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January 2024

The Postal Record

The monthly journal of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS

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Evaluating our goals and priorities for 2024



**Brian L.
Renfro**

Top of mind for all our members is collective bargaining and a new contract. While we have made progress at the bargaining table, there still are important aspects of an agreement that haven't been resolved. We anticipate that the interest arbitration process will begin in the coming

“Even as we proceed with the interest arbitration process, we will not stop negotiating with the Postal Service in good faith. Both parties still believe it is possible to reach an agreement, and as long as that possibility remains, we will stay at the table and continue fighting for what letter carriers have earned and deserve.”

months. We have been preparing for interest arbitration in earnest for more than a year. We believe we have an extremely strong case. Even as we proceed with the interest arbitration process, we will not stop negotiating with the Postal Service in good faith. Both parties still believe

A new year means a fresh start. It's a time to evaluate goals and priorities and decide what is needed to achieve them—and that's exactly what we're doing at NALC.

I anticipate the coming year to be a busy and successful one for our union. While we will continue to focus and work toward some of our long-standing priorities, we also will stay vigilant in responding to changes as they arise, and adjust our efforts as needed. I will use this month's column to outline some of NALC's expectations and priorities for the year ahead.

it is possible to reach an agreement, and as long as that possibility remains, we will stay at the table and continue fighting for what letter carriers have earned and deserve.

In the coming year, we also will continue to work with Postal Service management to represent the interests of our members during implementation of its Delivering for America plan. Our voice and perspective are a key component of any success that may result as the Postal Service moves forward with its strategic plan.

The safety of our members always comes first and the wave of assaults and robberies targeting our members is unacceptable. In recent months, we have been holding rallies around the country to emphasize that “Enough is enough,” and that the attacks on letter carriers must end. Since we started these rallies late last summer, more of these crimes have been prosecuted at the federal level—exactly what we asked for. However, we will not stop until every single crime against a letter carrier is prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

We will continue working on a comprehensive legislative solution. As this issue was going to print, bipartisan legislation in the House of Representatives was making its way to introduction, legislation that would better secure how we access mail, would assign a prosecutor in each U.S. attorney's office dedicated to prosecuting all crimes against letter carriers on the federal level, would increase the Postal Inspection Service's capacity to protect us, and would impose stronger penalties on those who attack our members while they are doing their jobs. This bill will be a top legislative priority, though not our only one.

Last year was one of the hottest years on record, yet heat safety has not been prioritized or addressed in an acceptable manner. We will continue our work with the Postal Service and through every available avenue to ensure that all letter carriers are educated about the risks and signs of heat illness and given the best opportunity to work safely in dangerous heat around the country. Additionally, we will work alongside the Department of Labor to finally get an established heat work rule, which would benefit letter carriers and countless other workers nationwide.

Regarding retirement priorities, we will continue to build support and work toward passage of the Social Security Fairness Act (H.R. 82/S. 597), which would repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision and the Government Pension Offset. Likewise, we will educate members of Congress on the importance of the Federal Retirement Fairness Act (H.R. 5995), a bill that would allow federal employees, including letter carriers, to buy back their time served in non-career positions—such as a city car-

rier assistant, transitional employee or casual—making it creditable toward their service under the Federal Employees Retirement System. If you haven't yet, I encourage you to visit our legislative action center at nalc.org/action and ask your members of Congress to co-sponsor these bills.

The long-term financial viability of our employer remains a priority. A sustainable USPS is key to our long-term job security and the service we provide. We will continue working on a bipartisan solution that includes an updated investment strategy for the Postal Service Retiree Health Benefits Fund. Currently, these funds are invested in low-yield Treasury bonds, and NALC is proposing to diversify the investment portfolio with stocks and bonds by purchasing Thrift Savings Plan-style index funds, yielding potentially hundreds of millions additional dollars annually.

Our work with the White House and the administration will continue to be critical this year. With two seats vacant on the USPS Board of Governors (BOG), previously held by Capt. Lee Moak and William Zollars, we will fight to ensure that pro-letter carrier candidates are nominated to leadership positions at the BOG and the Postal Regulatory Commission. Similarly, we will continue to encourage the administration to direct the Office of Personnel Management to implement the recommendations of the 2010 Segal Report, which would accurately value the Postal Service's pension assets and liabilities. This action is essential to ensuring the long-term financial stability of USPS and our jobs.

Lastly, as we enter 2024, we also enter a presidential election year. NALC will support and endorse candidates based solely on their records and stances on issues that affect letter carriers and our jobs. We will not engage in wedge issues that aim to divide us; rather we will direct our political efforts toward those who will stand with us and support our priorities. We will focus our efforts on battleground states to build and maintain pro-letter carrier representation in Congress and the White House.

To succeed in these battleground states and ultimately end up with an administration and a Congress that support letter carriers, we need to grow the Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF), NALC's political action committee. Next month's annual LCPF issue of *The Postal Record* will be dedicated to growing our power. Currently, 12 percent of

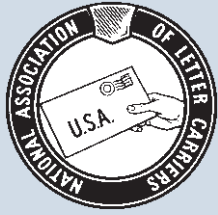
the NALC membership contributes to LCPF—which leaves a lot of room for growth and activism in 2024. I know that letter carriers are up to the challenge, and if you're not already an LCPF contributor, I hope you will join the fight with us and sign up today.

“To succeed in these battleground states and ultimately end up with an administration and a Congress that support letter carriers, we need to grow the Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF), NALC’s political action committee. Next month’s annual LCPF issue of *The Postal Record* will be dedicated to growing our power. Currently, 12 percent of the NALC membership contributes to LCPF—which leaves a lot of room for growth and activism in 2024. I know that letter carriers are up to the challenge, and if you’re not already an LCPF contributor, I hope you will join the fight with us and sign up today.”

As you can see, we have a full agenda ahead of us and many priorities to tackle this year. I believe that our best tool to achieve results for letter carriers is unity. I am confident that if we all come together to fight for the needs and priorities of letter carriers, NALC will come out on top in 2024.



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.



National Association of Letter Carriers, AFL-CIO

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

100 Indiana Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20001-2144
202-393-4695 | nalc.org

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1400 Trumbull
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347 W. 41st St., 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10036

NATIONAL BUSINESS AGENTS

Region 1: MARKEISHA LEWIS
(California, Hawaii, Nevada, Guam)
3105 E. Guasti Road, Suite 200
Ontario, CA 91761
909-443-7450

Region 2: NICK VAFIADES
(Alaska, Utah, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington)
7710 NE Greenwood Drive, Suite 200
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360-892-6545

Region 3: MICHAEL B. CAREF
(Illinois)
4979 Indiana Ave., Suite 203
Lisle, IL 60532-3848
630-743-5320

Region 4: DAN VERSLUIS
(Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Oklahoma, Wyoming)
12015 E. 46th Ave., Suite 550
Denver, CO 80239
720-828-6840

Region 5: DAVE TEEGARDEN
(Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas)
1828 Craig Road
St. Louis, MO 63146
314-985-8040

Region 6: DAVID MUDD
(Kentucky, Indiana, Michigan)
43456 Mound Road, Suite 501
Sterling Heights, MI 48314
586-997-9917

Region 7: PATRICK JOHNSON
(Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin)
Broadway Place West
1300 Godward St. NE, Suite 2600
Minneapolis, MN 55413
612-378-3035

Region 8: STEVE LASSAN
(Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee)
160 Commissioner Drive
Meridianville, AL 35759-2038
256-828-8205

Region 9: EDDIE DAVIDSON
(Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina)
1101 Northchase Parkway SE, Suite 3
Marietta, GA 30067
678-942-5295

Region 10: SHAWN BOYD
(New Mexico, Texas)
23760 Hwy. 59 North
Kingwood, TX 77339
281-540-5627

Region 11: MARK CAMILLI
(Upstate New York, Ohio)
2500 W. Erie Ave.
Lorain, OH 44053-1056
440-282-4340

Region 12: BRIAN THOMPSON
(Pennsylvania, South and Central New Jersey)
4 Neshaminy Interplex Drive, Suite 111
Trevose, PA 19053
215-824-4826

Region 13: VADA E. PRESTON
(Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, Washington, DC)
P.O. Box 2660
Ashburn, VA 20146
703-840-2010

Region 14: RICHARD J. DICECCA
(Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont)
33 Boston Post Road W., Suite 360
Marlborough, MA 01752-1813
617-363-9299

Region 15: BRUCE DIDRIKSEN
(Northern New Jersey, New York, SW Connecticut, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands)
347 W. 41st St., Suite 102
New York, NY 10036-6941
212-868-0284

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**Philip
Dine**

In May, we told the tale of Nashville Branch 4 member Michael Charest’s role in the campaign for a stamp honoring country music great Johnny Cash, featuring praise for his efforts from Cash’s youngest sister, Joanne Cash. The column included the gripping story of Mike’s wife, Judy, whose rescue from a frigid river as a 3-month-old on Dec. 24, 1956, after her despairing mother jumped from a bridge with her baby in her arms, led to her being known locally as the Christmas Eve miracle baby.

That story now is slated to hit the big screen, with casting having begun a half-hour ago as I write this, and filming set to start a few days

before you read it. Judy, who helped Mike with his stamp effort on behalf of the Man in Black and who also served as personal assistant to country legend Waylon Jennings, passed away in March of 2022. “It’s more than a movie to me,” Mike says. “It’s about my wife. I want to keep her memory alive.” If the movie lives up to the real-life story, it will do that and then some. Stay tuned.

A personal highlight of November’s rap session was the conversation with a carrier at an adjoining breakfast table. Several things struck me about Logansport, IN Branch 323 member Rick McGlothlin—the cultural curiosity he displayed while overseas; his journalistic skills/devotion to the craft; and his down-to-earth humility. To pursue his dual interests in broadcasting and traveling, Rick joined the Air Force. A 10-year military stint took him to Italy, South Korea, Japan and the Philippines, followed by a second decade abroad as a civilian contractor.

To learn the languages and understand the people, at his own expense Rick lived in the communities, not in military housing; seeking “to absorb what I could, while I had the chance.” As a news anchor, he became an integral part of the Armed Forces Radio and Television Service. When a CBS news crew arrived at South Korea’s Osan Air Base, Rick shot and edited footage for the network’s evening news, prompting the producer to issue a future invitation to CBS headquarters in New York for a potential job. Despite viewing journalism as “a blast,” Rick decided that Indiana would better suit his 3-year-old daughter, so he returned from abroad to the Hoosier State in 2006 to carry mail. Elected branch president in 2017, he still leads the branch in retirement. Journalism’s loss, it’s clear, is our gain.

My first conversation with Region 6 NBA David Mudd took an unexpected twist. As we discussed his Army experiences in Cold War Europe, it became evident that in the fraught period of late 1989, shortly before the Berlin Wall fell and communism collapsed in Eastern Europe, we were in the same area but pursuing decidedly divergent goals. David’s assignment was with the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment to East Germany’s south, watching that borders were respected. For my part, I was covering the spiraling events, straddling the Hungarian-Austrian border to interview East Germans fleeing through Hungary to western freedom in Austria.

As tensions rose in East Berlin, I knew history would be made and I had to get there, but I also knew that East German officials were in no mood to grant a journalistic visa. So rather than the conventional West Berlin-East Berlin crossing, I decided to drive into East Germany through the mountainous south under the cover of night. Let’s just say, I’m glad my first encounter with Dave was here, and not over there.

Victoria Leba of Minneapolis Branch 9 called recently about a *Postal Record* matter involving Veterans Day and her late husband, David Leba, a member of the same branch and an Army Vietnam War veteran, who had died in August. As she spoke, things got intriguing. Turns out they both started carrying mail in 1968—she in February and he in August—met at the post office, participated in the 1970 strike and got married the next year. “I had seniority on him, which I never let him forget,” Vicki said. “I could always pick my vacation first, but I would wait until we got down to his seniority. We were an interesting couple, I can tell you that. I always told him I was the best thing that ever happened to him. I actually think he believed me, after a while.”

The husband-and-wife team each became a 55-year-member last year. Notwithstanding the old joke about a newsroom placard reading, “Warning, journalist doing math,” I calculate that their combined 110 years with NALC equate to more than 80 percent of our union’s 135 years of existence.

EDITORIAL STAFF:
Director of Communications and Media Relations Philip Dine
Managing Editor Mike Shea
Writer/Editor Rick Hodges
Writer/Editor Jenessa Wagner
Editorial Assistant Sarah Eccleston

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Letter carriers tell Phoenix: ‘Enough is enough!’ on crime

“We’re all here today because our members—letter carriers—are under attack by violent criminals who have no regard for their health and safety,” NALC President Brian L. Renfro told a crowd in Phoenix, AZ, on Nov. 30. It was the latest “Enough is enough” rally held by branches across the country.

The Phoenix area has witnessed at least 10 crimes against letter carriers, often robberies of mail and Arrow Keys, over the past two years, a large increase from the past. It’s an increase seen throughout the country.

“We’re here because this violence should come with an increase in protection, awareness and community. But instead, as is often the case, it feels like we only have one another,” Renfro said.

“Nearly every day, I learn of one of my members—letter carriers—being victim to some sort of violence,” Renfro said. “Targeted armed robberies, assaults, shootings—and yes, even murder—has now become part of our job. This should not be.”

Renfro said more than 2,000 violent attacks had been inflicted on letter carriers across the country since 2020, with the majority involving a gun or other type of weapon. Renfro said, of those, only 14 percent have led to an arrest and prosecution. 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



NALC President Brian L. Renfro leads the rally in Phoenix.

prosecuted in the first place, reduces the deterrence to potential lawbreakers who aim to attack letter carriers.

“No carrier ever expects to wake up in the morning, put on that uniform, go to work, deliver the mail to our customers and not come home safe,” Region 4 National Business Agent Dan Versluis told the crowd, which as in other rallies included a contingent of journalists, meaning that the public also heard or read the message delivered by national, regional and local NALC leaders.

“We need our federal prosecutors to prosecute,” Branch 576 President **Cynthia Staley** said. “We need people to know that if you rob a letter carrier, you will be prosecuted and you will go to jail. Enough is enough.”

“Every employer has a duty and obligation to protect its employees on the job,” Renfro noted. “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

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

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

He said that NALC is working with members of Congress on legislation to help speed up the improvements. He vowed that NALC would make such legislation NALC’s top priority in Congress. (For more on what NALC wants to see in such legislation, see Renfro’s President’s Message on page 1.)



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 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 local and 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 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**

Last chance to give through CFC

The open enrollment period for the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) ends this month, on Jan.

15, so if you’ve been waiting, now’s the time to make your contribution. CFC is the world’s largest and most successful annual workplace charity campaign, raising tens of millions of dollars each year. Since its inception in 1961, the CFC has raised nearly \$8.7 billion for charities and people in need. Federal and postal employees participate in the CFC by choosing from a list of charities to support through automatic deductions from their paychecks.

