dates shortly after that.

“We will proceed as if we're going there, but at the same time, we are going to continue to negotiate,” he said. “I think both sides feel like it is well worth our time and our energy to continue to try to work toward an agreement.”

Renfroe said that while the parties have made progress toward reaching an agreement on the economic terms of a potential agreement, a gap remains between what the Postal Service is willing to pay and what the union believes would constitute a fair agreement that rewards NALC members for their value and contributions to the Postal Service's success.

“We started with a pretty large gap,” he said. “We are going to keep working



The NALC Executive Council was on stage for the rap session.

at it, and hopefully we can finally get to the point of agreement.”

Another topic of negotiation is the status of the non-career workforce. Renfroe said that if the non-career workforce does exist in the next contract, it needs to change considerably, particularly in pay. “There is a scenario where we could reach a tentative agreement that included the continuance of a non-career workforce in some form, if they are willing to pay all letter carriers what we believe we deserve,” he said. “Of course, there’s also a scenario where we reach a tentative agreement that does not include a non-career workforce.”

If the parties go to arbitration, NALC will present an official economic proposal that the union would support in its interest arbitration case and seek to achieve in the process, and if so, the president outlined what he was fairly certain would be in that proposal: “A single pay table, as we just talked about. We would go into the process proposing to eliminate the non-career category. We would propose that our cost-of-living adjustments be restored to 100 percent, starting at Step A and all the way through the process. And then we would, of course, propose that we receive significant annual general increases.”

Enough is enough

Renfroe then talked about the increase in robberies and assaults targeting letter carriers, which have risen exponentially over the past three years, with more than 2,000 such assaults in that period. Of those, only 14 percent have resulted in an arrest and federal prosecution. “Unfortunately, there is no simple, quick solution to this,” he said. “This is something that’s going to take time. But we are beginning to make progress.”

The Postal Service has made both public and private commitments to replace all of the Arrow Locks in the field and has tested a number of electronic solutions to devalue the Arrow Keys, which have been a primary target of thieves.

Renfroe said that increasing federal prosecution rates is another important component. The Postal Service is funding about a dozen prosecutors in U.S. attorneys’ offices to spend a majority of their time prosecuting these crimes. But more is needed, and that is why NALC has been holding “Enough is enough” rallies.

The rallies boost media awareness of the issue and generate robust news coverage, which in turn prioritizes the issue for residents and U.S. attorneys, thereby helping raise prosecution rates. (For more on the rallies, see page 10.)

In addition to the rallies, NALC has been working with members of Congress on crafting and introducing legislation to help combat the issue. Renfroe said that the bill would be NALC’s primary legislative priority and

that he will call for a day of action to quickly grow the support of co-sponsors and public awareness.

“For the longest time, most of us in this room carried mail and nobody ever messed with us,” he said. “There was a thought, if you mess with a letter carrier, that’s a federal employee, you’re going to jail. We have to make that a reality. That’s ultimately what deters these crimes.”

Heat safety

The president next addressed heat safety, which has resulted in letter carrier deaths. He said that the Postal Service has acknowledged the widespread problem with getting area and district managers to hold the mandatory heat training.

Along those lines, he said, “We are going to continue to engage them to ensure this training looks a whole lot different for 2024 by the end of or by April 1 of next year.”

A major part of the issue is that the United States does not have a heat safety



A New Orleans “second line” jazz band kicks off the rap session.



More than 1,000 branch and state leaders attend the rap session.

standard for workers. The Biden administration is working on one, which the NALC has vowed to help with. “We will continue to use every avenue we possibly can until we get to the point where they have a heat-illness prevention program that includes all the elements that are accepted by experts in this field, to protect people that are working from the dangers of excessive heat,” he said.

Improving representation, the Delivering for America Plan

Renfroe told attendees how the union is trying to improve representation for the branches, mostly small, that are not fully functioning—not active in representing their members—by working to merge those branches with nearby functional branches that can improve the representation for the members. He said that 113 of these branches have been merged with other branches, resulting in improved representation for those members.



Texarkana, TX Branch 569 President Sanjera Johnson asks a question during the rap session.

On the Postal Service’s 10-year plan, the union is remaining engaged with the Postal Service in order to maintain a seat at the table and offer feedback, but also to enforce compliance with the National Agreement as more letter carriers start delivering from Sorting and Delivery Centers (S&DCs). He also warned members to not listen to local managers talking about routes that will be moved to a future S&DC. “If you’re going to be impacted by one of these in any way, you will hear well in advance from your regional office and from us at Headquarters to prepare for that,” he said.

Politics and legislation

President Renfroe outlined NALC’s legislative and political agenda, starting with the union’s efforts to educate the Biden administration on the need for implementation of the “Segal” pension valuation method for CSRS. Convincing the White House to issue an executive action to institute the private-sector pension valuations would save the Postal Service billions of dollars annually.

In Congress, NALC continues to add support for the Social Security Fairness Act (H.R. 82), the bill that would repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision and the Government Pension Offset. Another piece of legislation is the Federal Retirement Fairness Act (H.R. 5995), the bill that would allow former non-career employees—including CCAs, TEs and casuals, all the way back to Dec. 31, 1988—to make deposit (or buy back) their non-career time and have it credited for retirement. A little-known fact, Renfroe said, is that 64 percent of active letter carriers would be affected

by this legislation, which shows why it remains a legislative priority.

However, President Renfroe said that members needed to be realistic about the chances of passage in Washington. He pointed to the many years it took of building support for postal reform through Congress after Congress, so that when a certain election went a certain way, it was possible to finally get the legislation enacted.

He thanked the letter carriers in the crowd who wore black T-shirts showing that they had upped their contributions to the Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF). He said that while he took pride in the fact that the union had reached the 12 percent threshold for members giving to NALC’s political action committee, he knows that NALC can do better.

“I just do not believe that 88 percent of our members have consciously chosen not to participate in the Letter Carrier Political Fund,” he said.

He said that when members are informed and then asked to join LCPF and the process is made easy, the union sees significant improvement. He said that the LPOs have been making the first part easier, especially when aided by branch leaders. On the second part, problems with PostalEASE and LiteBlue have made it more difficult, but NALC is working on a solution to make it much quicker and easier.

Unfortunately, the president said that there was not time to outline the process for Medicare integration under the Postal Service Reform Act, but that the “You Are the Current Resident” podcast posted on the same day had many details for members. The podcast

By making a contribution to the Letter Carrier Political Fund, you are doing so voluntarily with the understanding that your contribution is not a condition of membership in the National Association of Letter Carriers or of employment by the Postal Service, nor is it part of union dues. You have a right to refuse to contribute without any reprisal. Any guideline amounts are merely suggestions, and you may contribute more or less than the guidelines suggest and the union will not favor or disadvantage you by reason of the amount of your contribution or your decision not to contribute. The Letter Carrier Political Fund will use the money it receives to contribute to candidates for federal office and undertake other political spending as permitted by law. Your selection shall remain in full force and effect until canceled. Contributions to the Letter Carrier Political Fund are not deductible for federal income tax purposes. Federal law prohibits the Letter Carrier Political Fund from soliciting contributions from individuals who are not NALC members, executive and administrative staff or their families. Any contribution received from such an individual will be refunded to that contributor. Federal law requires us to use our best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, name of employer and occupation of individuals whose contributions exceed \$200 in a calendar year.



NALC national officers and letter carrier staff lead informative trainings over the course of the day.

is available on nalc.org, Spotify, iTunes and other places you listen to podcasts.

New initiatives

To end the speech portion of the meeting, Renfroe outlined four new initiatives NALC is working on:

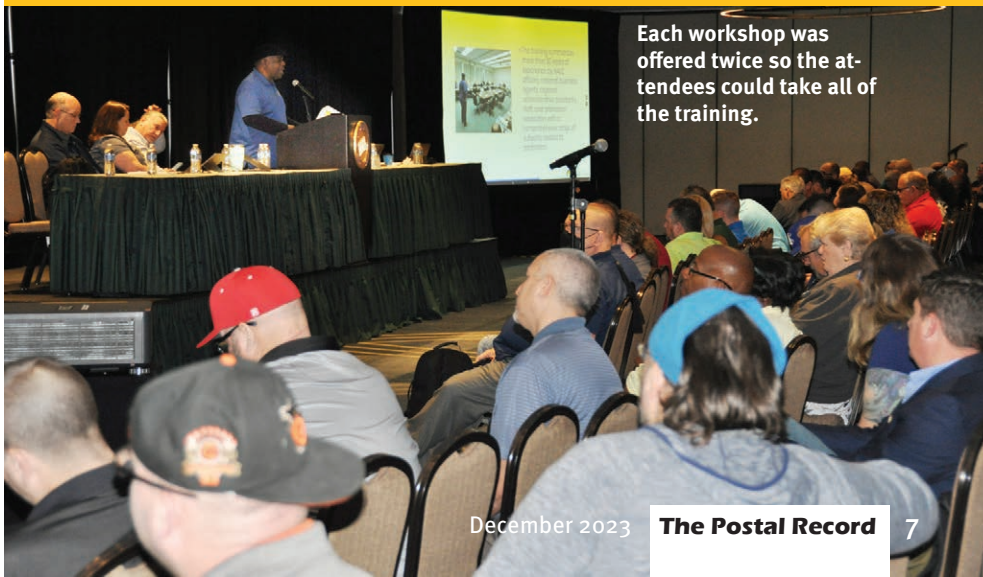
- A new online learning program to complement the in-person training that NALC does well on a local, regional and national level.
- An emergency response team of letter carriers to help NALC members when they're dealing with trauma, not to serve as counselors, but rather to offer peer-to-peer support in situations like suicide awareness, suicide prevention, mental health issues or substance abuse.
- A mentoring program for women in the union. "The idea behind this is to structure a program that for any of our members that face challenges just because of the fact that they are a woman, they have someone they can reach out to to help them navigate that challenge," he said.
- A standing committee for diversity issues. "Everyone in our union deserves and should have the opportunity to learn and to be involved, no matter who they are, no matter where they're from," he said. "And if we do that, and we make conscious efforts to ensure that as we move forward, we give all those who express interest that opportunity, it will allow us to continue to do something we've done for a long time, but I think even move to the next level, of embracing and utilizing the strength that we have through our diversity."

He then moved to the "rap" portion, taking approximately an hour's worth of questions from the attendees, primarily about issues related to contract negotiations, uniforms and route adjustments, before adjourning the meeting at about 11 a.m. **PR**

Workshops offer more updates

On Saturday, Nov. 18, attendees had the opportunity to attend four workshops on a multitude of topics important to letter carriers. The four workshops were:

- Executive Vice President Paul Barner, Vice President James Henry and Director of City Delivery Chris Jackson—along with Assistants to the President for Contract Administration Greg Dixon, Danielle Fake-Moorman and Jazmin Correa, and Assistant to the President for City Delivery Stephen Stewart—informed the attendees on national and regional arbitration and Step B updates, dispute resolution training for branch leaders and city delivery issues.
- Director of Life Insurance Jim Yates, Director of Health Benefits Stephanie Stewart, Director of Retired Members Dan Toth and Assistant to the President for Administration Chris Henwood talked about the benefits and offerings of the health and life insurance companies and about issues affecting current and future retirees.
- Secretary-Treasurer Nicole Rhine, Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Mack Julion, and Director of Safety and Health Manuel L. Peralta Jr. discussed issues related to branch dues, branch bylaw changes and the Employee Assistance Program.
- Special Executive Assistant to the President Tim McKay; Special Assistants to the President Doug Lape and Michelle McQuality; Assistants to the President for Administration Tamara Twinn, Mandy Hankins, Ron Osborne and Ed Morgan; Assistant to the President for Workers' Compensation Coby Jones; and Assistant to the President for Legislative and Political Organizing Brent Fjerstad provided updates on the New Employee Experience and Retention Program, USPS vehicles, the alternate dispute resolution process, Sorting and Delivery Centers, the Technology Integrated Alternate Route Evaluation and Adjustment Process, NALC's communications efforts, research and resources through NALC publications and website, OWCP and the Letter Carrier Political Fund. **PR**



Each workshop was offered twice so the attendees could take all of the training.



News from Washington

Ask your representative to co-sponsor the Federal Retirement Fairness Act (H.R. 5995)

The **Federal Retirement Fairness Act** (H.R. 5995) was reintroduced in the House by Reps. Derek Kilmer (D-WA), David Valadao (R-CA), Don Bacon (R-NE) and Gerry Connolly (D-VA) on Oct. 19. The bill would allow certain federal employees, including letter carriers, to make catch-up retirement contributions for time spent as non-career employees after Dec. 31, 1988, making it creditable service under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS).

H.R. 5995 would cover letter carriers who were employed as casuals, transitional employees or city carrier assistants, providing them with greater retirement security.

Currently, the bill has 29 co-sponsors—16 Democrats and 13 Republicans. It is important to build support and momentum for this bill, which would affect more than half of the active letter carriers.

All letter carriers are encouraged to visit NALC's Legislative Action Center and ask their representative to co-sponsor H.R. 5995. Visit nalc.org/action to contact your representative.

Equal COLA Act introduced in Senate

On Nov. 1, Sen. Alex Padilla (D-CA) introduced the Equal COLA Act (S. 3194). The bill would ensure that cost-of-living adjustments are applied equally to federal retirees.

Under current law, there is a discrepancy between COLA increases for Civilian Service Retirement System (CSRS) and Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) retirees. COLAs for CSRS retirees are determined by the rate of inflation measured by the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers in the third quarter of a year compared with the third quarter of the previous year. COLA benefits for FERS retirees are based on the same percentage change; however, the increase is

limited, based on certain criteria.

If the CSRS COLA increase is more than 3 percent, FERS retirees receive 1 percent less than the full annual COLA. If the CSRS COLA increase is between 2 and 3 percent, FERS retirees receive a 2 percent COLA. If the CSRS COLA increase is less than 2 percent, FERS retirees receive the full annual COLA.

For example, earlier this year the Social Security Administration announced a 3.2 percent COLA increase for 2024. Therefore, CSRS will receive this 3.2 percent boost in benefits while FERS retirees will only receive a 2.2 percent increase.

Sens. Ben Cardin (D-MD), Patty Murray (D-WA), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) and Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) were all original co-sponsors of S. 3194. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-VA) introduced a House version of the Equal COLA Act (H.R. 866) in February. The House version has 43 co-sponsors—40 Democrats and three Republicans.

"All retired letter carriers deserve to receive the same cost-of-living increases," NALC President Brian L. Renfroe said. "It is time for this disparity to be fixed so that our retired members, and all federal retirees, receive equal COLA adjustments."

Congress funds government through early 2024

Congress again narrowly avoided a potential shutdown last month. As Congress neared the Nov. 17 government funding deadline, the House passed a two-tiered stopgap funding bill on Nov. 14 on a 336-95 vote, the Senate passed it on Nov. 15 with an 87-11 vote and President Joe Biden signed it into law the following day. The short-term solution funds the government at current levels, avoids a government shutdown and excludes extreme funding cuts proposed by members of the House Freedom Caucus.

The two-tiered, or laddered, continuing resolution has two deadlines. Funding for

military and veteran programs, agriculture and food agencies and the Departments of Transportation and Housing and Urban Development will expire on Jan. 19, 2024, while the Departments of State, Defense, Commerce, Labor, and Health and Human Services are funded through Feb. 2, 2024.

The stopgap bill was the first major test for new Speaker of the House Mike Johnson (R-LA). House Freedom Caucus members took a hard stance against the bill, with 93 Republicans ultimately voting against it. A bipartisan stopgap agreement to fund the government at the end of September sealed Rep. Kevin McCarthy's (R-CA) fate as House speaker. After passage of a continuing resolution, Freedom Caucus members voted to oust McCarthy as their leader, triggering a three-week-long search for a new House speaker, eventually landing Johnson the job. Despite opposition from some Republican members, so far there are no reports of any plans to oust Johnson after this deal.

Two House Democrats, Reps. Jake Auchincloss (D-MA) and Mike Quigley (D-IL), voted against the measure since it did not include additional aid for Ukraine.

With the new deadlines in place, both chambers will continue working on the 12 appropriations bills for 2024. The House has passed seven, while the Senate has passed three. If the chambers cannot come to an agreement by the end of April 2024, the 1 percent spending cuts agreed to in the June debt-limit bill are scheduled to begin.

There is no clear path for the chambers to reach an agreement on spending levels. Senate appropriations bills follow the spending levels agreed to in the debt-limit deal, with an additional \$14 billion request for emergency funds. On the other side, House funding bills come in below the debt-limit deal's spending caps.

NALC will continue to monitor the appropriations process and will keep letter carriers informed of any important developments. **PR**

How to prepare for a successful food drive

Each year, NALC urges branches to register for the Stamp Out Hunger® Food Drive held on the second Saturday in May. Stamp Out Hunger is the largest single-day food drive in the nation.

Below you will find a guide on how to help your branch create a successful food drive, including the newly revamped registration process and website.

Registration

Work on the food drive must start in advance and must be a priority. The process begins with the branch selecting a food drive coordinator.

Once the food drive coordinator has been identified, the branch president should direct the coordinator to our newly designed website at nalc.org/community-service/food-drive to complete the branch registration form. The registration forms will be listed by region and should be returned promptly to the designated regional office. The coordinator should complete all fields on the form, including the name, address and website of the organizations that will receive the branch's donations.

Groundwork

Once the branch is registered, the food drive coordinator should explore NALC's newly designed website to order supplies; find information, such as the coordinator's manual or a sample press release; and find the national partners' and state and regional coordinators' contact information.

The food drive coordinator will want to make sure to review the coordinator's manual and then enlist help, as the branch will need volunteers. Start by asking the branch members to sign up by placing a sign-up sheet at your monthly branch meeting and on your branch web page and/or social media pages. Be mindful that you can solicit help from other crafts and NALC co-sponsors such as United Way.

Review the coordinator's manual and then create a timeline of duties and the branch's available budget to share with your volunteers, so they know what is expected of them. Schedule a meeting with the volunteers to identify skills or useful contacts. Make sure to set realistic expectations, assist with training if needed, provide reassurance and follow up regularly.

Building partnerships

Take advantage of local opportunities to solicit donations from businesses. Letter carriers have an advantage, as they interact with businesses daily and will have a relationship with the point of contact. In the coordinator's manual, you will find tips and talking points on how to secure local support.

Prior to meeting with a potential partner, create a folder and include material that you can leave with the prospective partner, including a letter explaining the cause, what type of donations you are requesting and how those donations will be used. Create a list of the possible partners and include the date the meeting took place, or the date the packet of information was mailed if you were not able to have a meeting, so you can follow up.

A great resource to use is your local United Way, which might be able to assist when attempting to get sponsors for bags. You can find more information at unitedway.org/find-your-united-way.

Advertising

There are numerous ways your branch can get the word out. One way is by establishing media contacts and asking them to help promote the drive. Also, you can contact your elected officials and ask them to declare the second Saturday in May as



Food Drive Day. You will find a sample press release for news and radio stations, along with a sample proclamation for your elected officials, in the food drive coordinator's manual.

Other ways include wearing food drive T-shirts; putting out lawn signs; hanging

posters and flyers inside banks, churches or grocery stores; providing stand-up talks with carriers to get them excited about the food drive; and sharing information on social media.

Remember to follow NALC's social media accounts on Facebook at facebook.com/StampOutHunger and on X (formerly known as Twitter) at [@StampOutHunger](https://twitter.com/StampOutHunger) for more ideas.

Next steps

After the food drive, what's next? The food drive coordinator should visit the NALC website to retrieve the final results form and record the weight (pounds) of the food collected plus the value in food of the money donated. Once the final results have been submitted to the applicable regional office, the coordinator should compile the information that has been collected and provide it to the branch president. The information should include lists of volunteers, vendor and partner contacts, food banks in your area with their contact information, a timeline of events leading up to the food drive, along with notes on what worked and areas to improve.

Determine if the current food drive coordinator will continue in that role next year. If not, do you have a replacement? In order for a branch to succeed, leaders must train the next generation.

Thank you for continuing the fight to Stamp Out Hunger. **PR**

Carriers call for stricter prosecutions, more help from the community

Letter carriers from several branches around the country are rallying to declare “enough is enough” and to make sure their local communities know about the surge in robberies and assaults against their postal carriers.

NALC President Brian L. Renfro crisscrossed the country in October and November, speaking at rallies. He told local media in several cities that in 2023 there have been more than 2,000 violent attacks on letter carriers, up from the 700 reported the previous year. And, he said, more needs to be done in response.

“Since 2020, only 14 percent of these crimes have had both an arrest and a prosecution,” Renfro said. NALC is calling for a more aggressive approach, including that these crimes against federal employees be prosecuted at the federal level.

The prosecutions that have occurred have often been at the local level, where penalties are not as severe as those available to federal prosecutors.

It takes a joint investigation among the Postal Inspection Service, the U.S. attorney general’s office and a local police force to hand the case to federal prosecutors. That, combined with the low number of such cases being prosecuted in the first place, reduces the deterrence to potential lawbreakers who aim to attack letter carriers.

“When these crimes are not prosecuted, it sends a message to criminals that they can get away with robbing a letter carrier,” President Renfro said.

“I am furious that our members continue to be targeted and harmed with no end in sight,” he added. “I have said many times that there is no single solution to this disturbing problem,



Top: NALC President Brian L. Renfro leads the rally in San Francisco on Nov. 3.



Left: Letter carriers and their families turn out for the Houston rally, held on Oct. 25.

but more can be and must be done, and it must be done immediately.”

He explained that while carriers often notice matters in the neighborhood that need to be addressed, such as mail piling up, the signs of a fire, a missing child, for example, now carriers need the help of residents.

“We’re simply asking all of you to look out for us the way we have looked out for you,” Renfro said at a rally in Detroit on Nov. 6. “We should not have to be here today. This has to stop.”

On Oct. 24, Denver, CO Branch 47 held a rally in nearby Aurora, where Colorado State Association President **Rick Byrne** told attendees, “We’ve had an increase in robberies and assaults on letter carriers in Denver [of nearly 300 percent].”

He told of two letter carriers he knew who quit after being assaulted. “It was just too much for them to take, to have to come back and look over their shoulder all the time,” he said. Several carriers are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). “It used to be that no one messed with the mail carrier,” he said. “It seems like the tide is turning.”

Byrne said that he was hopeful postal management and postal inspectors would do more. “They are communicating, but we need more awareness and possibly legislation to protect carriers across the country. It affects everybody.”

The next day, Houston, TX Branch 283 held a rally at the North Shepherd Post Office. The number of incidents



Detroit, MI Branch 1 members at its rally on Nov. 6

is up in Houston as well, where there have been at least 25 robberies targeting carriers in the last year.

“That’s just since January,” Region 10 National Business Agent Shawn Boyd told the attendees. “Those numbers are numbers we haven’t seen before, and we’ve been carrying mail for over 100 years.”

To put a face to the numbers, Branch 283 carrier **Ulysses Wells** told of an incident that happened to him in 2022. While putting mail in the boxes of a subdivision, three men got out of a car, assaulted him, and stole his Arrow Key and personal belongings. He still thinks about it.

“When I’m at work, I’m just nervous,” he said. “I’m just praying for the safety of my co-workers. I try to look out for them. They try to look out for me.”

“This is terrible, this is scary, this is frightening,” he said. “We need protection. And we need protection now.”

President Renfro then returned to the area where Greater East

Bay, CA Branch 1111 had previously held a rally on Oct. 12 (see the November issue of *The Postal Record*). On Nov. 3, San Francisco Branch 214 gathered to draw attention to the crime in its city across the bay.

“We chose this location because in the past month we had 11 robberies here in San Francisco,” Branch 214 President **Karen Eshabarr** said. “Seven of those were from this unit. It’s heart-wrenching. Our poor carriers are being terrorized.”

Renfro explained that as more Americans receive goods shipped through the mail, the profile of letter carriers becomes larger. “People know we’re carrying more packages than we normally do, so it just stands to reason that we could become larger targets,” he said. “That’s most definitely a concern.”

At the Nov. 6 rally in Detroit, Branch 1 President **Sandy Laemmel** told attendees that local incidents have been happening almost weekly, and she called on the community to keep watch.

“They can be the eyes and ears,” she said. “You usually know when your mail is coming. You usually see your letter carrier’s vehicle, you usually know where they park. Be observant of what is going on around us. If you see something that looks totally out of the ordinary, pick up the phone and call 911.”

Branch 1 member **Matt McBee** spoke about a day in July when, as he

stood at the mailboxes of an apartment complex, he felt a gun barrel pressed against his head. Two teens in masks and hoodies stole the letters he had and his Arrow Key.

McBee took time off from work but continues to have flashbacks. “I have to live with that. It’s very hard,” he said. “It’s the day I almost didn’t come home.”

Western Wayne Co., MI Branch 2184’s **Trang Do** had been on the job for only nine months when she was robbed. “I never [thought it would] happen to me, and I couldn’t breathe when I think about it,” she said.

Laemmel told the crowd of carriers, co-workers and the media, “We want to go home in the same condition we got here.”

NALC is leading the call for strong action to stop the trend, with the four rallies mentioned in this article following the initial four, in Chicago, Cincinnati, Compton and Oakland. The rallies, President Renfro said, aim “to bring attention to these violent attacks against our members. That’s why we’re sending a very clear message: This violence against our members has to stop.”

He continued: “Every employer has a duty and obligation to protect its employees on the job. The Postal Inspection Service is not protecting us, and the U.S. Department of Justice is not doing its job prosecuting these crimes.

“Postal inspectors and postal police officers work diligently to investigate and prevent instances of violence



‘Enough is enough’ (continued)

against our employees,” he said, and added, “and yet, current methods of prevention clearly are not working. The situation is worsening.”

Renfroe called on the Inspection Service’s leaders to do more: “Times have drastically changed, and methods for protecting our members while we do our job must reflect the current circumstances.”

President Renfroe said that in addition to more frequent and stronger prosecutions, NALC would also like to see newer technological versions of the Arrow Keys that criminals are after.

“A big part of the solution is to devalue that key, potentially using a technology solution so that if they did get their hands on it, it wouldn’t be nearly as valuable and wouldn’t give them the access that they currently have,” he said.

The rallies are part of NALC’s effort to get out a multifaceted message—to the Postal Service to better protect letter carriers on their routes; to locally based federal prosecutors to take these cases and apply the more harsh federal penalties that local prosecutors do not have available; to residents to alert authorities if they see anything worrisome and to preserve evidence, such as doorbell or other surveillance videos, for use by investigators; and to their elected representatives to be aware of the need for solutions.

Another way NALC is getting the message out is through reports by regional TV broadcasts, radio shows, newspapers and online news outlets about the surge in violence nationwide. Having the letter carrier perspective as a central element in these media reports increases community awareness of the issue and helps



President Renfroe declares “Enough is enough” at the rally in Denver, CO, on Oct. 24.



Denver, CO Branch 47 members call on the community to help prevent crimes against letter carriers.

strengthen NALC’s push for solutions. That is especially so because of the widespread public support for letter carriers, who in poll after poll have for years topped the list of the most trusted and highly regarded federal employees.

President Renfroe called on local branches to hold rallies such as the ones that have already been held. Branch leaders are encouraged to contact their national business agents’

offices for information and material to help organize a rally or for help contacting the media to amplify our message to their communities.

“Events like these make a difference and bring awareness to this growing problem,” he said. “I encourage all NALC branches, especially in areas that are experiencing an uptick in crime, to mobilize and plan similar events. When we all come out with a unified message, we are heard.” **PR**

Personal conduct, social media and the Postal Service

The Postal Service and NALC have a long history of earning high levels of public respect and trust. City letter carriers take pride in this history and always strive to present a positive image to the community. Acknowledging this tradition of respect, the Postal Service has certain expectations for the conduct of letter carriers. If you are new to USPS and NALC, these expectations may be unfamiliar to you. This article will briefly describe these expectations and summarize how they relate to employees' use of social media.

Section 665.16 of the *Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM)* outlines the overall expectations regarding conduct in and out of the workplace.

665.16 Behavior and Personal Habits

Employees are expected to conduct themselves during and outside of working hours in a manner that reflects favorably upon the Postal Service. Although it is not the policy of the Postal Service to interfere with the private lives of employees, it does require that postal employees be honest, reliable, trustworthy, courteous, and of good character and reputation. The Federal Standards of Ethical Conduct referenced in 662.1 also contain regulations governing the off-duty behavior of postal employees. Employees must not engage in criminal, dishonest, notoriously disgraceful, immoral, or other conduct prejudicial to the Postal Service. Conviction for a violation of any criminal statute may be grounds for disciplinary action against an employee, including removal of the employee, in addition to any other penalty imposed pursuant to statute.

Chapter 1 Section 112 of the *Handbook M-41, City Delivery Carriers Duties and Responsibilities*, reads in part:

112.52 Conduct affairs of personal life in a way that will reflect creditably on both you and the Postal Service.

Keep the *ELM* and *M-41* guidelines above in mind when interacting with the public or using social media. The

official Postal Service social media policy is contained in Section 363 of the *Administrative Support Manual (ASM)*. The USPS social media policy mainly addresses the conduct of employees who use social media in their official capacity to communicate with the public or other employees. To review *ASM* Section 363, visit nalc.org and choose the *Workplace Issues/Resources/USPS Handbooks and Manuals* tab to view the complete *ASM*.

While the *ASM* guidelines do not limit an employee's participation in union social media activity, there are specific rules contained in the Hatch Act that apply to union political activity and social media. For more information on the "dos and don'ts" related to the Hatch Act and social media, visit the "Government Affairs">"Political" tabs on the NALC website at nalc.org.

Recently, the Postal Service has issued reminders to employees about these expectations and specifically employees' behavior when interacting and posting on social media. A USPS Retail and Delivery stand-up talk issued in October reminds employees of the *ASM* rule prohibiting them from speaking on behalf of the organization on websites, blogs and social media without permission. Postal employees must receive written permission from the Postal Service social media team and the appropriate vice president before establishing any online accounts that represent the Postal Service.

USPS does not intend to have this policy infringe on employees' ability to have their own social media presence or personal accounts. However, be cautious when making posts related to your job with USPS. The stand-up talk also reminds employees that they should not post while on the clock. This includes "selfies" in the plant, post office, vehicle



or other official workplace areas. While social media videos and reels of letter carriers performing their duties and interacting with customers can often be entertaining and heartwarming, be aware that these may not be favorably received by the Postal Service.

You have the right to use personal social media outside of work hours at your discretion; however, be careful. Comments or videos you make on social media may be misinterpreted by customers, co-workers or management, which could create difficulties in the workplace. The *ASM* reminds employees to always be respectful, whether in the actual or virtual world. The Postal Service Standard of Conduct states: "Employees are expected to maintain harmonious working relationships and not to do anything that would contribute to an unpleasant working environment." *ASM* Section 363.B advises employees to "not verbally attack other individuals or companies. This includes fellow employees, contractors, customers, vendors, and competitors."

Remember that anything you post might be visible to anyone—including postal managers and the public—and could be there forever.

Be mindful of your personal conduct and what you are posting on social media—you never know who could be watching. **PR**

Workers are trying to make Amazon pay

Amazon, the giant online retailer company, is global—and so is the labor movement’s fight against it. Union representatives, Amazon workers, activists and advocacy groups gathered at “The Summit to Make Amazon Pay” in Manchester, England, at the end of October to strategize about how to make the company pay its fair share—to its workers as well as to the communities and governments where it operates.

NALC joined the meetings as part of UNI Global Union’s Amazon Alliance. Assistant to the President for Administrative Affairs Chris Henwood and Director of Research Holly Feldman-Wiencek represented NALC.



Director of Research Holly Feldman-Wiencek addresses the Manchester summit.

discuss organizing strategies and legislative opportunities, and provide support and solidarity to Amazon workers.

UNI formed the alliance about a decade ago, and NALC joined in 2019 when it became clear that Amazon was aggressively entering the delivery industry. The alliance, which meets about twice a year, includes labor

unions from Germany, Spain, Poland, Italy, France, the United Kingdom, South Africa and the United States. The October meeting, for the first time, also included unions from New Zealand and India, reflecting Amazon’s expanding global presence.

The summit featured panels of experts who discussed the ways Amazon uses its size and power to influence markets and governments to increase its profits, as well as how to limit this influence. Amazon’s tax-avoidance strategy means that it rarely contributes to the communities where it places its facilities, even as it has cornered the market on state and local government supply procurement, further increasing its profits. Often the solution must come from legislative and regulatory reform.

While the U.S. Federal Trade Commission’s antitrust case against Amazon filed in September could lead to reforms that limit this power, other countries provide instructional examples of laws and regulatory structures that could be used in the United States. India recently passed a law aimed at Amazon that limits it to acting only as a marketplace for other retailers to sell their goods, meaning Amazon cannot sell Amazon-branded products on the website, which has restricted its ability to profit there.

The summit also discussed on-the-ground organizing efforts—with some wins and losses for labor unions. Amazon warehouse workers and delivery drivers shared their experiences working for the company, highlighting the high injury rate, extreme speed of work and low pay, along with the fierce anti-union tactics Amazon uses to prevent workers from organizing.

While there have been only two successful attempts so far to form a union among Amazon workers in the

United States, experiences from other countries are informative. Labor laws and industry structures in European countries, particularly Germany, Italy and Belgium, have forced Amazon to follow certain pay rates and sectoral rules. However, even when there are stricter laws in place, Amazon refuses to bargain or cooperate in good faith.

A highlight of the summit for the NALC contingent was meeting and learning from Jessie Moreno, a delivery driver employed by a small delivery company that works exclusively for Amazon and that recently unionized and joined the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

Rather than employing its own delivery drivers, Amazon contracts with small delivery companies, called delivery service partners (DSPs), which employ the drivers. However, Amazon still controls every element of these drivers’ jobs. This employment structure, which is a form of employee misclassification, allows Amazon to hire and fire DSPs as it wants. This model is intentional so that Amazon can ruthlessly quash unionization efforts.

Jessie and his co-workers, who deliver in Palmdale, CA, were worried about working in the desert heat and they also protested their low pay. Their DSP owner understood their concerns and voluntarily recognized their union earlier this year. Amazon refused to engage and fired the entire DSP after the successful union vote, but that has not deterred the drivers. The workers in Palmdale have been on strike since the Amazon firing. “One day longer, one day stronger!” Jessie said as the strike went into its 125th day.

Finally, unions and activists shared and strategized over what collective actions against Amazon could be taken on the then-upcoming Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving in the United States



and the busiest shopping day of the year. Unions across the world planned strikes, walkouts, protests and media outreach, all aimed at building worker power, sharing their struggles with the public, and getting Amazon’s attention.

Unlike the first alliance meeting that NALC staff attended in 2019, where little progress had been made in organizing and addressing Amazon’s immense power, this meeting showed how much work had been done in the few years since. In addition to some small, yet significant, organizing wins, the largest change has been in how the public narrative has shifted against the company. Media coverage and the public are gaining an understanding of the many exploitative and predatory tactics of the company. This is thanks in large part to the many unions, community groups and advocacy organizations that have come together to shed light on Amazon’s poor labor and business practices. There remains, however, much more to do.

Manchester was a particularly appropriate place to hold such a meeting. The city, which was a small town for much of its history, expanded quickly at the turn of the 19th century, when it became one of the centers of textile manufacturing during the Industrial Revolution. While the Industrial Revolution brought wealth to the city, many workers suffered from meager pay and poor working conditions and lived in substandard housing in a city covered with smoke from factories. But workers fought to improve their lives, organizing to earn better working conditions as well as the right to vote. The city takes pride in its strong labor history.

Like Manchester once was, Amazon is a center of capitalism today. It is heartening to be reminded that workers have organized to overcome industrial power and greed in the past. With all of our help, Amazon workers will try to do it again and make Amazon pay its fair share. **PR**

Penalty overtime exclusion set

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 26-23, Week 1 (Dec. 2, 2023) and ends Pay Period 01-24, Week 2 (Dec. 29, 2023).

NALC documentary shown at film fest

On Oct. 28, NALC’s documentary, “The Revolt of the Good Guys,” was screened at the Workers Unite Film Festival (WUFF) at Cinema Village theater in New York City. The film details the buildup and explosion of the 1970 Great Postal Strike, as well as the roles of NALC President James Rademacher and the wildcat strike’s leader, Vincent Sombrotto.

WUFF is New York’s only labor film festival and is in its 12th season. It aims to feature student and professional films from the United States and around the world that highlight the struggles, successes and daily lives of all workers in their efforts to unite and

organize for better living conditions and social justice.

In addition to members of the general public, the audience for the film included New York Branch 36 members and 1970 strikers Jose Ramos, Harold Hillard and Eugene Spry; the film’s narrator (and also a



striker) Wally Padulo of Jersey City, NJ Branch 42; and six members of the Sombrotto family. **PR**

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



A season for giving



While letter carriers give of themselves year-round, there's something about the holiday season that brings out the better angels of their nature. In this issue of *The Postal Record*, we bring you some of the special moments this time of the year delivers—and some of the ways letter carriers keep the joy alive. However they spread happiness, letter carriers give of themselves—and receive rewards even greater than what they give.

Carrier answers Santa letter asking for help from bullying

Brittany Giles was leaving work one day in December last year when she saw her manager doing something different. “My boss was making these super cute envelopes and stuffing them with a bunch of stuff,” the Port St. Lucie, FL, letter carrier said. They were responses from kids’ letters to Santa. “There were really cute letters she typed up, acknowledging that these kids wrote to Santa, and she put in colored pencils, crayons, coloring books, candy canes, whatever.”

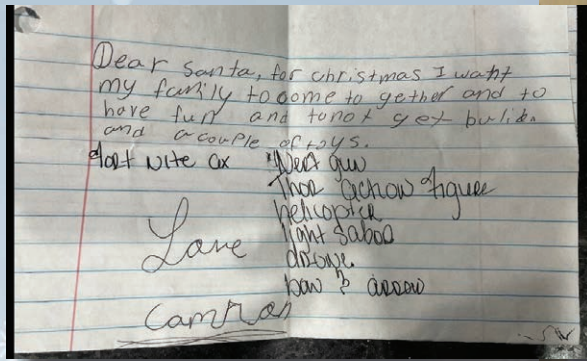
Giles, a six-year letter carrier with West Palm Beach Branch 1690, immediately asked her

manager if there were more. “I saw the bag and I started reading them, and a lot of them broke my heart. There were a lot of super-sad letters,” she said. But one stood out.

Camron King, then 10 years old, asked Santa for some toys and to have his family “come together and to have fun and to not get bullied.”

Giles knew she had to get involved.

“When I read that, you know, I’m a mom. I have two little kids. I’m super big on family. I have always taught my children to be as nice as possible to everyone, especially the struggling children at school that are being picked



on. Those are the ones that you want to go make friends with, right?" she said. "This was almost a year ago now, and I can still tell you exactly what the letter said because it stuck with me so much, because his letter was about how he wanted his family. He didn't want to be bullied. I mean, it broke my heart."

Giles left her post office that evening and went to the return address on the Santa letter—the residence of Camron's grandparents, who looked at this uniformed letter carrier like she was strange. After explaining that she had received Camron's letter and wanted to know what toys he would like (he hadn't included anything specific on his letter), the grandfather began crying.

"You have no idea how much this means to me," he told her. He also called Camron's mother, Amy, who brought the boy to meet Giles.

"He normally goes to Grandma and Grandpa's house after school, and then he had his cousin help him write the letter," Amy King told WPTV, the West Palm Beach NBC affiliate. Camron was born without his left hand and has a muscle nerve disorder. "It's called [Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease], so that affects his nerves and muscles in his legs and arms, so as he gets older it kind of deteriorates.

"They said he wouldn't be able to walk, but he's walking, running, playing soccer. I'm very proud of him. I always say, he's my little miracle baby," King added.

When Giles—a cancer survivor who was told (incorrectly) that she would never have children—met Camron, she told him, "I work for Santa and I read your letter, but you didn't say what type of toys you want. So, he sent me down here to get a list and bring it back to him."

The boy's face lit up and he gave her a list of gifts for him and his family. Giles wrote down his ideas, but she left with a few more that hadn't made it onto the list.

She reached out to St. Lucie County Sheriff's Office Deputies Ethan Kirk and Rebecca Ireland. They all pooled their own money to buy the gifts on the list. And Deputy Kirk told

WPTV that he "asked [Camron] if there's anything I can do for him, whether it's go to his school, talk with his school resource deputy and just try to figure out a plan and try to get this stopped." The police ultimately held an anti-bullying assembly at Camron's school and spoke to every kid there.

After local news covered the story, it began to take on a life of its own. The national organization Bikers Against Bullying contacted Giles and wanted to do something. They rented out a Chuck E. Cheese restaurant and arcade and hosted a party for Camron and his family. Just as he had asked in his letter, he got to come together with his family and have some fun.

"It was a great thing to see how many people truly cared and wanted to get involved and be a part of this," Giles said.

She encourages everyone to help in their community. "I'm sure every community or city has a mayor, and if you don't have anything that your office is a part of, you can always go through that way and try and get involved with your city. But, especially after COVID, things are rough for a lot of people right now," she said.

As for Camron, the carrier still is a part of his life, seeing him and his family regularly. "This is my extended family at this point," she said. "Community is everything. Family is everything. And it doesn't have to be by blood."

"Camron is not going to live a long life," Giles explained. "As he gets older, his body will start shutting down. He does not retain information. He does not remember a lot of things. But the fact that I could give that kid a merry Christmas, even if it only lasted in his mind for a few moments, it was worth it." **PR**

Top l: Camron's Santa letter

Top: Brittany Giles gives Camron a hug.

Above: The party at Chuck E. Cheese for his family and new friends





Michigan branch adopts two schools for the holidays

For Jackson, MI Branch 232, after a long spell of letting holiday giving go by the wayside, the branch ended up giving gifts last year to not only one entire school, but two.



Santa arrives on a motorcycle in Jackson, MI

The family that the branch adopted for the holidays in 2021

Though the branch had been involved in charitable endeavors in past holiday seasons—such as in 2007 when it put a new roof on the house of a father serving abroad in the military—changes in management complicated things. “We have had a revolving door of postmasters, and they didn’t want us doing stuff like this,” Branch 232 President **Deborah Marriott** said. “Only CFC.”

But with a new postmaster more accepting of it, the branch decided to get back to giving in 2021. The branch members brought it up at a union meeting and felt the time was right,

“especially after Covid and so many people lost their jobs,” Marriott said. “Jackson has a lot of families at the poverty level and below.”

When the decision to do something for a family was made by the branch, one of the members said that on their route they had a family with eight foster children who had just moved into the area. The branch voted and decided to adopt the family for the holidays.

“We raised over \$5,000,” Marriott said. “We got them all toys, clothes, brand-new pillows, bedding, blankets. We got them pajamas to put on for New Year’s Eve and toothbrushes.” Everything was themed for the child, “so if they like basketball, they got basketball bedding.”

Carrier **Mark Raczkowski** dressed up as Santa Claus and he received a ride on the back of the local APWU president’s motorcycle with a police escort. “Just seeing the kids light up as we’re bringing in bags and bags and bags and bags of gifts and stuff [was heartwarming],” Marriott said. “They were jumping up and down and screaming.”

It was such a success that for 2022, the branch decided that if helping eight kids felt that good, what if they helped a whole school full of them? “When the president of the local APWU heard what we were doing, he was like, ‘Hey, let’s band together and let’s do two!’ ” she said.

The schools were two separate elementary schools in underprivileged areas with 900 children in total. “We contacted both the principals to make sure they were down with it,” Marriott said. They were told, “‘Yeah, most of the kids here, they’re on the free lunch program. They come to school in the same clothes every day. They have very little.’ And we were like, ‘We’re on it,’ ” she said.

The branch started raising money in September, doing 50/50 raffles twice a week. It also set up a “pumpkin” mail hamper for toy donations. And both NALC and APWU members donated money.

Then it was time to do the shopping.

The APWU members did the shopping with



The two schools that the branch and the APWU local adopted for the holidays in 2022: Cascade Elementary (top) and Hunt Elementary (bottom)

the money they raised, while Marriott went to JCPenney and Kohl's department stores as well as ordering from Amazon with her branch's donations. "I would come home from work and there would be a wall in front of my back door with boxes from Amazon," Marriott said. "For over a month, my house, from one end to the other, almost to the ceiling, was nothing but boxes. As it came in, I had to categorize what I had, the age group, boy, girl, so we had everyone covered."

Marriott admitted that she had nightmares leading up to the event: "We're not going to have enough gifts!"

When the time arrived, the postmaster donated a 2-ton truck and NALC and APWU members separated all the toys so that they had enough for both schools, delivering to one a week after the other.

After work on the night before the first school event, they set the toys up on a U-shape of tables and covered them with tablecloths. The next day, Raczkowski dressed up as Santa Claus again while one of the clerks dressed up as an elf to help the kids celebrate. As the kids saw Santa and got to pick a gift, they also received a cocoa packet and a candy cane donated by the branch and a coloring book and crayons donated by the postmaster. Some of the rural letter carriers from the office joined in on their day off for the celebration, too.

"We had so many basketballs, the clerk actually pushed a pumpkin of basketballs out and started throwing it into the bleachers and the kids were just roaring," she said.

Not only did they have enough, "we actually ended up having more than enough gifts. So not only did we do the two schools, we also donated boxes of toys to our homeless shelter and also to a woman called Miss Wanda, who donates to the underprivileged all year round," Marriott said.

The kids at both schools thanked the letter carriers and clerks, and afterward they received thank-you cards. "It was just so heart-wrenching," she said, quoting the messages. "I



got exactly what I wanted," one said. "Santa, thank you so much," another said.

This year, the branch has decided to go back to adopting a single family. "We want to buy, of course, toys and clothes for all the kids and we want to get food for Christmas Eve, Christmas Day," she said. "And we're hoping to raise enough money to get a money order for Consumers Power and help that family with their electric bill for that month, too."

Marriott encourages other branches that want to give back to start local. "Ask people in your branch," she said. "Hey, does anyone on their route have a family that really needs help? That's how we got the one family, because we see it every day. We see them in the summertime, or we see them getting home from school wearing the same clothes all the time, with not many toys. And that's who we want to touch."

"I look at it this way," she said. "Every child that we touched at that elementary school is going to remember that. And hopefully one day they're in a position to pay it forward and help." **PR**





Carrier battles cancer while rocking for Christmas cheer

Music has always been a part of Harry Bittner's life. He grew up listening to Motown records around the house that his parents played, and then got exposed to rock 'n' roll music through neighborhood kids.

He picked up a bass guitar when he was 15 and has loved playing ever since. "I got started just because a friend of mine was kind of dabbling with the guitar," he said. "His older brother was in a band, and we would sneak down and play their instruments when they weren't around."

Fast-forward to 2019, when the Camden, NJ Merged Branch 540 member joined a five-member cover band called uNGLuED. They practice once a week, usually perform two shows a month at bars or other events like festivals, and the bandmates work together to choose songs to cover.

"They jokingly call me 'Heavy Metal Harry' because my background before doing

this cover band was doing heavy metal stuff, so I like harder stuff," Bittner said, and added that his biggest musical inspiration is Iron Maiden bass player Steve Harris. "But we tend to try and pick songs that we know will go over with the crowd," he said. "We're more inclined to do Michael Jackson and Prince. We don't do Metallica and Megadeth, you know what I mean?"

The carrier was enjoying playing regular gigs with the band when uNGLuED's singer, Wally, approached them in the fall of 2020 and told them about his longtime desire to do a traveling Christmas show by driving around a truck to a few locations, and the band would then play some Christmas carols on the back to

spread some cheer. "I immediately said, 'Yeah, I'm in,'" Bittner said.

However, that winter of 2020, COVID-19 was spreading, and events were shutting down. They began to fear that they'd get in trouble for gathering, so Bittner suggested that maybe they raise some money to help out people who need it while they play, in case they were questioned by police.

Then, fortuitously, an acquaintance of the carrier heard about their plans and asked if she could put them in touch with a friend of hers who is a retired prosecutor, who works with a charity and who could help the band find families who could be helped through the money collected.

"And boy, did she ever," Bittner said. "I mean, you hear these nightmare, horrible stories about everything from people that had lost their jobs and just were hurting for money with little kids to a woman that was a victim of domestic violence and kind of out on her own."

Plans soon came together, and the band began scouting locations and practicing songs. Wally spent a few weeks preparing the 20-foot utility trailer, and attaching the drum set to it so they can travel with it.

"We would tow this huge trailer decked out in lights and with a tree on it to a couple of different neighborhoods where we knew it wouldn't be an issue," Bittner said. "And then we went to a school that was closed at night [so] we'd have this big, giant open lot. We went to another community down the road where there was a VFW [Veterans of Foreign Wars]."

The first year they played four stops. Bittner's friend, Joe Popow, whom he called "the most authentic Santa you've ever seen in your life" accompanied them. He also recruited his youngest of two daughters, Alyssa, who dressed as an elf and handed out candy canes to children and walked around with a bucket to collect money from concertgoers.

People in the local communities, including some of his co-workers, "bring their kids, kids go see Santa," Bittner said. "They listen to us, give us a couple of bucks, and we would get it to the right people when all this was over."





uNGLuED perform on the back of its mobile stage.

Within a week or so, the band and Santa visited the houses of the selected families and dispersed gift cards and presents. “It kind of grew into this thing where we’d be able to get information on the families, like how many kids, what are their ages, what are their sizes,” he said, adding that the bandmates’ spouses shop for the kids’ clothes and toys, and then they’d all wrap the items.

“It was a huge success,” Bittner said of the 2020 endeavor—so much so “that we had every intention of doing it every year.”

They had just set out preparing for the 2021 show that October when Bittner went in for routine blood work. “Next thing you know, I’m casing mail in the morning. I get a phone call from the nurse, and she says, ‘Your liver enzymes are through the roof, and we’ve got to figure out why,’” the 29-year letter carrier said. “And that just kind of set off this chain of events where I had to get all these different tests.

“It was an ultrasound and then an MRI, and I find out I have this tumor, and they thought I had bile duct cancer initially, and it’s like a death sentence,” he continued, adding that after undergoing a colonoscopy he was eventually correctly diagnosed with Stage IV colorectal cancer. “I’m reading, and I’m thinking, ‘Oh my God, how did I go from perfectly healthy a month ago to, man, I might have three or five years?’ You know, that starts all setting in.”

His eldest daughter, Haley, was getting married that December, and Bittner was convinced by a friend to get his minister’s license to officiate the ceremony, so he did. “She’ll always have this to remember—that her dad married her,” he said.

“Around the same time, we’re doing Year 2 of the Christmas gig. And it’s just under this shroud of uncertainty and fear and what’s going to happen next. I know that chemo is coming, and I just kept thinking, ‘Boy, I hope it doesn’t start un-

til after the Christmas gig,’” he added. “I didn’t want to let my bandmates down. I didn’t want to let the people down that were going to be on the receiving end of these gifts.”

Fortunately, he was able to fully participate in the annual festivities. “It was even a bigger success than the first year. More people turned out, more money was raised, more families were helped,” Bittner said. They started to mix up the format, adding in some regular rock music, too.

They continued to collect cash, sometimes gift cards, and also PayPal donations at each stop. After receiving help from the retired prosecutor the first year with selecting families, the band was able to start finding them on their own. “People started hearing we were doing this, and we’d have people come to [us and] say, ‘Hey, man, I know this family, and they just had a house fire and lost everything. Can you help them out?’” he said. “We’ll check into it and be, like, ‘OK, this is legit. Let’s help these people out.’”

One of his favorite memories from the endeavor was when he and the band was playing a gig in the fall, and he saw a man he recognized but couldn’t place. In between sets, the man approached the band and said they had helped him and his family out the first year when they were in a tough spot. He had then gotten a new job and was doing better, so he wanted to offer a donation for another family in need. “That was really cool, because that was like, we’ve made a difference in these people’s lives, and now they’re appreciative, and they’re here to support us as a band—but more importantly, they’re here to pay it forward and give it to somebody else who’s now down on their luck.”

Bittner began chemotherapy in January 2022 and tried working his postal job through his treatment to keep a sense of normalcy, but he ended up taking some time off here and there





for treatments, which included eight chemo infusions, followed by five radiation treatments, and then a major surgery in which surgeons removed 60 percent of his liver and a section of his colon. In addition, “I had my gallbladder removed, hernia repaired, and I ended up with an ileostomy bag for nine weeks,” he said.

“They sent me [for] a scan in December of last year, and they found a tiny little piece of cancer in my common bile duct,” he continued. “And there again, the first thing I’m thinking is, ‘I don’t know when surgery is going to be, but I hope I can get this Christmas gig in,’ and I find out the surgery is going to be February. We did Christmas show No. 3 last December. And again—bigger, better, more money, more families.”

Being involved with music is both fun and rewarding, Bittner said. “Playing in the band has been so invaluable to me during my cancer journey, because every minute I spend learning a song, playing a song, playing out, it’s another minute that I’m not thinking about cancer,” he said, adding, “And that was really crucial, I think, for me to maintain a good attitude [and] press forward.”

As this issue of *The Postal Record* was going to press, the carrier and his bandmates were winding down the last of their regular gigs for the year and gearing up for the fourth annual

charity show on Dec. 9. “I’m sure it’ll be bigger and better than it’s been the last couple of years. It just keeps growing,” he said. “I think as long as the five of us are together as a band, that we’ll continue to do it.”

Bittner said of their fundraising, “You just do it because it’s the right thing to do. While it’s been a rough two years for my family, there’s people out there that have it worse.” This year they planned to help multiple people yet again, including a family they’ve met who lost everything in a house fire, even their dogs.

“When you’re in a cover band, you’re not looking to be famous or anything,” he said. “At the end of the day, you’re just doing it because it’s fun, and it’s a cool night out. You hope that people dig it, and in our case, with uNGLuED, you hope that you’re building up this fan base that will also contribute to the Christmas thing at the end of the year, and they do. The reason why we’ve collected \$13,000 in three years is because we have people that come see us at those other shows.”

As for himself, “things are looking up. There’s no sign of cancer right now,” Bittner said, and he added, “I’m one of the lucky ones. It’s not lost on me that so many people don’t come out the other side from this. I feel very blessed.”

Haley, whose wedding Bittner presided over, is expecting a baby girl in January, and the carrier and his wife, Joan, are looking forward to being grandparents.

Indeed, he’s thought of his legacy. “I want my kids, and my grandkids eventually, to have something to remember—that even when I was as low as low could be in the worst possible shape anybody could be in, I still was committed to getting out and doing this Christmas gig,” he said.

“And I want people to go, ‘Hey, you know what? This dude, he wasn’t feeling great and he looked like hell, but he bundled up and put hand warmers in his pocket and jumped on a trailer to play Christmas carols to help out other people that weren’t doing so good,’” he added. “That’s what it’s about for me. That’s why I do it.” **PR**

For more information, visit facebook.com/ungluedband.

uNGLuED with Santa and elf (Bittner’s daughter Alyssa)



The better angels keep giving back in New York

New York, NY Branch 36 carrier **Earnest Twomley's** chance encounter with a child on his route a decade ago led him to organize toy drives for needy children every Christmas.

Seeing a mother he knew from his route emerging from a taxi with her three children, he noticed that one of the children, a little girl, was in distress.

"She's screaming in the middle of the street," he recalled. "I went over there to see what the issue was because I have three kids myself."

He offered to help by delivering the little girl to her home.

"I said, 'Have you ever been delivered to your apartment by a mailman?' And she just looked at me and started laughing. So, I picked her up, carried a couple of flights of stairs, put her on a couch, and that was it."

But then a neighbor who saw what he did told him the significance of his kind act.

"One of the neighbors said, 'That was a real nice thing you did.' I said, 'What? Stop a little girl from crying?'" The neighbor told Twomley that the little girl had a brain tumor and was returning from New York's Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center after a round of treatment.

Wanting to do something more for the family, the next time he saw the mother while out on his route, he asked her for letters to Santa Claus from the children. He then asked some fellow carriers to help fulfill the wish list, and everyone pitched in.

"So, picture a grown man going into the American Girl doll store and picking out the stuff that she wanted!" Twomley said.

Twomley and some other carriers invited the family to get the presents under the Christmas tree in the lobby of his station in Manhattan. Somehow a local TV news station heard about it, and when the story aired an idea was born.

"The newscaster called us 'the Better Angels.' " That inspired Twomley and fellow



Branch 36 members **David Correa** and **Heriberto Rodriguez** along with postal employee Don Daggett to form a nonprofit group called the Better Angels of Human Nature to bring the spirit of that first generous toy drive to many more children.

Postal employees at several stations in New York donate toys each year for the effort, each filling up a postal container with toys.

Of course, Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without Santa Claus. A few years ago, after spotting fellow Branch 36 carrier **Daniel Weber** growing a beard, Twomley hatched a plan, asking Weber to let it grow out until Christmas. "So he's our official Santa Claus" each year, Twomley said.

The group's outreach has expanded far beyond that first family by serving children with disabilities in schools and needy children in women's shelters. Last Christmas, the Better Angels provided gifts for 290 children at the New Hope Transitional Housing family shelter in the Bronx and for 153 kids at PS 186X Walter

Earnest Twomley and some of the toys he and the Better Angels collect for the holidays



Damrosch School, a Bronx special education school.

This year they are busy collecting even more toys for PS 186X. “We have 800 kids with disabilities in the school where we’re going to fill the gymnasium up with toys and everything else for them,” he said. “What we usually do is get the toys and put them in a room. The kids come in, they pick whatever they want.”

Despite serving so many children, the Better Angels always seem to have extra gifts for others who reach out for help, because they lean on the community to donate along with postal employees.



Santa delivers to the Reyes family, the first of many families Twomley has given gifts to for the holidays.

“Right now, I have about 300 toys in my secret toy closet in the post office,” Twomley said. “The carriers ask some of these high-rise buildings—we’re in Midtown—to put out a toy box. The whole neighborhood knows us already. So we put the collection boxes in there.”

The Better Angels piggyback on the postal network to retrieve the toys. “We have relay drivers. They have to bring relays out there. So, every time they go to the building, they check

the box to see if it’s full and they bring them back. That’s how simple it is.” Several other stations in the area now help to collect toys from donation boxes.

“And management is 100 percent behind me with this,” he added. “Even our area manager is getting involved with me as well because he has a friend in the New York Police Department—and we just made an announcement that we’re going to be joining forces with them as well.”

Like the system itself, Twomley’s slogan for the operation is simple: “Everyone gets a toy.”

Twomley said the satisfaction of seeing the joy his work brings children is its own reward. He still remembers a mother who called and pleaded with him to keep a toy giveaway at a shelter open late one day, because she was late bringing her daughter.

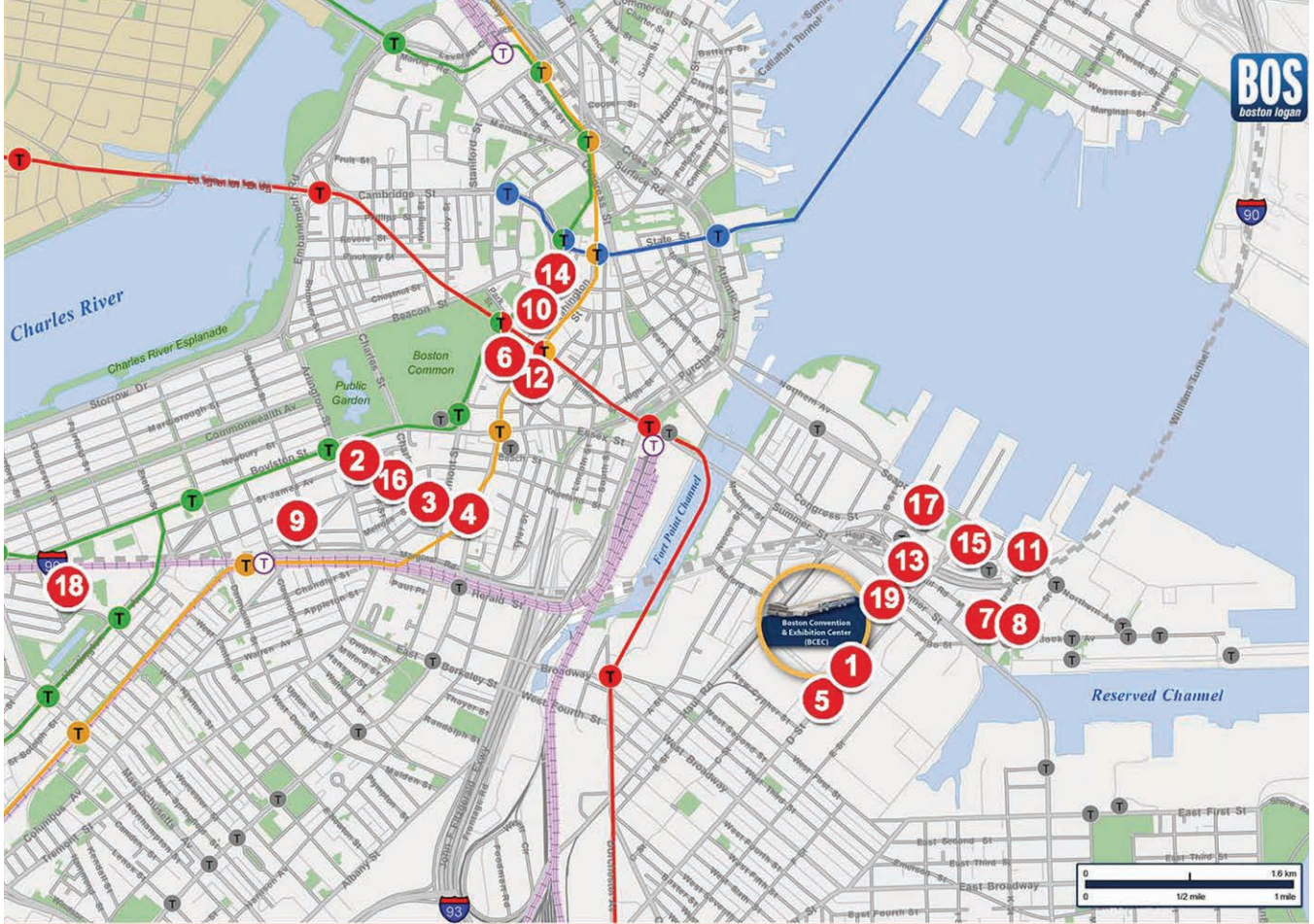
“She comes running in, and she’s out of breath,” he said. The woman was parked in the street because she couldn’t find parking, so someone went to watch her car and others brought her daughter, Mia, who used a wheelchair, inside.

“Her face lit up because we left all the toys that we were going to leave for them anyway in that room. And I said, ‘Mia, just pick anything that you want. It’s yours,’ ” he said.

“Her mother started crying, and for everybody in that room, there was not a dry eye in the place. And she picked up her toys, and we made her day. And for that moment, that moment is exactly why we do that.”

Twomley and the other Better Angels want to grow the project even more by getting more stations in New York City involved in collecting toys.

After 37 years on the job, Twomley is thinking about retiring soon, but he doesn’t plan to stop delivering joy: “I actually ripped out my garage and put an office together, and it’s just about done. So, when I retire, that’s going to be our main headquarters, and then I’m going to concentrate every year going around to all the post offices.” **PR**



Hotels for 2024 Boston convention

NALC has made special arrangements with 19 hotels to accommodate letter carrier delegates attending the 2024 Biennial National Convention in Boston Aug. 5-9. All NALC block hotels are within approximately 2.2 miles of the convention center. The room rates have been set so that branches can begin budgeting for the convention. **Please do not contact the hotels.** All room reservations will be made through NALC's official housing company. **PR**

Hotels with 40-350 rooms	Room Rate	Distance to Center
1 - Aloft Boston Seaport District *	\$264 Single/Double \$284 Triple	Across the street
2 - Boston Park Plaza *	289 Single/Double \$309 Triple	2.2 miles
3 - Courtyard Boston Downtown	\$264 Single/Double \$284 Triple	1.5 miles
4 - DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Boston - Downtown	\$274 Single/Double \$294 Triple	1.3 miles
5 - Element Boston Seaport District *	\$274 Single/Double \$294 Triple	Across the street
6 - The Godfrey Hotel Boston	\$299 Single \$329 Double	1 mile
7 - Hampton Inn Boston Seaport District *	\$299 Single/Double \$329 Triple	5 minute walk
8 - Homewood Suites by Hilton Boston Seaport District *	\$299 Single/Double \$329 Triple	5 minute walk
9 - Hotel AKA Back Bay *	\$299 Single/Double/Triple	1.7 miles
10 - Hotel AKA Boston Common *	\$299 Single/Double/Triple	1.3 miles
11 - Hyatt Place Boston/Seaport District *	\$299 Single/Double \$319 Triple	5-10 minute walk
12 - Hyatt Regency Boston	\$299 Single/Double \$324 Triple	1.7 miles
14 - Omni Parker House *	\$264 Single/Double \$294 Triple	1.2 miles
15 - Renaissance Boston Waterfront Hotel *	\$292 Single/Double \$312 Triple	2 blocks
16 - Revere Hotel Boston Common	\$280 Single/Double \$300 Triple	5 minute walk
17 - Seaport Hotel	\$299 Single/Double \$324 Triple	1 block across the bridge
18 - Sheraton Boston Hotel *	\$264 Single/Double \$284 Triple	1.5 miles

Hotels with 500+ rooms	Room Rate	Distance to Center
13 - Omni Boston Hotel at the Seaport *	\$299 Single/Double \$319 Triple	Adjacent
19 - Westin Boston Waterfront * (HO)	\$295 Single/Double \$325 Triple	Connected

* Union hotels

Proud to Serve

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

Honoring heroic carriers

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

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

Letter carrier becomes first responder after tornado strikes

Donte Jones was delivering on his route in Little Rock, AR, on a March Friday as bad weather approached.