“Letter carriers are the most generous people I know, giving of themselves to help those in the communities we serve,” NALC President Brian L. Renfroe said. “And there’s no easier way to help than by pledging to give a little each pay period to the charities you support.”

All active letter carriers can participate in the CFC 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.

One charity that many carriers choose to support through CFC is the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA), NALC’s official charity since 1952. MDA is the world’s leading nonprofit health organization sponsoring research into the causes of, and effective treatments for, neuromuscular diseases. MDA research grants support research projects worldwide, as well as camps and activities for children who have any of these diseases. MDA’s CFC number is 10561.

“This is your last opportunity to make a difference through CFC,” Renfroe said. “Make your pledge by Jan. 15.”

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



News from Washington

House committee holds hearing on WEP and GPO repeal


On Nov. 21, the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Social Security held a hearing on the Social Security Fairness Act (H.R. 82). The bill would repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO), parts of Social Security law that unfairly reduce, or sometimes eliminate, Social Security benefits of public employees, including letter carriers, who have earned pension benefits from public employee pension plans such as the Civil Service Retirement System.

The hearing was held at the St. George Fire Department Station 60 in Baton Rouge, LA, a city in Rep. Garrett Graves's (R-LA) district. Graves co-leads the bipartisan bill with Rep. Abigail Spanberger (D-VA).

Witnesses, all from Louisiana, included Patrick Yoes, national president of the Fraternal Order of Police; Ann Dugas, retired state employee; Bernard Piro, retired firefighter; and Paula Porter, retired teacher.

The hearing brought awareness to the issue through the testimonies of the witnesses who are affected by the WEP and GPO. Several witnesses said they did not know about the impact of these provisions until after they retired and that they likely would have considered different careers had they been informed. Others stated that if these provisions are not overturned, it will be more difficult to recruit and retain employees.

NALC President Brian L. Renfroe and Louisiana State Association of Letter Carriers President Troy Scott submitted comments to the committee for this field hearing explaining how the WEP and GPO affect letter carriers and the importance of repealing the provisions.



NALC

**National Association
of Letter Carriers**

BRIAN L. RENFROE President

100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144
202.393.4695
www.nalc.org

December 4, 2023

Dear Chairman Smith, Chairman Ferguson, and members of the House Ways and Means Committee,

We are submitting these comments on behalf of the Louisiana State Association of Letter Carriers (LSALC), which represents nearly 3,800 active and retired city letter carriers.

First, we would like to express our appreciation for the hearing held in Baton Rouge on Nov. 20. Your questions and the witnesses' testimonies emphasized the true hardship the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO) have had on the nation's retired public servants in Louisiana and nationwide.

These provisions are unfair and wrongfully reduce or sometimes eliminate the benefits that letter carriers and other public workers have paid into and earned throughout their careers.

Letter carriers spend their working lives serving their communities and providing an essential service that all Americans rely on. We are lifelines for seniors who need medications. We ensure our customers receive paychecks and bills on time. We deliver essential packages six and sometimes seven days a week. We are proven devoted public servants who deserve to receive the full Social Security benefits that we have earned.

Our retired members, who are living on fixed incomes, are not asking for anything extra. We, alongside millions of other public employees, are asking you to repeal the WEP and GPO so that we can receive the benefits we are entitled to and enjoy the modest retirement that we worked for and expected.


This benefit reduction does not happen in the private sector, and if it did, it would likely be tried in court. We must do better by treating our public servants better. We cannot allow the government to keep taking from our earned retirement benefits. It is time to finally repeal the WEP and GPO, with your help and support.

We appreciate your consideration of the Social Security Fairness Act (H.R. 82), and the LSALC is hopeful that the committee will hold a markup on the legislation soon.

Sincerely,

Brian L. Renfroe
President, National Association of Letter Carriers

Troy Scott
President, Louisiana State Association of Letter Carriers



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The next step for the bill, which has 300 co-sponsors, to move forward in the House is for the Committee on Ways and Means to schedule a markup.

"NALC appreciates the subcommittee holding a hearing on this important legislation," President Renfroe said. "Far too many letter carriers and

other public servants are victimized by the WEP and GPO. They work hard and pay into Social Security throughout their careers and deserve to receive the full benefits they have earned. We urge Chairman Jason Smith (R-MO) to prioritize this issue and hold a markup on H.R. 82." **PR**

NALC selects convention venues for 2028, 2030

The NALC Executive Council has selected the sites and dates for the 2028 and 2030 national conventions. The council voted to hold the 75th convention in Minneapolis, MN, July 31-Aug. 4, 2028, and the 76th convention in Honolulu, HI, Aug. 19-23, 2030. The 2024 convention will be held in Boston and the 2026 convention will be held in Los Angeles.

Following an announcement seeking bids from branches that wish to host a national convention, only Honolulu Branch 860 submitted an offer to host a future convention. The 2020 convention scheduled to be held in Honolulu was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Certain minimum requirements are crucial for potential host cities to make a successful bid for a convention that can bring between 5,500 and 8,000 delegates—requirements that eliminate many cities that lack the facilities large enough to hold a NALC convention. To find and help the Executive Council select potential sites, the Convention Site Committee considers the following criteria:

- The convention facilities must be unionized and have theater seating for approximately 8,000 delegates, as well as space for registration, workshops and more.
- NALC requires at least 3,500 hotel rooms, with preference given to hotels with a unionized workforce.
- All of these must be available during NALC's constitutionally mandated convention window, between the Fourth of July and the third full week of August.

After eliminating many cities because they could not meet the requirements mentioned above, the



The Minneapolis Convention Center



The Hawaii Convention Center

Convention Site Committee visited four cities up for consideration for the two conventions. The committee recommended that 2028's be in the eastern part of the country and that 2030's be in the western part of the country.

The Convention Site Committee provided site reports for the 2028 convention for Philadelphia, Detroit and

Minneapolis, and for the 2030 convention for Honolulu. Honolulu was given first consideration because of the cancellation of the 2020 convention. Had the proposal from Honolulu not been acceptable to the Executive Council, the Convention Site Committee would have provided other possible cities for consideration. **PR**

Postal Service considers fleet with mix of NGDVs and commercial vehicles

For approximately 10 years, the Postal Service has been going through the process of acquiring the Next Generation Delivery Vehicle (NGDV) to replace the current fleet of aging vehicles. The route to get from design to production of the NGDV has involved years of development and testing by USPS, with the active involvement of the NALC and letter carriers from across the country. As the time approaches for the first NGDVs to be produced and delivered, the Postal Service has determined what it considers to be the best mix of vehicles for the future.

The current fleet consists of both purpose-built vehicles and commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) vehicles. The two purpose-built vehicles currently in use are the Long Life Vehicle (LLV) and the Flexible Fuel Vehicle (FFV). The LLV and FFV are both right-hand drive (RHD) vehicles that were designed specifically for the Postal Service. The COTS vehicle

fleet includes both left-hand drive (LHD) vans, like the Ram ProMaster and the RHD Mercedes Metris.

In December 2021, the Postal Service issued the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) pertaining to the acquisition of the NGDV. This statement, which is required by the National Environmental Policy Act, outlined the Postal Service's choices for replacing the current fleet and the environmental impact of each alternative. According to the FEIS, USPS operates a delivery fleet of approximately 212,000 vehicles, of which about 165,000 are LLVs and FFVs. The remaining vehicles are a mixture of LHD and RHD COTS vehicles.

In the FEIS, the Postal Service explained its proposed action plan for replacing the existing fleet. Under the USPS's adopted plan, between 50,000 and 165,000 NGDVs would be built and deployed over a span of 10 years. According to the FEIS, the fleet of NGDVs

would be made up of both an internal combustion engine (ICE) and battery electric vehicle (BEV) powertrains. Under this plan, at least 10 percent of the NGDVs would be BEV, with the remainder being ICE vehicles. The FEIS also outlined three alternative plans for replacing the current delivery fleet; however, each was rejected by the Postal Service. Those were:

- The first alternative called for the purchase and deployment of up to 165,000 RHD ICE COTS vehicles, which would replace the LLV and FFV fleet. Currently, the only RHD ICE COTS vehicle available for purchase and use within the United States is the Mercedes Metris. Due to regulatory standards, RHD vehicles built for use overseas are not available to the Postal Service since they do not meet Environmental Protection Agency requirements. While the Metris would allow letter carriers to deliver to curbside boxes, this vehicle does not have sufficient cargo capacity to accommodate the current parcel volume.
- The second alternative called for the Postal Service to purchase and deploy only LHD COTS vehicles. Under this plan, these vehicles would be 100 percent BEV, like the Ford E-Transit, which the Postal Service plans to purchase and deploy in 2024. Unlike the LLV, FFV and Metris, LHD vehicles are not suitable for curbside delivery, so letter carriers would not be able to safely deliver mail to these types of addresses.
- The third alternative would be for the Postal Service to take no action to replace the fleet and to instead keep using the LLV and FFV long



The Postal Service is considering commercial off-the-shelf vehicles, such as the Ford E-Transit, as part of the vehicle fleet.



past their expected usable life. Under this plan, USPS would continue to repair the current vehicles whenever possible.

In September 2023, the Postal Service issued a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the NGDV, which outlined a new plan for replacing the current fleet. As in the FEIS, USPS laid out three alternatives for acquiring and deploying new trucks to replace the current fleet of LLVs, FFVs and COTS vehicles. The SEIS defined both the total number of vehicles the Postal Service would purchase and how many of each vehicle would be deployed. The three proposals were:

- Under the first alternative, which is the one preferred by the Postal Service, a total of 106,480 vehicles would be purchased and deployed. Of these, 60,000 NGDVs would be built, with 75 percent of them being BEV and 25 percent being ICE. Under this option, the NGDVs would be a mixture of front-wheel and all-wheel drive, depending on the expected need for each type. In addition to the 60,000 NGDVs, the Postal Service would buy 14,500 RHD COTS vehicles, with all of them being gas-powered. The remaining vehicles purchased under this alternative—31,980 in total—would be a mixture of LHD and RHD COTS vehicles or NGDVs. Any additional NGDVs purchased would be made up of 66 percent BEV, with the remainder ICE. The makeup of the remaining vehicles would depend on the availability of vehicles. Regardless of the type of vehicles acquired, 62 percent of the 106,480 would be electric and the total time to purchase and deploy the entire amount would be six years.

- Under the second option, the Postal Service would purchase 106,480 NGDVs, with 62 percent being BEV, over the course of eight years.
- The third alternative is the original preferred option outlined in the FEIS. Under this plan, USPS would purchase and deploy a maximum of 165,000 NGDVs over the next 10 years. At least 10 percent of any NGDVs bought under this option would be BEV, with the rest being ICE vehicles.

As the process moves forward, with the first NGDV planned for delivery from the manufacturer (Oshkosh Defense) in June 2024, NALC will continue to meet with the Postal Service regarding the replacement of the delivery fleet.

Since the beginning of this process, NALC has played an integral role in the design of the NGDV. During regular meetings with USPS representatives

from engineering, safety, delivery and labor relations, as well as with employees of Oshkosh Defense, NALC has raised the concerns voiced by letter carriers across the country about the current fleet and what is needed in a new vehicle.

The goal of NALC has always been to ensure that the Postal Service acquires a delivery vehicle that provides a safe and comfortable working environment for letter carriers while providing sufficient space to accommodate the current volume of parcels and mail. As the time approaches for the Postal Service to begin deploying new vehicles, NALC will continue to meet with USPS regarding the process. If the makeup of the anticipated fleet changes, or if the Postal Service issues another environmental impact statement that alters its preferred option for replacing the current vehicles, NALC will update members on the NALC website and in *The Postal Record*. **PR**

Please note:
There will be no Branch Items, State Summaries or Retiree Reports in the February 2024 *Postal Record*. That edition will be the special annual tribute issue honoring contributors to LCPF during 2023.

What every letter carrier needs to know about the **POSTAL SERVICE HEALTH BENEFITS**

PROGRAM



On April 6, 2022, President Joe Biden signed the Postal Service Reform Act into law, repealing USPS's unfair pre-funding mandate, ensuring six-day delivery and creating the Postal Service Health Benefits (PSHB) Program within the existing Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program. These accomplishments benefit the long-term financial stability of the Postal Service, which in turn benefits letter carriers. It's important for letter carriers to understand why the legislation was created, what it accomplished and how that has led to the creation of the PSHB Program, as well as what it means for them.

Most visibly, the legislation ended the requirement to pre-fund retiree health benefits decades in advance. This mandate had cost the agency an average of \$5.2 billion annually since going into effect in 2007 and was responsible for approximately 84 percent of USPS losses until the 2022 reform was passed. The Postal Service was the only federal agency or private company required to meet this burden to such an extent.

The bill also codified six-day mail delivery into the law. Though the vast majority of postal funding is independent of Congress's appropriations process, since 1983, Congress had to maintain six-day delivery on a yearly basis by including language protecting six-day delivery in its annual appropriations bills. The Postal Service Reform Act says that six-day mail delivery is the law and no longer is at risk of being removed through the often-contentious annual process.

The final major component of the law is the creation of the PSHB

Program inside FEHB to increase the level of integration with Medicare, into which the Postal Service and its employees have paid billions in payroll taxes. But the creation of the PSHB Program doesn't solely affect retirees or soon-to-be retirees, it affects all letter carriers and their families. And that has left many confused.

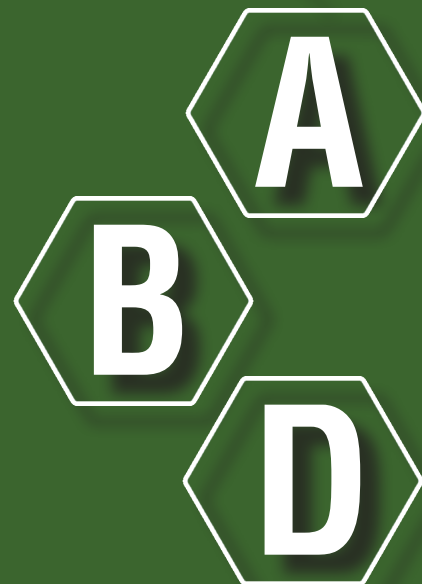
"We will do everything in our power to educate our members," NALC President Brian L. Renfroe said on the "You Are the Current Resident" podcast released Nov. 19. "But I think it's important that we begin with a basic understanding of what's going to take place, and how that will affect everyone."

Understanding Medicare (even for those who don't need it yet)

The new law is designed to integrate postal employees into Medicare to a greater extent than in the past, which should result in more savings for USPS and many letter carriers.

For those who don't know, Medicare is a federal health insurance program primarily covering people who are retired and 65 years or older. It is divided into three parts that cover specific services:

- **Medicare Part A** (hospital insurance) covers inpatient hospital stays, care in a skilled nursing facility, hospice care and some home health care. Typically, there is no premium for Medicare Part A once a retiree becomes eligible.
- **Medicare Part B** (medical insurance) covers certain doctors' services, outpatient care, medical supplies and preventive services. Typically, there is a premium for this coverage.