"We knew a storm was coming," the Little Rock Branch 35 member, a carrier since 2018, said. Tornado warnings were starting to buzz on his phone—but he didn't pay them much heed. "You get those all the time," he said, "but you don't really think anything of it."

That changed when a customer saw him delivering and said, "You're still out here?" The customer said a tornado had touched down nearby. Jones turned and saw a large tornado very close to him. "It was big and it was brown, and things were spinning," he said. The carrier got in his LLV and fled, but the tornado changed course and cut him off. He jumped out of the vehicle and found shelter at a nearby home until the twister passed.

As he tried to get back to his station, he found the path blocked by a fallen tree. The same tree, he learned later, delayed police and firefighters from



The scene in Little Rock after the March tonado



Donte Jones

ing help, and he smelled leaking gas. Jones went to the doors of several homes and alerted residents to the danger of the gas leaks and helped them leave their homes as heavy rain poured down.

The EF3 tornado damaged thousands of buildings, including several on the carrier's route, killed one person, and put more than 50 people in hospitals. "It was really hectic that day," Jones said.

The carrier plays down his heroism, though. "I would hope, and I would think, that anybody would do the same thing," Jones said.

Carrier rescues overdosed driver

Wrapping up his route in Addison, IL, on a May afternoon, four-year carrier **Andre Scott** saw a truck pass him and recognized a postal patron

reaching the area. He noticed people, many elderly, outside seek-

as the driver. He soon caught up with the truck when it was stopped ahead, blocking traffic. Scott, a member of Oak Brook Branch 825, saw the driver slumped in his seat with his head down.

When the man didn't react to Scott honking his LLV's horn, the carrier got out and tried several ways to get him to respond, including tapping firmly on his chest. The man finally lifted his head, and Scott could see the veins in his eyes were blue, which Scott took as a sign he was deprived of oxygen.

Scott turned off the man's truck and said to himself, "This man is not going to die on me." He called 911 and continued trying to revive the man. Police arrived and determined that the man had no pulse and helped Scott take him out of the vehicle. The carrier began chest compressions and continued for a short time until paramedics arrived. They eventually revived the man using two doses of Narcan. Scott waited until emergency vehicles no longer blocked in his LLV before continuing on his route.

Scott doesn't see himself as heroic. "I acted on impulse," he said. "It was overwhelming, but I tried to put it out of my mind."



Andre Scott

Eye on the elderly

After bringing the mail into an apartment building on his route with many elderly residents, “I heard a muffled scream,” **Jacob Leas** said. “I thought maybe some grandkids were playing.” But then the Akron, OH Branch 148 member, a carrier since 2016, heard the voice say, “Help me!” Leas searched for the door where the voice was calling from and banged on it. “Please help me,” the voice replied, and he knew he had the right apartment and went inside. “I looked around there was a refrigerator down,” but no sign of a person. He called out and a voice came from under the refrigerator—89-year-old Betty Rucker, a great-grandmother, had accidentally pulled the refrigerator on top of herself. Leas picked up the refrigerator and freed



Rucker. She thanked him and asked him to call her family members, but he called 911 first. Leas stayed with the woman until an ambulance arrived, then he went back on his route. He later learned that Rucker was hospitalized for a few days but was not seriously injured. She told him she was thankful for his actions when she got home and saw him again on his route. “I don’t think I was a hero,” Leas said. “I feel like it’s part of our jobs to look out for people.”



After 21 years on the job, **Timmye Crowley** knows her customers well. On her route on a cold, icy evening in Billings, MT, in November 2022, Crowley got out of her vehicle on her mounted route to bring an elderly customer’s mail to his door so he wouldn’t have to come to his box

in the bad weather. When she reached the door, the Billings Branch 815 member heard the man’s smoke detector beeping. Looking in the window, Crowley spotted the man asleep in a chair despite the beeping and the smoke filling the room. She knew he was hard of hearing and the smoke alarm wasn’t waking him. “I started pounding on the door, kicking it and ringing the doorbell,” she said. The man finally woke up and came to the door, still unaware of the fire. “He had no idea what was going on.” Crowley called 911 and brought the man to safety. “I got him outside, away from the smoke,” she said. At the door, she noticed the fire was simply a plug-in cooking appliance with burning food inside, so she went inside and unplugged it. After the fire department arrived, Crowley returned to her route. U.S. Sen. Steve Daines of Montana later honored Crowley for her actions. “I didn’t feel like a hero,” Crowley said. “I feel like I was just doing my job.”

Waiting in his station’s parking lot on a Wednesday morning in June for his office to open,



Rochester, NY Branch 210 member **Vijeon Manivasan** saw an elderly woman dropping off mail at a drive-through box. “She tried to reach the blue box,” Manivasan said, but hadn’t pulled close enough. “She opened the door—without setting the brake.” As the woman reached through the door, she fell out of the car and it moved forward. Manivasan, who has carried the mail since 2015, rushed from his own car to help. He jumped into the open door of the woman’s car and stopped it before it collided with anything or anyone. The woman was shaken up a little but unhurt, and she drove away after thanking the carrier. Manivasan went to work and didn’t mention the incident; managers only learned about it from other carriers who witnessed it. **PR**



Jeric Thomas and Megan Dahn

Carrier sounds fire alarm

Boston, MA Branch 34 carrier **Danita Brooks-Poindexter** was heading back from delivering Express Mail on her route in Watertown in May when she spied black smoke in the air about a quarter-mile away. She thought it was a car fire on the nearby interstate and continued her route. But she soon found the real source of the smoke on a residential street.

"I could see in between the houses [that] in the back of [one] house that there was a fire," the 26-year carrier said. "I pulled out my phone to call 911, and at the same time, I could see a woman heading up the [front porch] stairs to knock on the door. I pulled my truck down further to go back and check on the tenants."

Brooks-Poindexter parked her truck and rushed to help. Then her attention moved to the house next door. "As I got closer, I realized the neighbors had the music so loud that they would not know that there is a rapidly moving fire going on next door," she said. "I feared that the neighbor's house could possibly catch on fire, and they needed to get out."



Danita Brooks-Poindexter

"I banged and banged and banged on the door, and someone finally came," she said. "They were forever grateful that I knocked so hard to get their attention, because they didn't know that there was a fire going on next door." Fortunately, the fire did not end up spreading beyond the one house.

The carrier then went to the house that was on fire to check on the elderly residents. She found an older man who lived there outside, and he confirmed that his wife was away and not trapped inside, but he was upset by the fire. She consoled him and made

sure that he didn't try to enter the burning home. "I just held him by the arm so he would not try to go back in the house because it was too dangerous," she said.

With her truck trapped by emergency vehicles for a while, Brooks-Poindexter consoled other affected neighbors until she was able to return to her route.

"I'm just glad that they all made it out safe," she said. "The fire turned huge really fast."

Co-worker to the rescue

"It was a 'right place at the right time' situation," said 10-year carrier **Jeric Thomas** of his rescue of a fellow carrier in an LLV accident. Thomas, a member of Western Wayne County, MI Branch 2184, was driving to lunch in Canton in July when he saw an LLV driven by colleague and fellow Branch 2184 member **Megan Dahn** turning left from a parking lot—and witnessed a car hitting her truck.

"It T-boned her," he said, and knocked the truck onto its side.

Thomas pulled his own truck in the center lane to block traffic and rushed to help while calling 911. "I could see her" in the truck, he said. "She was terrified. I can still hear the sound of her yelling for help."

Due to the damage and position of the truck, both doors were blocked. Luckily, the impact had knocked the back hatch open. "She found her own way to release the seat belt," he said.

Thomas helped Dahn out through the hatch. Miraculously, she had almost no injuries, though she was shaken up. "I am 100 percent confident that the seat belt saved her life that day," he said. He helped her calm down until paramedics arrived. Dahn went to the hospital to be sure she was OK, and Thomas returned to his route.

To Thomas, assisting a fellow carrier was all in a day's work. "For me, it was the only thing to do," he said.

New carrier warns of fire

With only a few months of carrying the mail under his belt, Rochester, NY Branch 210 member **Scott Faticone** found himself coming to the rescue of some of his customers.

On his route in August, Faticone approached a house on his route in Rochester when he saw trouble. "I noticed a little smoke coming out of the house," he said, and also saw insects flying out of a hole in the side. Looking in, he saw the insect nest and a fire that was agitating the insects. He could see that the fire was moving up to the second floor.

The carrier banged on the door to warn the residents and a teenage girl opened the door, but she didn't understand much English. "I grabbed her and pulled her out to see the fire" so she would understand the emergency, he said. But the teenager still didn't understand the urgency of the situation—she began taking video of the fire with her phone.

Faticone asked her who else was in the house, and she said her grandmother and a dog, so he urged her to go get both out of the house. When the girl, grandmother and the dog were all outside and safe, Faticone went to the neighbor's house to alert them, too, in case the fire spread, but nobody answered the door. After fire personnel arrived, the carrier returned to his route.

The next time he delivered his route, Faticone saw the aftermath. "The fire department ripped out the whole side of the house," he said, but added that he was grateful nobody was injured or killed.



Scott Faticone



Enrique Rosado



Liam Brough

A race to help a trapped woman

“I was driving my route like normal,” Arlington, TX Branch 2309 member **Tessa Rios** said, “when I heard a scream.” The three-year carrier, out making deliveries on a March Wednesday, then saw a woman running toward her.

Rios parked and got out to help, but the woman was panicked and screaming and couldn’t explain the emergency. She was holding a phone and Rios heard a 911 dispatcher telling the woman to begin CPR, so Rios knew there was a life-or-death situation going on.

Rios managed to get the woman to tell her which house to go to and went inside, where she found a woman in a bathroom who had collapsed. Her head was stuck between the toilet and the wall. Rios had to crawl under the toilet tank to free the woman. As she laid her down to prepare her for CPR, a distraught teenage girl, the woman’s grandchild, appeared. Before Rios could begin life-saving treatment, EMTs arrived and took over, taking the woman to the hospital.

Rios consoled the stricken woman’s loved ones. “I said a prayer for the family and gave them hugs,” she said, and gave them her phone number in case they wanted to keep in touch.

Rios later learned that the woman had died, but she saw the family a few weeks later and they said that she had helped them get through the situation.



Tessa Rios

“You made a bad situation easier,” they told her.

“I felt comfort knowing I could be there,” Rios said, especially preventing the granddaughter from seeing the woman with her head stuck. “She really appreciated someone being there for her,” Rios said after meeting the girl again.

Alert carrier uses CPR to save man on route

“I was delivering mail like a normal day,” **Enrique Rosado** said, when he saw two women in a front yard. It was a February Wednesday in Haines City, FL. “I thought they were doing yard work or something,” he added. But then he saw the stricken man lying in the yard and heard one of the women screaming in distress. They were performing CPR on the man.

The four-year carrier, a member of Lakeland Branch 1779, rushed to help.

He checked the man’s pulse and, hearing none, took over doing CPR. “I did it about 10 to 15 minutes before the fire department came,” Rosado said. As he and the women watched, the EMTs attached an automatic chest compression machine to the man and revived him. They took him to the hospital, where he recovered before eventually return-

ing home. Rosado returned to his route once he saw that the man was in good hands.

The man’s wife, one of the women attending to him when Rosado found them that day, wrote to the postmaster that doctors told her that without Ro-

sado’s assistance, her husband would have died. “Our family is forever grateful for his heroic efforts,” she wrote.

Rosado and the couple are now fast friends. “I go visit him and see how he’s doing,” he said. “Every time I see him, he has a water or snack for me.”

Carrier gives family time to say goodbye

On his route in Oak Ridge, TN, in April, **Liam Brough** spotted a customer getting out of his car and handed him his mail. Brough, who has carried the mail for the Postal Service for two years, not counting another 12 years as a postman in his native Scotland, saw the man walk up a flight of stairs to his home. Then the man fell.

“He just dropped,” Brough said. “He didn’t go forward, he didn’t go back—he just crumpled.”

Brough called 911 and then checked the man’s breathing and pulse. He didn’t detect either. Having learned CPR from his soccer-coaching days, Brough began chest compressions. “It just kicked in,” he said.

Emergency personnel arrived a few minutes later and detected a pulse, and Brough saw the man’s eye’s open when he was carried into an ambulance and taken to the hospital. Brough continued on his route.

He called the man at the hospital a few days later, who said he was very thankful for Brough’s life-saving efforts. Unfortunately, the man died a week or so later, but Brough was happy that the man had time to see his family before his death.

Though his colleagues at the post office recognized him as a hero, Brough said the experience felt more strange than heroic. “It didn’t feel real,” he said.



Dominic Jack



Shelia Alexander

Children safe from fire after carrier's efforts

On his route in White Castle, LA, earlier this year, **Dominic Jack** had just delivered to a house at the end of a loop and was circling back when he saw trouble. "I saw gray smoke coming from the back of the house," he said. The two-year carrier, a member of Baton Rouge Branch 129, knew there were children living in the house, so he rushed to help.

"I could hear somebody screaming," he said.

He saw a small boy in the back yard, afraid to move. He coaxed the boy to come to him to reach safety. Jack then encountered a teenage girl at the front and convinced her not to go back inside to retrieve her phone. He went through the back door of the burning house to rescue the children's grandmother, who he found near the door, and helped her to the street.

When he was sure all four children and the grandmother were safe, Jack went to the next-door neighbor's home to warn them because he knew there were elderly people living there, and then alerted the neighbors on the other

side. The house on fire was completely engulfed by the flames, but the others were not harmed—but more importantly, nobody was killed or injured.

"Due to the quick thinking of this carrier we, and several of our neighbors, were able to get out of our houses safely and before the firefighters had arrived on the scene," one elderly neighbor wrote to the post office. "Carrier Dominic is definitely an asset to the Postal Service and the community!"

"It was just an instant reaction," Jack said of his heroic efforts. "I just did what I would do any day."

Carrier supports family of suicide victim

On Sept. 1, Indianapolis, IN Branch 39 member **Shelia Alexander** had just rung the doorbell of a customer's home after dropping a package. As she walked away, a young girl opened the door.

"She was so distraught," Alexander said. "I could see the stress, the hurt, the pain in her face."

The girl told Alexander that her brother had just attempted suicide in the home.

Alexander, a carrier since 2012, raced inside and found their mother performing CPR on the brother. The carrier checked the boy's pulse and called 911, and then turned to consoling the girl, who soon collapsed to the ground. When the girl said she wanted to take her own life too, because she couldn't live without her brother, Alexander knew exactly what to say because she had faced similar tragedies twice.

"God put me in front of you for a reason," she told the girl as she hugged her. "I lost my brother, who was my best friend, and I thought I wasn't going to make it, but I did." Alexander's older brother died in 2014.

"And just last week," she added, "I buried my younger brother."

When emergency personnel arrived, Alexander comforted the girl some more and then gave her her contact information, telling her to call anytime. After finishing her route, Alexander checked on the girl again and found out that her brother had died.

Alexander has kept in contact with the girl and helped her get through the tragedy. **PR**

Neighborhood watch

Two-year carrier **Kyle Mailman** is helping Wichita, KS, with a dangerous gopher problem. Recently, construction of a bridge spanning the Arkansas River was causing gophers to move into a residential area near the bridge. The gophers dug long tunnels underground, and when they encountered gas lines, they often chewed through them, causing dangerous leaks, Mailman

said. Delivering the mail on a route in that area in April, the Wichita Branch 201 member approached a recessed door of a home to put the mail in a door slot. "I'd heard a report in the area of people having gas leaks," he said. When he reached this door, the odor was unmistakable. "I about choked right then and there." Mailman warned the woman who lived there. "I knocked on

the door rather feverishly," he said, and told her to call the authorities immediately. After experiencing the ill effects of breathing gas himself due to an unlit pilot light on a stove many years ago, Mailman could tell that the woman showed the signs of gas poisoning. When the gas company came to fix the outdoor leak, it also found a leak in a faulty valve of an indoor gas fireplace as well.



Kyle Mailman

"To me, it's not really a big deal," Mailman said about his actions, which may have saved a life, "because I hope everyone would be out there helping each other." **PR**

Help on the way



Tommy Howe

Out on his route in Taunton, MA, on a hot July day, Fall River Branch 51 member **Tommy Howe** thought the man sitting by the road with a push lawnmower resting on his legs was feeling the effects of the heat. It looked serious enough that Howe stopped to help the man. “I tried to sit him up,” Howe said, but the man lost consciousness and collapsed. “That’s when I knew it was serious,” he said. “I had to get help quickly.” Howe, a carrier since 2007, spotted a pair of roofers working on a house nearby and yelled to them to assist. He took the lead, calling 911 and telling one roofer to flag down the approaching ambulance and gave the other one his water jug to give water

to the stricken man. “His lips were blue, so I know it was a matter of minutes” before he could die, Howe said. “We basically kept him alive until the ambulance got there.” EMTs arrived and managed to revive the man, who fully recovered. Though the man lost his memory of that day, he was apparently stung by insects and had an allergic reaction. The man was thankful when he talked to Howe later, and the city of Taunton gave him a certificate of appreciation, but Howe doesn’t think of himself as a hero. “I just happened to be at the right place at the right time,” Howe said. “I reacted.”

Cleveland, OH Branch 40 member **Kevin Seuffert** has carried the mail for 26 years, but never needed to call 911 until last August, when he discovered a customer with a serious injury. The customer, who had fallen from a ladder while installing gutter guards on his home, had been lying on the ground for about 30 minutes when Seuffert found him. “He was entangled in the ladder,” Seuffert said. The man was awake, but told Seuffert, “I don’t have

any feeling in my body.” The carrier calmed the man and called 911 and the customer’s wife. Seuffert waited with him until paramedics arrived, and then continued on his route. Seuffert later learned that the man had made a miraculous recovery despite being paralyzed by the accident. “He was in the hospital about 40 days,” Seuffert said. “He was told by three doctors that he wouldn’t walk again, but with a lot of rehab, he’s using a walker.” The thankful man is now back home. “It made me feel a lot better” that the man is recovering, Seuffert said, but he downplayed being a hero: “I was just doing my job,” he said.



Kevin Seuffert

Just a few months into her job as a carrier in Cincinnati, OH, **Mechelle Wright** encountered a life-or-death situation. On her route, the Cincinnati Branch 43 member saw a note on a customer’s door. She thought it might be a routine message about the mail or a package, but it was anything but—it was a suicide note. “If you are reading this, I am already dead,” the note said. The author requested a call to her brother, and included a phone number. Wright called 911 and waited for police to arrive, and then called the brother and told him what happened. She then continued on her route. The brother later called the carrier and told her his sister had survived the suicide attempt and was getting help for her difficulties, and thanked Wright for possibly saving her life. Though the woman has since moved out, the memory is still with Wright. “I always think about her when I’m on my route,” she said. Wright said she doesn’t feel like a hero. “I was just in the right place at the right time,” she said. “It wasn’t her time—God had other plans for her.” **PR**

Time running out for Combined Federal Campaign

The open enrollment period for the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) ends on Jan. 15, 2024, so don’t wait too long to make your contribution. CFC is the world’s largest and most successful annual workplace charity campaign, raising millions of dollars each year. Federal and postal employees participate in the CFC by choosing from a list of charities to support through automatic deductions from their paychecks.

“For carriers, there’s no busier period than the holidays, but it’s also the time when we focus most on the needs of others,” NALC President Brian L. Renfroe said.

“Please try to find a moment to pledge to give to the charities you support.”

All active letter carriers can participate through payroll deduction. Participants may use payroll deduction, credit or debit cards, or bank accounts to make recurring donations. They also can 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 money raised.

The easiest ways to sign up are 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 donate through a deduction from the annuity, by making a one-time or recurring donation using a credit or debit card, or through an automatic deduction from their bank account using the CFC Donor Pledging System.

Letter carriers can choose from among 2,000-plus nonprofit charitable organizations to support through CFC. By looking at the list and choosing a charity’s CFC number, you can donate directly to one or more charities. You can search for charities at cfcgiving.opm.gov/offerings. For more information, go to nalc.org/cfc. **PR**

Recognizing the NALC Disaster Relief Foundation contributors

The wildfire that destroyed a large part of Lahaina on the island of Maui in Hawaii on Aug. 8, killing nearly a hundred people—and destroying a post office and the homes of three letter carriers—is just one reminder from 2023 why the NALC Disaster Relief Foundation (DRF) was created.

NALC founded the DRF in 2018 to ease the process of getting help to members affected by disasters. Numerous branches had asked NALC to establish a mechanism that would facilitate getting direct assistance to carriers.

When a disaster strikes, DRF officers and directors quickly identify carriers who are affected and give them aid as soon as possible. The aid might include supplies such as water, food, clothing and postal uniform items. Working closely with local branch leaders, the DRF helps members whose homes are uninhabitable find temporary housing and transportation, as well as apply for DRF grants.

and phone numbers to help with emergency funds for members in need and to check on all of the members.

The fires in Lahaina and several other parts of Hawaii spread out of control due to drought conditions combined with high winds from a nearby hurricane, as well as potential human error. Fortunately, no postal employees lost their lives in the fire, but several carriers narrowly escaped the flames. The Downtown Post Office in Lahaina was destroyed.

In addition to the Hawaii fires, this year the DRF provided assistance to letter carriers affected by floods in Illinois, Michigan and West Virginia; by Hurricane Idalia when it struck Florida and Georgia; by tornadoes in Georgia; and by Hurricane Hilary in California, which coincided with an earthquake.

As the year's end approaches, letter carriers might consider donating to DRF, NALC President Brian L. Renfroe said.

"The foundation is ready to provide rapid help for our affected brothers and sisters," Renfroe said. "But it can't do its job without our support." To recognize the generous donors to DRF, *The Postal Record* has printed a list below.

The foundation provides aid in the form of supplies or grants, and in-person assistance when needed. Grants are provided for property damage sustained to a primary residence, automobile or 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 Re-



Lahaina fire

gion 9, Attn: NALC DRF/Christina Vela Davidson, 1101 Northchase Parkway SE, Ste. 3, Marietta, GA 30067, or made by credit card by going to nalc.org/nrdfdonate or using the QR code below (you must enter your member number to donate). 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 affected by a disaster do not have to wait for emergency relief or insurance claims to be settled to apply for help. 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.

"If you have not donated yet, please help your fellow letter carriers affected by a natural disaster," Renfroe said. "Let's all donate to the Disaster Relief Foundation now so that it can be ready when disaster strikes."

On the following pages are this year's donors to DRF. Please donate now to be recognized in the December 2024 issue. **PR**



**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**

Before the smoke had cleared, DRF was on the phone with Lahaina Branch 5306 President **Josh Doher**, Honolulu Branch 860 President **Howard Komine** and Hawaii State Association President **Alvin Matsumura**, collecting names

NALC Disaster Relief Foundation donors

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LOUISIANA

Br. 124, New Orleans
Grant Geiger

Br. 129, Baton Rouge
Paula Eli
Collen T. Honore

Br. 197, Shreveport
Sean Wells

MAINE

Br. 92, ME Mgd.
Norman Davidson

MARYLAND

Br. 176, Baltimore
Theodore Lingelbach
Frederick J. Schell

Br. 651, Annapolis
R. Rabinowitz

Br. 2611, Silver Spring
Stefan Wright

MASSACHUSETTS

Br. 12, Worcester
Paul Bialoncik
Harry Simonian

Br. 18, Southeast MA Mgd.
Douglas F. Smith
John R. Yadisernia
Scott Doughty

Br. 25, MA Northeast Mgd.
Thomas R. Bemish
Anthony Bossi
Nancy Chrisos
Gary Glenny
Allan Howard
John Kennedy
Charles R. Syrjanen Jr.

Br. 34, Boston
John Baginsky
Kevin Conroy
John F. Murphy
R.J. Sekenski

Br. 46, Western MA
Lupe Barile
Walter Bishop

Br. 286, Pittsfield
William Carroll Sr.

MICHIGAN

Br. 1, Detroit
Roxanne Autrey
Cecelia Cason

Br. 13, Muskegon
James M. Stewart

Br. 122, Lansing
Cindy L. Foster

Br. 246, Southwest MI
Jan Miller
Alan Oxley
David Smith

Br. 256, Mid-Michigan
Darla S. Wynn

Br. 262, Battle Creek
Henry Egan

Br. 320, N. Oakland Co.
Elizabeth Bays

Br. 2317, Midland
John Galarno

Br. 2555, E. Lansing
Lorry Young

Br. 3126, Royal Oak
Jacqueline Dick
Robert E. Dunn
Misty Wenger

Br. 4374, South Macomb
James Korolowicz

MINNESOTA

Br. 9, Minneapolis
Alice Nopola
Steven Petersen
Barry Weiner

Br. 28, St. Paul
Luke Kane
Jeffrey Malean
Timothy O'Donnell
Robert Priebe

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Anthony Mitchell

Br. 127, Jefferson City
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Br. 203, Springfield
David Krewson

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Jeffrey Conrad
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David Gray
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Michael O'Neill
David Picconi
Mario Romana
Michael Silva
Michael Vanni

Br. 67, Elizabeth

Reinaldo Santiago

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Br. 342, Montclair

Arlene Siebel

Br. 370, Atlantic City

Jason Ausborn

Br. 380, Trenton

Vincent Brown
Rose Matakovich

Br. 425, Bergen Co. Mgd.

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Br. 540, Camden Mgd.

R. Rahmel

Br. 769, Cherry Hill/ Haddonfield

Dean Curran
Robert Curry Jr.
William D. Law
Richard Lawrence
Br. 2128, Toms River
Richard Farley
Lou Grohowski

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Miguel Algarin
Richard Burke
Vernando Romain
Pietro Tassielli

Br. 41, Brooklyn

John Patrick Murphy

Br. 134, Syracuse

John Holo peter

Br. 137, Hudson Valley

Mgd.

John Travis

Br. 210, Rochester

Donna Carter
Thomas Munger

Br. 294, Flushing

Thomas J. DeStefano
Robert Godfrey

Br. 387, Yonkers

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Br. 693, Westchester Mgd.

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Thomas Staab

Br. 5229, New City

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NORTH CAROLINA

Br. 248, Asheville

Robert Feldmann

Br. 382, Durham

Christina Vela Davidson
Cliff Davidson
Thomas Smith
William Stone

Br. 459, Raleigh

Gerald Lewis
Averell Mattocks

Br. 461, Winston-Salem

Wayne Green
Dexter Lester

Br. 545, Charlotte

Donna Butler
Francis Piojda Jr.
Timothy Rorie

Br. 780, New Bern

Jason Cobbs

Br. 934, Salisbury

Kimberly Lane

Br. 1128, Fayetteville

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NORTH DAKOTA

Br. 205, Fargo-W. Fargo

Cory Carter

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Dennis Easton

OHIO

Br. 40, Cleveland

Thomas Doughty
Robert Jackson

Br. 78, Columbus

Michael Mattick

Br. 100, Toledo

Alexander Maroda

Br. 148, Akron

Ted Babiy
Michael Mullen

Br. 182, Dayton

Paul Keen

Br. 196, Elyria

Matthew Toth
Marcus Zajdel

Br. 385, Youngstown

Donald Revis

Br. 583, Lorain

Cory Brumbaugh
Todd A. Rasey

OREGON

Br. 82, Portland

Kollin Luman
Robert Olson
Jimmy Williams

Br. 743, Baker

Lee Kinsey

PENNSYLVANIA

Br. 22, New Castle

Charles Bolster

Br. 84, Pittsburgh

Edwin T. Atwood
James V. Burgess
Donald Foe hringer
Eugene Girman
William Haddad
Robert Mander a

Br. 115, Wilkes-Barre

Andrew Sabol

Br. 157, Philadelphia

Tony Long
Rafean Mercado
Mark Orzeck
Sidney Shore

Br. 254, Bethlehem

Lewis Coursen
Suzanne Perry

Br. 258, Reading

Scott Reichard
Donald Weller

Br. 273, Lancaster

Joshua Leeking

Br. 274, Lehigh Valley

David Szerencsits
William Wescoe

Br. 509, York

William Enterline Jr.
Gail Schwartz

Br. 725, Southeast PA Mgd.

John Coyle
Edward Kelly
Charles McQuaid

Br. 1495, State College

Richard Ott

Br. 2572, Morrisville

Lawrence R. Bux

Br. 4317, Great Valley Mgd.

Glenn Clinger

PUERTO RICO

Br. 869, San Juan

Rafael Figueroa

RHODE ISLAND

Br. 15, Providence

Richard Silva

SOUTH CAROLINA

Br. 233, Columbia

Joseph Baker III

Br. 1871, Anderson

Stanley Wales

Br. 3902, Charleston

Jackie Oree

SOUTH DAKOTA

Br. 491, Sioux Falls

Brian Doerr

TENNESSEE

Br. 27, Memphis

Robert Herrod

Br. 419, Knoxville

Thomas Naspinski

TEXAS

Br. 132, Dallas

Shawn Boyd
Ronald Stover

Br. 181, Austin

Leslie F. Doss
Marilyn Smith

Br. 283, Houston

Zelma Benjamin Fields
Perla P. Garza
Arturo Ramirez Jr.

Br. 421, San Antonio

Casey Burnett
Louise Jordan
Philip Jordan
Bonifacio Lopez

Br. 950, Abilene

Jay Gober

Br. 1227, Wichita Falls

R.O. Harper
Larry Snyder

VIRGINIA

Br. 247, Tidewater

James Cones Jr.

Br. 326, Petersburg

Harold McClellan III
Cara Neri

Br. 513, Staunton

Cynthia Connors

WASHINGTON

Br. 79, Seattle

Mary Bartley

Br. 791, Snohomish Co.

Robert H. James

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Br. 66, Wheeling

Robert Cain

Br. 359, Huntington

Paul S. Riggs

Br. 531, Charleston

Chad Fallecker
Timothy McKay
Robert Spurlock

Br. 2420, Beckley

Rudy J. Painter

WISCONSIN

Br. 2, Milwaukee

Robert Cowan
Lawrence Morchinek
Wayne A. Schiel
Brian Shernell

Br. 572, Janesville

Gary Carlisle

Br. 619, Green Bay

Gary Strebel

Br. 778, Merrill

Roger Detert

WYOMING

Br. 1681, Casper

Rene Eberhardt

Br. 5384, Worland

Cameron McFarlane

Branches, state associations, regions and others

Detroit, MI Br. 1
Buffalo-Western NY Br. 3
Scranton, PA Br. 17
Southeast MA Mgd. Br. 18
Los Angeles, CA Br. 24
NJ Mgd. Br. 38
Indianapolis, IN Br. 39
Columbus, OH Br. 78
Seattle, WA Br. 79
Galesburg, IL Br. 88

Toledo, OH Br. 100
Montgomery, AL Br. 106
Baton Rouge, LA Br. 129
Dallas, TX Br. 132
Sacramento, CA Br. 133
Dunkirk, NY Br. 150
Baltimore, MD Br. 176
Dayton, OH Br. 182
Jackson, MI Br. 232
Rock Island, IL Br. 292
St. Louis, MO Br. 343
Greenville, SC Br. 439
Winston-Salem, NC Br. 461
Anderson, IN Br. 489
Birmingham, AL Br. 530
Charlotte, NC Br. 545
Columbus, GA Br. 546
Phoenix, AZ Br. 576
Adrian, MI Br. 579
Mishawaka, IN Br. 820
Fort Collins, CO Br. 849
Wichita Falls, TX Br. 1227
Gulf Coast Mgd., MS
Br. 1374
Porterville, CA Br. 1469
Yuma, AZ Br. 1642
Orangeburg, SC Br. 1782
AZ Mgd. Br. 1902
Fort Myers, FL Br. 2072
Beverly Hills, CA Br. 2293
Van Nuys, CA Br. 2462
Las Vegas, NV Br. 2502
Escondido, CA Br. 2525
Royal Oak, MI Br. 3126
North TX Br. 4065
Roxboro, NC Br. 4122
Venice, FL Br. 5480
Alabama State Association
California State Association
Colorado State Association
Indiana State Association
Maryland/DC State Association
Michigan State Association
New Mexico State Association
Texas State Association
Wyoming State Association
Region 5
Region 6
Region 9
Region 15
Ame's Uniforms, Ronald Bergstrom Committee of Presidents
From A To Arbitration Galls, LLC
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Network for Good
Zion Evangelical Church

STEP B and the Dispute Resolution Process

Decades of righting wrongs through our grievance procedure



**Paul
Barner**

For most active letter carriers, the grievance procedure found in Article 15 of the National Agreement is the only contractual process they have used to grieve actions by management. But it hasn't always been so. There was a time, from our first contract in 1971 until 1998, when NALC and USPS used a grievance process different than the one we have now.