What every letter carrier needs to know about the **POSTAL SERVICE HEALTH BENEFITS PROGRAM**



- **Medicare Part D** (prescription drug coverage) helps cover the cost of prescription drugs (including many recommended shots or vaccines).

Letter carriers, like almost all private and public employees in the country, pay taxes on their earnings toward Medicare, which is then available to them when they retire and reach the age threshold. Most postal retirees opt in to Medicare Part A, as there are often little or no premiums for it. Approximately 80 percent opt in to Medicare Part B, with monthly premiums at about \$170 a month currently. They also continue their FEHB plan into retirement. As a result, when they are retired, these 80 percent rarely pay out-of-pocket medical expenses because Medicare becomes the primary payer, and whatever is left is paid for by the FEHB plan, including medical care or hospitalization.

The law will increase savings for the Postal Service in the approximately 20 percent of postal retirees who are eligible but do not opt in to Medicare now, even though they've paid for those benefits their entire careers. That percentage will decrease as current and future employees retire.

Medicare is set up to give those who turn 65 an initial enrollment period (IEP). This period lasts for seven months, starting three months before the person turns 65, and ending three months after the month the person turns 65. That IEP is extended for a person still receiving health care through a job or a spouse's job until they no longer receive that coverage.

If a person chooses not to enroll at that point, there is a 10 percent late-enrollment penalty on the premium if the person enrolls later. It applies for each 12-month period a person delays enrollment. As time goes on, that penalty can get prohibitively expensive. For example, if a retiree waits 10 years to enroll, the penalty will be 100 percent of the premium, meaning the premium will cost twice as much as someone who opted in at 65. Without such a late-enrollment penalty, seniors would have an incentive to defer enrollment until they got sick—undermining the financial viability of the Medicare insurance pool.

And that is where the law aims to create savings for postal retirees, but their experience will vary depending on letter carriers' ages and employment status.

For active letter carriers under the age of 64

For Plan Year 2025, which will follow the Open Season beginning in the fall of 2024, every active letter carrier will need to enroll in a new health benefit plan under the PSHB Program. The new PSHB plans will still be under the FEHB umbrella and likely will be largely identical to the previous FEHB plans, but they will be available only to Postal Service employees and their families.

"The plans will be the same in terms of the benefits, but by separating them, what we have is a set of plans where postal folks only are enrolled," Renfroe said.

For example, if a letter carrier has the NALC Health Benefit Plan's High

Option Plan and wants to stay in that plan, during Open Season in the fall of 2024, the carrier will simply enroll in the NALC HBP's High Option Plan in the PSHB Program. (We are legally required to say that this is contingent on the High Option Plan being approved for both FEHB and PSHB). The benefits will most likely be the same, at least initially. As the years go on, there may be improvements to the postal-only plans not seen in the FEHB plans, as Medicare takes on a higher share of the costs of members' health care, which should allow the plan providers to lower premiums and add more value.

After the 2024 Open Season this fall, once postal employees retire and are age 65 or older, they will be required to enroll in Medicare Parts A and B, with two exceptions:

- If they live in a location where there are no Medicare providers, such as in a foreign country.
- If they get their health insurance from another source, such as through the Department of Veterans Affairs or through a spouse's health insurance coverage.

President Renfroe encouraged all members to remain alert this year as program details become available.

For retirees and active letter carriers 64 and older

Like the previous group, during the fall 2024 Open Season, retired letter carriers of any age and active carriers who are 64 or older will also have to enroll in a new health benefit plan within the PSHB Program. However, such carriers will not be required

to enroll in Medicare Parts A and B when eligible, though they may choose to do so.

In addition, the new law provides retirees aged 65 or older who have not so far enrolled in Medicare Part B a chance to enroll without penalty. There will be a special one-time-only Medicare Special Enrollment Period for eligible postal seniors this spring. If they enroll, the Postal Service will pay for the rest of their lives any annual penalties on the premium for not enrolling during their initial enrollment period. This will be a chance for many retirees to opt in to Medicare Part B at a period later in their lives when they might need it more, without having had to pay the premiums earlier when they might not have needed it, or a penalty for opting in later.

"That'll be a one-time opportunity," President Renfroe said. "If you're in that circumstance, then I encourage you to do your research and be prepared when that time comes. And we'll be sure to get a lot of information out to you."

Examples

Here are a few hypothetical examples to help letter carriers better understand the process.

- **Example 1.** Louise Simonson is 62 years old and an active letter carrier. She has the NALC HBP's High Option Plan for her health care under FEHB. During the Open Season in November and December of 2024, she goes on LiteBlue and elects the NALC HBP's High Option Plan under the PSHB Program. When Simonson turns



What every letter carrier needs to know about the **POSTAL SERVICE HEALTH BENEFITS PROGRAM**



65, she retires from USPS. She is required to enroll in Medicare Parts A and B and elects to keep her NALC coverage. She pays no out-of-pocket costs for medical costs or hospitalization.

- **Example 2.** Chris Claremont is 70 years old and a retired letter carrier. He opted in to Medicare Part A when he was 65 but did not opt in to Medicare Part B. During the special Open Season in spring 2024, he opts in to Medicare Part B, with the penalty of adding 50 percent to his Medicare Part B premium because he enrolled five years late. But the Postal Service covers the penalty, so Claremont needs to pay only the normal Medicare Part B premium going forward.
- **Example 3.** Larry Hama is 67 years old and an active letter carrier. He has Blue Cross Blue Shield for his health care under FEHB. During the Open Season in November and December of 2024, he elects for the Blue Cross Blue Shield plan under the PSHB. When Hama retires from USPS, he can decide whether to opt in to Medicare Parts A and B.
- **Example 4.** Jo Duffy is 62 years old and a retired letter carrier. She has the NALC HBP's High Option Plan for her health care under FEHB. During the Open Season in November and December of 2024, she elects for the NALC HBP's High Option Plan under the PSHB. When Duffy turns 65, she can decide whether to opt in to Medicare Parts A and B.

More information to come

The president promised to continue to inform NALC members as they make required decisions about the new PSHB Program. "We will do mailings that will be specific to the circumstances of a lot of our members," Renfroe said. "We'll have this in the magazine. We'll have this on our website. I would expect we do another podcast on it when we get closer."

In addition to the above choices, there is a behind-the-scenes change that will benefit the Postal Service and letter carriers. The law requires all PSHB Program insurance plans to make internal changes to qualify for funding from Medicare Part D that effectively lowers the costs of PSHB drug benefits for Medicare-eligible annuitants. Neither employees nor retirees will have to take any action for this change to go into effect.

NALC has been at the forefront of trying to strengthen and preserve letter carriers' employer, the United States Postal Service. That's why letter carriers took a leadership role in pushing for the passage of the Postal Service Reform Act. A strong Postal Service serves the American public and it better serves its employees.

The result of all this, President Renfroe said, is that over time the Postal Service will benefit financially by saving billions of dollars in retiree health costs, and the resulting increase in financial stability will benefit postal employees as well as postal customers. **PR**

The letter carrier of a thousand faces

When Robert Emery made home movies with his four sons when they were young, he never thought moviemaking would amount to anything more than a few laughs. But in 2017, a trip to meet actor Val Kilmer led the Phoenix, AZ Branch 576 member on his own filmmaking path.

With his then-wife, Emery went to the historic town of Tombstone, AZ, for a “DOC HOLLI-DAYS” weekend festival, an annual event celebrating John Henry “Doc” Holliday, a well-known 19th-century gambler and gunfighter. Holliday had played a major role in Wyatt Earp’s O.K. Corral gunfight, as documented in the 1993 Western movie “Tombstone.”

Kilmer, who played Holliday in the movie, was going to be there. “So, my ex-wife, that was her favorite movie, and he’s a wonderful actor, so we made a trip down there and I signed up for the [Doc Holliday] lookalike contest,” Emery said. “But I kind of got a little obsessed about it and put a lot of money into the outfit and practicing. Anyway, it turns out I won.”

“I just kind of fell into the Western scene,” he added, explaining that he began to be known in Western film circles and started accumulating Western wardrobe and gear. He soon was invited to do live performances and reenactments of gunfights that had occurred in the old West. “I did that for a couple of years with the Arizona Gunfighters,” he said. “I learned a lot and developed more outfits.”

Acting was never on his bingo card. “It was never a bucket-list item,” he said. “I never perceived it as a possibility.”

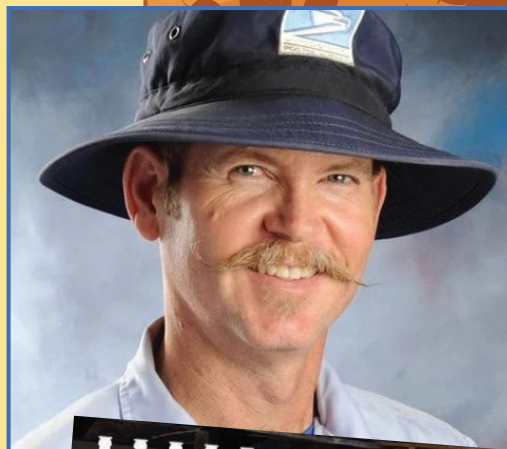
Emery joined the Postal Service in 1992, working first as a mailhandler and then as a clerk before becoming a letter carrier in 2006. Though his postal career doesn’t allow him a lot of time to schedule acting gigs, he does it whenever it’s feasible.

The carrier stepped foot onto his first movie set during the COVID-19 outbreak in 2020. When a friend posted on social media about an independent film she was doing for which the director was seeking background characters, Emery reached out.

“I got just background, but that was pretty eye-opening, seeing the actual cameras and lighting, and you know, ‘OK, you go.’ [There’s] a lot of waiting around, but still, it’s thrilling,” he said, added that he’d tell himself, “I can actually do this.” So from then on, it’s like, ‘Ooh, what else can I do?’ ”

He had been cast in a speaking role in a new movie in late 2020 when he tested positive for COVID-19 and had to tell the director that he needed to bow out to quarantine.

“So, then I’m at home for 10 days, so what am I going to do?” Emery said. “I’ve got all these outfits, so I said I’m going to



Robert Emery and the poster for his award-winning short film, “Bottled Up Poison”



The letter carrier of a thousand faces



The awards Emery's film, "The Woman Who Cried, Ringo!" won at the Wild Bunch Film Festival 2023

Emery in a scene in "The Dog Bite Murders"



Courtesy "The Dog Bite Murders" and Director of Photography Clint Clarkson

take photos of all these outfits to post for future jobs.”

Trying on costumes turned into, “Why don’t I just do a video?” he said. “So, I did. I made a little movie, a little 11-minute thing. Put it out on YouTube. Had fun with it. You know, a lot of it was a learning experience, but it was fun.”

Friends were amused, especially with Emery playing several characters, including a woman. But he wanted to do more with it. “I want to try to improve on it and practice and make it a little bit better and then finish the story, because it kind of had an ending, but not really,” he said.

That opportunity soon came. In late 2021, he and a friend were selected to be in “1883,” the prequel to the popular TV show “Yellowstone” as background, and he took a week off from work to film in Texas. “I was kind of hopeful maybe something more would come [from it],” he said. “You never know—when you’re on set, things could happen. So, I was excited.”

He was prepared to show up with his period-correct clothing for the wardrobe department to look at when he received an email that his role had been canceled because they would not be allowing any outside wardrobe.

Disappointed and finding himself with a week off, Emery made the best

of it. He called a friend who manages a Western movie set and asked about availability of the space, then lined up a photographer friend to film the full-length version of what became a 26-minute film, “Bottled Up Poison,” in which he played 13 characters as well as wrote and directed it.

Playing the more than one dozen parts took some coordination. “I had to go from a full beard down to just a little bit of a mustache,” he said, so he tried to do all of one character at a time. “If I mess up on the scene, oh well. I’m not going to wait another eight, nine, 10 months to grow a beard again.”

The Western-themed short film is a humorous look at a woman “who is getting away from a toxic ex-boyfriend and he finds her in the in the town where she escaped [to],” said Emery, adding, “She’s got a new relationship and he comes in and wreaks havoc.”

After some praise from friends who saw it, Emery decided to submit it to the Wild Bunch Film Festival, an annual event held in Tucson featuring short Western films created in Arizona. His film was selected, and he won awards for “Best Originality – Short Western” and “Director’s Choice – Comedy.”

He had submitted films the previous year and had been rejected, though he wasn’t upset about it. “Don’t be afraid to suck and just keep going,” he said. “That’s how you get better.”

To win was thrilling, he said. “I try to look at it from the realistic perspective,” he added. While it’s not on par with Sundance Film Festival, the country’s most prestigious independent film festival, “those smaller film festivals are just fantastic for people trying to get in and learn, so I’m very grateful for it.”



A promotional image for Emery's short film, "Cursed"

Emery and girlfriend Kasey Haas with actor and filmmaker Billy Bob Thornton

He has support within NALC as well. "Robert Emery is a union brother with many talents and accomplishments," Branch 576 President **Cynthia Staley** wrote to *The Postal Record*. "Who knew Branch 576 had a movie star among us?"

Emery has acting credits in 15 independent films, including "The Prototype," "The Pleasant Valley War," "Noche," and will have his biggest role to date in the upcoming film "The Dog Bite Murders," based on an event that took place in Globe, AZ, in 1910. "I'm looking forward to that one. I play the attorney who defends the alleged murderers," said Emery, who was excited to work with director Clint Clarkson. "He's a great guy. Just fantastic skills at lighting and camera work, so being on set with him, he makes me look far better than I am."

Emery and his girlfriend, Kasey Haas, have since made another movie, the five-and-a-half-minute "The Woman Who Cried, Ringo!" and it was selected for the 2023 Wild Bunch festival. The film won "Best Film Twist," "Film Fest Director's Choice – Best Western Mini Short" and "Best Actress for a Mini Short Western."

"We filmed it during the weekend that they had the 30th anniversary of the movie 'Tombstone.' So, a lot of actors were down at Tombstone," Emery said. With permission, they were able to incorporate a cameo from actor

Michael Biehn, who had played Johnny Ringo in "Tombstone." "I'm very grateful that he is gracious enough to allow us to put his image in our little thing," the carrier said.

Haas plays a town crier who is trying to warn everybody that Johnny Ringo's in town "and nobody seems to care," Emery said, adding with a laugh, "It's a cute little comedy, I think."

Emery has multiple YouTube channels and a website, kraseylove.com. Besides his job as a carrier, where he says he gets to "exercise, socialize and fantasize" and making movies, he likes spending time with his family and sharing Christmas poems with his customers, a tradition that's more than 20 years strong.

After he retires in a few years, Emery will consider doing more films and potentially joining the Screen Actors Guild if eligible; he also plans to concentrate on some other projects. "I've got a couple screenplays in my mind that I want to write, and I want to do my own little stop-motion series," he said.

"I just love storytelling," Emery added. And as long as he's continuing to create and share stories, this storyteller will be happy. **PR**



How do I get city carrier uniforms?