In 1998, the NALC and USPS jointly tested a new grievance procedure known as the Dispute Resolution Process (DRP) designed to reduce the backlog of grievances. This provided for a Step B dispute resolution team (DRT) consisting of one union representative and

one management representative. The DRT test was a success, as we were able to work together to resolve disputed grievances by writing contractually sound decisions that would serve to educate both union and management representatives. Due to the party's recognition of the benefits of the new process, DRP was negotiated into the 2001-2006 National Agreement.

Although the previous process had its merits, it was unable to accommodate the rising number of grievances during the 1980s and 1990s. Grievances rarely were settled at the local level, causing huge backlogs at Step 3 and arbitration. As a result, letter carriers had to wait longer and longer for a final decision on their grievances. Even though removals received priority scheduling for arbitration hearing dates, an unjustly fired letter carrier could wait as long as two years or more (without pay) for a hearing date.

Another difference was that, prior to 1998, when carriers were issued a notice of suspension, they actually served the suspension time, losing pay for that period. This meant that managers were unlikely to settle those grievances, as it would often result in a payment to the grievant. Moreover, it was difficult for stewards to settle for less than full back pay, as it meant the carrier would still lose some pay. As a result, grievance resolutions over suspensions were nearly impossible to attain, and because letters of warning could place a carrier one step away from a lost-pay suspension, they were difficult to settle as well.

The goal of the DRP when it was implemented nationwide was primarily to promote contract compliance,

and when disputes arose, to use the *Joint Contract Administration Manual (JCAM)* to resolve them at the lowest possible level of the grievance procedure (which in most cases should be the local level).

The DRP is a means of achieving a fair solution to a problem in a timely fashion and is specifically geared to protect our members from the issues that arise in the workplace. While our grievance procedure is designed to resolve issues at the lowest possible level, it requires that both parties bargain in good faith.

Our Step B team representatives have a tough job, as it is not a simple task to resolve disputes between the parties.

Currently there are 59 full-time Step B teams and we have 76 Step B teams activated. The NALC Step B representatives deserve a lot of credit and thanks for the job they do.

Here is where we stand now: There are 10,781 cases pending a decision at Step B. Of those, 8,260 grievances have been at Step B awaiting a decision for more than 14 days. As you can see, we have some work to do to reduce the backlogged cases and address them in a timely manner. The case volume at Step B has nearly doubled in the last year. While we are aware that several factors contribute to the number of cases being appealed to Step B, we also have an increased impasse percentage rate from the Step B teams. Regardless of the backlog of grievances pending at Step B and the reasons behind it, we will continue to uphold our agreements and protect the rights of letter carriers.

Everything within the DRP, outside of each party selecting their respective representatives, must be done jointly. The process works only if the members of the DRTs are committed to working together without outside influence. The national business agents (NBAs) and district field labor relations specialists (DFLRs) are responsible for overseeing and monitoring the DRTs in their respective jurisdictions. If process problems arise and the NBA and DFLR are unable to resolve the issue, guidance is sought at the national level.

As of late, NALC has spent a significant amount of time addressing the Step B backlog we have experienced over the last year. We are working on ways to reduce and resolve more disputes at the local level in many locations. Again, we should never lose sight of the fact that the primary objective is to resolve disputes quickly and in accordance with the National Agreement//JCAM, as the creation of the DRP was intended to do.

'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.

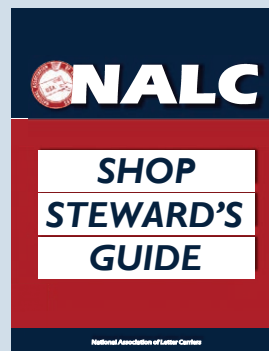
“'Tis the season for us all to take a little extra time and make just a little more effort during this time of the year to be a bit more compassionate, thoughtful, considerate, caring and aware of our ability to help someone in any capacity we can.”

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

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, is 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.

The guide is only available through the Members Only portal, allowing 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.

Minimum dues increase, convention registration and housing process



Nicole Rhine

There will be a biweekly dues increase for 2024 due to the cost-of-living adjustment achieved with the National Agreement. The dues change will take place in Pay Period 1 of 2024 (Dec. 16, 2023–Dec. 29, 2023) and will be reflected beginning with the Jan. 5, 2024, 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 \$30.97 for 2024. National re-

tains one-third of this amount, \$10.31, and remits the other two-thirds to the local branches (with some withheld for state associations and remitted by National 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.

National convention

The official Convention Call to the 73rd Biennial Convention of the National Association of Letter Carriers to be held in Boston Aug. 5-9, 2024, has been mailed to each NALC branch and state association. The branch Convention Call included a branch delegate allotment card advising each branch of the maximum number of delegates it can send to the convention per the provision of Article 4, Section 1 of the *National Constitution*, which provides for one delegate for each 20 members or fraction thereof. The number of delegates a branch is entitled to is based on the branch's active and retired membership as of Oct. 1 of the year preceding the national convention, the "benchmark" date adopted by the delegates to the 2004 National Convention. Branch officers should read the Convention Call thoroughly, because Articles 4 and 5 of the *National Constitution*—provisions concerning the election of delegates, voting strength and related issues—are explained.

Information regarding the room rates of the NALC block hotels was provided on the NALC website and additional information is provided in this issue of *The Postal Record*. *The reservation process does not start until February—*

and not until the branch's delegate eligibility list (DEL) is received, delegates are registered, and the credentials are sent to the branch secretary. NALC Headquarters will be advising its official housing company of all confirmed registered delegates. Anyone booking a room who is not a confirmed registered delegate at the time of the booking will be subject to cancellation and will receive a notice of such. *Any individuals who call NALC Headquarters to inquire about making reservations are advised that they must go through their branch to make reservations and that this cannot be done until the DEL has been received and processed, and credentials have been mailed to the branch secretary.* Do not contact the host branch officers about housing; they will not be able to assist you.

The DEL will be mailed to each branch on or about Feb. 1 and must be returned to my office no later than June 5. The DEL lists the branch's regular members in good standing as of Dec. 31, 2023. *No housing information is included in the mailing of delegate eligibility lists.* Branch secretaries should read the enclosed instructions thoroughly, complete the DEL fully and accurately, sign it, keep a copy for the branch, and return the original to my office.

Reminder: All branches have the option to register their delegates electronically rather than checking off the delegates on the DEL paper list. The letter and sign-up form for the option to register electronically was mailed to all branches in November. The sign-up form must be returned to my office no later than Dec. 31.

After my office has received the DEL and registered the delegates, the credentials will be mailed to the branch secretary. Included with the credentials is information on the housing process. This information includes a web address and a code specific to your branch so that you can reserve rooms for your delegates. *Branch secretaries may prefer to copy the instructions and give them to each delegate to make their own reservations.*

For branch secretaries or delegates who do not have internet access, NALC will include with the credential mailing a room reservation form with a fax number, along with the phone number of the housing company. Branch secretaries with no internet access may make reservations for all of their delegates in this manner or may wish to copy the forms and give them to the delegates.

Again, branch secretaries are reminded that no housing information will be included in the mailing of the delegate eligibility lists around Feb. 1. That information will be provided when NALC Headquarters mails you the credentials. Branches and individuals are not to contact hotels directly and must wait until credentials and NALC housing instructions are received.

Upload them bylaws



**Mack I.
Julion**

At our most recent Branch Officers Training, a question was asked concerning the time it takes to get bylaws approved. This branch officer was under the impression that it could take several months to almost a year to receive a decision. She might have been told this by someone who experienced an extended wait time, but this would be an exception rather than the rule.

As the chair of the Committee of Laws, I have worked with my fellow committee members to make sure that we get branches and state associations a response as soon as possible. I wrote in my July

article about providing a response within 30 to 45 days from the date of receipt, and I was using that as a conservative estimate. The turnaround can be shorter or longer depending on the extent of the changes and the schedule of the committee members.

We know that branches and state associations can put a lot of time and effort into creating or amending bylaws, so we want to get them back to you so you can officially implement your *proposed* changes. Remember, even if it is something agreed to by your members, it's just "proposed" until approved by the Committee of Laws. Article 11, Section 3 of the *NALC Constitution* states in part, "*by-laws and subsequent alterations or amendments made thereto shall not take effect until so approved.*" (Emphasis added.) The only exception to this would be changes made to the bylaws "fixing the time and place of meetings, and the amount of initiation fees, dues and reinstatement fees." Those would become effective at the time determined by the branch or state association.

When you follow the process outlined in Article 15 of the *NALC Constitution*, a branch can have bylaw changes approved by their members within 30 days. Consider, for example, a branch introduces bylaw changes at its September meeting, votes and approves them at the October meeting (30 days), then *immediately* submits them to the Committee of Laws; in this case, the branch can have them back by or before the December meeting. I used that example because I know it was a reality for the branches or state associations that submitted changes this past October. Some might have actually had them returned by the November meeting.

The key to the quickest return possible is the Members Only portal of the NALC website. As I have written previously, you can track the status of your bylaws through the portal as well. Another way to access the portal is by going to the assistant-secretary treasurer page under the "Union Administration" tab on the NALC website for direct links and forms to complete for bylaw submission.

It should be noted that only presidents, secretaries and treasurers have access to the bylaw menu in the portal. At some point we will have it where the president can provide access to any member or officer as designated.

For those who have access, once inside the Members Only portal, you will see the "By-Laws" button and when you click on it, it will take you to the "Maintain Bylaws" section of the database. From there you can amend or create bylaws directly by typing them in by article and section. And that's important because a change to each section should be entered just like you would on the hard-copy version. Be careful not to "submit" each article and section as a separate bylaw submission. There is a tutorial in the "Maintain Bylaw" section to help you every step of the way.

If you already have it typed up as a PDF from the fillable form provided on my webpage, you also can directly upload it through the portal. Simply drag and drop and I will receive your changes instantly once it is submitted. The program will confirm the successful submission by responding "file uploaded complete."

You also are able to view any submission that we have currently in the database for your branch or state association. We are working on digitalizing and uploading in the database any hard-copy file that we have at Headquarters that is not already available for your viewing. If you are using the portal, make sure that you include a copy of your current bylaws as well. This can help if we have any questions concerning the context of what is submitted.

Complete all of the information requested, including your contact information. A *direct* phone number and/or an email address for the contact person will suffice.

Disclaimer: For purists like me who love mail and the Postal Service, this in no way implies a preference for digital over our beloved mail service. This just provides a quicker response time. Mailed bylaw changes are still very much welcome!

In closing, I wish all a very merry Christmas, a happy Hanukkah, joyous Kwanzaa and a prosperous new year, from my family to yours.

COTS vehicle pilot test and MDD-TR updates



Christopher Jackson

In past articles, I have shared information about the Postal Service's need to replace older model vehicles in the delivery fleet. In working to replace these vehicles, the Postal Service is scheduled to deploy the Next Generation Delivery Vehicle (NGDV) in mid- to late 2024. However, the NGDV is not the only option the Postal Service is considering for the delivery fleet. This month, I would like to share information on the latest commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) vehicle model that USPS is evaluating, along with a recent update to the Mobile Delivery Device (MDD-TR).

the steering wheel, displays video feeds from cameras as installed above the passenger side cargo and rear doors of the vehicle as well.

The C250 is a right-hand drive model that is the same height as the current Long Life Vehicle (LLV) but extends four feet longer. The vehicle has approximately 250 cubic feet of cargo space, which is more than twice as much storage space as the LLV. The cabin area is equipped with a built-in passenger jump seat that also folds down into a tray for mail handling. There is no interior door connecting the cabin area to the cargo section; therefore, a carrier will need to exit the cabin to access mail loaded into the cargo section.



Morgan Olson C250 pilot test

In October, the Postal Service notified NALC of its intent to pilot test a Morgan Olson C250 vehicle at six locations across the country. The Morgan Olson C250 is a COTS



internal combustion engine vehicle (ICE) that operates on pump gasoline. USPS states that the purpose of the test is to evaluate the performance and maneuverability of the vehicle when utilized in Postal Service operations.

Recently, my staff and I visited the USPS engineering facility in Merrifield, VA, to review this new vehicle. The C250 is equipped with many of the modern features found in today's passenger vehicles. A key fob is used to unlock the doors and to start the engine. A panel inside the cabin area holds push-button controls for a fan that is mounted on the dashboard, heated driver's seat, steering wheel and side mirrors, LED lighting for the cabin and cargo areas, and exterior rear auxiliary strobe lighting. There is a control for switching the vehicle between two-wheel drive (2WD) and four-wheel drive (4WD) to accommodate handling in various weather conditions. Additional cabin area controls operate the radio, power windows, hazard lights, heating and air conditioning. A small monitor, mounted above



The rear and cargo areas are accessible through roll-up shutter doors. The cargo area has one shutter door on each side of the vehicle. The area contains two levels of shelving with six rectangular sections.

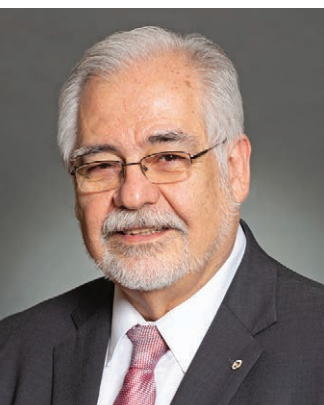
Many of the sections feature rollers along the bottom for sliding equipment from one side to the other. A drop-down cover is attached to one of the sections on the driver's side providing a second working tray for mail handling.



A larger compartment aligned with netting is located in the rear of the vehicle. This compartment

(continued on page 45)

Retaliation against injured employees



Manuel L. Peralta Jr.

It has been quite a while since I have addressed the issue of whistleblower protection, so here we go.

In April 2022, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) revised its *Whistleblower Investigations Manual*, and in reviewing it, I want to address a few items.

The NALC has bargained a very sophisticated grievance procedure that requires us to identify what happened, which rule was violated and what we seek as a remedy. The membership of the NALC has been well represented by its shop stewards, branch officers and regional representatives in the processing of their grievances. Further, we have

developed a well-trained cadre of arbitration advocates who present these cases to the assigned arbitrator. Our advocates have done an outstanding job upholding the contract.

If you are terminated and you believe that your rights have been violated, you have the right to file a grievance, and the union has the right to move that grievance forward if it, too, believes that your rights were violated.

If you suffer an injury and management issues you discipline, or retaliates against you in other ways, you again have access to the grievance procedure.

If, however, you are a new city carrier, your right to protest a termination begins after 90 days for a PTF, and if you are a CCA, your right to protest a termination through the grievance procedure is conditioned on your completion of 90 workdays or 120 calendar days (see page 16-12 of the 2021 *Joint Contract Administration Manual [JCAM]*).

What if you have not completed your 90/120, suffer an on-the-job injury and are then terminated? If you are in such a situation, management often believes that it is free to wash its hands of you and it takes the action simply because it thinks it is free to do so. Are you without any rights? Is there anything that the NALC can do?

The answer to the latter is yes, but it is limited.

There are times that the law and/or federal regulations protect us beyond the reach of the grievance procedure, as I'll explain below.

OSH Act of 1970

The Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Act of 1970 created OSHA for the purpose of promulgating and en-

forcing standards. This law also established the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) for the purpose of conducting research and recommending occupational safety and health standards. When this law was written, it contained a section intended to protect employees against retaliation. That rule is found in Section 11(c) of the OSH Act and reads as follows:

(1) No person shall discharge or in any manner discriminate against any employee because such employee has filed any complaint or instituted or caused to be instituted any proceeding under or related to this Act or has testified or is about to testify in any such proceeding or because of the exercise by such employee on behalf of himself or others of any right afforded by this Act.

(2) Any employee who believes that he has been discharged or otherwise discriminated against by any person in violation of this subsection may, within thirty days after such violation occurs, file a complaint with the Secretary alleging such discrimination. Upon receipt of such complaint, the Secretary shall cause such investigation to be made as he deems appropriate. If upon such investigation, the Secretary determines that the provisions of this subsection have been violated, he shall bring an action in any appropriate United States district court against such person. In any such action the United States district courts shall have jurisdiction, for cause shown to restrain violations of paragraph (1) of this subsection and order all appropriate relief including rehiring or reinstatement of the employee to his former position with back pay.

(3) Within 90 days of the receipt of a complaint filed under this subsection the Secretary shall notify the complainant of his determination under paragraph 2 of this subsection.

So, what does that mean?

It means that you have the right to file a whistleblower complaint through OSHA, to protest retaliation by management (any adverse action), that you believe violates the law as written. Once a complaint is filed, OSHA's team is responsible for conducting an investigation. What do they investigate?

Best to turn to the *Investigative Manual* beginning at page 23, in Chapter 2, which explains:

...In general terms, a whistleblower investigation focuses on determining whether there is reasonable cause to believe that retaliation in violation of an OSHA whistleblower statute has occurred by analyzing whether the facts of the case meet the required elements of a violation and the required standard for causation (i.e., butfor, motivating factor, or contributing factor).

Elements of a violation (page 24):

An investigation focuses on the elements of a violation and the employer's defenses. The four basic elements of a

whistleblower claim are that: (1) Complainant engaged in protected activity; (2) Respondent knew or suspected that Complainant engaged in the protected activity; (3) Complainant suffered an adverse action; and (4) there was a causal connection between the protected activity and the adverse action (a.k.a. nexus).

A. Protected Activity: The evidence must establish that Complainant engaged in activity protected under the specific statute(s). Protected activity generally falls into a few broad categories. The following are general descriptions of protected activities. Specific information on the protected activities under a specific statute can be found in the desk aid for the specific statute. If there is any inconsistency between this general information and the information in the desk aid, follow the more specific information in the desk aid.

1. Reporting potential violations or hazards to management – Reporting a complaint to a supervisor or someone with the authority to take corrective action.
2. Reporting a workrelated injury or illness – Reporting a workrelated injury or illness to management personnel.
3. Providing information to a government agency.
4. Filing a complaint – Filing a complaint or instituting a proceeding provided for by law, for example, a formal complaint to OSHA under the OSH Act’s section 8(f).
5. Instituting or causing to be instituted any proceeding under or related to the relevant act... – Examples include filing under a collective bargaining agreement a grievance related to an occupational safety and health issue (or other issue covered by the OSHAenforced whistleblower protection laws), and communicating with the media about an unsafe or unhealthful workplace condition.
6. Assisting, participating, or testifying in proceedings...

B. Employer Knowledge: The investigation must show that a person involved in or influencing the decision to take the adverse action was aware or at least suspected that Complainant or someone closely associated with Complainant, such as a spouse or coworker, engaged in protected activity

C. Adverse Action: An adverse action is any action that could dissuade a reasonable employee from engaging in protected activity. Common examples include firing, demoting, and disciplining the employee. The evidence must demonstrate that Complainant suffered some form of adverse action. An adverse action usually must relate to employment, but under statutory provisions like section 11(c) which do not specify that the retaliation must affect the terms or conditions of employment, adverse action need not be related to employment.

D. Nexus: There must be reasonable cause to believe that the protected activity caused the adverse action at least in part (i.e., that a nexus exists). As explained below, depending on which law is involved in the case, the protected

activity must have been either a “butforcause” of the adverse action, a contributing factor in the decision to take adverse action, or a motivating factor in the decision to take adverse action.

The above is a simplified listing of what the investigator needs to look into to determine if the four required elements of a whistleblower violation are in fact present.

How can you help?

From your first day of employment forward, keep track of the work you are assigned and the time it takes you to do that work.

Keep track of your working relationship with your supervisors and managers, taking note of any feedback they give you.

If you suffer an injury and report it, and then things go sour, you may need to file a whistleblower complaint and be at the ready to explain how things changed when you reported the injury.

If you need to file a whistleblower complaint, go to whistleblowers.gov/complaint_page.

Remember, you have a 30-day time limit (from the date of the adverse action) to initiate a complaint.

I would like to take a moment to say farewell to a close friend of over 30 years. Al Apfelbaum passed away on Oct. 12.

Al started his USPS career in 1968 and served as a shop steward, union activist and officer of Santa Clara, CA Branch 1427. In December 1990, Al was appointed as a regional administrative assistant (RAA) in Region 1 by President Vincent Sombrotto. Al served in that position until President Sombrotto appointed him as an assistant to the president at NALC Headquarters beginning in 2001. Al retired in early 2012, after serving the NALC at the regional and national level for 22 years. Upon his retirement, he returned to serving his branch until his death last month.

Al is survived by his wife, Dinna; his daughter, Danielle; and his grandson, Joseph.

In closing, merry Christmas and happy holidays to all.



Withdrawal rates



**Dan
Toth**

Planning for retirement is, in large part, a financial question. For some, it is the only question. Although this column regularly reviews the retirement benefits of city letter carriers, it intentionally avoids providing financial advice. Although this article will continue that tradition, it will discuss withdrawal rates.

Withdrawal rate is an important topic to address, so that those planning for retirement, or even those who have already retired, can have a ballpark understanding of how much money they can withdraw from their Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) for an indefinite horizon.

Conversely, an understanding of withdrawal rates helps one understand how much they need to save up for retirement based on an expected budget.

One withdrawal method is often referred to as the 4 percent rule. It's fairly simple. The idea is that a retiree can withdraw 4 percent of their retirement account each year, year after year, and not run out of money. For example, if your TSP is \$400,000, then the 4 percent rule says you could withdraw \$16,000 per year (\$1,333 per month) for the rest of your life. It is important to point out that nobody can predict the future and that there is always some risk with any withdrawal rate. To better understand the risk, we should look at the history of the 4 percent rule and how it was derived.

Prior to 1994, the adage was typically that one could withdraw 5 percent per year. One financial advisor decided to challenge this guidance and analyzed historical data of stock and bond returns over a 50-year period. William Bengen, the financial advisor, found that a 4 percent withdrawal rate would survive nearly every scenario, good and bad. This change to the guidance helps ensure retirees saved enough prior to retirement, and do not face a significant risk of outliving their savings. As the 4 percent rule was derived by analyzing historical data, we should be reminded that past performance does not dictate future performance. There is always some inherent risk.

There are many factors that could impact your nest egg and desired withdrawal rate, such as rising medical expenses and personal tax rates. The makeup of a portfolio also is vital. Is the portfolio allocated entirely in stocks or bonds or is it diversified? The 4 percent rule was derived

using 60 percent equities and 40 percent bonds, but at a time when bonds had a higher return than they do now.

Of course, the performance of the market is a substantial factor. Keep in mind that the 4 percent rule is just general guidance. If the market is performing poorly, one might cut back on some expenses and withdraw less. Typically, if the market is performing poorly, there is an economic impact such as inflation or higher interest rates, which might make it easier to cut back as one waits for a better deal on non-essential items, such as travel and entertainment. Alternatively, if the market is overperforming, you might be able to spring for that luxury you've been dreaming about or helping the kids out, without serious long-term risk to your savings.

Some might go with a more conservative withdrawal rate of 3.5 percent. They might have personal factors, such as an expectation of living longer than average. The lower withdrawal rate increases the chances that the savings will last their lifetime. Others might want a lower withdrawal rate for a different reason, knowing that their savings will be passed on to a loved one. On the other hand, those with a shorter life expectancy might be more aggressive and opt for a 4.5 percent withdrawal rate to get the most out of retirement.

Fortunately, the TSP withdrawal options are flexible and can accommodate various goals. In particular, the TSP provides options for installments (automatic withdrawals), or partial distributions of a specified amount. There is no limit on the number of partial distributions, except that no more than one will be processed in a 30-day period. You can even make partial distributions while you are receiving installments. One approach might be to start with a conservative withdrawal rate in the form of installments, and if needed, supplement with a partial distribution or simply increasing the withdrawal rate. Be mindful that increasing your distribution may have an impact on your effective tax rate and/or Medicare premium.

Every person will have a deeply personal decision to make when it comes to withdrawing their retirement accounts. They may need to weigh their retirement goals, expenses, budget, risk tolerance and other benefits to help them determine how much to withdraw from their retirement accounts, or how much they can afford to. If you decide that a financial advisor is right for your situation, be sure to understand all of the costs and whether the advisor has a fiduciary duty to you. Bear in mind that the TSP's fees (expense ratio) can be hard to beat with the C Fund at 59 cents for every \$1,000 invested.

MBA Retirement Savings Plan 2024 update



**James W.
"Jim" Yates**

The Mutual Benefit Association (MBA) offers several retirement savings plans (RSPs) for all city letter carriers who are members of the NALC and their families. These plans are the MBA RSP, the MBA Family RSP, the city carrier assistant (CCA) RSP and the MBA Immediate Annuity.

The MBA RSPs are retirement income plans designed to supplement your pension. You make small payments to your plan while you're working so that you can receive a lifetime of monthly payments after you retire.

The MBA RSPs are offered as traditional IRAs, Roth IRAs or non-

qualified annuities.

With a traditional IRA, the contributions you make each year may be deducted from your federal taxes. In addition, earnings accumulate tax-free until the time of withdrawal. Upon distribution at age 59½ or older, the earnings and principal (your contributions) are taxed as ordinary income. For 2024, the maximum annual contribution per individual under age 50 has increased to \$7,000. If you reach the age of 50 or older before the end of 2024, you may contribute an additional \$1,000 in catch-up contributions. Owners of a traditional IRA must take a required minimum distribution (RMD) beginning at age 73.

Contributions to a Roth IRA are not tax-deductible, but earnings accumulate tax-free. At the time of withdrawal, earnings are free from taxes if the owner has held the IRA for a minimum of five years and is at least 59½ years old. The contribution limits for a Roth IRA are the same as for the traditional. Owners of Roth IRAs, or their surviving spouse, do not have to take RMDs from it during their lifetime. Beginning in 2024, your beneficiaries no longer have to take RMDs from your account after they inherit it.

Similar to a Roth IRA, contributions to a non-qualified annuity are not tax-deductible. However, your earnings on that money are taxed when you withdraw it from the account, regardless of how long you have held the account. The principle has already been taxed and is not taxed again upon withdrawal. There is no contribution limit, as there is with a traditional or Roth IRA. A non-qualified annuity is not subject to RMDs.

Participation in a MBA RSP is easy. Once enrolled, you can simply make small contributions, as low as \$15 per pay period (\$25 per month, with an initial \$1,000 deposit for the Family RSP or a minimum premium payment of \$25,000 for the Immediate Annuity). The easiest way to pay for active city carriers is through automatic deductions from your paycheck. You can adjust how much you want to contribute, stop and start making payments, or pay in lump sums whenever you want. MBA will handle the automatic deductions, or bill you monthly or annually.

When a participating CCA becomes a career employee, they may transfer their traditional IRA funds to the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), or continue the plan with the MBA to have an additional source of retirement income. The MBA will waive the surrender charge in this instance only. Due to IRS regulations, Roth funds from a personal IRA account cannot be transferred into the TSP.

The interest rates for all MBA IRAs are set by the trustees each December for the following year. For 2023, the interest rate was set at 2.80 percent for all new accounts and those issued on form 860 (2015 or newer). As of this writing, the rates for 2024 have not been set (check back here next month). The rate in effect at the time of purchase will remain in effect for 12 months, then rerate to the current year's percentage. From that point on, the interest rate will change every January based on the trustees' decision in December, but will never go below the guaranteed minimum interest rate of 2 percent. For the rates on older contracts, please see our website, nalc.org/mba, or call the office if you are not sure which contract you have.

If you need emergency cash, you can stay in an MBA RSP while withdrawing money any time after one year, subject to certain minimums and limitations. However, during the first six years you are in a plan, you will pay a surrender charge on the amount you withdraw in addition to any IRS penalties, if applicable. You also can surrender your plan for its cash value at any time, subject to the same surrender charges listed above.

In next month's article, I will discuss your payout options for when you decide to collect your annuity.

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

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

New prescription drug plan for Medicare-eligible retirees



**Stephanie
Stewart**

I am excited to announce a new prescription drug plan for our High Option Medicare-eligible retirees beginning in January 2024. Since this is a new offering, I thought it was pertinent to take some time this month to discuss the benefits. The new coverage is called SilverScript PDP.

NALC's SilverScript coverage combines a standard Medicare Part D prescription drug plan with additional prescription coverage provided by the Plan. The additional coverage is designed to close the gaps between the standard Part D plan and your current coverage.

I know that many of our members are comfortable with the Plan's current prescription benefits and prefer not to experience change, however, the new coverage has been custom-tailored for participants in the NALC Health Benefit Plan and will provide you with even more savings. Our SilverScript PDP was built in a way that allows our members the ability to take advantage of lower-cost medications associated with Medicare Part D, but that also provides assurance that you will never pay more than you pay for your existing prescription coverage provided by the Plan.

“The move to SilverScript will change the way NALC HBP delivers affordable prescription drug coverage and will allow the Plan to offer a better benefit to our Medicare-eligible retirees and their covered Medicare-eligible dependents.”

The move to SilverScript will change the way NALC HBP delivers affordable prescription drug coverage and will allow the Plan to offer a better benefit to our Medicare-eligible retirees and their covered Medicare-eligible dependents.

Specifically, this move allows the NALC HBP the ability to provide each SilverScript PDP enrollee with a Medi-

care Part B Premium reimbursement of up to \$600.

The SilverScript prescription drug plan offers:

- An extensive network of pharmacies that includes national chains
- An inclusive formulary—or drug list—of Medicare Part D drugs
- Coverage of some drugs that are not covered by Medicare
- CVS Caremark® Mail Service Pharmacy for your Part D maintenance drugs or prescriptions commonly used to treat conditions that are considered chronic or long term
- Specialty pharmacy services for complex-condition medicines that require:
 - Special handling
 - Refrigeration
 - Education and support

To make it easy for our members to take advantage of the cost savings associated with our new prescription coverage, the NALC HBP will automatically enroll you in our SilverScript plan unless you are currently covered under a Medicare Advantage Plan. We will also submit your enrollment to Medicare and pay the Medicare Part D premiums on your behalf.

Although there are many financial benefits to enrolling in the program, if you do not wish to be enrolled, you will be provided an opportunity to opt out and remain within your current prescription coverage. During the opt-out period, there will be no requirement to submit physical or electronic notices to SilverScript; you will simply be able to call SilverScript and instruct the representative to remove you from the SilverScript plan. Upon opting out of SilverScript, you will automatically remain with your current NALC prescription plan, which does not include any reimbursement toward your Medicare B premium.

Members will receive a new identification card from SilverScript to use at the pharmacy, but your medical identification card will remain the same. Beginning on your effective date, you will be able to fill your prescriptions at your local pharmacy within the SilverScript pharmacy network or through the CVS Caremark Mail Service Pharmacy™.

However, if your spouse or dependent child has prescription drug coverage through the Plan and is not

enrolled in SilverScript, they will continue to use their current identification card through the NALC HBP to get their prescriptions filled.

I believe that SilverScript is an excellent offering for our eligible members and an opportunity for those enrolled in Medicare to acquire additional savings.

We know that this is a change in the administration of your retiree prescription drug plan, and you may have many questions. Please know that we are diligently working to make this change as seamless as possible and to provide you with a positive experience. If you have any questions, please contact us.

By the time this article reaches you, Open Season may be nearing a close, or possibly already have closed. If you are a current member and choose to stay with us, I would like to thank you for your dedication. Your commitment is appreciated more than we can say. If you are a new member who has enrolled or may be considering us as an option, then I also say thank you for adding us to your list and giving us the chance to stand out. Together, let's make 2024 an even healthier year.

In closing, I would like to take this time to wish you and your families a joyous holiday season and a happy new year.

MDD-TR updates (continued)

(Continued from page 39)

also functions as a large sliding tray. When the bottom handle of the compartment is lifted, the carrier can slide the entire section out through the rear door. This area also is accessible from either side of the vehicle by unhooking the attached netting. Testing of the C250 is being conducted Nov. 6, 2023, through Feb. 16, 2024.

MDD Software Version 7.80

Also in October, the Postal Service shared the latest update to the MDD-TR, release 7.80. The update includes several enhancements that will affect city carriers.

One enhancement to the MDD-TR is related to Certified Mail processed into the Delivery Point Sequence (DPS) automated mail. In my October column, I discussed a notification received from USPS detailing its plan to conduct a pilot test using the MDD-TR to communicate with carriers when they have Certified Mail in their DPS. During the pilot program, the MDD-TR notified carriers as they approached a Certified Mail delivery point using its GPS capabilities. The device also tracked the total number of Certified Mail pieces and delivery attempts the carrier made throughout the day then the option to conduct a Certified Mail review was

presented to the carrier at the end of the tour. Through software update 7.80, the Certified Mail test features have now been implemented on all MDD-TR devices nationally. For more details regarding the pilot test, please see my October column.

Another feature of Release 7.80 is a popup reminder for carriers to enter their vehicle return mileage before ending their tour for the day. As a carrier breaks the geofence of the delivery unit when returning from the street, a reminder will display, "Please remember to enter Ending Mileage for the day." If the ending mileage is not input, when the carrier attempts to enter an "End Tour" the scanner will display the message, "Ending Mileage has not been reported. Press Enter to proceed." After pressing enter, the scanner will redirect the carrier back to the Ending Mileage entry screen. The MDD-TR will not accept an "End Tour" clock ring for the carrier until a vehicle return mileage is submitted.

In closing, I want to remind carriers to be mindful of safety hazards on the street when loading and unloading from the rear of the vehicle.

My staff and I will continue to monitor these initiatives and provide updates to the membership. Be sure to read my article each month and visit nalc.org for the latest information.

Contract Administration Unit

Paul Barner, 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

Retirement processing issues

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) administers the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) and the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS). OPM is the federal agency that has authority to decide all matters regarding CSRS and FERS retirements. OPM determines whether a letter carrier is eligible to retire, how much the carrier will receive in retirement, and deals with a host of related issues. OPM has its own internal appeals system that is available when a retiree believes an OPM decision is wrong. Since OPM is a separate federal agency and not a party to the collective-bargaining agreement between the USPS and NALC, no decision, action or lack of action by OPM can be challenged using the grievance procedure.

However, OPM requires employees to apply for retirement through their own federal agency, including the Postal Service. Likewise, OPM requires the Postal Service to process the retirement applications of employees. The OPM regulations regarding the processing of retirement applications of employees by agencies are complex. Many of those regulations are explained in OPM's *CSRS-FERS Handbook*, which is available online at opm.gov.

The regulations pertaining to retirement within the Postal Service are found in the *Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM)*. Section 560 of the *ELM* explains the process for employees covered under CSRS, while Section 580 describes the rules for those covered by FERS. These sections of the *ELM* reflect many of OPM's regulations regarding retirement applications. If there is an apparent conflict between OPM regulations or policies and the Postal Service *ELM* provisions regarding the processing of retirement applications, OPM's regulations control. Section 581.2 of the *ELM* states:

OPM administers the basic portion of FERS. The FERS laws, policies, and regulations issued by OPM, including those governing employee eligibility and benefits, are controlling in the event of conflict with the information contained in this subchapter.

Article 21, Section 3 of the National Agreement incorporates the provisions of CSRS under 5 United States Code (USC) 83 and FERS under 5 USC 84. It follows that Postal Service violations of OPM regulations, *ELM* provisions, Step 4 settlements, etc., regarding retirement processing issues can be addressed through the grievance-

arbitration procedure, provided the grievant is a current employee at the time of filing¹.

One retirement application processing issue seems to be widespread. It has to do with the Certified Summary of Federal Service (CSoFS) form. For FERS employees, it is Standard Form 3107-1, and for CSRS employees it is SF 2801-1. The CSoFS is the form that agencies use to certify to OPM the dates of the retiring employee's creditable service, which includes career service and may also include creditable non-career, military and part-time service, etc. This is a critical form, because both an employee's eligibility to retire, as well as the amount of their annuity, are based on the total years and months of service.

Here is what OPM's *CSRS FERS Handbook*, Section 40A3.1-1B says about the form:

B. CSRS Forms To Be Completed by Agency

The personnel office must:

Prepare a Certified Summary of Federal Service (SF 2801-1) that lists the employee's verified Federal civilian and military service.

NOTE: The employee should review and sign the Certified Summary of Federal Service. However, if the employee is unable to sign the Certified Summary, the agency may submit the form to OPM without the employee's signature.

Section 40A3.1-1.D goes on to clarify that CSoFS for FERS employees uses a different form number.

D. FERS Forms To Be Completed by Agency

The forms to be completed by the personnel office in the case of a FERS employee are the same as those used for a CSRS employee (see paragraph B), with the following exceptions:

The Certified Summary of Federal Service is SF 3107-1;

The instructions on the form itself are also clear. The first set of instructions on the form pertains to information for the agency. Item No. 1 requires a certified copy of the form to accompany the employee's application for retirement. The second set of instructions is to be completed by the employee. The instructions state:

1. Your employing office will complete and certify this form for you.
2. Review this form carefully. Be sure it contains all of your service.

¹ As a general matter, non-employees, including retirees, do not have standing to initiate grievances. A major exception to this general rule is Memorandum of Understanding Re: Debts of Retired Employees found on page 217 of the National Agreement.

3. Complete Section E, Employee’s Certification, and return the form to your employing office.

Section D of the form includes a line for a signature by an official from the employing agency certifying that the service history information on the form accurately reflects official agency personnel and/or payroll records. Section E of the form is titled “Employee’s Certification” and includes a line for the employee’s signature.

The service histories of most employees are relatively straightforward, with a beginning date of career service through the anticipated retirement date. But other employees may have made a deposit for military or non-career civilian service; accumulated more than six months of leave without pay (LWOP) in a calendar year; or have more than two months of aggregate LWOP due to an accepted on-the-job injury. These scenarios make reviewing and certifying the service history even more important as they are more prone to error and are vital in making fully informed retirement decisions.

Despite the clear guidance and form instructions, the Postal Service retirement counselors at the Human Resources Shared Service Center (HRSSC) routinely provide blank forms to retiring employees, without any service history information. Some retiring employees have been told that they should sign the blank form and that the form would be filled out later by the Postal Service. No employee can reasonably be required to sign a document certifying that the information provided by the Postal Service on the document is accurate when there is no information provided on the document. Employees who do not trust the Postal Service to certify the correct service should request the form be completed so that it can be reviewed in accordance with the instructions provided by OPM. Those who choose to submit a blank form can do so, without a signature, and it should not delay your retirement.

Insistence by HRSSC counselors that retiring employees sign a blank CSoFS should be challenged, through the grievance procedure, if necessary, as this is contrary to the provisions set forth by OPM.

Employees who are denied a completed form can consider asking their shop steward to investigate (remember that any grievance must be initiated prior to separation) and then submit the application with the blank, unsigned, CSoFS. Employees should not have to delay their retirement due to retirement-processing issues by the Postal Service.

The consideration of the proper remedy in such a case is very important. In addition to a cease-and-desist to protect future retirees, an important remedy to include during a retirement processing grievance is compelling the Postal Service to re-certify to OPM the employee’s service history, if it did not do so correctly in the first place. This is because OPM will rely solely on the service history provided by the Postal Service. It generally will not consider employee statements and documentation. The best way to fix such a situation is to have the Postal Service re-certify the correct service history.

“Retirement is a critical benefit that letter carriers have earned through their years, if not decades, of service. Mistakes by the Postal Service when processing retirement forms have a substantial financial impact on retirees.”

This can become complicated as the grievance would be filed prior to the employee’s separation, but if the Postal Service initially refused to complete the CSoFS and the employee retired without it, the Postal Service doesn’t complete the form until a later date, post-separation. This creates a situation where the CSoFS cannot be reviewed when a grievance is initiated. A mutual agreement to extend the time limits of the grievance, such that the CSoFS can be properly reviewed for accuracy, can be an efficient method to either correct the issue or to ensure that the proper remedy is included. Grievances that are advanced to the next step prior to review of the CSoFS should be sure to include a remedy that provides for re-certification of the form as necessary.

Retirement is a critical benefit that letter carriers have earned through their years, if not decades, of service. Mistakes by the Postal Service when processing retirement forms have a substantial financial impact on retirees. Shop stewards and branch officers play an important role in ensuring that letter carriers are provided with the benefits to which retiring employees are entitled under the law.

Get ready for a new year

Sisters and brothers, I want to wish you a warm and safe holiday season. For those who have met me and those who have not, I love my job, and I take it to heart. Being selected and supported by President Emeritus Fredric V. Rolando and having the continuing support from President Brian L. Renfroe makes all the difference.

Remember that our community service programs help us maintain a positive public image and are a civic duty. They help us with elected officials and are an asset in negotiations. They help us build trust, relevance and relationships within our communities.

The joint mission of NALC and the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) is to free individuals from muscle-debilitating diseases and to be a source of comfort and hope to patients and their families. Every day, people go to extraordinary lengths to advance this mission.

I know I keep repeating myself, but the fact that there are sisters and brothers picking up *The Postal Record* for the first time and who might be reading this and finding new or different ways to raise money for MDA is a subject always on my mind.

NALC was the first national sponsor for MDA, and letter carriers are among MDA's top fundraisers, collecting millions of dollars over the years to finance research and provide care and services to children and adults with muscular dystrophy. Your efforts also help children go to summer camp, which allows them to just be kids for a week.

A new year is coming, and that means a new year in which we can raise money for MDA. Branches across this lovely nation—including those in Puerto Rico, Guam and the Virgin Islands—all raise money in different ways. One of the easiest ways is to join an MDA event—or create your own event—to raise vital funds to help MDA families live longer and grow stronger. We have branches of all sizes out there raising money for MDA—from very large branches, such as New Jersey Merged Branch 38, to very small ones like Manitowoc, WI Branch 490, and branches in between, such as Erie, PA Branch 284. At this time, all three branches are at the top of their respective categories in fundraising.

With a new year approaching, I want to start early and ask you to share your ideas. Share your thoughts. Share the methods behind the fundraising madness. The more we help and share with each other, the more money we can raise for MDA. You can share your ideas on the NALC MDA Facebook page at facebook.com/deliverthecure.

Participation in these events creates excitement within your branch, knowing you've made a big difference in the lives of kids and adults with muscular dystrophy. MDA representatives are available to support you in your fundraising efforts as a branch and as individuals.

Here are some easy ways to raise money for MDA:

- Raffles
- Car washes
- Yard sales
- Shamrocks
- Satchel drives
- Texas hold'em tournaments (follow state laws)
- Local credit union partnerships
- Bowling tournaments
- Pool and dart tournaments
- Comedy/karaoke nights
- Charity golf tournaments
- Corn hole and bean bag tournaments
- Bake sales
- Bingo nights
- Branch member donation drives
- Pancake breakfasts or spaghetti dinners
- Muscle walks
- 5K Tough Mudders
- Trivia tournaments



So many ideas to choose from, and probably many more ideas out there that can be shared. Remember, our commitment to MDA is here until a cure is delivered (#DelivertheCure), no matter how long it may take.

If your branch has not participated in years, please feel free to contact me at 202-662-2489 or mda@nalc.org, and together we can make a plan for your branch to begin participating.

New MDA support team

- Sabrina Allen, senior director, organizational partnerships
- Jessica Marcus, specialist, organizational partnerships

They can be contacted at nalc@mdausa.org, 312-392-1100 or at this address: Muscular Dystrophy Association Inc., Attn: NALC, P.O. Box 7410354, Chicago, IL 60674-0354

All funds raised for MDA in 2023 must be **received by Dec. 29** (by mail to the address above) to be counted in the year's figures. As a reminder, all checks and offline gifts received by the branch should use the NALC/MDA Allocation Form.

Please mail me copies of any receipts or checks along with a copy of the NALC/MDA Allocation Form so that your branch can be properly recognized. The NALC/MDA Allocation Form must be turned in the same calendar year of the event (no later than Dec. 29) in order to qualify for the NALC Honor Roll for that year. Please send copies by **Dec. 29** to me at the Region 9 NBA office: 1101 Northchase Parkway SE, Suite 3, Marietta, GA 30067.

—Christina Vela Davidson

Medical evidence and OWCP, Part 4 —The CA-1 and traumatic injuries



Regional Workers' Compensation Assistant Coby Jones

As city letter carriers, we sustain more traumatic injuries each year than any other group of federal employees. And unlike occupational disease cases, the majority of our traumatic injuries are initially accepted without further adjudication by OWCP if the appropriate CA-1 form is timely filed.

The implementing regulations of the FECA found at 20 CFR §10.5(ee) define a traumatic injury: “*Traumatic injury* means a condition of the body caused by a specific event

or incident, or series of events or incidents, within a single workday or shift. Such condition must be caused by external force, including stress or strain, which is identifiable as to time and place of occurrence and member or function of the body affected.”

Put simply, a traumatic injury occurs during a single day at work due to something specific that you can point to. If you can't point to an event or series of events, you might consider filing a CA-2 for occupational disease—depending on the diagnosis—even if the condition first manifests itself during the course of a single day.

The medical evidence needed to establish a traumatic injury claim is generally much simpler and more straightforward than an occupational disease claim. With the exception of the minor visible injuries that were discussed in last month's column, all other traumatic injuries will require a medical report signed by a physician that in all cases includes a diagnosis and, in most cases, includes a causal explanation.

The diagnosis must be based on objective clinical findings. It should be noted that OWCP views pain as a symptom and will not accept it as a diagnosis. The medical evidence should briefly describe how the attending physician arrived at the diagnosis. According to *FECA Procedure Manual 2-0810.5.b*, there are three general classes of objective clinical findings that establish diagnoses:

- (1) Physical findings, which are noted by the physician's visual inspection, palpation and manipulation of the body. They include readings of temperature, pulse, respiration, blood pressure, range of motion, etc.
- (2) Laboratory findings such as blood tests, urine and tissue samples, etc.
- (3) Reports of a diagnostic procedure, such as an x-rays, MRI, EMG, etc.

Once the attending physician has arrived at a diagnosis, they should then explain how the claimed incident led to

that diagnosis. In what OWCP calls “clear-cut” traumatic injuries, the causal explanation can be minimal. These injuries usually involve something outside the routine performance of duty such as a slip, trip, fall, equipment failure, animal attack, assault or vehicle accident. They are often impact injuries. Here is what *FECA Procedure Manual 2-0805.3.d(1)* says about “clear-cut” traumatic injuries:

- (1) In clear-cut traumatic injury claims, where the fact of injury is established and is clearly competent to cause the condition described (for instance, a worker falls from a scaffold and breaks an arm), a fully rationalized medical opinion is not needed. The physician's diagnosis and an affirmative statement are sufficient to accept the claim.

In our experience, OWCP claims examiners tend to require more detailed causal explanations in cases involving trauma to the body that occurs while engaged in otherwise routine work activities such as lifting, twisting, climbing stairs, reaching, stepping in and out of the vehicle, etc. Often these cases initially involve diagnoses of strains or sprains. Here, the attending physician should provide a brief biomechanical description of the injury, such as, “The weight of the parcel strained the muscles and ligaments of the lower back as my patient straightened up and twisted to the left to place the parcel on the shelf in their vehicle.”

“The medical evidence needed to establish a traumatic injury claim is generally much simpler and more straightforward than an occupational disease claim.”

A more detailed causal explanation may also be required in traumatic injury cases involving a body part that has been previously injured, or has pre-existing or degenerative conditions. In such cases, claims examiners will expect the attending physician to show familiarity with the medical history of the affected part and to discuss the traumatic injury in the context of the previous injuries or preexisting conditions.

Finally, as was pointed out in October's column discussing the newly revised CA-20 form, we anticipate that in most traumatic injury cases, a conscientiously completed CA-20 form should result in the initial acceptance of the claim. OWCP, however, may still require additional medical evidence beyond the CA-20 in traumatic cases that involve previous injuries to the affected body part or pre-existing degenerative conditions in the affected part.

Next month's column will continue the discussion of medical evidence and OWCP.



Additional NALC Veterans Group members

Below are the 249 new Veterans Group members who joined after the November issue of *The Postal Record*, with the full list of Veterans Group members, went to press. Unfortunately,

some of the applications did not arrive in time for that issue and are being run here.

To join, go to nalc.org/veterans, fill out and print the membership form,

and then mail the completed application to: NALC Veterans Group, National Association of Letter Carriers, 1101 Northchase Parkway SE, Suite 3, Marietta, GA 30067.

John A. Arciero of Montgomery, AL Br. 106
Michael L. Griggs of Birmingham, AL Br. 530
Raymond Kidd of Decatur, AL Br. 1314
Allen P. Early of Phoenix, AZ Br. 576
Charles W. Haniman of Phoenix, AZ Br. 576
James G. Ogburn of Phoenix, AZ Br. 576
Judy A. Ogburn of Phoenix, AZ Br. 576
Norbert D. Kinne of Tucson, AZ Br. 704
Edgar L. Johnson of Los Angeles, CA Br. 24
Kenneth C. Baracz of Sacramento, CA Br. 133
Kenneth D. Kapaun of Sacramento, CA Br. 133
Thomas W. Turner of Sacramento, CA Br. 133
Andrew T. Milburn of Santa Rosa, CA Br. 183
Leonardo H. Dayrit of San Jose, CA Br. 193
Ruben D. Nazareno of San Jose, CA Br. 193
Genovebo Guzman of Central CA Br. 231
Michael R. Ward of Central CA Br. 231
Fernando D. Gonzalez of Garden Grove, CA Br. 1100
Gary D. Thurber of Garden Grove, CA Br. 1100
Thomas R. Carlson of Greater East Bay, CA Br. 1111
Patrick L. Cherry Sr. of Santa Clara, CA Br. 1427
Frank R. Sandt of Santa Clara, CA Br. 1427
Christian A. Cervantes of Tulare, CA Br. 1810
Christian M. Alcaraz of Pasadena, CA Br. 2200
Thomas J. Huffman of Pasadena, CA Br. 2200
James A. Lyon of Torrance, CA Br. 2207
J. Pasillas of Van Nuys, CA Br. 2462
Donald J. Bayne of Sonora, CA Br. 4625
Daniel K. Feimster of Denver, CA Br. 47
Kevin B. Hooper of Denver, CA Br. 47
Jason Manzanares of Denver, CA Br. 47
Carl G. Payne II of Denver, CA Br. 47
Eduardo A. Pena of Denver, CA Br. 47
Delmas R. Rowe II of Arvada, CO Br. 4405
Philip E. Green of Centennial, CO Br. 5996
Roy C. Zuniga of Centennial, CO Br. 5996
Wendell J. Fletcher of CT Mgd. Br. 20
John A. Barry of Bridgeport, CT Br. 32
Paul D. Barrett of Hartford, CT Br. 86
Jose Maysonet of Hartford, CT Br. 86
Brian D. Sullo of Hartford, CT Br. 86
Hilton Bland of North FL Br. 53
Wilbert A. Jackson I of North FL Br. 53
Carlo Noid of North FL Br. 53
Louis A. Carmon of Tampa, FL Br. 599
Dominic A. Cuizio of South FL Br. 1071
Ronald D. McKay of South FL Br. 1071
Jeffrey L. Cummings of West Coast FL Br. 1477

Robert Quagliotti Jr. of West Coast FL Br. 1477
Willie J. Kendrick Jr. of Lakeland, FL Br. 1779
Harold C. Carter of Clearwater, FL Br. 2008
Jonathan W. Curtis of Sarasota, FL Br. 2148
Paul E. Davis of Emerald Coast, FL Br. 4559
Hector Irizarry of Naples, FL Br. 4716
Vernon M. Mosby of Atlanta, GA Br. 73
Jon L. Martin of Savannah, GA Br. 578
Maurice R. Collette of Honolulu, HI Br. 860
Gikichi Nakama of Aiea-Pearl City, HI Br. 4682
Dwayne A. Baker of Twin Falls, ID Br. 1392
Kendrick B. Wright of Chicago, IL Br. 11
Devin J. Watkins of Springfield, IL Br. 80
Tracey L. Hawkins of Belleville, IL Br. 155
Antonio T. Thompson of Joliet, IL Br. 305
Thomas C. Florez of La Grange Park, IL Br. 825
Salvatore Occhipinti of La Grange Park, IL Br. 825
Jacob Warren of Morton, IL Br. 3980
Andralph Brevil of Indianapolis, IN Br. 39
Justin R. Callahan of Indianapolis, IN Br. 39
Jerry R. Kennedy of Terre Haute, IN Br. 479
Richard E. Gross Jr. of Hammond, IN Br. 580
Robert S. Miller of Sioux City, IA Br. 69
Cynthia M. Newell of Clinton, IA Br. 126
Dennis K. Bowers of Cedar Rapids, IA Br. 373
Patrick W. Garrett of Ottumwa, IA Br. 447
Steven R. Southerland of Topeka, KS Br. 10
Benjamin C. Zilkie of Topeka, KS Br. 10
Nikolaus W. Bekemeyer of Wichita, KS Br. 201
Joe L. Neal of Wichita, KS Br. 201
James A. Mitchell of Shawnee Mission, KS Br. 5521
Dallas Greenwood of Louisville, KY Br. 14
Paul L. Fontenot of Baton Rouge, LA Br. 129
Tanya O. Watts of Gretna, LA Br. 2730
Michael D. Brannon of Rockville, MD Br. 3825
Timothy G. Myers of Rockville, MD Br. 3825
Charles P. Hodgkinson of Worcester, MA Br. 12
Stephen J. Mathews of Worcester, MA Br. 12
Ronald J. Richard of Worcester, MA Br. 12
Arthur C. Tatro of Worcester, MA Br. 12
James R. Clavette of MA Northeast Mgd. Br. 25
Thomas J. Kobrenski of MA Northeast Mgd. Br. 25
Jerome E. Adams of Boston, MA Br. 34
Joshua R. Alves Depina of Boston, MA Br. 34
John R. Hughes of Western MA Br. 46
Daniel T. Jamroz of Western MA Br. 46
Richard Demello of Fall River, MA Br. 51
Derek Hart of Framingham, MA Br. 334

Andrew Taylor of Saginaw, MI Br. 74
Jeffrey S. Garcia of Lansing, MI Br. 122
Homer D. Crane of Bay City, MI Br. 187
Howard J. Koning of Southwestern MI Br. 246
Phillip J. Mumaw Jr. of Southwestern MI Br. 246
Dontrell Tull of Southwestern MI Br. 246
Rodney B. Bonner of Western Wayne Co., MI Br. 2184
David M. Cyrek of Western Wayne Co., MI Br. 2184
Ryan Zyngier of Western Wayne Co., MI Br. 2184
Cortez Norris of Royal Oak, MI Br. 3126
Gerald E. Kozlowski of South Macomb, MI Br. 4374
Thomas A. Krawczynski of Minneapolis, MN Br. 9
Philip C. Leppanen of Minneapolis, MN Br. 9
Wayne W. Witry of Minneapolis, MN Br. 9
James R. Bealke of St. Paul, MN Br. 28
David M. Rowe of St. Paul, MN Br. 28
Dean K. Bixenman of Mankato, MN Br. 90
James P. Matthews of Grand Rapids, MN Br. 3610
Jerry E. Beebe of Kansas City, MO Br. 30
Trevor L. Lewellen of Kansas City, MO Br. 30
Charles T. Holtschneider of Jefferson City, MO Br. 127
Edward L. Brazzil of St. Louis, MO Br. 343
William V. Fisher of St. Louis, MO Br. 343
Terry L. Markley of St. Louis, MO Br. 343
Paul Schmidt of St. Louis, MO Br. 343
Jimmie D. Sutherland of St. Louis, MO Br. 343
Henry P. Zittel of St. Louis, MO Br. 343
William A. Rosner of St. Charles, MO Br. 984
Richard D. Bernstein of Omaha, NE Br. 5
Paul S. Wendt of Lincoln, NE Br. 8
George C. Reade of Las Vegas, NV Br. 2502
Monte L. Wilson of Las Vegas, NV Br. 2502
Michael F. Gould of NH Mgd. Br. 44
John J. Bann Jr. of NJ Mgd. Br. 38
Ngar P. Chin of NJ Mgd. Br. 38
Joseph R. Cutaia of NJ Mgd. Br. 38
James C. Cziak of NJ Mgd. Br. 38
Jerome T. Herman of NJ Mgd. Br. 38
Robert C. Mihok of NJ Mgd. Br. 38
Bruce W. Beckman of Princeton, NJ Br. 268
John A. Symcak of Trenton, NJ Br. 380
Richard J. Grabowski of Camden, NJ Mgd. Br. 540
Anthony Festa of Brick Town, NJ Br. 5420
Bryon Onyia of Roswell, NM Br. 1069
Apollo Sena of Roswell, NM Br. 1069
Donaciano Amparan of Raton, NM Br. 1142
Zedrick Shorty of Gallup, NM Br. 2990
Raymond M. Garey of Buffalo-Western NY Br. 3

Philip J. Jackson of Buffalo-Western NY Br. 3
 Heather Price of Buffalo-Western NY Br. 3
 James F. Wheeler Sr. of Buffalo-Western NY Br. 3
 Teddy Gutherz of New York, NY Br. 36
 R. G. Kemper of Staten Island, NY Br. 99
 John M. Wasilenko of Syracuse, NY Br. 134
 Francis M. Beams of Hudson Valley Mgd., NY Br. 137
 James L. Mccollister of Rochester, NY Br. 210
 George J. Steck of Utica, NY Br. 375
 Alfredo A. Newball Jr. of Jamaica, NY Br. 562
 John J. Jack of Raleigh, NC Br. 459
 Jacob Battyanyi of Winston-Salem, NC Br. 461
 Jacob T. Edmondson Jr. of Winston-Salem, NC Br. 461
 William B. Patrick of Winston-Salem, NC Br. 461
 Gregory O. Russell of Winston-Salem, NC Br. 461
 Nicholas F. Williams of Winston-Salem, NC Br. 461
 William J. Helton Jr. of Eden, NC Br. 3712
 John C. Lyons of Fargo-W. Fargo, ND Br. 205
 Dennis J. Arndt of Cleveland, OH Br. 40
 George S. Kegyes of Cleveland, OH Br. 40
 Jeffery S. Rickman of Cincinnati, OH Br. 43
 Shaun E. Reed of Columbus, OH Br. 78
 Pamela J. Loucks of Toledo, OH Br. 100
 Ronald P. Green of Steubenville, OH Br. 164
 Ryan A. Walters of Dayton, OH Br. 182
 Kenneth E. Finch of Marion, OH Br. 280
 Donaciano L. Chacey of Newark, OH Br. 281
 Richard J. McGee of Youngstown, OH Br. 385
 James P. Anness of Hamilton, OH Br. 426
 Josh Barnett of Oklahoma City, OK Br. 458
 Marc C. Covert of Oklahoma City, OK Br. 458
 Dustin B. Dunaway of Oklahoma City, OK Br. 458
 Robert A. Molina of Oklahoma City, OK Br. 458
 Micheal H. Schlageter of Oklahoma City, OK Br. 458
 Charles Kirchen of Lawton, OK Br. 1123
 David W. Lucie of Tulsa, OK Br. 1358
 Richard L. Toler III of Tulsa, OK Br. 1358

David W. Smith of Portland, OR Br. 82
 Gary R. Harland of Corvallis, OR Br. 1274
 Darrel L. Falske of Roseburg, OR Br. 1518
 Eugene R. McCann of Scranton, PA Br. 17
 Ray B. Anthony of Pittsburgh, PA Br. 84
 Jacob Ewing of Pittsburgh, PA Br. 84
 Alexander W. Kukler Jr. of Pittsburgh, PA Br. 84
 Brandon J. Lewis of Pittsburgh, PA Br. 84
 David W. McHugh of Pittsburgh, PA Br. 84
 Thomas A. Nath of Pittsburgh, PA Br. 84
 Richard W. Swidarski of Pittsburgh, PA Br. 84
 Liam P. Varney of Pittsburgh, PA Br. 84
 Steven M. Small of Philadelphia, PA Br. 157
 Naaman Houseal of Bethlehem, PA Br. 254
 Rickey L. Brown of Lehigh Valley, PA Br. 274
 William D. Margeson of Lehigh Valley, PA Br. 274
 David P. Crossley of Erie, PA Br. 284
 Lawrence A. Deal Jr. of Erie, PA Br. 284
 William L. Sterling of Erie, PA Br. 284
 Robert D. Brett of Johnstown, PA Br. 451
 G. E. Zurick of York, PA Br. 509
 Vincent F. Neri of Providence, RI Br. 15
 Stephen K. Soulliere of Providence, RI Br. 15
 William H. Upshaw of Providence, RI Br. 15
 Walter L. Lightburn II of Charleston, SC Br. 3902
 Richard J. Larson of Dell Rapids, SD Br. 4976
 Chris S. Jensen of Nashville, TN Br. 4
 James S. St. Clair of Nashville, TN Br. 4
 Joe S. Lynn of Knoxville, TN Br. 419
 Braxton H. Hill of Dyersburg, TN Br. 1994
 Thomas Davidson of Dallas, TX Br. 132
 Eugene J. Bennett Sr. of Austin, TX Br. 181
 Joe A. Herrera of Austin, TX Br. 181
 Clinton S. Jacobs of Austin, TX Br. 181
 Robert W. Petty of Austin, TX Br. 181
 David A. Brown of Fort Worth, TX Br. 226
 Olanrewaju J. Aderinto of Houston, TX Br. 283

Luis E. Burgos of Houston, TX Br. 283
 Joan E. Mendez of Houston, TX Br. 283
 Gary L. Herman of El Paso, TX Br. 505
 Ollie C. Colvin of Abilene, TX Br. 950
 John P. Salazar of Amarillo, TX Br. 1037
 Juan R. Mancha of McAllen, TX Br. 2130
 Johnny A. Gaona of New Braunfels, TX Br. 2805
 Paul B. Estrada of Lake Jackson, TX Br. 4723
 Ray C. Jennings of Salt Lake City, UT Br. 111
 Gilbert E. Kocher of Salt Lake City, UT Br. 111
 Earl T. Bolden of Richmond, VA Br. 496
 Wade A. Brown of Richmond, VA Br. 496
 Velda M. Chambers of Richmond, VA Br. 496
 Reginald L. Harris of Richmond, VA Br. 496
 Ronald E. Jackson of Richmond, VA Br. 496
 Carl L. White of Richmond, VA Br. 496
 Vincent E. Wyatt of Richmond, VA Br. 496
 Charles G. Obenchain of Roanoke, VA Br. 524
 Thomas N. Lake of Fredericksburg, VA Br. 685
 David A. Hevrin of Burlington, VT Br. 521
 William H. Cox of Seattle, WA Br. 79
 Curtis L. Matthews of Seattle, WA Br. 79
 David Carufel of Olympia, WA Br. 351
 Victoria Casey of Olympia, WA Br. 351
 James T. Morris III of Kent, WA Br. 2038
 Patrick J. Ross of Milwaukee, WI Br. 2
 Jon W. Salewski of Milwaukee, WI Br. 2
 Samuel D. Monsoor of La Crosse, WI Br. 59
 James M. La Croix of Sheboygan, WI Br. 102
 Gary L. Lemiesz of Oshkosh, WI Br. 173
 Michael A. Roulette of Green Bay, WI Br. 619

Correction: Nashville, TN Branch 4 member Christopher M. Verville's name was listed wrong on the list of Veterans Group members in the November *Postal Record*.

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

State Summaries

Arizona

Greetings from sunny Arizona.

The Arizona State Association of Letter Carriers will be hosting its yearly retirement seminar at Branch 576's union hall, located at 3720 W. Greenway Road, Phoenix. Please RSVP to our new email address, arizonalettercarriers@gmail.com. This seminar is a great opportunity to learn more about what to expect in retirement and also provides the chance to ask any questions about creditable service, military buy-back, your annuity, or any other related question you may have.