Over the decades, the Postal Service has established a high level of confidence with the American public and has consistently been rated the most trusted federal agency. City letter carriers, in their familiar blue uniforms, are the public face of USPS. People recognize the USPS brand and feel at ease when they see their letter carrier wearing the familiar uniform.

Besides brand recognition, the city carrier uniform serves several other purposes. Uniforms provide immediate visual identification to the public, which makes the job safer when carriers are going down streets, up to houses and into businesses. Uniforms provide protection from the elements while delivering mail outdoors for hours a day. In addition, uniforms project a neat and professional appearance that customers associate with the outstanding service provided by letter carriers.

Over the years, NALC has negotiated numerous contractual provisions related to uniforms. Since it is a requirement that eligible letter carriers wear postal uniforms, it was established that the Postal Service must provide eligible letter carriers with the resources to acquire them. Article 26 of the National Agreement states that all employees who are required to wear uniforms or work clothes shall be furnished uniforms or work clothes, or shall be reimbursed for purchases of authorized items from licensed vendors. This commitment from the Postal Service is intended to keep letter carriers prepared for duty while relieving them of the financial burden that comes with acquiring durable and comfortable uniform items.

Understanding how the uniform program works can be confusing for newly hired letter carriers. It is important to know when a new employee becomes eligible for his or her uniform allowance, how much that allowance will be and how it will be provided, and the ways in which uniforms can be purchased. The uniform program varies depending on the employee's status at the time they become eligible to receive a uniform allowance. Whether the employee is a city carrier assistant (CCA) or career employee can affect how the employee receives the allowance and how items are purchased.

CCAs are eligible to receive their uniform allowance upon completion of whichever of the following two comes first: either 90 workdays or 120 calendar days of employment. The date they become eligible becomes their uniform anniversary date. This anniversary date is maintained for the duration of their career, even after converting to career status, and becomes the date each year they receive their next uniform allowance.

Within 14 days of the eligibility date for receiving a uniform allowance, newly eligible CCAs should be provided with a letter of authorization—more commonly referred to as a voucher—from their local management to purchase uniforms. Once the form is completed, they may provide the letter of authorization to USPS-authorized vendors to purchase uniform items. Uniform allowances may be used to buy items only from authorized USPS vendors. A list of USPS authorized vendors can be found on the LiteBlue website at liteblue.usps.gov. Click on the “My HR” section and then the “Uniform Program” link. From this sec-

tion, click on the “Licensed Uniform Vendors” link.

Effective May 21, 2022, the annual uniform allowance for all eligible letter carriers is \$499. After a CCA converts to career status, they will receive a one-time additional credit of \$116 on the next uniform anniversary date.

The one significant difference in the uniform program between CCAs and career status employees is the way in which uniform allowances are received and uniforms purchased. Career employees do not typically use the letter of authorization or voucher system used by CCAs.

Career employees are provided with a preloaded Visa debit card and simply provide the card number to the authorized vendor to pay for their uniform order. Upon conversion to career status, letter carriers will receive the preloaded debit card in the mail close to their next uniform anniversary date. Keep in mind, this process is not automatic. After conversion to career status and as the employee’s uniform anniversary date approaches, local management must complete the Uniform Allowance Request Interactive Worksheet and submit it to the Human Resource Shared Services Center (HRSSC) for the card to be issued.

In the event a CCA is converted to career status after their uniform eligibility or anniversary date, and already has been issued a voucher, the CCA will still have the remainder of the one year of eligibility to use the uniform allowance voucher before receiving the purchasing card on the next anniversary date.

The uniform eligibility date for employees hired directly to career status is upon completion of the 90-day probationary period. As a reminder,

career employees will receive the one-time additional credit to their uniform allowance for their first allotment received after becoming a career employee.

As stated earlier, letter carriers receive a new uniform allowance each year on their anniversary date. Any unspent funds cannot be carried over from the previous year and will be forfeited if not used. If a CCA does not use the full allowance before their appointment ends, the remainder of the uniform allowance will carry over into the next appointment, but it must be spent before the next anniversary date. CCAs cannot purchase uniform items during their five-day break in service. Again, as a reminder, when a CCA converts to career status, their uniform anniversary date remains the same. Be aware of backorders; vendors are not permitted to charge your allowance until the purchased items ship. It’s important for both CCAs and career employees to remember to shop early to avoid forfeiting any unspent funds.

Unfortunately, uniform prices are on the rise. Uniform manufacturers and vendors cite several reasons for higher prices, including increases in the cost of materials, labor, utilities and shipping. NALC is concerned about city carrier uniform pricing and availability and routinely engages with the Postal Service on uniform issues in several ways. As part of ongoing collective-bargaining negotiations, NALC will continue to pursue Article 26 improvements to uniform allowances. Additionally, NALC will use the City Carrier Uniform Task Force to explore modified or alternative methods to supply city carriers with sufficient uniform items. As part of the duties of



the Uniform Control Committee, the parties consider all non-cost matters pertaining to the Uniform Allowance Program.

CCA uniform program details, including how the uniform allowance is provided, how uniforms are purchased, and how the uniform vendor is reimbursed, are explained on pages 26-2 through 26-4 of the *Joint Contract Administration Manual* and in the uniform section of the *Letter Carrier Resource Guide*, which are available on the NALC website (at nalc.org/jcam and nalc.org/resourceguide, respectively). New city carriers who have questions about the uniform program, or who have met the eligibility requirements but have not received their letter of authorization or purchasing card to buy uniform items, should contact their NALC shop steward or a branch officer. **PR**

Leadership Academy graduates urged to strengthen letter carriers' cause

NALC Director of Safety and Health Manuel L. Peralta Jr. presided over the graduation ceremony of the 31 members of NALC Leadership Academy Class 27. The ceremony was held on Dec. 8 at the Maritime Center in Linthicum Heights, MD, just south of Baltimore.

Peralta told the graduates that one of their roles going forward is to not just mentor letter carriers, but to help educate the next generations of trade unionists. He shared how when he was a boy and his family moved to Anaheim, CA, in 1964, one of his neighbors was a Teamster. "Papa Jim took all the kids in the neighborhood under his wing to teach them about the importance of unions in society and a fair playing field by the power that collective workers can use. Well, that's how I started as a unionist at the age of 8, being preached by Papa Jim," Peralta said.

"Our job is to teach people the importance of the NALC and unionism in America," he said, "because it can't be just [letter carriers] that we're protecting. We have to protect unionism as a whole."

He continued: "We have to preach about the NALC contract and how we serve that membership in every

Director of Safety and Health Manuel L. Peralta Jr.



opportunity you have. You have to ask yourself, 'Am I helping my branch? Not my ego. Am I helping my branch to be stronger, and to influence others to develop the army that we need to protect each other in the future?' "

He pushed them to thank the people who inspired them to become unionists, and urged them to find people whom they can inspire on that same path.

"Make your union stronger forever. Continue to learn. Don't give up. Don't walk away," he said.

The commencement event capped several months of intensive training on the skills necessary for union members to become effective leaders. Under the tutelage of their mentors—established NALC leaders such as branch presidents—the students combined three separate weeks of classroom learning at the Maritime Center with take-home assignments and special projects.

The 31 participants (listed below) now add their names to an ever-lengthening list of graduates of the Academy. During their classes,

The graduation luncheon was held on Dec. 8 at the Maritime Center in Linthicum Heights, MD.





Class 27

students took part in often lively discussions on such subjects as the National Agreement and the union's legislative agenda. They also learned more about the Dispute Resolution Process, strategic planning, branch financial responsibilities, safety and health, retirement issues, route protection, workers' compensation, effective negotiation techniques and the use of social media for branch communications.

NALC national officers, Headquarters staff members and President Brian L. Renfroe are tapped to teach classes on a wide variety of topics. The attendees also were guided by daily class instructors:

former National Business Agents (NBAs) Troy Clark and Chris Wittenburg; Region 1 NBA Keisha Lewis; Region 5 Regional Administrative Assistant Larrissa Parde; and Assistant to the President Ed Morgan.

Each week of the Academy also includes an emphasis on acquiring effective written and oral communication skills. Back in their branches, graduates will make use of those skills in such forums as membership meetings, awards ceremonies and dinners.

After the commencement, the graduates were assigned to work at their NBAs' offices for a week to learn in a different environment. **PR**



Melissa Limage receives her certificate from Peralta.

NALC Leadership Academy Class 27 graduates

Adam Albrecht
Denver, CO Br. 47

Eric Beu
Oklahoma City, OK Br. 458

Lakeyshyan Bryant
Greenwood, MS Br. 1080

Katherine Buettner
Ballwin, MO Br. 5050

Cory Carter
Fargo-West Fargo, ND Br. 205

Valerie Castillo
Salem, OR Br. 347

Sherie Davis
San Jose, CA Br. 193

Joseph Desrosiers
Southeast MA Mgd. Br. 18

Krishonna Edwards
South FL Br. 1071

Andrea Frias
Central CA Br. 231

Jesse Golumbeski
Wilkes-Barre, PA Br. 115

Daniel Gordon
Warwick, RI Br. 3166

Yvette Kinard
New York, NY Br. 36

Ramon Lawson
Columbus, OH Br. 3166

Melissa Limage
Rockville, MD Br. 3825

Debra Lundergan
Garden Grove, CA Br. 1100

Caitlin Magruder
Joliet, IL Br. 305

Latasha Mccaleb
Minneapolis, MN Br. 9

Matthew Parkin
Pocatello, ID Br. 927

Richard Ray
Staten Island, NY Br. 99

Adriana Rivera
Santa Fe, NM Br. 989

Blake Rockers
Lawrence, KS Br. 104

Jose Romero
Albuquerque, NM Br. 504

Ronnie Salvador
Silver Spring, MD Br. 2611

Jarett Sims
Louisville, KY Br. 14

Brian Stahlheber
Belleville, IL Br. 155

Benjamin Vess
Asheville, NC Br. 248

Edward Walsh
Northeastern NY Br. 358

Chris Williams
Northern KY Br. 374

Dennis Young
Hammond, LA Br. 2223

James Zerbe
Harrisburg, PA Br. 500

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.

Carrier comes to aid of disabled vet

"I wasn't even supposed to be where I was" on his route in Mt. Lebanon, PA, in May of 2023, **Eric Ketter** said, "but there was road construction." On a slight detour, Ketter, a member of Pittsburgh Branch 84, happened to see an elderly man lying in the street. While other drivers seemed oblivious to the man, an alert Ketter noticed him immediately.

The carrier stopped his postal truck to block traffic and protect the man and then went to assist him. After ensuring it was safe to move him, "I picked him

up the best I could without hurting him," Ketter said. The man, a disabled veteran, had fallen from the steps of his home and dropped his phone, so he couldn't call for help. He asked Ketter to alert his wife inside. The man's wife took him to the hospital, where he was treated for minor injuries.

"I was very lucky to be in the right place at the right time," Ketter said. "I was happy to help him." While he hadn't met the man before, "now I talk to him almost every day."

Helping a woman with a broken hip

Jonathon Rash was walking his route in Bluefield, WV, on a cold, rainy day in January 2023 when he heard a dog barking somewhere on his left. Being deaf in his left ear, he didn't hear much other than the dog. But on his way back down the street, the Branch 880 member, who has carried the mail and looked out for his customers since 2005, heard something else—a cry for help.

He followed the sound to the backyard of a home and found an 88-year-old woman. "She's laying on the ground with the dog's leash wrapped

around her legs," Rash said. The woman told Rash she thought she had broken her hip. She had been walking her dog wearing shoes without socks, and the shoes had fallen off, leaving her barefoot in the near-freezing weather.

Rash immediately called 911 and went into the house to get an umbrella. He sheltered the woman with the umbrella and his coat.

"This poor lady probably would have laid there and died" if he hadn't found her, Rash said. "I was just at the right place at the right time."

Emergency responders arrived and took her to the hospital, where doctors confirmed she had a broken hip. She recovered and soon returned home.

"I check on her every day," Rash said. "It's just something we do [as letter carriers]."

Carrier's knowledge helps disabled man

Andrew DiBenedetto was closing in on the end his route in Tonawanda, NY, Aug. 5, 2023, when he spotted someone lying on the sidewalk. "I could see that he had a cut on his forehead," the seven-year carrier said, "and his glasses were lying on the sidewalk, broken."



Eric Ketter

Help on the way

Dec. 13, 2022, was just another day on his route in Princeton, WV, for **Paul Felger**, but that would soon change. As the nine-year carrier, a member of Beckley Branch 2420, approached a familiar house, Felger saw the resident standing at the bottom of his front stairway. "I thought that he was just saying 'hi.'" Felger

said. "However, when I got to his house, he was still there. I could see the stress in his face, as he was holding onto the wall at the bottom of his house. He said, 'Paul, can you call 911 for me?'" Felger called 911 and asked if the customer wanted help sitting. "He didn't want to," Felger said. "He was afraid to move." The carrier

stayed with the man until paramedics arrived and helped him, and then continued on his route. Felger later learned from a neighbor that the man had died, but that didn't take the luster off his attempt to help the man. "Being honored as a hero feels



Paul Felger

good in a way as to know that my customers depend on me," Felger said, "not only for the delivering of their mail, but also assistance when

in need. I feel that that is one of the duties of all mail carriers for the USPS." **PR**



Jonathon Rash



Andrew DiBenedetto



Sarah Faulkner

Fire & rescue

On a route in Westbrook, ME, in March of 2023, six-year carrier and T-6 **Sarah Faulkner** was approaching the front door of a home when she heard a smoke detector beeping inside. The Maine Merged Branch 92 member banged on the door, but nobody answered, and she saw no cars at the home, so she hoped nobody was there and in danger. She called 911 and firefighters came to the home. Firefighters later told her what happened. “It turned out the guy had cooked something on the stove and forgot to turn it off,” and then left the home, she said. If Faulkner hadn’t seen the situation and alerted them, the fire might have spread beyond the stove, they told her, but they were able to put it out with no damage to the home. “It was a ‘right place at the right time’ thing for sure,” Faulkner said. “I’m glad I was there.” **PR**

Rescue wasn’t the end of carrier’s caring

DiBenedetto, a member of Buffalo-Western New York Branch 3, recognized that the fallen person was a 67-year-old intellectually disabled man who lives with his sister on the carrier’s route.

DiBenedetto kept the man calm and thought about how to help him, and then spotted the man’s phone on the sidewalk. The man was too injured to use the phone, so DiBenedetto picked it up, found the sister’s number and called her. “It was a big help that he had his phone set to call his sister,” he said. She rushed to the scene of the incident and called 911, and then DiBenedetto continued his route.

In a thank-you letter to the branch, the sister wrote that her brother suffered a broken wrist and shoulder and required surgery.

“We thank Andy from the bottom of our heart,” she wrote. “If he wasn’t there at that moment, we’d hate to think that he might have laid there for a while.”

“It was just one of those things—I was out making my rounds at the right place and the right time,” DiBenedetto said. If he hadn’t been there to help, the carrier added, “Who knows how long he could have been sitting there?”