Recently, Rep. Debbie Lesko announced she will not seek reelection in the 8th Congressional District, and former Senate candidate Blake Masters has declared his candidacy for the open seat, along with several others. Rep. Lesko was one of the first from Arizona to sign on to H.R. 82, and we hope whoever wins continues to support our priority legislation.

On the Senate side, our representative from the 3rd District, Ruben Gallego, is seeking the Democratic nomination, and former gubernatorial candidate Kari Lake is seeking the Republican nomination. While Sen. Kyrsten Sinema has not announced that she is seeking reelection, the assumption is that she will do so. In a three-way race, there is no telling what could happen. Our mission is, and always will be, to support those who support letter carrier issues.

May you have a safe and healthy holiday season.

Tim Fisher

California

"Public servants deserve recognition for their service just like every other worker, whether they began their career as temporary or full-time federal employees. The Federal Retirement Fairness Act (H.R. 5995) will ensure these hard-working Americans are not punished for beginning their career as temporary employees. I'm proud to join our colleagues in re-introducing this bipartisan legislation that will help federal employees retire on time," said California Rep. David Valadao (R-22) in a public statement issued on Oct. 19.

Ten years ago, Rep. Valadao would not give us the time of day. Now, not only does he sign on to our legislation when asked, he openly *advocates* for our issues. That means he helps get others to sign on to our bills. Now, you noticed there's an "R" by his name, right?

For those of you who chime in on social media and other places to complain about no attention being paid to non-career time counting for nothing, well, now's your chance to do something about it. How, you ask?

You can contact your congressional representative and ask them to co-sponsor H.R. 5995. Get your co-workers and other interested federal employees to call or write as well (off the clock, of course).

You can contribute to the Letter Carrier Political Fund so that we can fund politicians such as David Valadao, who support our issues. Whether you like it or not, money is the mother's milk of politics. If you want favorable legislation to pass and become law, well, you need to elect politicians who will vote for your bills. And politicians need money to make TV

commercials and mail out campaign literature. That stuff isn't free, you know.

That's how politics works.

Eric Ellis

Kentucky

As the heat from another Indian Summer fades into smoke from Canadian and Eastern Mountain forest fires above the commonwealth of Kentucky, our NALC members prepare for a much different season: winter! So letter carriers go from taking safety stops for heat and to rehydrate, to warming and preventing frostbite. While our jobs vary with all four seasons and daily anomalies, your Kentucky State Association is constantly working for you on the political/legislative front. We lobby our six U.S. representatives and two U.S. senators about our NALC legislation and regulatory impact. Two of the largest that I see: Federal Retirement Fairness Act and the Segal Report. You can go to nalc.org for facts or contact me for my reasoning.

We educate our members about the importance of the Letter Carrier Political Fund. We have a district meeting in downtown Ashland on Saturday to Sunday, Feb. 24-25, 2024. We will get details to our branch presidents. The Delta hotel there has been remodeled. An agenda will be formulated and released as we get closer. Please contact KYSALC State Secretary Steve Terry at 502-681-4512, Ashland Branch President Jason Haywood at 606-922-1230 or me for general details. I am wishing happy holidays and a merry Christmas to all Kentucky State Association members and their loved ones.

Bob McNulty

Michigan

Greetings from Michigan.

The 2024 Senate race in Michigan has taken another turn. Former Rep. Pete Meijer has joined seven other Republicans seeking the GOP nomination to replace the retiring Sen. Debbie Stabenow. Normally Meijer would not have much of a chance in today's GOP, but given the sheer number of contenders he has a good chance to prevail. This race could now feature the most competitive primaries and general election of any Senate race in the country.

Meanwhile in West Virginia, Sen. Joe Manchin has announced that he will not be seeking reelection, making the Michigan race all the more important. Joe Biden has proven that he has labor's back—let's give him the tools he needs with a labor-friendly Congress.

Now is the time to prepare our members for an election year that will be like no other. Make your list, check it twice. Make sure your members are registered, hold a LCPF drive, get the word out—your state association is here to help.

By the time you read this, peak season is well underway—no doubt management is playing nice because they need you, but after the new year they will be back with a vengeance. Stay safe and be careful in the winter weather.

To all our brothers and sisters in Michigan and across the country, on behalf of the Michigan State Association of Letter Carriers, have a merry Christmas, happy holidays and happy new year!

John Serwach



Members of the South Dakota Association of Letter Carriers gather at the state convention in Rapid City in September.

South Dakota

The SDALC welcomed carriers to its 85th state convention in Rapid City Sept. 15-16. We shared political/legislative information, educated attendees, and enjoyed camaraderie with fellow carriers and learning about issues across the state and nation. We were honored to hear from Manuel Peralta (national director of safety and health), as well as Region 7 NBA Patrick Johnson, RAA Joel Malkush, OWCP from Samantha Hartwig, and NALC LPO Anthony Mitchell. We also had speakers from EAP, Feeding America, and learned more about TIAREAP.

Find the time and energy to participate in NALC events at all levels. You will be rewarded.

Tiffany Rufener

Tennessee

Thank you for your service!

Being a veteran meant you endured numerous inspections, field trips in the rain and cold, sleeping under pine trees in the snow and mud, GI parties and many more events that were at times horrifying and will always remain in our minds. But on social media, when veterans are mentioned, it has a tendency to place an emphasis on more men than women.

At times, the "glass ceiling" exists in our society, but not in our military. Women have fought alongside their male peers since the Revolutionary War. They are equal or more than equal to their male brethren in arms! Out of 74 carrier veterans in Branch 419, there are four female veterans within our branch. In the active-duty force (National Guard and Reserves), women made up 17.3 percent in 2021 versus 21.4 percent of males. In terms of our population, 1.4 percent of all female Americans have served, compared to 13.4 percent of all male Americans.

Notice

By making a contribution to the Letter Carrier Political Fund, you are doing so voluntarily with the understanding that your contribution is not a condition of membership in the National Association of Letter Carriers or of employment by the Postal Service, nor is it part of union dues. You have a right to refuse to contribute without any reprisal. Any guideline amounts are merely suggestions, and you may contribute more or less than the guidelines suggest and the union will not favor or disadvantage you by reason of the amount of your contribution or your decision not to contribute. The Letter Carrier Political Fund will use the money it receives to contribute to candidates for federal office and undertake other political spending as permitted by law. Your selection shall remain in full force and effect until canceled. Contributions to the Letter Carrier Political Fund are not deductible for federal income tax purposes. Federal law prohibits the Letter Carrier Political Fund from soliciting contributions from individuals who are not NALC members, executive and administrative staff or their families. Any contribution received from such an individual will be refunded to that contributor. Federal law requires us to use our best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, name of employer and occupation of individuals whose contributions exceed \$200 in a calendar year.

So, please mark June 12 on your calendar and give a “thank you” to female veterans on this special day of acknowledgement. Here in Tennessee, there is a Women Veterans Social & Support Group. Here in Knoxville there is the East TN Women Veterans Network—see etnwomenveterans.com. Its contact information is etwvwn@etnwomenveterans.com or P.O. Box 503, Powell, TN 37849. And, as always, its mission is to advocate for women veterans through partnerships, training and the exchange of information, to identify barriers to successful transition of women veterans and military women to the civilian community, and recommend solutions through legislative, pro-

grammatic and outreach activities.

So, remember the troops! I say again, all my last transmission, get on your radio and set up a rendezvous and support our women veterans!

Tony Rodriguez

West Virginia

This is my first submission to *The Postal Record* in years.

Several months ago, I wrote a letter to Editor Philip Dine. I suggested that an article should be written about Joe Paden, president of the West Virginia State Association. I informed Mr.

Dine that President Paden will have served the West Virginia letter carriers for 40 consecutive years as their president. I believed this is a record which will never be surpassed.

Apparently, Mr. Dine disagreed. Last month a two-page article appeared in *The Postal Record* about a carrier who grew horseradish to flavor his bloody marys.

This submission is not meant to denigrate that letter carrier but is intended to demonstrate facts that are really important. Mr. Dine chose horseradish over 40 years of faithful and exemplary service.

Mack Combs

From the Trustees

Happy holidays from the Nalcrest trustees and our wonderful staff. Hopefully, 2024 will bring all of our NALC brothers and sisters good health, prosperity, and maybe a visit to our wonderful retirement community.

The annual Nalcrest holiday parade will be held Friday, Dec. 15. Our residents look forward to decorating their golf carts, bicycles, motorcycles and boats to participate in this festive event. Later, the Nalcrest holiday lighting will take place, a great way to celebrate the holidays.

Nalcrest 12th annual food drive report: Nalcrest residents held their annual food drive on Tuesday, Oct. 31. The drive was coordinated by Nalcrest resident Bruce McDowell, who has been overseeing the food drive for all 12 years. Many Nalcrest residents volunteered by picking up donated food in their golf carts. The donated food is then brought back to the Town Center, where the food is picked up by the Lake Wales Care Center. This year the total food amount collected was 970 pounds. Great job to all who participated.

Did you know:

- Nalcrest is the only union-sponsored retirement community in the country.
- Residents at Nalcrest represent all 50 states.
- Nalcrest has a resident who is 100 years old.

Jerome Burke from Springfield, IL Branch 80 is our oldest resident. He has lived at Nalcrest for 15 years.

- Resident Jack Jewell from South Jersey, NJ Branch 908 is the second oldest. He is 95 years old and has lived at Nalcrest for 31 years.

Nalcrest is preparing for its 60th anniversary celebration Feb. 1-2. A commemorative booklet is in the works. If any branch, state association or individual is interested in submitting an ad for this special event, please contact the Nalcrest office for information.



Nalcrest holds its annual food drive on Oct. 31, collecting 970 pounds of food for donation to the Lake Wales Care Center.

Nalcrest Update

Please continue to read our Nalcrest trustees articles in the monthly *Postal Record*. This will keep you informed and updated with the latest events at Nalcrest. Also, please follow our Facebook page at Nalcrest Foundation, Inc.

Tony Diaz

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 Executive Vice President Paul Barner

NALC Secretary-Treasurer Nicole Rhine

NALC Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Mack I. Julion

NALC Director of Retired Members Dan Toth

Nalcrest Trustees President Matty Rose

Nalcrest Trustees Vice President Fred Rolando

Nalcrest Trustees Vice President Tony Diaz

Mutual Exchanges

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. Include your name, address

and branch number. Begin each ad with your state abbreviation, city and seniority date.

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.

AZ: Phoenix (2/18) to Atlanta, GA; Detroit, MI or surrounding areas. Carrier since 2018 seeking mutual exchange. 480-247-1458 or sarrettawilliams3430@gmail.com.

AZ: Phoenix (9/05) to Charleston, WV; Lubbock, San Antonio, TX or surrounding areas. Call with any questions. John, 602-214-8785.

IL: Schaumburg (9/15) to McKinney, TX or surrounding area. Hiten, 630-923-2425 or hitenpatel1966@yahoo.com.

PA: Pittsburgh (5/19) to Phoenix, AZ or surrounding area. Timothy, 717-439-0063 (text or call) or 24ktlg@gmail.com.

Retiree Reports



Anchorage, AK Branch 4319 delegates convene with NALC President Brian Renfroe at the Region 2 rap session in Couer d'Alene, ID. Pictured (l to r) are (kneeling in front) Jesse Funk, Alison Harpe and Cindy Hall; and (back row) Chris Crutchfield, Renfroe, Lyal Hansen, Steve Engst, Jim Raymond, Chris Bertels, Tommy Devros, Julie Ramian, Kona Naehu and Jennifer Atwood.

Anchorage, Alaska

Congratulations to our newly elected branch officers (by acclamation) for the 2024-25 term of office, starting with President Tommy Devros (reelected), Vice President Jospser Villegas (reelected), Recording Secretary Andrew Grant (reelected), Secretary-Treasurer Chris Crutchfield (reelected), Health Benefits Representative Alison Harpe, Sergeant-At-Arms Joab Mendoza, and trustees Chris Bertels, Jennifer Atwood and Cindy Hall (all reelected).

Don't forget to get your carrier a gift for Christmas. Just as many of you received gifts from your customers, you are also a customer and should recognize the hard work they do all year long.

If you are planning on retiring, there are a couple of things that help me process retirement applications for members as the Region 2 retirement specialist. Have your LiteBlue password, as it is helpful to download your retirement estimate and ensure you are getting credit for all of your time. Please ensure your life insurance beneficiaries are up to date. If you are a FERS employee, the application asks if you've ever filed or received OWCP. Many members have due to our jobs, yet they can't remember their claim numbers or the dates they received OWCP. If you don't know, go to ecompany.dol.gov and register an account for yourself. Once activated, all of your OWCP claim numbers with dates that you received benefits for will be listed. Along with your application, you will need to include your marriage certificate and DD214 if applicable. And if you've been divorced and a por-

tion of your annuity has been awarded to your ex-spouse, the divorce decree will need to be attached as well.

Lastly, I want to wish all of you a merry Christmas and a happy new year. Hopefully, Santa will leave a brand-new contract under the tree filled with much-deserved wage and COLA increases for a job well done.

Jim Raymond, Branch 4319

Bergen Co. Mgd., New Jersey

The 2023 National Dog Bite Awareness Week took place June 4-10. The theme this year was "Even good dogs have bad days."

During National Dog Bite Awareness Week, dog owners are provided tips for protecting mail carriers while making their rounds:

"Dogs are just unpredictable." "They're protective of their families, and we want to make sure that we're able to keep our carriers from getting attacked." It is highly recommended that people keep their dogs in their homes or ensure they're controlled or on a leash when they notice their mail carrier nearby. If a carrier delivers mail or packages to your front door, place your dog in a separate room and close that door before opening the front door. Some dogs burst through screen doors or plate-glass windows to attack visitors. Dog owners should keep the family pet secured.

Parents should remind their children and other family members not to take mail directly from carriers in the presence of the family pet, as the dog may view the person handing mail to a family member as a threatening gesture.

The Postal Service places the safety of its employees as a top priority. If a carrier feels

threatened by a dog, or if a dog is loose or unleashed, the owner may be asked to pick up mail at a post office until the carrier is assured that the pet has been restrained. If a dog is roaming the neighborhood and not contained and the carrier does not feel safe, they should curtail the mail for the day.

Dennis Spoto, Branch 425

Centennial, Colorado

Since I'm an avid reader of the scribe items in *The Postal Record*, let me comment on the October item from Wichita, KS. Writer Dustin Saville was quoting an article from 1994 that is still relevant today. Apathy vs. consistency—how do local leaders deal with these opposite forces? On one hand, you have active letter carriers at every meeting, making decisions, setting agendas. Then there is a group of members who are content to pay their dues and take no part in the future of the branch. Not showing any interest in how your dues are being spent means that a dedicated group of people are going to make the decision for you. If you are not happy with how *your* dues are spent, start going to meetings!

When I was an active carrier, this time of year was always so hectic—daylight is short, packages are heavy, and weather can be unpredictable. Yet everyone was in a good mood and wishing each other good cheer. It really made me proud to be a letter carrier and to serve my customers with a smile and sometimes a push when they were stuck on ice! Working in the dark was not too bad because of all the lights decorating their houses. And the camaraderie among fellow co-workers made it a special time of year.

Happy holidays!

In unity—

Barb Larson, Branch 5996

Paterson, New Jersey

In last month's article, we were happy to attend the New Jersey State Association of Letter Carriers state convention, welcoming and honoring out new national business agent, Bruce Didriksen.

This month we would like to thank our state president, Richard O'Connell, and our state board members, who put together an extraordinary event, making us all feel proud to be letter carriers. Items of this nature bring letter carriers together in hopes of creating a solitary bond of which no one can break.

We look forward to attending these events as well as others as much as possible.

Joseph Murone, Branch 120



NALC Director of Retired Members Dan Toth (far l), Region 15 National Business Agent Bruce Didriksen (far r) and Bergen County Merged, NJ Branch 425 Director of Retirees Dennis Spoto (second from l) present 65-year membership pins to George Wrocklage and Edward Mani, both 94, at a branch retirement luncheon in October.

Annapolis, Maryland

This is official notice to all members of Branch 651 that nominations for delegates to the 2024 national convention to be held in Boston Aug. 5-9, 2024, will be held at the branch meeting at 7 p.m. on Jan. 3. Members who want to be nominated to delegate positions must be present at the Jan. 3 meeting at the American Legion, located at 1905 Crownsville Road, Annapolis.

Elections will be held at the Feb. 7 meeting at the American Legion, located at 1905 Crownsville Road, Annapolis.

Edgar Tinoco, Pres., Br. 651

Bay City, Michigan

This is official notice to all active and retired members of Branch 197 that nominations for branch officers were held at our regular monthly meeting in November at the American Legion at 700 Adams St.

Elections will be held at our December meeting at the same location.

Shelly Baranek, Sec., Br. 187

Binghamton, New York

Let this posting serve to inform all members of Merged Branch 333 that, in accordance with Article 5 of the *NALC Constitution* and Article 7 of Branch 333 bylaws, nominations for the following local officers will be held at the regular monthly meeting of Branch 333 at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 10, 2024, at 76 Main St., Binghamton.

Open for nominations are three trustees and sergeant-at-arms. All nominees must be present to accept or have filed their intentions with the

branch secretary prior to the nominations. Anyone having applied for or served in a higher-level/supervisory position for 24 months prior to nominations shall be deemed ineligible (*NALC Constitution*, Article 5, Section 2).

Elections, if necessary, will be conducted by secret mail ballots, per local bylaws.

This notice is due to an oversight at the November meeting, where the nominations for three trustees and sergeant-at-arms failed to occur.

Ashley Emmick, Sec., Br. 333

Charlotte Amalie, Virgin Islands

This is official notice to all active and retired members of Branch 6412 that nomination of officers for a term of three years (January 2024 to December 2027) will be held at a special meeting from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Dec. 3 at Evolution Bar & Grill, 5065 Norre Gade, Suite 3, St. Thomas.

Nomination must be submitted in writing, dated, signed and received by the recording secretary of the election committee prior to the nomination meeting on Dec. 3, but no later than Nov. 27. Self-nomination is permissible. The address to mail nominations to is: *NALC Branch 6412, P.O. Box 8755, St. Thomas, VI 00801-1755.* (Please send via Certified Mail if mailing.) Nominations are for the following offices: president, vice president, treasurer, recording secretary, financial secretary, sergeant-at-arms, three trustees and shop steward.

Members who wish to be nominated for any office must be present at the meeting when nominated or signify in writing prior to the meeting their willingness to serve if elected. This documentation should be signed and submitted to the recording secretary of the election committee. Remember, you may only ac-

cept one office during nominations and there shall be no write-in votes for candidates not officially on the ballot.

Election will be conducted from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Dec. 31 at Evolution Bar & Grill at 5065 Norre Gade, Suite 3, St. Thomas, by secret ballot, which will be mailed out immediately after the Dec. 3 nomination meeting. Those who must return ballots by mail must return them prior to the election special meeting, but no later than Dec. 26. (Please send via Certified Mail if mailing.) The committee will not be responsible for nominations or ballots sent without signature confirmation. Members, other than those living off-island, please notify the branch secretary in advance if your intentions are to mail your nomination and/or ballot.

Vera Joyce Thomas-Pinney, Pres., Br. 6412

Elizabethton, Tennessee

This is a notice to all members of Branch 2831 that nominations for the offices of president, vice president, secretary and treasurer will be held at 7 p.m. on Dec. 10 at The Black Olive restaurant, 173 Hudson Drive, Elizabethton.

If required, elections will be held at 7 p.m. on Jan. 15 at The Black Olive restaurant, 173 Hudson Drive, Elizabethton.

Logan Higgins, Sec., Br. 2831

Quincy, Illinois

This is an official notice to all members of Branch 216 that nominations for all officers were held at the Nov. 15 meeting. Elections for all of these officers will be held at the Dec. 20 meeting.

Ted Meyer, Sec.-Treas., Br. 216

Rochester, New York

In accordance with Article 5 of the *NALC Constitution*, this is official notice to members of Branch 210 that nominations for union stewards (for the term of two years, Jan. 1, 2024, to Dec. 31, 2025) must be submitted to the union hall, at 585-427-2450, no later than Jan. 3, 2024.

Election ballots will then be mailed out and must be returned to the union hall, at 2491 Brighton-Henrietta Townline Road, Rochester, NY 14623, by Jan. 31.

Anthony Polidori, Rec. Sec., Br. 210

State College, Pennsylvania

In accordance with Article 5 of the *NALC Constitution* and the Branch 1495 bylaws, this serves as official notice to all members in good standing that nominations for delegates to the 2024 national convention will be taken at the regular branch meeting on Jan. 9, 2024.

Following the nominations, elections will be held by secret mail-in ballot. Election results will be announced at the February monthly branch meeting.

Members wishing to be nominated must accept such nominations in person or must submit their willingness to be nominated in writing to the branch secretary prior to the January nomination meeting.

Kevin M. Sommers, Pres., Br. 1495

Valley Stream, New York

This will serve as official notice that nominations for the offices of president, vice president and secretary-treasurer will take place at the January branch meeting and the election at the February meeting.

Anthony Licari, Sec.-Treas., Br. 2189

In Memoriam

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

James F. Laird	Br. 576	Phoenix, AZ	Stephen M. Vozzella	Br. 241	Lewiston, ME	Arthur L. Hill Jr.	Br. 1629	Cuyahoga Falls, OH
Bonnie L. Wood	Br. 576	Phoenix, AZ	Daniel J. McGonagle Jr.	Br. 92	ME Mgd.	Ernest L. Wasem II	Br. 340	Lancaster, OH
John Guingao	Br. 782	Bakersfield, CA	Peter P. Fantasia	Br. 34	Boston, MA	Robert D. Michalak Sr.	Br. 100	Toledo, OH
Philip Moreno	Br. 231	Central CA	Irving E. Martin	Br. 34	Boston, MA	Marvin W. Case	Br. 385	Youngstown, OH
Diane R. Kestler	Br. 1100	Central Grove, CA	Vincent E. Martino	Br. 34	Boston, MA	Thomas G. Fabian	Br. 385	Youngstown, OH
Howard Lin	Br. 24	Los Angeles, CA	Joseph P. Shannon	Br. 34	Boston, MA	John Limbian	Br. 385	Youngstown, OH
Robert L. Joseph	Br. 1291	Modesto, CA	Walter M. Burgess Jr.	Br. 25	MA Northeast Mgd.	Albert M. Moran	Br. 385	Youngstown, OH
J. E. Nixon	Br. 133	Sacramento, CA	Russell P. Costa	Br. 18	Southeast MA Mgd.	Leo E. Dayer	Br. 1358	Tulsa, OK
Hao H. Chi	Br. 193	San Jose, CA	Stanley A. Hiselman	Br. 1	Detroit, MI	Loren E. Epperson	Br. 1358	Tulsa, OK
Alan J. Apfelbaum	Br. 1427	Santa Clara, CA	Paul E. Niemi	Br. 1	Detroit, MI	Jerry O. O'Kelly	Br. 1358	Tulsa, OK
Alvin R. Scott	Br. 47	Denver, CO	Edward M. O'Neill	Br. 1	Detroit, MI	Thomas J. Sapienza	Br. 284	Erie, PA
Walter S. Aniskoff	Br. 86	Hartford, CT	Theron V. Franklin	Br. 320	N. Oakland Co., MI	Victor Adams	Br. 157	Philadelphia, PA
Walter L. Dillard	Br. 86	Hartford, CT	Kyle L. Gustafson	Br. 9	Minneapolis, MN	Edward J. Bockol	Br. 157	Philadelphia, PA
Joseph B. Hannigan Jr.	Br. 86	Hartford, CT	Theodore P. Strauch	Br. 28	St. Paul, MN	Rosario J. Bonacci	Br. 157	Philadelphia, PA
L. L. Kempton	Br. 86	Hartford, CT	William L. Caldwell	Br. 195	St. Joseph, MO	Arthur N. Brooks Jr.	Br. 157	Philadelphia, PA
R. W. Liegl	Br. 86	Hartford, CT	James B. Casey	Br. 203	Springfield, MO	David B. Butler	Br. 157	Philadelphia, PA
Jonathan A. Booth	Br. 1071	South FL	Timothy P. Gill	Br. 8	Lincoln, NE	Edward W. Byers	Br. 157	Philadelphia, PA
Sharon Y. Henley	Br. 1071	South FL	Jesus M. Bolanos	Br. 709	Reno, NV	Lawrence J. Concio	Br. 157	Philadelphia, PA
Robert E. Taylor	Br. 1071	South FL	Michael A. Marchionne	Br. 540	Camden, NJ Mgd.	Ronald C. Durst	Br. 157	Philadelphia, PA
Peter R. Kehr	Br. 1477	West Coast FL	Roy A. Tompkins	Br. 41	Brooklyn, NY	Joseph W. Glodek	Br. 157	Philadelphia, PA
Clifford Bason	Br. 73	Atlanta, GA	Robert P. Bonyak	Br. 21	Elmira, NY	John E. Kulak	Br. 157	Philadelphia, PA
James E. Johnson	Br. 73	Atlanta, GA	Samuel H. Dean	Br. 21	Elmira, NY	Floyd M. Smith	Br. 157	Philadelphia, PA
Lawrence Phillips	Br. 73	Atlanta, GA	Bruce L. Hatfield	Br. 21	Elmira, NY	Charles J. Yuskavage	Br. 157	Philadelphia, PA
Arthur H. Yarnik	Br. 309	Alton, IL	Thomas C. Przymusik	Br. 21	Elmira, NY	Robert A. Bisignani	Br. 84	Pittsburgh, PA
Jennifer K. Clay	Br. 11	Chicago, IL	Francis T. Hupfer	Br. 6000	Long Island Mgd., NY	Thomas Grguric	Br. 84	Pittsburgh, PA
Casmier T. Adamowski Jr.	Br. 305	Joliet, IL	Howard S. Arotzsky	Br. 36	New York, NY	Francis C. Fogle	Br. 509	York, PA
Charles E. Holl	Br. 305	Joliet, IL	John D. Arros	Br. 358	Northeastern NY	Robert J. Bazinet	Br. 439	Greenville, SC
Charles L. Leonard	Br. 305	Joliet, IL	Edward C. Puma	Br. 134	Syracuse, NY	Joe E. Clevenger	Br. 439	Greenville, SC
Andrew W. Verchimak	Br. 305	Joliet, IL	Cleo E. Dennis	Br. 382	Durham, NC	William B. Thomas	Br. 439	Greenville, SC
Ricky L. Southard	Br. 31	Peoria, IL	Michael Dimassa	Br. 40	Cleveland, OH	James C. Robertson	Br. 491	Sioux Falls, SD
Frank P. Kiefer	Br. 4016	S. Suburban Mgd., IL	Richard A. Hargis	Br. 40	Cleveland, OH	Robert D. Jones	Br. 283	Houston, TX
Stephen H. Sea	Br. 4016	S. Suburban Mgd., IL	Donald J. Lombardo	Br. 40	Cleveland, OH	Joseph A. Sacco	Br. 3520	Northern VA
Vaughn A. Perkins	Br. 377	Evansville, IN	John R. Sandidge	Br. 40	Cleveland, OH	Forrest E. Kelly	Br. 1104	Vancouver, WA
Carolyn A. Wolfe	Br. 377	Evansville, IN	Jerome F. Wancho	Br. 40	Cleveland, OH	Daryl E. Rothfus	Br. 1104	Vancouver, WA
Richard A. Miller	Br. 116	Fort Wayne, IN	P. L. Cupp	Br. 78	Columbus, OH	Donald E. Werner	Br. 619	Green Bay, WI
Ned E. Shippy	Br. 116	Fort Wayne, IN	Lucian A. Susi	Br. 78	Columbus, OH			
Jerry L. Young	Br. 116	Fort Wayne, IN	Charles C. Trott	Br. 78	Columbus, OH			

Honor Roll

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

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



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



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

Additionally, the national secretary-treasurer's office handles

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

80-year pins

Charles C. Gentry Los Angeles, CA Br. 24

75-year pins

Manuel Alba Los Angeles, CA Br. 24
Stan E. London Los Angeles, CA Br. 24
Edward J. Swiontek Detroit, MI Br. 1

70-year pins

Louis F. Trezza Los Angeles, CA Br. 24
Dino J. Delgrande San Francisco, CA Br. 214
James N. Hodge San Francisco, CA Br. 214
Willie W. Hawkins Indianapolis, IN Br. 39

65-year pins

John R. Duran Los Angeles, CA Br. 24
Eucie Grant Los Angeles, CA Br. 24
James M. Reeve Los Angeles, CA Br. 24
Porter A. Sims Los Angeles, CA Br. 24
Robert E. Bouray Freeport, IL Br. 223
Clifford P. Hutchison Indianapolis, IN Br. 39
Frank E. Wilkins Indianapolis, IN Br. 39
Carl J. Stricklen Detroit, MI Br. 1
Eugene Tindle Detroit, MI Br. 1
Edward Turnbow Detroit, MI Br. 1
Bert Robinson Kansas City, MO Br. 30
Carl N. Holman Sedalia, MO Br. 139

60-year pins

Dallas L. Farris Carmichael, CA Br. 4494
Charles N. Baron Los Angeles, CA Br. 24
Jerald R. Broeske Los Angeles, CA Br. 24
Armando Celaya Jr. Los Angeles, CA Br. 24
Joseph H. Langley Los Angeles, CA Br. 24
Oscar C. Pierce Los Angeles, CA Br. 24
Louis J. Rollins Los Angeles, CA Br. 24
Domingo O. Damian San Francisco, CA Br. 214
Phai P. Fong San Francisco, CA Br. 214
Glenn Hampton San Francisco, CA Br. 214
Charles R. Kautz Jr. San Francisco, CA Br. 214
Jerry D. Kibler San Francisco, CA Br. 214
Ronald G. Wong San Francisco, CA Br. 214
Stephen N. Middleton Crawfordsville, IN Br. 198
Wayne A. Bondi Indianapolis, IN Br. 39
Paul W. Morton Indianapolis, IN Br. 39
Ronald M. Drumm Muncie, IN Br. 98
James R. Tharp Muncie, IN Br. 98
Robert L. Adams Shawnee Mission, KS Br. 5521
Howard C. Burris Shawnee Mission, KS Br. 5521
Laurie D. Henderson Shawnee Mission, KS Br. 5521
William J. Hofer Shawnee Mission, KS Br. 5521
James R. Osborn Shawnee Mission, KS Br. 5521
Ronald E. Pfaffly Shawnee Mission, KS Br. 5521
Arthur E. Bonneval Metairie, LA Br. 6119

Thomas E. Guppy Framingham, MA Br. 334
Ronald Stephen Detroit, MI Br. 1
Warren P. Stewart Detroit, MI Br. 1
Leo L. McEneny Jr. Ballwin, MO Br. 5050
Joseph C. Pelloquin Ballwin, MO Br. 5050
William L. Gonda Zanesville, OH Br. 63
William L. Hartmeyer Zanesville, OH Br. 63
Roscoe E. Hopwood Houston, TX Br. 283
Delbert G. Luedke Houston, TX Br. 283
Richard S. Taylor Houston, TX Br. 283

55-year pins

Harold L. Benson Carmichael, CA Br. 4494
Anthony J. Esposito Carmichael, CA Br. 4494
Jack Morris Carmichael, CA Br. 4494
Ronald E. Parrett Carmichael, CA Br. 4494
Lawrence F. Peterson Carmichael, CA Br. 4494
Marvin N. Reich Carmichael, CA Br. 4494
Jesse A. Vogt Carmichael, CA Br. 4494
Thomas D. Wells Carmichael, CA Br. 4494
Gerald W. Robinson Greater E. Bay, CA Br. 1111
Emily V. Del Buono Los Angeles, CA Br. 24
Stephen N. Enomoto Los Angeles, CA Br. 24
Casey D. Garcia Los Angeles, CA Br. 24
Burton E. Granlow Los Angeles, CA Br. 24
Anita J. Guzik Los Angeles, CA Br. 24
R. L. Harris Los Angeles, CA Br. 24
Leroy Kimble Los Angeles, CA Br. 24
Charline H. Lewis Los Angeles, CA Br. 24
Robert L. Mandrell Los Angeles, CA Br. 24
Wayne H. Nakaoka Los Angeles, CA Br. 24
Delbert R. Reed Los Angeles, CA Br. 24
Louise L. Richardson Los Angeles, CA Br. 24
Valera Rockwell Los Angeles, CA Br. 24
John S. Ross Los Angeles, CA Br. 24
Ruben Sandoval Los Angeles, CA Br. 24
Bobby Thomas Los Angeles, CA Br. 24
W. L. Thomas Los Angeles, CA Br. 24
Jose A. Martinez Colorado Springs, CO Br. 204
Robert A. Beehler Bradenton, FL Br. 1753
John W. Campbell Jr. Bradenton, FL Br. 1753
Terry L. Davidson Bradenton, FL Br. 1753
Robert R. Dvoratchek Bradenton, FL Br. 1753
James T. Fisher Bradenton, FL Br. 1753
James T. Pinson Bradenton, FL Br. 1753
Lewis Pryor Bradenton, FL Br. 1753
Delmas K. Ridenour Bradenton, FL Br. 1753
Stuart A. Skene Bradenton, FL Br. 1753
Steven W. Charney Fort Myers, FL Br. 2072
George E. Crowe Fort Myers, FL Br. 2072
James C. Coger Fort Myers, FL Br. 2072
Everett W. Meiners Fort Myers, FL Br. 2072
Gregory T. Modersohn Fort Myers, FL Br. 2072
Charles M. Rossback Fort Myers, FL Br. 2072
David P. Schutt Fort Myers, FL Br. 2072
Ernest A. Smith Jr. Fort Myers, FL Br. 2072

Charles A. Soo Fort Myers, FL Br. 2072
Wilfredo Villanueva Fort Myers, FL Br. 2072
Michael F. Walsler Fort Myers, FL Br. 2072
John H. Whaley Fort Myers, FL Br. 2072
Kenneth C. Zeske Fort Myers, FL Br. 2072
Selby W. Daniel Atlanta, GA Br. 73
Edward A. Grant Hilo, HI Br. 2932
Patrick L. Kahawaiolaa Hilo, HI Br. 2932
Kenneth L. Oliveira Hilo, HI Br. 2932
Donald Pacheco Hilo, HI Br. 2932
Thomas N. Walsh Jr. Hilo, HI Br. 2932
Jack H. Sward Freeport, IL Br. 223
Terrence A. Baker S. Suburban Mgd., IL Br. 4016
Wilburn T. Huckaba S. Suburban Mgd., IL Br. 4016
Richard C. Kamper S. Suburban Mgd., IL Br. 4016
Timothy E. Balough Indianapolis, IN Br. 39
Earnest R. Barnett Jr. Indianapolis, IN Br. 39
Walter Gunn Indianapolis, IN Br. 39
Jerry D. McIntyre Indianapolis, IN Br. 39
Richard E. Robertson Indianapolis, IN Br. 39
Roberta E. Skyles Indianapolis, IN Br. 39
Charles M. Sullivan Indianapolis, IN Br. 39
David G. Cheesman Muncie, IN Br. 98
Terry L. Comer Muncie, IN Br. 98
John P. Engle Muncie, IN Br. 98
Vicki J. Halstead Muncie, IN Br. 98
Linda K. Obryant Muncie, IN Br. 98
James R. Odle Muncie, IN Br. 98
Terry L. Reynard Muncie, IN Br. 98
Robert D. Wright Muncie, IN Br. 98
Fred A. Johnson Crawfordsville, IN Br. 198
Glenn Williams III Crawfordsville, IN Br. 198
Tommy W. Stepaniak Shawnee Mission, KS Br. 5521
Harry M. Baus Metairie, LA Br. 6119
Clyde J. Becnel Jr. Metairie, LA Br. 6119
Donald F. Blanchard Metairie, LA Br. 6119
Arthur E. Bonneval Metairie, LA Br. 6119
Larry J. Booksh Metairie, LA Br. 6119
Charles L. Booksh Jr. Metairie, LA Br. 6119
Ardell Butler Metairie, LA Br. 6119
Wilbert Carter Metairie, LA Br. 6119
Abraham Casborn Jr. Metairie, LA Br. 6119
Anthony C. Comberrel Metairie, LA Br. 6119
Almonie Combre Jr. Metairie, LA Br. 6119
David K. Conover Metairie, LA Br. 6119
Josie L. Cryer Metairie, LA Br. 6119
Michael E. Culligan Metairie, LA Br. 6119
Ben E. Fritsche Jr. Metairie, LA Br. 6119
Barry A. Grzych Metairie, LA Br. 6119
Charlotte S. Hancock Metairie, LA Br. 6119
Thaddeus Lawless Metairie, LA Br. 6119
Eric J. Leingang Metairie, LA Br. 6119
Donald S. Leonard Metairie, LA Br. 6119
Clemence C. Lowe Jr. Metairie, LA Br. 6119
Theodore Milligan Metairie, LA Br. 6119
Leo J. Nunez Jr. Metairie, LA Br. 6119
Harry H. Riddle Jr. Metairie, LA Br. 6119

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

Murphy Riley	Metairie, LA	Br. 6119	Raymond R. Sobocinski	Cape Atlantic, NJ	Br. 903	Robert P. Mordes	New Haven, CT	Br. 19
Ernest Rogers	Metairie, LA	Br. 6119	John W. Vollrath	Cape Atlantic, NJ	Br. 903	Robert A. Beehler	Bradenton, FL	Br. 1753
Ralph V. Ruffino	Metairie, LA	Br. 6119	Geo L. Williams	Cape Atlantic, NJ	Br. 903	John W. Campbell Jr.	Bradenton, FL	Br. 1753
Clarence W. Samuels	Metairie, LA	Br. 6119	Albert J. Zarbetski	NJ Mgd.	Br. 38	Terry L. Davidson	Bradenton, FL	Br. 1753
James S. Smith	Metairie, LA	Br. 6119	Darryl H. Arbeit	Brooklyn, NY	Br. 41	Robert R. Dvoratsek	Bradenton, FL	Br. 1753
Paul A. Szwest	Detroit, MI	Br. 1	John N. Cavallo	Brooklyn, NY	Br. 41	James T. Fisher	Bradenton, FL	Br. 1753
Marilyn J. Terry	Detroit, MI	Br. 1	Cortez R. Smythe	Hudson Valley Mgd., NY	Br. 137	James T. Pinson	Bradenton, FL	Br. 1753
Larry F. Thayer	Detroit, MI	Br. 1	Ralph Zelman	New York, NY	Br. 36	Lewis Pryor	Bradenton, FL	Br. 1753
Sumpter Thomas	Detroit, MI	Br. 1	Linda A. Brown	Rochester, NY	Br. 210	Delmas K. Ridenour	Bradenton, FL	Br. 1753
Willie E. Thomas	Detroit, MI	Br. 1	Robert R. Cariola	Rochester, NY	Br. 210	Stuart A. Skene	Bradenton, FL	Br. 1753
Terence C. Thompson	Detroit, MI	Br. 1	Donald F. Dulanski	Rochester, NY	Br. 210	Alan D. Witt	Clearwater, FL	Br. 2008
David W. Thomson	Detroit, MI	Br. 1	L. B. Farrell	Rochester, NY	Br. 210	Earl R. Williams Jr.	West Coast FL	Br. 1477
Richard W. Tierney	Detroit, MI	Br. 1	Carolyn D. Holden	Rochester, NY	Br. 210	Selby W. Daniel	Atlanta, GA	Br. 73
Ronald D. Tobey	Detroit, MI	Br. 1	R. C. Johnson	Rochester, NY	Br. 210	John D. Erwin	Freeport, IL	Br. 223
Terry Tolbert	Detroit, MI	Br. 1	Lawrence J. Kleehammer	Rochester, NY	Br. 210	John D. Gittler	Freeport, IL	Br. 223
Mark J. Tondreau	Detroit, MI	Br. 1	Theodore N. Kloss	Rochester, NY	Br. 210	Allen E. Loring	Freeport, IL	Br. 223
Alvetter Turner	Detroit, MI	Br. 1	Joeanne G. Putnam	Rochester, NY	Br. 210	Gregory P. Frieders	Indianapolis, IN	Br. 39
Joseph F. Van Hagen	Detroit, MI	Br. 1	Walter A. Romashko	Rochester, NY	Br. 210	Linda K. O'Bryant	Muncie, IN	Br. 98
Walter J. Vonallmen	Detroit, MI	Br. 1	William A. Russell	Rochester, NY	Br. 210	John R. Heimberger	Coffeyville, KS	Br. 766
George T. Waite	Detroit, MI	Br. 1	Thomas D. Welsh Jr.	Rochester, NY	Br. 210	Philip K. Helt	Coffeyville, KS	Br. 766
Gerald J. Walega	Detroit, MI	Br. 1	David L. Blackstone	Zanesville, OH	Br. 63	Harry M. Baus	Metairie, LA	Br. 6119
Arthur W. Smith	Jackson, MI	Br. 232	James K. Gee	Zanesville, OH	Br. 63	Clyde J. Becnel Jr.	Metairie, LA	Br. 6119
John J. Betz	Ballwin, MO	Br. 5050	Barbra L. Gibson	Zanesville, OH	Br. 63	Donald F. Blanchard	Metairie, LA	Br. 6119
Herbert B. Boyster	Ballwin, MO	Br. 5050	William L. Gonda	Zanesville, OH	Br. 63	Larry J. Booksh Jr.	Metairie, LA	Br. 6119
Michael S. Burd	Ballwin, MO	Br. 5050	Patricia L. Hambel	Zanesville, OH	Br. 63	Charles L. Booksh Jr.	Metairie, LA	Br. 6119
William E. Casey	Ballwin, MO	Br. 5050	Norbert G. Doll	Stillwater, OK	Br. 1595	Herbert P. Burrell	Metairie, LA	Br. 6119
Vere E. Church	Ballwin, MO	Br. 5050	Myron T. German	Stillwater, OK	Br. 1595	Ardell Butler	Metairie, LA	Br. 6119
Jerrold K. Dotson	Ballwin, MO	Br. 5050	Bobby G. Graham	Stillwater, OK	Br. 1595	Wilbert Carter	Metairie, LA	Br. 6119
Alice A. Hillis	Ballwin, MO	Br. 5050	Ivol N. Hane	Stillwater, OK	Br. 1595	Abraham Casborn Jr.	Metairie, LA	Br. 6119
Luceal King	Ballwin, MO	Br. 5050	William J. Mattox	Stillwater, OK	Br. 1595	Anthony C. Comberrel	Metairie, LA	Br. 6119
Joseph W. Koch	Ballwin, MO	Br. 5050	Millard F. Turner	Irving, TX	Br. 4240	Almonie Combre Jr.	Metairie, LA	Br. 6119
Janice L. Mason	Ballwin, MO	Br. 5050	Richard L. Layfield	Wichita Falls, TX	Br. 1227	David K. Conover	Metairie, LA	Br. 6119
Dennis R. Morgan	Ballwin, MO	Br. 5050	Lyndall B. Ritchie	Wichita Falls, TX	Br. 1227	Josie L. Cryer	Metairie, LA	Br. 6119
Joseph F. Sapienza Jr.	Ballwin, MO	Br. 5050	Kenneth L. Iverson	Milwaukee, WI	Br. 2	Michael E. Culligan	Metairie, LA	Br. 6119
Dorothy A. Seville	Ballwin, MO	Br. 5050				Ben E. Fritsche Jr.	Metairie, LA	Br. 6119
Robert F. Vandeven	Ballwin, MO	Br. 5050				Barry A. Grzych	Metairie, LA	Br. 6119
Edward G. Whitehead	Ballwin, MO	Br. 5050				Charlotte S. Hancock	Metairie, LA	Br. 6119
Morris A. Ross Jr.	Kansas City, MO	Br. 30				Thaddeus Lawless	Metairie, LA	Br. 6119
Charles D. Bahner	Sedalia, MO	Br. 139				Eric J. Leingang	Metairie, LA	Br. 6119
Donald M. Bradshaw	Sedalia, MO	Br. 139				Donald S. Leonard	Metairie, LA	Br. 6119
Robert J. Brucks	Sedalia, MO	Br. 139				Clemence C. Lowe Jr.	Metairie, LA	Br. 6119
Thomas R. Blankenship	Southwest MO	Br. 366				Theodore Milligan	Metairie, LA	Br. 6119
Robert G. Crocker	Southwest MO	Br. 366				Leo J. Nunez Jr.	Metairie, LA	Br. 6119
John A. Hornick	Southwest MO	Br. 366				Harry H. Riddle Jr.	Metairie, LA	Br. 6119
Jimmy D. Howerton	Southwest MO	Br. 366				Murphy Riley	Metairie, LA	Br. 6119
Rex B. Jones	Southwest MO	Br. 366				Ernest Rogers	Metairie, LA	Br. 6119
Kenneth W. King	Southwest MO	Br. 366				Ralph V. Ruffino	Metairie, LA	Br. 6119
Edward N. Schumaker	Southwest MO	Br. 366				Clarence W. Samuels	Metairie, LA	Br. 6119
Harold D. Summerlin	Southwest MO	Br. 366				James S. Smith	Metairie, LA	Br. 6119
Leslie Tappana	Southwest MO	Br. 366				La Coure Vaughn	Detroit, MI	Br. 1
Gary A. Vickers	Southwest MO	Br. 366				Arthur W. Smith	Jackson, MI	Br. 232
C. A. Adams Jr.	Cape Atlantic, NJ	Br. 903				Dick L. Klein	Sedalia, MO	Br. 139
Frank D. Allen	Cape Atlantic, NJ	Br. 903				David C. Mead	Southwest MO	Br. 366
F. J. Bailey	Cape Atlantic, NJ	Br. 903				Juan J. Rodriguez	Trenton, NJ	Br. 380
Robert G. Buchner	Cape Atlantic, NJ	Br. 903				Daniel E. Kern	Cape Atlantic, NJ	Br. 903
Thomas J. Connelly	Cape Atlantic, NJ	Br. 903				Dominick V. Gallina	Long Island Mgd., NY	Br. 6000
Robert J. Constantine	Cape Atlantic, NJ	Br. 903				Edward J. Heintz	Long Island Mgd., NY	Br. 6000
William J. Delaney	Cape Atlantic, NJ	Br. 903				Kenneth K. O'Donnell	Long Island Mgd., NY	Br. 6000
David P. Drongoski	Cape Atlantic, NJ	Br. 903				Thomas J. Farrell	Rochester, NY	Br. 210
Joseph F. Eagar Jr.	Cape Atlantic, NJ	Br. 903				Richard A. Schutt	Rochester, NY	Br. 210
Gary W. Fallows	Cape Atlantic, NJ	Br. 903				Victor J. Torricelli	Staten Island, NY	Br. 99
Patrick J. Flanagan	Cape Atlantic, NJ	Br. 903				Robert E. Bourne	Raleigh, NC	Br. 459
Nelson Gaskill	Cape Atlantic, NJ	Br. 903				David L. Blackstone	Zanesville, OH	Br. 63
Edward M. Grassi	Cape Atlantic, NJ	Br. 903				James K. Gee	Zanesville, OH	Br. 63
James W. Haughey	Cape Atlantic, NJ	Br. 903				Barbra L. Gibson	Zanesville, OH	Br. 63
Linda L. Higbee	Cape Atlantic, NJ	Br. 903				Patricia L. Hambel	Zanesville, OH	Br. 63
Robert J. Imlay	Cape Atlantic, NJ	Br. 903				William E. Irvin Jr.	Zanesville, OH	Br. 63
Terence A. Leary	Cape Atlantic, NJ	Br. 903				Oran P. Edwards	Houston, TX	Br. 283
Joseph J. Mannion	Cape Atlantic, NJ	Br. 903				Frank A. Naquin	Houston, TX	Br. 283
Leonard Marmorato	Cape Atlantic, NJ	Br. 903				Thomas D. Reed	Houston, TX	Br. 283
John W. Marshall	Cape Atlantic, NJ	Br. 903				Richard L. Layfield	Wichita Falls, TX	Br. 1227
William R. Nunn	Cape Atlantic, NJ	Br. 903				Lyndall B. Ritchie	Wichita Falls, TX	Br. 1227
Ronald F. Simon	Cape Atlantic, NJ	Br. 903						

50-year pins and gold cards

Jacquelyn L. Anderson	Carmichael, CA	Br. 4494
Jim L. Boyd	Carmichael, CA	Br. 4494
Leslie A. Mott	Carmichael, CA	Br. 4494
Timothy R. Starrett	Carmichael, CA	Br. 4494
Brian W. Bauer	Los Angeles, CA	Br. 24
Jimmy R. Cummings	Los Angeles, CA	Br. 24
Phil M. Demus	Los Angeles, CA	Br. 24
Gilbert C. Espinosa	Los Angeles, CA	Br. 24
Michael R. Gapido	Los Angeles, CA	Br. 24
Arturo Garza	Los Angeles, CA	Br. 24
Mickey R. Gordon	Los Angeles, CA	Br. 24
Michael H. Hall	Los Angeles, CA	Br. 24
Steven E. Hastings	Los Angeles, CA	Br. 24
Antonio Huerta	Los Angeles, CA	Br. 24
Guy A. Jacobs	Los Angeles, CA	Br. 24
Robert M. Johnson	Los Angeles, CA	Br. 24
James M. Montgomery	Los Angeles, CA	Br. 24
Richard P. Rangel	Los Angeles, CA	Br. 24
Robert L. Richardson	Los Angeles, CA	Br. 24
Tommie L. Scott	Los Angeles, CA	Br. 24
Homer O. Starks	Los Angeles, CA	Br. 24
Kenneth L. Iverson	Milwaukee, WI	Br. 2
David A. Antonio	San Francisco, CA	Br. 214
John A. Baptiste	San Francisco, CA	Br. 214
Jose E. Bolanos	San Francisco, CA	Br. 214
Jeffrey A. Chung	San Francisco, CA	Br. 214
Michael R. Dixon	San Francisco, CA	Br. 214
Susan L. Garshol	San Francisco, CA	Br. 214
Norman J. Lew	San Francisco, CA	Br. 214
Joseph P. McAndrew	San Francisco, CA	Br. 214
John W. Murray	San Francisco, CA	Br. 214
Franklin H. Woo	San Francisco, CA	Br. 214
Richard A. Zanardi	San Francisco, CA	Br. 214
Paul J. Czapllicki	New Haven, CT	Br. 19
Francis J. Farrell Jr.	New Haven, CT	Br. 19
Anthony Ferrara	New Haven, CT	Br. 19
Ronald V. Kimball	New Haven, CT	Br. 19

Branch Items

Albany, New York

It's been close to five years now of being grossly understaffed in Albany city. You have an entire supervisory staff, with the exception of one or maybe two supervisors, who have never run a floor without being off the list.

You have managers and regular carriers alike who have no idea what a break day is. I'd venture a guess that the entire Albany management team couldn't articulate the difference between a Letter Carrier Paragraph violation and an Article 8.5.D violation. They simply have never had to learn the difference, as each of the three stations is "off the list" every single day. There is practically no difference between the carrier not on any overtime desired list and the carrier who signed up for the 12-hour list in the city of Albany. Unfortunately, with the amount of time that has passed, we as carriers are becoming complacent in this scenario ourselves.

We have come to accept that, no matter which list we signed up for, we will be forced in on our non-scheduled day, and we will be carrying a piece off another route almost every other day. We have all been burning the candle at both ends for far too long and it shows.

I'm going to dedicate my space over the next few months to getting back to the very basics of our jobs—the forms we should be using every day to protect ourselves, and to help the shop stewards when it comes time to grieve these gross contractual violations. Everything can be found in the *Letter Carrier Resource Guide* you can get for free in the Members Only section on nalc.org.

Norris Beswick, Branch 29

Atlanta, Georgia

The Atlanta Letter Carriers, Inc. of Branch 73 will hold its annual meeting on Thursday, Jan. 11, 2024, at Branch 73's union hall, located at 1842 Candler Road, Decatur, near the intersection of Glenwood Road. The meeting will begin at 5:30 p.m. prior to the regular branch meeting. All positions will be open for election.

Regal Phillips, Branch 73

Camden, New Jersey Merged

I've been filing grievances for more than 25 years. I was filing grievances back before there was ever a Dispute Resolution Process (DRP). Our then-branch president, Russ Olive, was one of the first Step B representatives to be appointed by Vince Sombrotto, and the first in the South Jersey District. Russ taught us everything he learned about the DRP. He taught us what the spirit of the DRP was all about. I can say this: The DRP is not what it used to be.

Like everything else they do, management has no "buy-in" to the process. There is no continuity, and certainly no desire to hold local management even a little bit responsible. Everything is only a numbers game. It's like pulling teeth to get them to agree to a mere "cease and desist." I'm not griping because I lost a grievance at Step B, or it got impasse and we got a watered-down pre-arb decision. But it's bad when you're upset about a grievance

you won. Now, they won't even agree to saying management violated the National Agreement.

I framed the issue in the form of a question: Did management unreasonably deny the shop steward's request for information, and is this a violation of Article 31? Not only did management not agree to say there was a violation,



Phoenix, AZ Branch 576 honors one of its own with a Silver Eagle Award in recognition of retiree Jeff Clark's hard work and dedication to NALC's political action movement.

they also wouldn't agree to the simplest answer to the question—"Yes." Management wouldn't use the term "must adhere" or "unreasonably denied." The best they could do was to say management "should" answer the union's requests.

We have supervisors who have never received DRP training meeting at the Informal A level. When was the last time there was joint DRP training? I'm witnessing the collapse of the very thing I've spent my entire career working on. This whole process needs a reboot.

Chuck Goushian, Branch 540

Charlotte, North Carolina

Branch 545 would like to wish everyone a very merry Christmas and happy holidays. We know that everyone will be putting in long days and working extra hours to deliver for our customers. We hope you get to spend some much-needed time with your family and friends.

We also want to recognize two of our fellow union stewards who attended the Steward College in November. Ysa Wethington and John Hickman, thank you so much for taking your own time and making the personal efforts to become better union stewards and gain much-needed education on the national contract. We all look forward to both of you sharing the knowledge that you have obtained to make us a much stronger branch.

The union leadership would like to let all of 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. Food will be provided at the meeting for those who are able to attend. We look forward to seeing all of our members who are able to make it out.

Justin Fraley, Branch 545

Cincinnati, Ohio

Live week is finally here for Sharonville, after being delayed the previous two weeks for reasons which probably will never be known—oh wait, common sense, something of which is never used at the Post Office. The mail volume has obviously been too much for them, being there is a midterm election upon us with a few key issues in Ohio. We have had either average or above-average mail volume the whole month of October.

A good friend of mine at my station has reminded me over these last few years, especially when we are pushed out of the office within an hour, that no matter how heavy or light your flats are, that those houses we are delivering to aren't going anywhere, no matter how long it should really take to case and pull down your route. Remember: It takes what it takes. You are your own person; don't be rushed. Running only gets you a lot more work—something we do enough of, especially compared to our so-called supervisors with their extra 20 smoke breaks a day and extended lunches they take. Out on the street, let's please make the scanners our best friends and use them to our advantage.

Congrats to Jay Scott and Bradley Kidwell on their retirements—well deserved, guys. Also, I have some very big shoes to fill after our union steward said he is stepping down and I was the only one to sign up.

Happy holidays, everyone. Please make sure to take time and spend it with the ones you love outside of work; your body, mind and those around you will really appreciate it, because the only one at work who cares about you is you.

Meeting every second Thursday of the month. All are welcome.

Chris Rought, Branch 43

Cumberland, Maryland

Season's greetings! By the time you all read this, we will be well into the Christmas rush. Carriers all across the country will be delivering parcels to millions of customers, making their Christmas wishes come true. Letter carriers work especially hard during this time of year.

The new year will be upon us shortly, and we can all start the new year getting involved with your branches planning the activities for the new year. Participating in branch meetings will help with knowledge and solidarity. Start asking questions on the route inspection process and how it works. Get involved, be informed, start the new year off in solidarity.

Paul Kirby, Branch 638

Emerald Coast, Florida

Hello, Houston; we are in trouble. I always thought God gave us all a thing called "common sense," but I guess not, because I am starting to realize that management missed out on the servings. It does not make any sense how they are totally clueless on how to manage and communicate with the carriers.

I have seen them do things that are totally stupid. I will give you several examples.

Example No. 1: Your office is constantly down on an average of four to five routes down per day each week, and you give CCA's off because the district has told them to give them off. This is a problem when you make a regular workday their non-scheduled day. They are our help, but we must give them off.

Example No. 2: We as the union will attempt to avoid filing grievances by explaining and showing management the language in the National Agreement, only to be told "I don't do it that way," which only leads us to do what we were attempting not to do: file a grievance.

Example No. 3: Mind you, I said earlier that the office is constantly down routes, so there is a thing called the Letter Carrier Paragraph, which explains to management what they need to do before forcing a carrier not on the big list to work off their route. The steward, branch president and the Step B team have all explained it to them and guess what? They still want to do it their way, but the kicker is that they want us to understand their dilemma and continually use the same carriers every day and allow the CCAs to go home. I would think they would get the message. I guess not.

Percy Smith Jr., Branch 4559

Flushing, New York

In honor of our retirees, on Sunday, Oct. 22, Branch 294 held its annual brunch at the Douglaston Manor. The color changes of autumn made for a spectacular view of the golf course that we were able to enjoy at the beautiful Douglaston Manor. This year was extra special, with NALC President Brian Renfroe joining us.

Our new retirees are Evan Arnow, Claude Bonello, Frankie Chan, Larry Chan, Kyong Chung, Charles Giacomelli, William Heman, John Idzinski, John Kelbel, Raymond Lai, Frederick Lauricello, Janet Lew, Harry Luke, David Maurer, Myriam Naveda, Michael Phillips, Jeffrey Robles, Mary Toomey, Meng Wang, Peter Yeung and Hering Yuan.

Our 50-year gold card members are Ralph Anastasio, Sam Armato, Natty Biancoviso, Steven Buder, Richard Chieffo, Robert Coletti, Glen Comunale, Walter Epps, Joseph Gembecki, Michael Gamy, Stanley Gratkowski, Robert Holland, Sal Lahey, Peter Ladislav, Robert Lent, K.J. McDermott, Marshal Murphy, Robert Oggins, Chris Pappas and John Percoco.

Our 55-year members are Warren Distl, Joseph Ferrante and Howard Wurtz.

Our 60-year members are Michael Castaldo, Arthur Foley and Robert Harrington.

Congratulations to all, and thank you for your service, strength and wisdom. Special thanks go to NALC President Brian Renfroe and Region 15 RAA Tony Perconte, along with our friends from Branches 562, 36, 41, 357 and 6000 for joining us in celebrating this very special occasion.

Stay strong—

Tony Paolillo, Branch 294

Fresno, California

It gets old reading on social media how some of our members write nothing but negative things about our union. I imagine people as snitches, scabs, and people just unhappy in their lives doing all the complaining. No amount of benefits will make them happy. They praise UPS getting a \$10-an-hour pay raise. I personally ask three UPS workers if that were true. "I wish" is the answer I heard. That's \$10 over the course of their newest contract. Not all at once.

Air-conditioned vehicles! Have you seen how they drive with the doors open? All the jumping in and out of the vehicles? How much does the air conditioning help? Some. But, be for real.

I firmly believe the NALC will get a favorable National Agreement. It usually does. There are many factors in negotiations—including dealing with all of the attorneys involved and all of those National Convention resolutions passed by our delegates over the years.

I have seen many people with good-paying jobs over the years. Years later the business is closed, and they now work for less pay.



Flushing, NY Br. 294 honors its veterans at the branch's November meeting.

Once, a successful business owner told me he wished he had a government job. A secure job. He now works for a much smaller place. I think about him when some of our own complain about how bad they have it. In my 39 years as a letter carrier, there were some bad times. But also many, many good times. Those are the main things I look back on: a retirement check, COLA raises, OWCP benefits, TSP, NALC representation.

Appreciate your union and job. Get involved in helping instead of complaining. If you are always critical, at least have your facts right. There are plenty of ways you can help, starting with being united.

Jesse Dominguez, Branch 231

Hagerstown, Maryland

Happy holidays, all!

Last month at the November union meeting we had our branch elections. As many are likely aware of by now, we had a rash of new officers elected who will be sworn in next month. I would like to take this time to congratulate all of my fellow elected officers and thank everybody for their upcoming service. Looking back, I would also like to thank all of the officers who have stepped down for all of

their past work and helping keep our branch strong and organized.

Moving forward, with the new route adjustments downtown having been installed for the past month, it is my sincere hope that everybody spent the month of November learning their new territory and determining if that new territory would be overburdened for themselves. As part of TIAREAP, we should be having a 30-day consultation soon where we will meet and address any of our concerns about our adjusted routes. The month of December will not count toward your route evaluation. While the time is still fresh, I recommend writing a note of your opinion about the route adjustment so that when it is time for consultations, there will be a note to reference without having to think through the fog that is the holiday season.

Lastly, as we enter the holiday season, we should all take the time to remember that while the number of parcels may be overwhelming and tiring, it is all of us who deliver everybody's holidays to them. So, while we all deliver the parcels, please take the time to deliver each parcel with the care you would want shown to your own delivery so that we can remain safe while we deliver during the holidays.

In solidarity—

Jeremy Kessel, Branch 443

Jackson, Michigan

Jackson has gone through many changes to its office and its communications between carriers and supervisors/postmaster. The one I love the most is the Huddle Board, or as we call it, the "Cuddle Board." Yes, do we still have the Negative Nellies who think it's a waste of time? Absolutely! Is it worth it? Absolutely!

So, we have a white board, and anyone can write on it concerns or questions they may have. The reps from the carriers then take the question or concern to the supervisors or postmaster. We then have a discussion about it. Does it get out of hand sometimes? Yeppers! Is it worth it? Absolutely!

Our postmaster has pledged to be there three times a week. She takes on concerns head-on. I gotta give her a pat on the back, because that takes guts to open yourself up to your workers. Does it help having her there? Absolutely! It seems to work and brings issues to the forefront.

We table some items.

We discuss some items!

We solve some items!

No matter what happens, we all are there and can give our input. Is it a good thing? Absolutely!

I'm glad to be part of an idea that helps make all issues important and gives workers, supervisors and postmaster the opportunity to make a difference.

We also do safety and recognition during this time. Way to step it up, Jackson!

Mark Raczkowski, Branch 232

Kansas City, Missouri

The Branch 30 Retirees Annual Dinner Committee and the executive board honored the

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branch's retirees at the union hall last month with a party for the ages. (Get it?) Chaired by HBR Anita Franklin, she along with Melanie Kumpf, Janice Mickles, Vicki Ploeger and Lou Cole pulled off a winner. Retiree Robert McKinney delivered the prayer, while past Region 5 NBA and past Branch 30 President Dan Pittman led the Pledge of Allegiance. Following the introduction of the retirees, a delightful meal prepared by Carla's Catering Company was served. Past Region 5 NBA and Missouri State Association Director of Retired Members Mike Weir was the keynote speaker. Always a fountain of information, retirement guru Mike provided pertinent information about upcoming Medicare Part B changes and the changing of the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) to the Postal Service Health Benefits (PSHB). Current Region 5 NBA and past Branch 30 President David Teegarden, along with Missouri State President Patrick Flora, were also present for the affair.

My wife, Norma, and I had the privilege to be seated with retirees Lou Cole and Elmer Harris. Next to us was Steve (Connie) Puterbaugh from Branch 827, Independence, MO.

At 97, retiree Bert Robinson began his postal career as a substitute mail clerk on a train running between Kansas City to Chicago in 1967, before becoming an NALC letter carrier in 1974. A steward at James Crews, he met and became partners-in-crime with Rick Davis. Following their retirements, both joined their wives, Geneva and Patsy, respectively, in NALC Auxiliary 4. Led by Missouri State President George Anna Myers, the Auxiliary performs legislative actions NALC members can't do, due to Hatch Act restrictions. (Unfortunately, Rick Davis passed earlier in 2023.) NALC family members/friends are encouraged to join the Auxiliary. The harvest is plentiful; the workers are few.

Calvin Davis, Branch 30

Knoxville, Tennessee

Happy holiday to all carriers! We know that by now, carriers are tired of the ice, snow and wet slush during the winter months, but one event that a carrier can

envy and detest at the same time is overtime! Just like a fly around a cow's rear end, it will never go away. Instead, management and the NALC have agreed on a period when there will be no penalty overtime.