After noticing in July 2023 that an elderly customer hadn’t gathered her mail in a few days, Durango, CO, carrier **Seana Green** checked in on the woman, whom she usually saw on her porch when she delivered there. “I just followed my gut feeling,” the 15-year carrier said.

Green, a member of Pueblo Branch 229, approached the door, which was partly open. “I knocked on the door and I hollered,” she said. She heard the woman calling out in response. After asking if she could come inside, Green searched for the woman and asked her where she was, then followed her voice.

“She was in the kitchen,” Green said, “but she was on the floor of the kitchen.” The woman had fallen a few days earlier. Green, a search-and-rescue volunteer and former EMT, knew exactly what to do. She assessed the woman’s injuries but didn’t try to pick her up. She went outside to call 911, knowing that overhearing the call might panic the stricken woman, and then waited for emergency responders to arrive.

After telling paramedics what had happened, Green continued on her



Seana Green (r) and the party for her elderly patron

route—but she wasn’t done looking out for the woman. After learning that she wouldn’t be able to leave the hospital until after her upcoming 90th birthday, Green got permission to bring a few neighbors to her hospital bed to have a birthday party. **PR**

Eye on the elderly

A couple on **Mike McNerney’s** route in Buffalo, NY, normally picked up their mail daily, so when it started building up over several days in March, the five-year carrier and Buffalo-Western New York Branch 3 member was concerned. “They were an elderly couple, one in a wheelchair,” he said. “They were always there” at home,

never leaving town. “Something didn’t seem right,” McNerney said, so he called 911. Firefighters arrived and couldn’t get through the front door because it was blocked, but they heard cries for help and found another way in. They found the couple both lying in a bathroom, unable to stand. One had fallen and the

other fell, too, when trying to help. They had lain there for several days and were taken to a hospital by the responding EMTs. Once the carrier saw that his customers were in good hands, he returned to his route. “The paramedics said they were hours away from death,” McNerney said of the couple. Sadly, the

husband later died in the hospital, but his wife recovered and moved to a nursing home. McNerney said the incident was a reminder that letter carriers really do look out for their customers. “You hear the stories all the time,” he said, but he was surprised when his turn to come to the rescue came. **PR**



NALC Branch publication competition call for entries

Editions of branch and state association newsletters and websites are invited to enter NALC's biennial competition for outstanding periodical publications.

A panel of publications experts will determine award winners in the various categories, which are listed below. The decision of the judges is final. Winners will be announced at a workshop held during the national convention in Boston Aug. 5-9.

Entries must be received by **April 1** at this address: Publications Competition, NALC, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144.

All entries must have been created by NALC members; been published in branch or state association newsletters, between April 2022 and March 2024 (inclusive); and must be submitted by current branch officers or editors. For the Best Website award, the judges will review the current website or feed.

Please duplicate the labels on the following page (also available on *The Postal Record* page of the NALC website) and attach one to each copy of each entry. Submissions that do not comply with these directions will be disqualified. Each entry must be clipped or photocopied from your publication and, if smaller than 8½ x 11 inches, taped onto a full-size sheet of paper. Entries will not be returned. Entries will be judged in the following categories:

Overall Excellence: This category recognizes publications that best serve the membership. Judges will consider content (appropriate and original articles, useful information, local angles), style (clear writing, effective headlines, good story placement) and overall appearance (readability, attractiveness, use of photos and art).

Judging will be based on three publication issues you choose to submit; please note that you must send two copies of each issue. Each copy must have a completed "Overall Excellence" label attached.

Publications will compete in the subcategories of 1) large branches and state associations and 2) small branches. Large branches are defined as having 500 or more members, but the judges may alter that threshold to create a balanced number of entries in both categories.

Best Editorial or Column: This category is for opinion pieces such as editorials or columns by union officers or editors. The judges will consider such factors as the author's effectiveness in putting forth their point of view and insight into the topic. Each branch or state may submit up to three editorials or columns. Send two copies of each entry.

Best News or Feature Story: This category is for reports on topics important to letter carriers and for features on branch or member activities; do not submit columns or other opinion pieces here. Judges will weigh choice of topic, factual reporting and clear writing. Each branch or state association may submit up to three news or feature articles. Send two copies of each entry.

Best Cartoon or Photo: Each branch may submit any combination of up to three cartoons, photos or illustrations created by members of that branch. Cartoons will be judged on relevance, technique and how well they convey their point. Photos and illustrations will be judged on interest, impact and quality. Send two copies of each entry.

Promoting Unionism: The special award for the Promoting Unionism category includes, but is not limited to,

articles or photo treatments that raise members' awareness of and activism in the labor movement. The judges will look for attention-grabbing entries that promote pride in labor and involve carriers more deeply in NALC. Each branch or state association may submit up to three entries. Send two copies of each entry.

Best Website: This category recognizes websites that best serve the

membership. Judges will consider relevance of content, overall appearance and timeliness of information. Blogs, Facebook pages and X (formerly known as Twitter) or Instagram feeds may be submitted as well. Please print out the web address of the site onto two 8½ x 11-inch pieces of paper and attach the "Best Website" label to each. Send two copies of the entry. **PR**

**2024 NALC Publication Contest Entry
OVERALL EXCELLENCE**

Number of members in branch: _____
 Branch no. or state name: _____
 Located in city, state: _____

 Name, title and phone number of person submitting:

**2024 NALC Publication Contest Entry BEST
NEWS or FEATURE STORY**

Name of author: _____
 Name of publication: _____
 Month and year of issue: _____
 Branch no. or state name: _____
 Located in city, state: _____
 Name, title and phone number of person submitting:

**2024 NALC Publication Contest Entry
BEST EDITORIAL or COLUMN**

Name of author: _____
 Name of publication: _____
 Month and year of issue: _____
 Branch no. or state name: _____
 Located in city, state: _____
 Name, title and phone number of person submitting:

**2024 NALC Publication Contest Entry
BEST CARTOON or PHOTO**

Name of artist or photographer (must belong to your branch): _____
 Name of publication: _____
 Month and year of issue: _____
 Branch no. or state name: _____
 Located in city, state: _____
 Name, title and phone number of person submitting:

**2024 NALC Publication Contest Entry
PROMOTING UNIONISM**

Name of creator: _____
 Name of publication: _____
 Month and year of issue: _____
 Branch no. or state name: _____
 Located in city, state: _____
 Name, title and phone number of person submitting:

**2024 NALC Publication Contest Entry
BEST WEBSITE**

Number of members in branch: _____
 Branch no. or state name: _____
 Located in city, state: _____

 Name, title and phone number of person submitting:

Checklist for entries

- Submit two copies of every entry in the print categories. A copy may be clipped from the publication and taped to a sheet of 8½ x 11 inch paper, or it may be a page from the publication (or a photocopy of that page) with everything but the entry crossed out.
- Attach a completed label to each of the two copies of every entry. Please type or print clearly. For example: If a publication decides to enter one editorial and two columns in the "Best Editorial or Column" category, it must provide two copies of the editorial and two copies of each of the two columns, and it must affix a completed "Best Editorial or Column" label to each of these six items. Entries that don't comply with these rules will be disqualified.
- Submissions must be received by **April 1** at the following address: Publications Competition, NALC, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144.

Article 15—Interpretive Step



**Paul
Barner**

Article 15 of the National Agreement provides the structure for grievance-arbitration procedures that are negotiated by the parties to resolve disputes. In my November and December 2023 *Postal Record* articles, I reviewed and provided updates to Step B and regional arbitration levels of the process. Now, with this article, I will provide a review and update of the interpretive dispute level.

Interpretive disputes

Article 15.3.F of the National Agreement provides the process by which interpretive disputes are handled:

F. It is agreed that in the event of a dispute between the Union and the Employer as to the interpretation of this Agreement, such dispute may be initiated at the national level by the President of the Union. Such a dispute shall be initiated in writing and must specify in detail the facts giving rise to the dispute, the precise interpretive issues to be decided and the contention of the Union. Thereafter the parties shall meet at the interpretive step within thirty (30) days in an effort to define the precise issues involved, develop all necessary facts, and reach agreement. Should they fail to agree, then, within fifteen (15) days of such meeting, each party shall provide the other with a statement in writing of its understanding of the issues involved, and the facts giving rise to such issues. In the event the parties have failed to reach agreement within sixty (60) days of the initiation of the dispute at the interpretive step, the Union then may appeal it to arbitration, within thirty (30) days thereafter.

Currently, there are five cases pending at the national level as interpretive disputes. Once an issue commences at the interpretive step, all grievances pertaining to that issue are placed on hold in the grievance process pending resolution of the interpretive issue. These cases are identified below with a brief synopsis of the core interpretive dispute being advanced:

- **Q11N-4Q-J-16655901:** In this interpretative dispute, the responsibility for collection boxes was converted from city delivery to rural delivery. The Postal Service framed the interpretive issue as whether a jurisdictional dispute initiated by NALC that concerns work assigned or being assigned to rural letter carriers may be appealed to arbitration pursuant to Article 15.4 of the USPS/NALC collective-bargaining agreement.

- **Q06N-4Q-C-12180373:** This interpretive dispute arose from a disagreement over when the Oct. 22, 2008, memorandum of understanding (MOU) Re: Assignment of City Delivery expired. The Postal Service took the position that this MOU expired at midnight on Nov. 20, 2011. NALC believes that the Assignment of City Delivery MOU did not expire until the interest arbitration decision known as the “Das award” was issued on Jan. 10, 2013.
- **Q06N-4Q-C-09038600:** This interpretive dispute came about from issues related to implementation of, and compliance with, the MOU Re: Article 32 Committee and the MOU Re: Subcontracting. These MOUs were implemented on Sept. 11, 2007, and placed additional prohibitions on contracting city letter carrier work.
- **Q06N-4Q-C-11377406:** This case was a product of a test conducted by USPS, referred to as the “caser-streeter” program. The test involved restructured city letter carrier assignments by separating the office of a delivery unit’s casing and associated duties from street duties for a six-month period in about 60 sites around the country. The interpretive issue concerning the program is whether the Postal Service may suspend compliance with the National Agreement under the guise of conducting a test. This test was similar, but not identical, to the recent consolidated casing test.
- **6X19-N-6X-C-23276415:** This case concerns the failure of the Postal Service to adequately protect access to employees’ electronic payroll information. As a result, many employees who were enrolled in direct deposit via PostalEase fell victim to a criminal attack on LiteBlue. It resulted in city letter carriers and other postal employees’ wages being diverted and stolen. Prior to the attack, the Postal Service had failed to employ basic security protocols to prevent unauthorized access of employee accounts. In particular, it failed to implement multifactor authentication (MFA), among other available security measures for employees wishing to log into the LiteBlue website. MFA is required by the Handbook AS-805, *Information Security*, which was updated in June 2021. This PostalEase case is scheduled to be heard at national arbitration before Arbitrator Dennis Nolan this month, on Jan. 23 and 24.

As always, NALC will provide updates on any future developments regarding these cases, as well as any additional interpretive disputes that may arise. Here’s wishing you a happy and healthy 2024.

Resolve to be more active in your branch



James D. Henry

Every January, nearly everyone we know makes New Year's resolutions. We resolve to eat better, exercise more, get organized, spend less money and so on. Unfortunately, we often abandon our resolutions. I find that, in general, we lose our motivation both to get started and to see the resolutions through all the way. Adjusting and adapting to accommodate our new additional goals is vital. Including our families can help us stay motivated to accomplish our short- and long-term goals.

For those of you who are not deeply immersed in union functions, I want you to consider getting more involved this year. Consider attending all branch meetings and bringing someone along with you. Let that be one of your New Year's resolutions. We all have very valid reasons as to why our participation and involvement in union functions may not be as much as we desire. Often there are competing interests, such as our family priorities, long hours at work, exhaustion, etc. However, the world still spins, and the business of the union still must be conducted.

The business of the NALC is accomplished only by the involvement and participation of its members. You, the members, are the union! There has been a decline in branch meeting attendance for years now. Unfortunately, COVID-19 caused an even further decline, and we've yet to fully rebound. It is important to encourage one another to be resolute and steadfast in our activism.

When you're trying to change your behavior, one helpful tool is to set small targets that help you monitor your progress. Instead of approaching this year with "I will make every branch meeting and function," have a made-up mind to attend every general membership meeting and function in support by the union for that month. Then restart each month's goal over with the next month, and before you know it, you're quite active in the union. Looking back at what you've done reaffirms your commitment. If you're already committed, you'll want to make more progress when you look ahead.

I've found that the ideal scenario for getting involved is to have someone alongside you who wants to see you succeed in meeting your goals. I entered into the USPS di-

rectly out of active-duty military service for the Marine Corps where there wasn't a union. Therefore, when I became a letter carrier, I wasn't sufficiently aware of the importance of unions and the necessity of active involvement. As such, I wasn't inspired to attend branch meetings, become a shop steward or participate in branch functions, because I hadn't seen unions on television and had no common knowledge of them. So, when I was asked by my then-shop steward "Andy" Andranegian to accompany him to a union meeting, I was moved in a way I wouldn't have been otherwise. The

"For those of you who are not deeply immersed in union functions, I want you to consider getting more involved this year. Consider attending all branch meetings and bringing someone along with you. Let that be one of your New Year's resolutions."

comradery and sense of purpose and belonging manifested itself in a profound way. Ultimately, I not only made it a New Year's resolution, but a career resolution, to be an active member of the NALC. Now, I've even made it a life resolution.

Most, if not all of us, want to know what our union is doing for its members. How is it working to our advantage? What is the latest in contract negotiations? When will the Next Generation Delivery Vehicles arrive? And many other questions abound. A means to find the answers is to commit to participating in union functions and regularly attending branch meetings to be further informed. Information is the resolution to uncertainty!

*Happy
New Year*

image: freepik.com

Reporting to the DOL: Forms LM-2, LM-3 and LM-4



**Nicole
Rhine**

Unless your branch has no annual income or financial activity, you must file with the Office of Labor-Management Standards (OLMS) one of three types of financial reports, depending upon the total annual receipts of the branch. The Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRDA) requires unions to file the report within 90 days after the branch's (or state association's) fiscal year. Most branches' fiscal years end on Dec. 31, so most should be filing by March 30 each year. As a reminder, 2024 is a leap year. Branch presidents and treasurers

are responsible for ensuring that the required reports are filed timely and accurately. The LMRDA does not provide for or permit an extension of time for filing for any reason.

The filing requirements are:

- **Form LM-2**—Lengthy report filed electronically by branches with \$250,000 or more in annual receipts.
- **Form LM-3**—Four-page report filed electronically by branches with total annual receipts of at least \$10,000 but less than \$250,000.
- **Form LM-4**—Two-page report filed electronically by branches with annual financial receipts of less than \$10,000.

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

Willfully failing to file a report or to keep required records can lead to criminal penalties—specifically a fine of not more than \$100,000, imprisonment for not more than one year, or both. Knowingly making a false statement or representation of a material fact or knowingly failing to disclose a material fact in a report or other required document; and/or willfully making a

false entry in, or withholding, concealing or destroying documents required to be kept, might result in the same penalties listed above.

As a reminder, since 2005, the OLMS has required labor organizations to submit Form LM-2 electronically. OLMS also requires all filers to file electronically. This new rule, for all filers, is applicable to fiscal years beginning on or after Jan. 1, 2017.

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

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

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

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

New responsibilities



**Mack I.
Julion**

This past year has really been quite a transition for me. Obviously, relocating and acclimating to life in Washington DC, and the East Coast has not been easy—6 a.m. still comes too early for me here. But the real learning curve was making adjustments with new and different responsibilities as a resident national officer of the NALC.

Understand that for the past 13 years as president of Branch 11 in Chicago, everything was like clockwork. It had become relatively “easy,” because not only did I know where everything was, I put it there. Successfully navigating the needs of the branch and

my members while fighting management was second nature. But now as your assistant secretary-treasurer, my duties are quite different. Yet the core remains the same—the representation of city letter carriers. I use this example of my journey over the past year to illustrate the profound challenges facing those of you who will be assuming new responsibilities this year in your elected or appointed roles within your respective branches.

Let me first say congratulations, and always remember this is what *you* asked for; now put on your seat belt because you may be in for a heck of a ride! This is the very reason Secretary-Treasurer Nicole Rhine puts together officers training courses two or three times a year. There is always someone who needs initial or refresher training as officers of our branches and state associations.

One of the more relevant training sessions, aside from those involving fiduciary responsibilities, is identifying the basics needs of new officers in the class, aptly titled “I’ve just been elected, now what?” Unfortunately, there is so much to take in from what we present in that class that there isn’t space to thoroughly go over the whole presentation here. So, I want to focus on a few things from this class that the newly elected officers should be mindful of, especially the branch presidents and secretaries.

We all like to see outgoing officers remain true to their oath to facilitate an orderly transfer of power, but we know that is not always the case. Too often the newly elected do not have any cooperation or assistance from the prior administration. With that in mind, let’s look at

some of the things that we need to consider when we take on the duties of our newly elected positions.

What do the *Constitution* and branch bylaws say about your new position and responsibilities?

Particularly at the branch level, a lot of us first run for positions with pre-conceived notions of all the things we will do differently. Some of us come in as masters of the national and local agreements and thus are effective at dealing with management. This may propel us into the office, and we feel like we can come in and instantly make changes, but those changes might be in direct conflict with the branch bylaws. That’s why it is so important to become familiar with your bylaws and the *NALC Constitution*, to understand the parameters of what you can and can’t do. Your bylaws can contain everything from the official name and objective of a branch to the order of business in general membership meetings. The bylaws outline the duties of the officers, the terms of office and when they are elected. It also offers the guidelines of how and when money is spent. Trust me, all of this is important to know, especially if you are the president, secretary or treasurer.

What records does the branch have and where are they kept?

This is a loaded question and can encompass so much. Depending on the size of the branch, there may be a multitude of records with different timelines for retention. Let’s just start with the basic grievance files and information pertaining to the membership. There is a level of confidentiality that needs to be protected, as well as a responsibility of representation with pertinent grievance files. Then there are the tax records (IRS), Department of Labor LM reports, employment records (stewards and officers are branch employees), bills and, of course, the number of documents and records can increase exponentially if there is property owned or leased by a branch. There also are records involving labor-management meetings, LMOU negotiations as well as records that include the charter of the branch, the minutes of its meetings and the history of its officers and bylaws. Then there are the more immediate and tangible items such as credit cards and bank records, the signing over of the responsibility for these accounts and any other possessions of the branch.

Yes, the new year brings a new beginning, as well as new responsibilities. If any new or existing officers need assistance, don’t hesitate to reach out to your national business agent and national officers. Good luck—you can do it!

New career orientation and MDD-TR updates



**Christopher
Jackson**

First, I want to wish you and your families a belated merry Christmas and a happy new year. I truly hope this month's edition finds you in good health.

As 2023 closed, I held several discussions with the Postal Service regarding orientation for newly converted career letter carriers. I've found that many of our newly converted carriers are not receiving the benefit of this important orientation. I want to touch on this topic and share details on the latest update to the Mobile Delivery Device-Technical Refresh (MDD-TR).

It's important to clear up any confusion about letter carrier orientation. Newly hired letter carriers take part in

a training program consisting of five phases: orientation, driver training, shadow day, Carrier Academy and on-the-job training. This orientation introduces the Postal Service to its new hires. The Postal Service often schedules newly hired career letter carriers, such as part-time flexible carriers (PTFs), to attend this same initial hiring orientation with newly hired non-career letter carriers, such as city carrier assistants (CCAs). The orientation is composed of eight chapters, or "modules," and covers many subjects, such as postal history, employee conduct, safety and employee resources.

The eighth and final module of the orientation focuses on career employee benefits. Because non-career carriers are not entitled to the same benefits as career carriers, the Postal Service will temporarily excuse non-career carriers at the end of Module 7 and continue their discussion with career carriers in Module 8. Non-career carriers are allowed to resume the orientation for a Q&A session after career employee benefits have been reviewed.

Chapter 7 of the Postal Service's *Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM)* covers training and development. Section 715.2 states:

Postal Orientation

An orientation program is required at all levels for new career employees on their first day of official duty.

Since non-career employees are not permitted to review career employee benefits when they attend their initial hiring orientation, it is vital that they attend the orientation required by *ELM* Section 715.2 on the first day of their official duty as a career carrier. It is during this orientation that they can review all of the new benefits they are now eligible for with the Postal Service, including annual leave, the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program, Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), Federal

Employee Group Life Insurance (FGLI) and flexible spending accounts (FSAs). Enrollment in these programs can be time sensitive, which adds to the importance of participation in the orientation on the first day of a carrier's career appointment.

If you have recently been converted to a career carrier position and local management failed to provide you with an orientation on the first day of your career appointment, request to speak with your shop steward or branch officer and request that a grievance be filed on your behalf.

MDD-TR software version 7.85

In November, the Postal Service shared the latest update to the MDD-TR, release 7.85. The update includes several enhancements affecting city carriers.

One enhancement to the MDD-TR focuses on the delivery of 3811 Return Receipts or "green cards" associated with some Certified Mail items. USPS states that many of these items are mishandled, resulting in excessive refunds for failure to provide the requested service.

With the latest update, the MDD-TR now displays a "Return Receipt Pending" or "RR Pend" icon informing a carrier when they have 3811 Return Receipts for delivery. The icon lists the total number of 3811s the carrier has for the day and, as pieces are delivered or attempted, the remaining total changes to reflect the amount left pending. A geofence alert from the MDD-TR notifies carriers as they approach a delivery point for a 3811. A new "Return Receipt Incomplete" or "RR Incomp" icon will appear on the scanner once the geofence for the delivery point has been broken. This icon lists the number of 3811s for the address and will remain until a delivery attempt has been completed.

This update also includes a "Return Receipt Lookahead" feature, which displays the list of addresses receiving return receipts for the route assignment.

Another feature of release 7.85 is an enhancement to the existing eArrow Lock application. The eArrow Lock application is active only on some MDD-TR devices across the country. The application is specifically used to operate and open eArrow Locks that have been installed on mail receptacles in certain areas. USPS states that the eArrow Locks are an added measure of protection against mail theft. The eArrow lock application is updated to provide a user interface (UI) that feature illustrations to notify the user when each step of the process in opening an eArrow Lock has been completed. The new illustrations work together with audible chimes previously included in the application. USPS states that the new interface will be especially beneficial to carriers with hearing disabilities.

I will continue to provide information on these important topics to the membership. Be sure to read my column each month and visit nal.org for the latest updates. I want to thank all letter carriers for the hard work and excellent service you provided to our customers through another tough peak season.

Investigating accidents Finding the true cause



**Manuel L.
Peralta Jr.**

Last month I addressed the subject of retaliation against an employee who reports an injury. If you have not reviewed that column, I encourage you to do so. Please take the necessary steps to protect employees who are unjustly disciplined for reporting an accident or injury.

Why is accident reporting so important? If an accident that led to an injury is not reported, the source of that incident is never discovered. To prevent management from learning of the event, the employee might also end up shouldering medical care costs, in turn losing out on benefits provided in their contract. If the injury results in a long-term or permanent impairment, and no OWCP claim was filed, wage-loss benefits and limited duty (*Employee and Labor Relations Manual*, Section 546.142) might not be available to the employee.

If the event is not properly investigated, the hazard waits for the next unsuspecting victim. The decision not to report the injury leaves the possibility of the hazard causing others' serious injury or death. How would you feel if your lack of reporting resulted in someone's injury or death?

When you suffer an injury, you should immediately report it to management and get the necessary medical care. Once the accident is reported, OSHA regulations and our contract (through Article 19) require management to investigate to find the true cause of the injury.

The relevant OSHA regulations are found in 29 CFR §1960.29 which provide as follows:

1960.29(a): While all accidents should be investigated, including accidents involving property damage only, the extent of such investigation shall be reflective of the seriousness of the accident.

1960.29(b): In any case, each accident which results in a fatality or the hospitalization of three or more employees shall be investigated to determine the causal factors involved. Except to the extent necessary to protect employees and the public, evidence at the scene of an accident shall be left untouched until inspectors have an opportunity to examine it.

1960.29(c): Any information or evidence uncovered during accident investigations which would be of benefit in developing a new OSHA standard or in modifying or revoking an existing standard should be promptly transmitted to the Secretary.

1960.29(d) The investigative report of the accident shall include appropriate documentation on date, time, location, de-

scription of operations, description of accident, photographs, interviews of employees and witnesses, measurements and other pertinent information. A copy of the investigative report required by this section shall be forwarded to the official in charge of the workplace, the appropriate safety and health committee and the exclusive employee representative, if any. The investigative report shall be made available to the Secretary or his authorized representative on request.

In addition to the above obligations, OSHA has an incident investigation recommendation found at <https://www.osha.gov/incidentinvestigation>, which provides the following:

Investigating a worksite incident—a fatality, injury, illness or close call—provides employers and workers the opportunity to identify hazards in their operations and shortcomings in their safety and health programs. Most importantly, it enables employers and workers to identify and implement the corrective actions necessary to prevent future incidents.

Incident investigations that focus on identifying and correcting root causes, not on finding fault or blame, also improve workplace morale and increase productivity, by demonstrating an employer's commitment to a safe and healthy workplace. (emphasis added)

Incident investigations are often conducted by a supervisor, but to be most effective, these investigations should include managers and employees working together, since each bring different knowledge, understanding and perspectives to the investigation.

In addition to the OSHA requirements and recommendations, management has codified its obligations in the *ELM* at Section 821.3, which in part states:

...Accident analysis is vital for identifying the hazardous conditions, contributing factors and root causes of accidents...Installation heads/managers must use the results of accident analyses to address the causes of accidents, develop specific actions (countermeasures) and enter them into an accident reduction plan (ARP)...

Section 821.33 explains the process of conducting an "accident analysis" listing a number of factors that include the following:

- a. Specific tasks being performed at the time of the accident or injury.
- b. Operations, equipment, tools and machinery involved.
- c. Specific event that resulted in the accident or injury.
- d. Nature and severity of the injury.
- e. Part(s) of the body involved.
- f. Incidence and nature of the following:
 - (1) Faulty equipment or design.
 - (2) Unsafe condition(s).
 - (3) Unsafe acts or practices.
 - (4) Violation of rules, procedures or instructions.
 - (5) Inadequate training or lack of safety rules or procedure

Let's help make the workplace safer by finding out why an incident happened without blaming the victim.
To be continued.

Retirement by the numbers



Dan Toth

With another year in the books, it's a good time to reflect on the past and look forward to the future. Let's first recognize our long-serving active Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) employees. There are approximately 1,500 CSRS carriers still in our craft, or about 0.76 percent.

Because the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) became effective Jan. 1, 1984, and given that there have been no new CSRS employees since then, every CSRS employee has nearly maxed out their annuity. The maximum CSRS annuity is 80 percent of the high-3 average salary, which is achieved

with 41 years and 11 months of creditable service. An exception is that unused sick leave at retirement will be credited and can exceed the 80 percent limit.

The CSRS annuity estimates for maxed-out carriers who are retiring Feb. 1 is a monthly basic annuity of \$4,800, or about \$57,600 per year. This estimate is before any deductions, including a survivor benefit reduction.

Over the years, the number of retirement columns directly addressing CSRS specific items has declined. This has generally been because the number of active CSRS employees has declined while the number of FERS employees has increased. While that may be the case, all employees should know that the Retirement Department remains a steadfast resource to all members in need of assistance. As usual, the Retirement Department can be reached by calling 800-424-5186 (toll free) Monday, Wednesday and Thursday 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Eastern time or by calling the NALC Headquarters switchboard at 202-393-4695 and asking for the Retirement Department.

Additionally, the publication *Questions and Answers on the Civil Service Retirement System* can be obtained on the NALC website under "Workplace Issues" and then "Retirement." Hard copies may be available through your national business agent's office and at retirement seminars. This remains a valuable resource with more than 180 common questions and answers.

Switching over to FERS, we have 171,000 active employees. Within FERS, there are three sub-classifications based on initial career hire date. There are

67,000 FERS employees hired prior to 2013 who pay 0.8 percent of their basic pay. Revised annuity employees (FERS-RAE) were hired in 2013 and pay 3.1 percent of their basic pay. FERS-RAE make up a small portion of the membership at 1,600 employees. The largest group of 102,000, who were hired after 2013, are further revised annuity employees (FERS-FRAE), who pay 4.4 percent of their basic pay. Although the three types of FERS employees have different contribution levels, they all receive the same benefits.

Another issue, which disproportionately affects newer carriers, is the inability to make a deposit for non-career service after 1988. The Federal Retirement Fairness Act (H.R. 4268) would fix that by modifying the law to allow employees to buy back non-career federal service after 1988 and therefore make that service creditable. This is an important piece of legislation to recognize the non-career service that a majority of our members have undertaken, sometimes for years.

While the newest CSRS employees are maxing out, the earliest FERS employees have started to surpass 40 years of service and are likely approaching age 62 or beyond. The most recent FERS annuity estimate for FERS carriers who retire on Feb. 1, with 40 years, is a basic annuity of \$2,400 per month, or \$28,800 per year.

These estimates are for employees retiring before age 62. However, FERS employees with more than 20 years of service retiring at age 62 or later will have their annuity computed with a factor of 1.1 percent per year rather than the default factor of 1 percent. This change to the factor increases the annuity by 10 percent and is permanent. Generally, the closer one gets to age 62, the more beneficial it becomes to wait until age 62 versus retiring prior to age 62 and receiving the Special Annuity Supplement (which ends at age 62).

Unlike CSRS, FERS has no maximum annuity. Each month and year of service will continue to increase the annuity proportionately.