Article 8, Sections 4 and 5 identified the penalty overtime exclusion period, and for this year, it will begin Pay Period 26-2023, Week 1 (Dec. 2) and end Pay Period 01-2024, Week 2 (Dec. 29). This will be the last period before the start of the new year and the onslaught of catalogs, tax forms and other government publications that are held in abeyance so carriers can concentrate on parcels.

So, if you're a "hog" (slang term for a Branch 419 Overtime Desired List carrier), remember that the 12/60-hour rule does not apply to ODL and Work Assignment List (WAL) carriers. Management may, but is not required to, work carriers more than the 12/60 hour during the penalty exclusionary period. During the penalty overtime exclusion period, a WAL carrier has the right to work the additional time more than 10 hours, since penalty overtime is not paid. Remember that management may assign another carrier to perform the work at the straight-time rate rather than assigning it to a carrier on the WAL. Either way, there will always be a hog feasting at the trough!

Tony Rodriguez, Branch 419

Las Vegas, Nevada

During this holiday season, we would like to express our admiration and respect for our brother and sister carriers who are enduring bitter cold, ice and snow. We can only imagine the hardship. But this article is for all of us.

Do you have any idea how important you are? You may not know your customers personally, but they know you. They know when you arrive. They see you on the street and you bring a sense of normalcy, stability and routine as you deliver eagerly awaited letters, flats and packages that literally change lives. No one else can do this as well as we can. Our customers count on us. Letter carriers go above and beyond every day. Every day.

We were the heroes of the pandemic, and we're still heroes as we show up for work and get exposed to a virus that has not disappeared. And while this has been forgotten by management, it hasn't been forgotten by our customers.

We save lives. We work in frequently unbearable conditions both inside and outside the office. Our work can be dangerous. But we persist, we show up, and we do our best day after day. We don't get to hear it enough, but when our customers thank us for our good service, it's because we are professional letter carriers for the United States Postal Service, and we care.

During the holidays, carriers are working their a---s off to get everything out. This frequently creates ungodly hours, but we do it for the people who are depending on us. They are our patrons, friends, neighbors, and ultimately the only bosses who count. The small gifts and cards of thanks during this time of year don't mean as much as the recognition that we're important to them. Work proud!

In solidarity—

Leslie Hammett, Branch 2502

Louisville, Kentucky

Go to work in the dark, go home in the dark! Fall is officially here and feeling more like a bipolar winter. With the cold weather and time change comes the increase in DPS and packages. If you're not ready for the holidays, it's too late—they're here. I can say here in Louisville there have been some changes. We're still hiring PTFs and turning them over so quick as unassigned regulars.

Our new acting postmaster is currently re-enforcing some basic rules and regulations, showing us her focus. At times I'm thinking, Don't they have better things to do? But then, that is her job! So, as a steward, I make sure I'm telling my carriers, "Don't give the Post Office a reason to be on your back." Have your cell phones up, no headphones while delivering, be in full uniform, and attendance is always an issue they'll focus on.

I hope everyone took the time out to go and vote! I know I did. With that being said, make sure you're also helping by donating to the Letter Carrier Political Fund. Now more than ever we need help keeping the future of the Post Office bright. Remember, knowledge is power!

Adriane Shanklin, Branch 14

New Orleans, Louisiana

Greetings, my fellow letter carriers, It's that time of year again when things began to blossom into holidays. Happy Veterans Day to all our many veterans. Thank you for your service. With the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday near, many—if not all—are grateful and thankful for the many blessings that have been bestowed upon us and the many more that we anticipate coming our way. We are indeed a blessed people. We have so many gifts and blessings to revel in that we don't forget to bless our fellow man. We also look forward to the coming yuletide season.

With anticipation, we ready and steady ourselves for the negotiated contract between USPS and the NALC—one with meaning and substance that we all can enjoy and benefit from. My brothers and sisters of this great union, be proud that you belong to such an outstanding organization. There are many unions, but there is only one NALC!

When you calculate what you're giving to charity, do remember to give to LCPF! Those funds help protect your job and hard-earned benefits that you've gained over the years. You want to maintain what you have and to make other gains as well. No givebacks! We are on the cutting edge of sophisticated technology and software. AI is everywhere into everything. It's hardly a day that passes when you are confronted with AI. On your phone, Siri, Alexa and trying to reach customer service, it's everywhere. Probably a threat to many people's job. What is one to do?

We can confidently look to the future that if we strive to be all we can be, we shall indeed

Notice

By making a contribution to the Letter Carrier Political Fund, you are doing so voluntarily with the understanding that your contribution is not a condition of membership in the National Association of Letter Carriers or of employment by the Postal Service, nor is it part of union dues. You have a right to refuse to contribute without any reprisal. Any guideline amounts are merely suggestions, and you may contribute more or less than the guidelines suggest and the union will not favor or disadvantage you by reason of the amount of your contribution or your decision not to contribute. The Letter Carrier Political Fund will use the money it receives to contribute to candidates for federal office and undertake other political spending as permitted by law. Your selection shall remain in full force and effect until canceled. Contributions to the Letter Carrier Political Fund are not deductible for federal income tax purposes. Federal law prohibits the Letter Carrier Political Fund from soliciting contributions from individuals who are not NALC members, executive and administrative staff or their families. Any contribution received from such an individual will be refunded to that contributor. Federal law requires us to use our best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, name of employer and occupation of individuals whose contributions exceed \$200 in a calendar year.

overcome. Continue coming to meetings! Learn your contract! Knowledge is power!

Yours in solidarity and unionism—

Marshall Wayne Smith, Branch 124

Norristown, Pennsylvania

When management doesn't want to manage, they just say, "Call at 3" and leave it for the PM manager to figure out. They give you two hours of OT and say get it done in 1:30. You fill out a 96 saying you're over on your own route and they disapprove it and say "Call at 3" if you're not making 6:30.

We have safety talks in the morning, but they never address working in the dark... 'cause we shouldn't be.



North Florida Br. 53 LCLC and past Branch President Bob Henning (r) presents retiree Lloyd Pearson with an NALC retiree cap on his 102nd birthday.

It's the most dangerous time to work. If we got our mail at an earlier time, we could provide better customer service and be safer for the carriers. I know—"Stop makin' sense!"

In our office, we are getting Metrisis and they are not very good. Mine has 12,000 miles and already I've gone through

two headlights and the left turn signal, and today the right turn signal went out—plus they are rear-wheel drive. (Anyone with common sense would say you should get all-wheel drive 'cause they are better in the snow.) When asked about getting chains for them, we were told that we weren't getting them, 'cause when they break, they mess up the wheel well on them. Glad to know that a van is more important than a carrier's safety.

One more thing: They talk about scanning integrity, that we should scan "delivered" at the point of delivery and not to scan at office in the afternoon. We were told today that when having a package on hold we are to scan it "hold" then "delivered," so when a person has an alert about their package it's gonna say we delivered it. I questioned the integrity and was told carriers are to scan again when really delivering it; it will give us a geo stamp of where it was scanned...yeah—at the office. Can't make this crap up.

Merry Christmas!

Joel Stimmler, Branch 542

North Florida

Last month I wrote about decisions coming back from the B Team paying a non-compliance penalty to the union of \$500 per case. Recently the B Team added a \$75 penalty for not meeting at Informal A and another \$75 for not meeting at Formal A.

Currently this branch has more than 100 cases just like it pending decisions, but here is the kicker: Management has not paid any of the money, and that has generated more non-compliance cases. As a former Step B rep, I know that both the postmaster, labor relations manager and the district manager get copies of these cases. The blame all goes to them for continuing to let it happen. Then we wonder why the Postal Service is in financial straits. Our stewards are commended for the excellent work keeping up with all of this.

Recently I had the honor of attending retired carrier Lloyd Pearson's 102nd birthday celebration. Lloyd has been a good friend and sometimes mentor. Congratulations to you from all of us at Branch 53.

Branch 53 wishes all NALC members and their families a happy and safe holiday season.

Bob Henning, Branch 53

Northeastern New York

I had the opportunity to attend the health benefits seminar in October. It was very informative, and there are many benefits for active and retired members. The premiums are very competitive and less than most health plans. There are wellness programs, Hinge health, a healthy heart program and telemedicine. I have personally taken advantage of these programs.

Next year will be the time many of our retirees who did not sign up for Medicare Part B will have the opportunity to do so. The enrollment period is April 1 to Sept. 30, 2024. With Medicare Part B and our NALC high-option plan, our Medicare retirees will experience a drastic reduction in their health care costs. In most cases, they will not experience out-of-pocket costs.

Our HBR, Mike Curran, and I have hosted three retiree breakfasts throughout our branch. We are getting the message to our retirees on enrolling in Medicare and considering our health plan.

It was great to see some familiar faces at the breakfasts, including a former co-worker, Craig McKim. Craig always stays in touch and is a staunch supporter of the NALC and our health plan.

In closing, I would like to wish everyone happy holidays!

Frank P. Maresca, Branch 358

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

This will be my swan song as my branch's scribe. I have served as Branch 458's scribe for 37 years, although not consecutively, as I gave up the position after retirement in 2000 and was convinced by a friend to run again four years later. Eighteen years the first time and 19 years the second time. It is about time. I have enjoyed being scribe, but there comes a point, at which I am, that the position needs new blood and someone who is involved in the everyday goings-on on the workroom floor.

A lot has changed in the Postal Service, and a lot has changed in the way we approach keeping management accountable. I am proud of the part I have played in that. Letter carriers care about the Postal Service, and we want it to be there for future generations. I am confident

that my replacement will do what is necessary to ensure that postal management's feet will be kept to the fire.

I'm not going away, just winding down to a lesser degree. Thanks to a lot of friends I have made over the years through my scribe position. And thanks to members of my branch who elevated me to the position and kept reelecting me year after year. Branch scribe is an important position and words do matter.

Bob Bearden, Branch 458

Palatine, Illinois

Dates of 2024 branch meetings: Jan. 10, Feb. 7, March 13, April 10, May 8, June 26, July 10, Sept. 11, Oct. 9 and Nov. 20.

Meetings start at 6:30 p.m. and are held at the American Legion, 122 W. Palatine Road.

Monica Howard, Branch 4268



Petersburg, VA Br. 326 member Roslyn Polite (l) celebrates 30 years of service in November with the help of Postmaster Charlene Parker.

Petersburg, Virginia

Branch 326 city carrier Roslyn Polite celebrated 30 years of service in November. She transferred from New York City to Petersburg, VA, in 2003. Every year, Ms. Polite coordinates a holiday toy donation drive to benefit children in need in the Petersburg community. She says, "I enjoy coming to work to serve my customers."

Postmaster Charlene Parker awarded her a 30-year recognition certificate. The branch congratulates Ms. Polite on her years of dedicated service.

Cara Neri, Branch 326

Phoenix, Arizona

Branch 576 honored one of its own with a Silver Eagle Award in recognition of retiree Jeff Clark's hard work and dedication to the NALC'S political action movement.

Jeff has spearheaded the branch efforts for decades and was the Arizona State Association president from 2013 to 2023.

Jeff tirelessly visited local and national political representatives and testified before congressional committees in the fight to protect the interests of the NALC, USPS and letter carriers.

Supporting this recognition of Jeff's accomplishments were NALC Director of Safety and

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Health Manny Peralta, NALC LPO John Beaumont and Region 4 NBA Dan Versluis.

Congratulations and thank you, Jeff!

Al Linde, Branch 576

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

This may be a bit boilerplate (again, haha), but I figured I'd go over a few generalities since we're in the "lull" before the holiday season. I wanted to hit some reminders possibly familiar to veterans, but not as obvious to new employees.

I've noticed that a lot of trees still have half of their leaves in mid-November. Even though the weather has been balmy for this time of year, we've started the temperature swings that bring us frost in the mornings. Icy leaves are just as slick as plain wet ones, so adjust your walking/driving accordingly.

We've recently set the clocks back and that means darkness is coming earlier. "The sun is way too low and the shadows are entirely too long for me to be at this point in my route" is a thought I've already had multiple times since adjusting them. It really shows what repetitive creatures of habit we are. If you cannot deliver everything assigned to you because of this, remember—your reasoning should be "safety" and not simply "darkness."

Finally, Open Season should be in full swing by the time you read this. It runs from Monday, Nov. 13, through Monday, Dec. 11. I recently read an article that mentioned premiums are increasing an average of 7.7 percent, with some plans going up a whopping 10.1 percent. Check the rates and the comparison tool on opm.gov.

It's hard to believe that 2023 is almost toast already! So, in the interest of lead time for the publishing of this magazine, I hope you all have a happy Thanksgiving, a productive and safe holiday rush, and a merry Christmas.

John Conger II, Branch 84

Portland, Oregon

As of this writing, we have just returned from another Region 2 rap session. Thanks for hosting us, Coeur D'Alene, ID! It's always nice to see familiar faces and catch up with each other's branch news.

Hey, "You Are the Current Resident Podcast" folks: Thank you for your Nov. 5 episode, "A closer look at *The Postal Record*." Who would have guessed that *The Postal Record* is older than the union itself? It was very interesting to hear Mike Shea talk about the history and ins and outs of working on our union's magazine. There's so much history there!

I often wonder about all the branches that do not have a newsletter. (Why not?) For them, *The Postal Record* holds even more importance. They do such a beautiful job with it, and I would like to express my gratitude and give congratulations to the whole staff. (Of course, I'm the branch scribe, so no surprise there.) Sometimes one wonders if anyone is even reading the result of all the hard work that goes into the newsletter, and it's always nice to hear back from a fellow co-worker about a certain article or photograph. Cheers to all the editors, writers, cartoonists, illustrators, photographers and contributors out there!

Finally, as we settle into this month of peak and prepare to say farewell to another year, I would like to thank my work family at my station, Rose City Park. It makes a huge difference to get some laughs and smiles in the morning before you embark on your route for the day. We have that in spades, and I wish the same for all of you reading this near and far.

Suzanne Miller, Branch 82



South Macomb, MI Br. 4374 awards three gold cards at its annual Social Night Dinner. Pictured (l to r) are Al Dybalski, Dorothy Wurth and Mike Sheridan.

Providence, Rhode Island

Here in Providence, discipline for attendance is the flavor of the month, especially tardiness. Just be mindful that management is looking for patterns of tardiness to bring to the table. Also, there was a small spike in dog bite incidents last month. Remember, if you are bitten by a dog, you should file a workers' compensation claim (CA-1) as a precaution, even if you don't think it's a serious bite.

Management continues to do office counts and 3999 walks in most stations. Also, in most of these circumstances, management is not fulfilling their obligations per the TIAREAP memo to do a consultation with the carrier. Per the memo, all carriers who have a 3999 done on them should be given an unedited version of the 3999 at least one day before the consultation, which should take place within three business days. If management is conducting walks, they should do them properly and give the carrier a consultation so that we know what they are putting in for notes.

Lastly, a new Arrow Key procedure was implemented in a few stations where letter carriers had to scan a clerk or supervisor's badge to both obtain and clear an Arrow Key. This process was unilaterally implemented, and grievances were filed in all those installations. If you notice any changes like that in your office, feel free to contact your steward or someone in the branch to verify.

Anthony Turcotte, Branch 15

Racine, Wisconsin

I finally figured out why dogs bark at the mailman. It's because we smell like too many different houses, and they can't trust that. When dogs bark at us, what they're telling us is to

keep moving and don't even think about coming back tomorrow.

From October until December, here in the Midwest and elsewhere in the winter states, you can actually watch daily as carriers add layers of clothes as the weather sets in until full-blown winter gear in December. For all the new CCAs, this is a tough time to start. Winter will make us or break you. Hang in there—it's baptism by fire; come spring, you will all be old hands at this. It's also hibernation time for most of our customers. Everybody holes up for the winter and we won't see many of our customers until the spring thaw. Just us and the elements.

We've all had those moments in our careers that catches us with a foot in our mouth. For example, very early in my career a customer was receiving lots of cards. I said to her, "Looks like somebody's having a special day," to which she replied, "My husband just passed." Ouch. Or the guy who was painting his house. It was either a puke brown or lime green, and I couldn't remember which one he started with. Finally, I say, "Getting rid of that puke brown, I see" and he says, "No, painting it brown and getting rid of the lime green." Yikes. My bad. So the moral of this exercise is to just keep your yap shut and opinions to yourself. Nod and smile, and say everything looks great.

When I retire, I'm going to get a job washing mirrors; I can see myself doing that. Comments, remarks, anything? Merry Christmas.

Chris Paige, Branch 436

Rockville, Maryland

I met at NALC Headquarters on Oct. 20 with Executive Vice President Paul Barner, NBA Vada Preston, RAA Tonya Detrick and Special Assistant to the President Tim McKay. Washington, DC Branch 142 President Keith Hooks and former Annapolis Branch 651 President and Step B rep Annette Taylor participated via Webex.

We discussed issues of importance that are adversely affecting our members. Here is a small sample:

No one can get back pay when an 8039 is required. The acting back pay coordinator for management, Tonja Jackson, either refuses to complete all of the boxes on the 8039, or just refuses to process the 8039. This has been going on for nearly two years! No one can get back pay for any Step B decision or arbitration that states "Make the grievant whole." Our members are owed hundreds of thousands of dollars!

Someone in management is prematurely taking employees off the USPS rolls, usually after an injury suffered on the job or pending a removal notice. This means they are not paid when they return to work, and their health insurance is terminated.

Management is sending our members for psychological FFD exams after management loses the EP case at Step B. Then, when management informs us that the carrier failed the FFD, they are not allowed to work. And, management refuses to provide the union with a copy of the FFD report in obvious violation of

Article 31, Section 3 of the National Agreement. We are entitled to medical information if the information is related to a grievance. How do we really know the employee failed the FFD if management refuses to provide us with the medical report?

Management is refusing to pay Continuation of Pay, forcing us to grieve this issue. This also violates the FECA and numerous other laws!

In the struggle—

Kenneth Lerch, Branch 3825

St. Louis, Missouri

I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a very merry Christmas and a happy and healthy new year.

As in so many years in the past, we face uncertainty with our unresolved union contract and critical shortage of qualified workers, as well as an abysmal assortment of ill-tempered supervisors and managers. Carriers are being pushed to the brink as to how much verbal abuse they can tolerate, not to mention the inordinate amount of work hours being forced on them.

In the St. Louis division alone, we have consistently maintained a deficiency of nearly 235 CCAs short of the proper complement of employees.

When I joined the Postal Service in 1976, there was a waiting list. When I took the postal exam, I waited nearly eight months before I heard a reply, and when I did, I lived in an apartment and received a knock on the door at 10:30 p.m. on a Sunday to report to the main post office at 7:30 a.m. Monday for orientation.

Being a letter carrier used to be a prestige job. The salary wasn't the greatest, but the health benefits and retirement annuities were a reason to want the job. The bosses weren't as belligerent and obnoxious as they appear to be today. Carriers got along, and our objective was serving the public.

Now, we can't entice anyone to work for the Post Office. USPS job fairs are held weekly in virtually every post office in the division without an inquiry. The micro-management on the part of supervisors and managers is killing a once-revered institution. No one seems to care, and not enough introspection is taking place in management to try to identify and stem the exodus of senior letter carriers who've had enough.

Tom Schulte, Branch 343

St. Paul, Minnesota

As of the writing of this Branch Item, we still have not heard the results of our branch elections. Those included elections for president, recording financial secretary and three trustee positions. I hope we have great turnout. These elections will shape the future of our branch, and we all should have a hand in that shaping. I look forward to being able to share the results in the January branch article.

Before we get there, though, we have peak season looming before us. I feel as if I could almost copy/paste my article from last year,

with the only exception being upper management has done even less preparation than ever before. The grand plan seems to be that maybe we won't get as much snow as last year. Maybe they weren't very good at geography growing up, but we're in Minnesota. Our average in the Twin Cities is between 3 and 4 feet a year. Piling on top of that, the difficult-to-plow streets of St. Paul make all of management's prep quite the Hail Mary.

It seems like it's going to be a challenging peak season, to say the least. That means it's more important than ever to watch out for each other out there. Take care of the new folks especially. We can't let management bully them or put them into dangerous situations. As our scanner is so fond of reminding us, we're in charge of our own safety, but I think that's not totally correct. We should all be watching out for each other to make sure we all make it home safe. We're strongest when we're working together.

Solidarity forever!

Kaylee Valerius, Branch 28

Seattle, Washington

There's not a letter carrier slinging a pouch who hasn't had a bad back tale to tell. And there's always a backstory to this "back story." For me it was crippling back spasms that could cut my legs right out from under me. I'd like to sketch out how I went about tracking down the source of these back-breaking events.

I was off to see the wizards, who might enlighten me as to how I kept finding myself flat on my back. First stop, my primary care physician, who loaded me up with muscle relaxers, and always gave me a note to keep me home for a couple days. Popping pain pills didn't seem like the road to recovery, though—it felt more like the road to rehab.

You know you're desperate when you sign up for deep tissue massage. Hands? Fingers? It felt more like the blunt end of a pool cue. And when he would catch a knot, he'd "lean into it" until I thought I'd pass out. I couldn't believe I paid for that, but the spasms were worse.

Then it was off to the chiropractor. Yes, I went to see this bone crusher, and part of his protocol was X-rays. So he says, "You're in luck. It's soft tissue." The lucky part being that there were no cracked vertebrae, nothing splintered in the spine, so surgery would not be needed.

The acupuncture person was my last stop. I did everything except aromatherapy and healing crystals. He said I may have a spasm in my back, but there were extenuating circumstances. Part of my problem was posture. I left there with a series of stretching exercises and ended my battle with back spasms by investing time in body maintenance. Exercises couldn't hurt, though the same could not be said about back spasms.

Don Nokes, Branch 79

South Jersey, New Jersey

Impasse! Impasse! Impasse! That is what we continue to receive from the Step B management representative at the DRT. I understand there are times when both sides can't meet on agreement because cases are that close to call and neither party wants to give in; however, I believe in this latest situation, I need to call out the management member in our district for blatantly delaying a case they knew had no merit but sent it forward anyway.

We got our hands on an email the DRT representative sent out to the postmaster whose case should have been resolved, but impasse anyway just to clog up the system. It said, "We are impassing this grievance from Step B. I am not sure, though, how far it will go. I don't believe it will make it to arbitration because in the suspension itself, you did not list the specific violation from Management Instructions, but instead used wording from a *Postal Link*. A more solid suspension would have been deviation from route, unauthorized OT, etc., that can be easily documented with language from the *M-41*, etc."

This is the exact correspondence from the rep, which blatantly shows how they are corrupting this system by not doing their job and ruling on the contractual case in front of

COLA: Cost-of-living adjustment

- **Correction:** The November issue contained incorrect information about the final 2024 retiree COLAs. The CSRS COLA will be 3.2 percent; the FERS COLA will be 2.2 percent.
- The 2025 projected COLAs for the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) and the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) are **0.3 percent** following the release of the October consumer price index (CPI). The 2025

COLAs will be finalized with the publication of the September 2024 CPI in October 2024.

- The 2024 projected COLA under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA) is **3.8 percent** following the release of the October CPI. This COLA is based on the change in the CPI between December 2022 and December 2023.
- Visit nalc.org for the latest updates.

them. They knew darn well this was a loser, but would rather waste everyone's time and money by moving this case forward. Our brother lost 30 days' pay and overtime hours because of an incompetent postmaster. We tried intervening before it got to this point, but no one in Labor or OPS wanted to help. This just shows how broken this process has become, and needs a complete overhauling. This rep should be held accountable for her actions!

Gary DiGiacomo and Bill Revak, Branch 908

Southeast Pennsylvania Merged

Happy holidays! It's the time of year we pay thanks to our loved ones. Let's not forget our postal family. We work together, complain together, and generally drive each other crazy sometimes. But at the end of the year, we can look back and see all we accomplish.

The facts are that we deliver more mail and packages at a cheaper price and with more accuracy than our competitors. Don't let anyone tell you differently—there are many independent studies to prove this. You are great at what you do. And it seems to be that you care more!

The NALC held an OWCP training at our hall on Nov. 12. It was well attended. The event covered all the rights letter carriers are entitled to with regard to workers' compensation. Our branch is committed to the rights of workers injured on the job. If you have any questions, please call the branch office.

As we approach another calendar year, NALC is hard at work to procure your next contract. There are many opinions out there with regard to our contract. Please note, our union chooses not to negotiate our contract in public. It has worked wonders for us. The other unions look to us for guidance in contract negotiations. NALC President Brian Renfro stated we could have a contract instantly. But NALC wants a good contract for the membership, and that takes as long as it takes.

We are approaching a new year and all it brings. We have a lot to look forward to. Only hard work pays off in life. And NALC works very hard for our membership. Let's do our part to continue to make our experience the best it can be. Don't count on management; they won't help.

#WeCanOnlyDoOurBest #UnityInThePostalCommunity #LearnYourRightsThenExerciseYourRights

#DontLetThemIntimidateYou

Eric Jackson, Branch 725

Toledo, Ohio

Our delegation to the Committee of Presidents meeting in Las Vegas returned without any winnings. Besides hoping to win at blackjack, they were hoping for better news on the contract. There have been recent developments with the auto workers and actors unions. Maybe that's a hopeful sign for our negotiations.

We're about to top 1,500 grievances, plus we have done numerous pre-arbs and arbitrations. The hits just keep on comin'!

We honored a total of 20 retirees for their 50 years of membership as well as eight retirees for 60, 65 and 75 years. I was one of the gold card recipients, but was unable to attend due to my semiannual trip to Hilton Head, SC. Those in attendance at the Toledo Club enjoyed dinner before the ceremonies. NALC Director of Retired Members Dan Toth and Region 11 National Business Agent Mark Camilli were also at the dinner. Both expressed their deep appreciation of retirees.

Happy holidays to all, and best wishes in the new year.

Ray Bricker, Branch 100

Tri-Valley, California

Across the country, PMG DeJoy is combining letter carrier routes into Sorting and Delivery Centers (S&DCs). And, if you haven't heard by now, we were notified that we have been affected by this incentive. Recently, at the time of writing this article, the parties jointly conducted stand-ups at the affected offices: Ventura Main Post Office, where carrier routes will be moved into the Oxnard Installation, which will soon be converted to an S&DC.

The move will take effect in February 2024, and management has already begun the building transformation process. We were given a tour of the facility; it appears that Oxnard is on schedule to meet its deadline.

When the S&DCs are created, the Postal Service remodels the buildings so that each facility is structured the same as the others. Letter carriers working at the Oxnard S&DC have renovations that include remodeled bathrooms with new fixtures, new water fountains that include bottle fillers, and a remodeled break room with ice machine. Oxnard's S&DC also received new carrier cases, which are blue instead of the traditional green. The Oxnard S&DC is also equipped with a package-sorting machine called a Small Delivery Unit Sorter (SDUS), which can sort parcels by carrier route.

While I have some concerns about the Oxnard S&DC transformation—such as safety, sufficient office space, parking, and route adjustments for the increased travel distances—local management has assured that the National Agreement will be observed and followed throughout the transition. Nevertheless, the union is prepared to challenge inappropriate action through the grievance procedure for any contractual violation that may occur from this move. "Well done" is better than "well said," and the only way to ensure that letter carriers' rights are not violated is to stay on alert and be ready.

James C. Perryman Jr., Branch 2902

How to submit items

Branches may submit items for publication in *The Postal Record* by standard mail or by e-mail. **But please note the important information below.** Due to production requirements, items that do not comply with the styles specified cannot be published. Call *The Postal Record* office at 202-662-2851 if you have questions.

Who can submit: Branch presidents must send *The Postal Record* a letter designating authorized scribes, especially if the branch scribe has changed. If items will be submitted by e-mail, the president also must list the e-mail address(es) that will be used.

Deadline: The deadline is the 10th of the month preceding the month of publication, 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. 11. Items

received after the deadline will be held for the next issue.

Word limit: The *NALC Constitution* (Article 9, Section 1.b) limits items to 300 words. Submissions that are too long or violate the prohibition on defamatory or unlawful matter (such as electioneering) cannot be printed.

To submit items by mail: Use upper and lower case letters (not all capitals) on one sheet of 8.5 x 11" paper. Use an easy-to-read font (no scripts) and print in black. Mail to *The Postal Record*, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144. Include the following information: type of item (Branch Item, State Summary, Retiree Report, Election Notice, etc.); where it comes from; the person sending it; and how to contact the sender.

To submit items by e-mail: Send to postalrecord@nalc.org with the branch city and state as the subject. The item can be in

the body of the e-mail or as an attachment in Microsoft Word format (not Microsoft Works). Do not type in all-capital letters. Include the same information as listed above for items sent by mail. If you do not receive an acknowledgment that your e-mail was received, please call *The Postal Record* at 202-662-2851.

Photos: Branches may submit in-focus, professionally processed photos or e-mail digital image files of at least 300 dpi resolution as attachments. Include caption information **identifying all individuals** and the event. Do not send photos printed on a desktop printer. Due to space limitations, *The Postal Record* does not guarantee publication of photos. Photos may be posted online at nalc.org or in one of NALC's social media accounts.



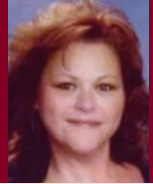
Cynthia Martinez
President

National Auxiliary Board

News and updates from the officers



Crystal Bragg
Secretary



Samantha Yerg
Treasurer

From the President

Hello, Auxiliary sisters and brothers and all of our carrier friends.

What a wonderful time of year. Our weather is cooling off, and that is a blessing.

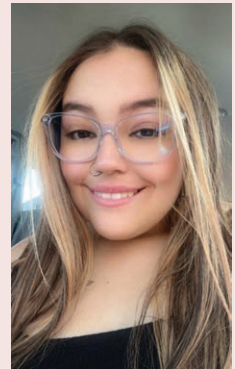
We were so delighted to receive a generous donation to our NALC Auxiliary. Hartford, CT Branch 86 were the benefactors of our surprise. What a wonderful letter and check to get in our mailbox. Thank you to the officers and members of Branch 86. The National Auxiliary is so appreciative.

NALC Director of Safety and Health Manual Peralta and Region 4 National Business Agent Dan Versluis were guests at Phoenix, AZ Branch 576's October union meeting. Director Peralta gave carriers tips on safety in the heat and dangers on the road. NBA Versluis addressed local issues. The best part was that both are supportive of the Auxiliary. All of our members enjoyed talking to them after the meeting.

Our local Auxiliary #377 members volunteered to fold, stuff, seal and label letters in the hope of increased participation for the Letter Carrier Political Fund.

ter Carrier Political Fund.

A bright spot in Washington state is its new auxiliary president, Alessandra Davis, 20. She is a member of Yakima Auxiliary #194. I believe she is the youngest state president. Congratulations—we are delighted to have you.



Alessandra Davis

We have had requests for the Auxiliary cookbooks. I have not located any more yet. I will let everyone know if I do, especially Thelma Lancaster. Thank you for your interest.

Merry Christmas to all, and a bright and happy new year!

Cynthia A. Martinez

Top left: At a recent Phoenix, AZ Aux. #377 gathering, Jana Maron, Barbara Lewis, Faith Wysaki, Rosemary White, NALCA President Cynthia Martinez, Tina Leonard and Sharon Larkin volunteer to stuff envelopes to help increase LCPF participation.

Bottom left: Wysaki, Region 4 National Business Agent Dan Versluis, Carol Bryant, Maron, Kelly Busalacchi, Larkin, NALC Director of Safety and Health Manny Peralta and Martinez attend Phoenix Branch 576's October meeting.



Notice

By making a contribution to the Letter Carrier Political Fund, you are doing so voluntarily with the understanding that your contribution is not a condition of membership in the National Association of Letter Carriers or of employment by the Postal Service, nor is it part of union dues. You have a right to refuse to contribute without any reprisal. Any guideline amounts are merely suggestions, and you may contribute more or less than the guidelines suggest and the union will not favor or disadvantage you by reason of the amount of your contribution or your decision not to contribute. The Letter Carrier Political Fund will use the money it receives to contribute to candidates for federal office and undertake other political spending as permitted by law. Your selection shall remain in full force and effect until canceled. Contributions to the Letter Carrier Political Fund are not deductible for federal income tax purposes. Federal law prohibits the Letter Carrier Political Fund from soliciting contributions from individuals who are not NALC members, executive and administrative staff or their families. Any contribution received from such an individual will be refunded to that contributor. Federal law requires us to use our best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, name of employer and occupation of individuals whose contributions exceed \$200 in a calendar year.

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NALC's podcast "You Are the Current Resident" is available on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Google Podcasts, and wherever you listen to podcasts.

During each episode, NALC President 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.



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