Although many unions don't allow their retirees to remain members, the NALC is proud to do so and has more than 88,000 retired members. Our union is stronger because of each and every one of them. We should especially recognize the 24,000 who are life members with 50 years or more of membership.

To all the active employees, I look forward to your ascension into the ranks of the retired and eventually into a lifetime membership. Here's to another fruitful year of employment, or retirement, to everyone.

Retirement savings plan settlement options



**James W.
“Jim” Yates**

More than 6,200 active and retired letter carriers and their families participate in the United States Letter Carriers Mutual Benefit Association’s (MBA) retirement savings plans (RSP). RSPs are available as traditional individual retirement accounts (IRAs), Roth IRAs, and non-qualified deferred annuity policies.

Both career and non-career letter carriers and their family members use these plans to prepare for a secure financial future. By making contributions while they are employed, they will receive a lifetime of benefits during their retirement years.

As explained in my December 2023 article, the trustees meet each year in December to determine the interest rates for the upcoming year. For 2024, the interest rate will be 3.25 percent for all new accounts and those issued on Form 860 (2015 or newer). This is an increase from 2.80 percent. Your interest rate will remain in effect for 12 months from the time your account is opened, then it will re-rate to the current year’s percentage. The interest rates for all other accounts are unchanged from 2023.

The MBA RSPs provide many settlement options when it is time to start receiving benefits from the policy. The benefit amount will depend upon the age of the annuitant, the amount of money in the plan and the specific option chosen.

The following settlement options are outlined in the MBA RSP policies; however, the MBA may allow other settlement options requested by the annuitant:

- **Life annuity:** Monthly payments will be made to the annuitant as long as they are alive. No further benefits will be paid after the date of the annuitant’s death.
- **Life annuity with five, 10, 15 or 20 year period certain:** Monthly payments will be made for a specified period of five, 10, 15 or 20 years and will continue after the expiration of the specified period as long as the annuitant is alive. If the annuitant dies during the specified period, monthly payments will continue until the end of the period to the beneficiary designated in the supplemental contract.

- **Joint life annuity:** Monthly payments will be made during the joint lifetimes of two annuitants and after the death of one annuitant during the lifetime of the surviving annuitant. The amount of the monthly payments is determined by the ages of the annuitants on the date the supplemental contract is effective.
- **Full cash refund annuity:** Monthly payments will be made as long as the annuitant is alive. At the death of the annuitant, we will pay to the annuitant’s beneficiary the remaining proceeds of the policy.

At the time of choosing a settlement option, some letter carriers decide to forego taking a payment for the rest of their lives, and instead chose a specific dollar amount to be paid each month or a specific number of months (or years) to be paid a monthly benefit. For these options, the annuitant will receive a monthly check for the designated period of time. Upon receiving the full benefits outlined in the supplemental contract, the benefits end.

The RSP settlement options are available to the policy owner at any time. However, any funds distributed from a RSP prior to age 59½ will be subject to an early withdrawal penalty from the IRS.

As life circumstances can change, the choice of a RSP settlement option is not made until the time the policy owner wishes to start receiving the benefits. Prior to the maturity date of a RSP (as defined in each MBA policy), the MBA will send a letter to the policy owner stating the date of maturity. The letter will explain all of the settlement options available.

When a settlement option has been chosen and the monthly benefits begin, the option may not be changed. Therefore, when considering choosing a settlement option, contact the MBA executive office and ask for a list of the monthly benefit amounts that you would receive under each settlement option. Our knowledgeable representatives can provide you with the information to make an informed decision about your supplemental contract payments.

MBA’s retirement savings plans are excellent choices for adding to retirement planning for letter carriers and their families. These plans are not intended for short-term savings. The earlier you begin saving through your MBA RSP, the more money you will have for your retirement years!

For more information about the MBA RSP or 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 time. You also can visit our website at nalc.org/mba.

SilverScript Prescription Drug Program explained



**Stephanie
Stewart**

Over the last few weeks, I have received an overwhelming response regarding the NALC Health Benefit Plan's new High Option SilverScript Prescription Drug Program added into the 2024 benefit package for Medicare-enrolled members.

Unfortunately, many are uncertain about the change, have received inaccurate information, or have heard false rumors about the NALC's SilverScript program. For those reasons, I have decided to dedicate this article to clearing up those misconceptions and talk about why you should consider staying in the SilverScript

Program for your prescription needs.

Let's start with a few misconceptions. One of the biggest misunderstandings is that prescription medications will cost more, which caused many members to immediately opt out. The truth is, when enrolled in the SilverScript Program, your prescription costs are guaranteed to be the same, and in some cases will be even lower through this program. The NALC has ensured that members will never see a higher cost share.

Another misconception regards the opt-in or opt-out opportunities. Participation in SilverScript is voluntary and you have the choice to opt out at any time. If you have chosen to opt out but feel differently after reading this article, you can also opt in at any time. Our process is not tied to Open Season or Medicare enrollment periods.

To re-enroll in the program, please call NALC Health Benefit Plan Customer Service to request an enrollment form or visit nalchbp.org to download a copy of the form. Once completed, the form will need to be returned to the Plan at 20547 Waverly Court, Ashburn, VA 20149, or uploaded through our member portal. It is important to note that after the form is received, it might take approximately six weeks for the process to be finalized and your enrollment to become effective.

Now let's talk about how this program will do even more to put money back in your pocket. When you and eligible dependents participate in SilverScript, you are eligible for up to \$600 in a tax-free Medicare Part B reimbursement. The money will be held in a Medicare Part B reimbursement account (MRA) and the process to get this money was designed to be simple.

First, you will need to register online for this account at healthequity.com/wageworks. Once there, you will select "LOG IN/REGISTER" and then "Employee Registration." You then answer a few simple questions and create a username and password.

Here are some important reminders:

1. Each eligible participant will have their own HealthEquity account.
2. Only Medicare Part B premiums paid by you, the owner of the account, are eligible for reimbursement.
3. Make sure to update your account preference and personal information if you have future changes.
4. Set up direct deposit or designate "check" to identify the method to receive your reimbursement.

Once everything is created, you will need to provide proof of the Medicare Part B premium expense through the online portal or by fax or mail. Proof can be provided by submitting a canceled check, a credit card statement showing payment, a bank statement or the yearly Social Security statement indicating your Medicare Part B premium.

With this program, you will receive a prescription Identification card. This should be used at the pharmacy. Your Medicare Parts A and B card and current NALC High Option identification card should continue to be used when visiting a provider's office or receiving medical care.

Finally, is there a reason not to participate in this program? To keep things simple, here's the most common question for you to consider: Do I combine my current prescription health insurance with any prescription drug discount cards or coupons?

If so, you should review the savings those discounts give you. Medicare Part D does not allow you to use discount coupons. If these save you more than \$600 a year, and you cannot change medications, you will want to opt out of the SilverScript program to continue to use them.

Although there are many positives to SilverScript, we do understand that participation is a personal decision. The Plan makes decisions with the needs of our members in mind, and this is why we created our SilverScript program. We customized our program to ensure a financial benefit to our members, but we also will continue to look for other ways to reduce the overall costs of enrolling in Medicare. With that, we hope that our members take advantage of the benefit and savings we have created.

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

Back-pay compensation— PS Forms 8038 and 8039

Letter carriers are entitled to “back-pay compensation” when grievance settlements and arbitration decisions reverse or amend personnel actions taken by the Postal Service or to make an employee whole for work improperly denied. If you are unfamiliar, the process for recovering this back pay can be complicated and confusing. This month’s Contract Talk will summarize the back-pay process, Postal Service rules regarding back pay and the necessary forms.

Section 436 of the *Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM)* governs back pay and the processing of back-pay claims. The *ELM* defines this action as a “Corrective entitlement.” *ELM* Section 436.1 states:

An employee or former employee is entitled to receive back pay for the period during which an unjustified or unwarranted personnel action was in effect that terminated or reduced the basic compensation, allowances, differentials, and employment benefits that the employee normally would have earned during the period.

For purposes of entitlement to employment benefits, the employee is considered as having rendered service for the period during which the unjustified or unwarranted personnel action was in effect.

Management Instruction (MI) EL-430-2017-6, Back Pay explains that back-pay compensation can be awarded to letter carriers in two forms—in a lump sum or calculation of the number of hours worked. A lump sum is back-pay compensation in the form of a single payment of a known amount of money. A lump-sum award does not affect the compensation history used by the Office of Personnel Management to calculate retirement annuities or other employment-related benefits, such as sick or annual leave, health or life insurance or Thrift Savings Plan participation. A back-pay lump-sum award is always subject to federal, state and local income tax withholding and Social Security and Medicare deductions, where applicable. Lump-sum payments differ from make-whole awards in that make-whole awards require recalculation of employment-related benefits along with hours that the employee would have normally worked.

Per-hour calculations are based on a hypothetical schedule that the claimant would have worked if not for the personnel action that was subsequently reversed or the retirement action that was denied.

In some cases, the process for recovering back pay can be simple. According to *MI EL-430-2017-6*, grievance settlements and arbitration decisions that award specified amount lump-sum payments or less than

one full pay period of lost earnings calculation of hours in which there is no directive to make whole, do not require the employee to complete any forms or provide documentation. These awards are processed by management through the Grievance Arbitration Tracking System and can be completed relatively quickly.

However, employees and union representatives should make note of the amount of accrued leave without pay (LWOP) the employee has on record. For every 80 hours of LWOP, the employee will lose annual leave—four, six or eight hours—so a lump-sum payment should be avoided. Further, excessive LWOP not corrected through back pay may affect retirement calculations.

Grievance settlements or arbitration decisions that require tabulation of the number and type of pay hours can be more complicated and require additional steps. In these circumstances, the employee will be required to complete and sign a PS Form 8038, Employee Statement to Recover Back Pay and management must complete the companion PS Form 8039, Back Pay Decision/Settlement Worksheet.

ELM Section 436.2 provides for offsetting back pay by a reduction equal to outside earnings during the period of non-work. Section 436.2 states:

Any amount that the employee earned in new employment or in an enlarged part-time employment to replace Postal Service employment must be determined and offset against the amount of the reimbursement to which he or she would be entitled.

An employee who files an appeal challenging a personnel action involving separation, indefinite suspension or denial of employment is required to mitigate damages during the period necessary to adjudicate their appeal.

If the original action, prior to grievance settlement or award of an arbitrator, resulted in separation or suspension of 45 days or less, the employee is not required to certify or provide documentation to support efforts to secure other employment. For periods in excess of 45 days, up to six months, the employee must provide a statement certifying the reasons why they did not secure other employment for the period beyond the first 45 days. If the period of separation or suspension was more than six months, then the employee must provide documentation certifying their efforts to obtain other employment. These requirements are found in *ELM* Section 436.42, d.

(continued on next page)

Back-pay compensation (continued)

(Continued from previous page)

There is an exception to this rule. Preference-eligible veterans pursuing an administrative appeal with the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) are not required to make reasonable efforts to obtain employment.

PS Form 8038, Employee Statement to Recover Back Pay

Letter carriers who are required to complete and sign the PS Form 8038 should seek assistance from their local manager and union representative when completing the form. Section A – Employee Identification, contains basic employee information along with information identifying the employee’s work location and the USPS labor relations or human resource contact information. Section B – Statement Questions, contains information from the back pay period itself. This section includes information on outside employment, other income and health benefits enrollment or reinstatement, to name a few.

Letter carriers also must include on the PS Form 8038 any unemployment or workers’ compensation that was received during the back-pay period and attach supporting documentation for each. The amounts included will be offset from the final back-pay amount. Employees also might be entitled to substitute annual or sick leave for periods when they were not ready, willing or able to perform their Postal Service job. In addition, the PS Form 8038 provides options for enrollment or reinstatement of health benefits, partici-

pation in TSP, and payment of current postal indebtedness. Be mindful when completing the form to make sure everything is accurate. This will ensure that the back-pay compensation is calculated properly.

United States Postal Service®
Employee Statement To Recover Back Pay

INSTRUCTIONS: An employee may be eligible to receive payment of back pay following an unwarranted or unjustified personnel action if the employee was one of the following:
a. separated (except for erroneous separation due to optional retirement),
b. placed on leave without pay (LWOP) during indefinite suspension
c. denied Postal Service™ employment.

Before a back pay claim can be processed, an employee who satisfies one of the above conditions must also:
a. complete this form,
b. provide all required supporting documentation. Attach additional pages as necessary, noting on each attached page which question it relates to.

If you have questions concerning the completion of any part of this form, contact your local personnel office for assistance.

A - Employee Identification

Name (Last, first, MI)		Employee ID Number	Designation/Activity Code (DES-ACT)	
Address (Number, street, box, ste./apt. no.)				City
State	ZIP+4®	Telephone No. (include area code)	Current Position Title	Current Occupation Code
Back Pay Period: From (MM/DD/YYYY)		Back Pay Period: To (MM/DD/YYYY)	Employing Office Finance No.	Employing Office Telephone No. (include area code)
Employing Office Address (Number, street, box, ste./apt. no.)				City
State	ZIP+4	USPS® Labor Relations or Human Resources Contact		USPS Contact Telephone No. (include area code)

B - Statement Questions

Employment -- Questions 1 - 4

1. **Did you seek outside employment during the back pay period?** Yes No
Note: Preference eligibles requesting back pay under an MSPB decision are not required to seek outside employment.
If YES, you must furnish the information required below based on the type of personnel action and the length of the back pay period.

a. **SEPARATIONS AND INDEFINITE SUSPENSIONS.** If the back pay claim is for a period of separation or indefinite suspension and no outside employment was obtained for all or part of the back pay period, you must furnish the following:

- (1) If the back pay period is 45 days or less, you must answer questions 2, 5 and 6 on this form.
- (2) If the back pay period is more than 45 days but less than 6 months, you must provide a written explanation of the reasons outside employment was not obtained for all parts of the back pay period, except for the first 45 days.
- (3) If the back pay period is 6 months or more, you must provide detailed information concerning the efforts you made to obtain other employment for all parts of the back pay period, except for the first 45 days. Give the following information for EACH employer:

- (a) the date or approximate date the contact was made;
- (b) the business name, address, and telephone number;
- (c) whether the contact was in person, by telephone, or by mail;
- (d) the name of the person contacted or who conducted the interview;

(continued on Page 2)
PS Form 8038, January 2004 (Page 1 of 6)

PS Form 8039, Back Pay Decision/Settlement Worksheet

The PS Form 8039 is completed by management and is used in conjunction with the PS Form 8038 submitted by the employee to calculate the back-pay amount and corrections to employee benefits other than wages. These forms may be completed by local management or the back-pay coordinator designated by the district labor manager. The form includes general information about the employee, any disallowed periods and offset amounts, as well as hour tabulations for the back-pay period.

ELM Section 436.41 also requires local management to provide overtime averages, premium pay entitlement, step increases and other employment-related benefits information when completing the PS Form 8039. They also must use the responses provided by the employee on the PS Form 8038. Once the form is complete, all signatures must be obtained, including the employee's.

Always keep copies

Letter carriers always should keep copies of the PS Forms 8038 and 8039 along with all supporting documentation prior to submitting them to postal management. Be sure to make note of dates and to whom the forms are submitted. It also might be helpful to communicate this information and any changes in the status to the shop steward or branch officer assisting with the back-pay claim.

Management responsibilities

In addition to ELM Section 436, MI-EL-430-2017-6 details postal management's responsibilities in the back-pay compensation process. These responsibilities include providing the employee with the necessary forms and instructions.

(continued on next page)

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE		Back Pay Decision/Settlement Worksheet																
<p>INSTRUCTIONS: The applicable sections of this form, depending on the calculation method used (see ELM 436), must be completely filled out before the Minneapolis Accounting Service Center (ASC) can process this back pay claim. The employee must review and agree to the information provided on this form prior to submission to the ASC.</p> <p>Do not attach or forward any additional documentation supporting this claim, unless otherwise specified. ALL supporting documentation must be retained as a part of the back pay file at the final approval level.</p>																		
A. General Information (Must be completed)																		
1. Employee's Name		2. Address of Employing Office																
3a. Social Security Number	3b. Designation/Activity Code																	
4. Back Pay Period (From/to: month, day, year)		5. Finance Number																
6. Calculation Method (Check only one)																		
<input type="checkbox"/> Direct Calculation: (For separations, suspensions, and denial. Complete all sections.)		<input type="checkbox"/> Pay Differential: (Complete section H. Section E should also be completed if a salary progression is applicable.)																
<input type="checkbox"/> Indirect Calculation: (Complete section F. No benefits are affected unless specified in the decision. If such is the case, the appropriate data must be noted in sections D and H.)		<input type="checkbox"/> Erroneous Separation for Optional Retirement (Complete sections D, E, and G, and you must attach either: (a) a letter from OPM stating the amount of erroneous payments if an annuity has been paid; or (b) a copy of the employee's NARECS monthly annuity statement stating amount of erroneous payments if no annuity payments were received by the employee.)																
7a. Forum of Decision/Award or Settlement Agreement (Check only one)			7b. Date of Decision															
<input type="checkbox"/> Grievance (Steps 1 through 4) <input type="checkbox"/> MSPB <input type="checkbox"/> EEOC <input type="checkbox"/> Arbitration <input type="checkbox"/> OPM <input type="checkbox"/> Court <input type="checkbox"/> Other:																		
8. Was Interest EXPRESSLY AWARDED in the Decision/Award or Settlement Agreement?																		
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (Interest is computed after the award has been processed and is paid by separate check.) <input type="checkbox"/> No																		
NOTE: A copy of this form must be sent to the San Mateo ASC for the processing and payment of court costs and/or attorney fees.																		
9a. Were Court Costs Awarded?		10a. Were Attorney's Fees Awarded?																
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (Complete items 9b and 9c) <input type="checkbox"/> No		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (Complete items 10b and 10c) <input type="checkbox"/> No																
9b. Amount Awarded \$		10b. Amount of Fee \$																
9c. Name and Address of Payee		10c. Name and Address of Attorney																
B. Periods Disallowed																		
1. For Receipt of Worker's Compensation (Check only one)		2. For Failure to Seek Outside Employment (List dates below)																
<input type="checkbox"/> Full Compensation <input type="checkbox"/> Partial Compensation		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Date From</th> <th>Date To</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Date From		Date To												
Date From		Date To																
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Date From</th> <th>Date To</th> <th>Amount Received</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>\$</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>\$</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>\$</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Date From	Date To	Amount Received			\$			\$			\$					
Date From	Date To	Amount Received																
		\$																
		\$																
		\$																
PS Form 8039, November 1996 (Page 1 of 3)																		

Back-pay compensation (continued)

(Continued from previous page)

Management also must provide assistance to employees in obtaining information and completing required forms and documentation. The back-pay coordinator, who is also the certifying official, has the responsibility of reviewing and coordinating the back-pay claim process. The claim is then forwarded to the manager, labor relations, who has the responsibility of ensuring that all forms and documentation are complete and that claimants have satisfactorily mitigated damages as set forth in *ELM* 436.2. The manager, labor relations submits the required back-pay forms and documentation to the manager, human resources for final approval. Upon final approval of the employee's claim, the Human Resources Shared Services Center conducts final processing of the employee claim for wages and benefits adjustment.

Interest on back pay

In cases involving disciplinary suspension or removal, the national parties have agreed that the letter carrier is entitled to interest on the back-pay amount. This agreement has been memorialized in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Re: Interest on Back Pay, found on page 200 of the 2019-2023 National Agreement, states:

Where an arbitration award specifies that an employee is entitled to back pay in a case involving disciplinary suspension or removal, the Employer shall pay interest on

such back pay at the Federal Judgment Rate. This shall apply to cases heard in arbitration after the effective date of the 1990 Agreement. (The preceding Memorandum of Understanding, Interest on Back Pay, applies to NALC City Carrier Assistant Employees.)

Pursuant to *ELM* Section 436.7, interest on back pay also is required to be paid on decisions/awards from the MSPB, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB).

Delayed payment

The MOU, Re: Article 15-ELM 436-Back Pay provides relief to city carriers when back pay compensation is delayed. The MOU found on page 201 of the 2019-2023 National Agreement states:

The following applies solely to back pay claims covered by Section 436 of the Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM):

A pay adjustment required by a grievance settlement or arbitration decision will be completed promptly upon receipt of the documentation required by *ELM* part 436.4 *Documents in Support of Claim*. An employee not paid within sixty (60) days of submission of the required documentation will receive an advance, if requested by the employee, equivalent to seventy (70) percent of the approved adjustment. If a disagreement exists over the amount due, the advance will be set at seventy (70) percent of the sum not in dispute. (The preceding Memorandum of Understanding, Article 15 - ELM 436 - Back Pay, applies to NALC City Carrier Assistant Employees.)

As indicated, letter carriers who have not received back pay within 60 days of submission of required documentation may request an advance on the approved amount. This MOU is why it is important to document the date on which the back-pay claim is submitted and to make copies of all the associated information. To receive the salary advance, it may be necessary for the claimant to prove the submission date.

The process of recovering back pay can be very cumbersome. Letter carriers often find their back pay delayed or denied based on improper completion of required forms and management's failure to properly process claims. Letter carriers should seek the advice and guidance of their local union officials when submitting claims for back pay.

If you have any questions related to back pay, contact your shop steward or branch officer for more information. You also can find more information on *ELM* Section 436 and *MI-EL-430-2017-6* on the NALC website at nalc.org under the "Workplace Issues" tab.

Correction: Regretfully, there was an error in the information provided in the March 2023 Contract Talk article. On page 38 of the magazine, the first paragraph of column two has been corrected to read:

Management has an obligation to fill temporarily vacant carrier technician positions when requested via Article 25 by a qualified career letter carrier. National Arbitrator Snow held in C-10254, Sept. 10, 1990, that management may not assign different employees on an "as needed" basis to carry a route on a T-6 string when a vacancy of five or more days is involved; instead, such vacancies must be filled according to Article 25. While CCAs are not eligible for higher-level pay under Article 25, CCAs can be administratively assigned by management to vacant carrier technician assignments. When this occurs, the CCA's PS Form 50, Notification of Personnel Action must be revised to reflect that they are assigned to a carrier technician position.

New Year's resolutions

“If you want to be happy, set a goal that commands your thoughts, liberates your energy and inspires your hopes.” —Andrew Carnegie

It hardly seems thinkable, but 2023 is no more and the new year is in motion. For those of us who care deeply about community service, this is a time for looking back at our accomplishments and for planning for the upcoming year.

You should be proud of your union and the work we do to make our communities better. For more than 72 years, we've been there for the Muscular Dystrophy Association each step of the way. NALC and MDA are committed to transforming the lives of people affected by muscular dystrophy, ALS and related neuromuscular diseases through innovations in science and innovations in care.

I want to thank each of you who works to raise funds for the Muscular Dystrophy Association. NALC President Brian L. Renfroe and the whole Executive Council appreciate the hours of hard work each branch puts in to provide help and hope to those affected with muscular dystrophies.

Many people set New Year's resolutions. Has your branch set any goals for community service for 2024? If not, I hope your executive board sits down soon to plan for the whole year. Start by designating an MDA coordinator.

Below are the ways your fundraising has helped achieve goals so families can live longer and grow stronger. You can find this information and more at mda.org/about-md/our-impact.

MDA takes a big-picture perspective across the full spectrum of neuromuscular diseases to uncover breakthroughs that accelerate treatments and cures. The power in its research approach is that MDA can often apply learnings from one disease to achieve progress in others to bring urgently needed answers to families.

- **Research:** MDA is the largest source of funding for neuromuscular disease research outside the federal government and has committed more than \$1 billion in funding since its inception.
- **Treatments:** Research it has supported is directly linked to approved, life-changing therapies across multiple neuromuscular diseases.
- **Technology:** MDA's MOVR platform is the first and only data hub that uniquely aggregates health care, genetic and patient-reported data, transforming health outcomes and drug development in neuromuscular disease.

Early diagnosis, highly specialized care and access to promising clinical trials help ensure



the best possible outcomes for individuals and families facing muscular dystrophy, ALS and related life-threatening diseases. That's why MDA provides care for kids and adults from Day 1. MDA Care Centers offer families best-in-class, comprehensive care from a wide variety of health care specialists at one location on the same day, while trained information specialists and educational resources offer guidance and support through every step.

Also, every year thousands of children and young adults learn vital life skills and independence at MDA Summer Camp and other recreational programs at no cost to families.

Remember, MDA and NALC dream of a day when every child and adult diagnosed with muscular dystrophy will be able to have a cure or treatment so that families will not be shattered by the nightmare of these diseases. If we can keep planning and fundraising all year long, we will help MDA get ever closer to finding a cure. However, until then, we will continue to provide help and hope to MDA families in need.

Sisters and brothers, we may not go door to door like in the old days, but all the various and vigorous ways of fundraising have helped MDA with that promise.

Brothers and sisters, I want to end by asking you to please mark your calendars. We will be doing branch challenges in March, July and October this year. Remember, during the branch challenges monies raised must be to the MDA office before the end of the month.

If your branch is planning an activity, let me know well in advance. We will use the "Deliver the Cure" Facebook page and other social media avenues to promote the event once we know the exact date. NALC has many MDA giveaways for your scheduled events, if needed. Requests will be handled on a first-come, first-served basis until the supplies are exhausted.

All branches must use the allocation form provided on the website. Also, please send copies of the form and checks to me at: Christina Vela Davidson, Assistant to the President for Community Services, 1101 Northchase Parkway, Suite 3, Marietta, GA 30067, so your branch can get credit for the yearly numbers.

—Christina Vela Davidson

Medical evidence and OWCP, Part 5 —The CA-2 for occupational disease



Regional Workers' Compensation Assistant Coby Jones

Though OWCP initially accepts the vast majority of CA-1s filed by letter carriers for traumatic injuries, it initially accepts significantly less than half of the CA-2s filed for occupational disease. In most claims where OWCP has denied a CA-2, it is because the injured worker has failed to provide the sort of medical evidence that OWCP requires in occupational disease cases.

The implementing regulations of the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA) found at 20 CFR §10.5(q) define occupational disease as, "a condition produced by the work environment over a period longer than a single workday or shift." Some of the more widely recognized occupational diseases/illnesses include carpal tunnel syndrome, arthritis, rotator cuff strains and tears, radiculopathies, tendonitis and many back injuries. These medical conditions usually develop slowly and do not generally occur at a specific time and place.

Physicians routinely write medical reports for health insurance providers to get paid. However, the evidence, findings and opinions that OWCP expects in a medical report to accept an occupational disease case go well beyond what any other medical insurer finds necessary for providing coverage. And most doctors have no experience writing such reports. This is because not only does OWCP require detailed and specific causal explanations that no other insurer requires, but also because occupational disease cases additionally often involve prior injuries and pre-existing conditions that the attending physician must address in their report. And occupational disease cases may involve activities outside of work such as sports, hobbies and household chores that might also have affected the diagnosed occupational conditions.

In writing any medical report for OWCP, the attending physician should be aware of both the non-apportionment rule and the standard of reasonable medical certainty that were discussed in September's column. The attending physician also should bear in mind that OWCP claims examiners have no medical expertise or training. They are bureaucrats and they read medical reports, much as high school teachers read test exams, with a checklist of required elements that are taken from OWCP's implementing regulations and the FECA *Procedure Manual*. Claims examiners will not review chart notes or the medical record as a whole to extract the required elements. The required elements must be contained within a single report.

The implementing regulations of the FECA found at 20 CFR §10.330 list the required elements:

In all cases reported to OWCP, a medical report from the attending physician is required. This report should include:

- (a) Dates of examination and treatment;
- (b) History given by the employee;
- (c) Physical findings;
- (d) Results of diagnostic tests;
- (e) Diagnosis;
- (f) Course of treatment;
- (g) A description of any other conditions found but not due to the claimed injury;
- (h) The treatment given or recommended for the claimed injury;
- (i) The physician's opinion, with medical reasons, as to causal relationship between the diagnosed condition(s) and the factors or conditions of the employment;
- (j) The extent of disability affecting the employee's ability to work due to the injury;
- (k) The prognosis for recovery; and
- (l) All other material findings.

That's quite a list. To simplify matters, the report should focus on the following items.

1. Clear diagnoses based on objective clinical findings

The attending physician should clearly state the diagnoses and the clinical basis for them (the diagnostic procedures relied upon such as physical exams, MRIs and X-rays). The attending physician also should be aware that OWCP will not accept pain as a diagnosis. The focus should be on the cause of the pain such as a sprain, strain, herniated disc, radiculopathy, etc.

2. A review of the medical history of the affected body part

The physician should, in writing, review and show familiarity with the medical history involving the affected body part. This review can be done as a chronological bullet point list of dates of examinations, treatments and procedures performed along with brief summaries for each bullet point.

3. Familiarity with the work activities that have contributed to the diagnosed conditions in the affected body part

Injured letter carriers should provide to their physician a detailed narrative statement describing the work duties they believe have contributed to their occupational disease. The May 2017 column provided detailed guidance on how to write this narrative. Attending physicians in their medical report should not only indicate that they have read the narrative statement but should also, as part of their causal explanation, refer to the specific work duties that they believe have caused or contributed to the diagnosed occupational disease.

In the March column I will continue this discussion of the medical evidence required in CA-2 occupational disease cases by examining in detail the requirement for a causal explanation, which is the most common reason for OWCP denying these cases.

Team NALC



Chief of Staff
Kori Blalock Keller

As we begin the new year, I can't help but think back on the national rap session in my hometown of New Orleans just one week before Thanksgiving. In my humble view, it's the greatest city in the world—chock-full of food, culture and heartfelt hospitality. It's always invigorating to spend time with our members and the leaders of our great union, who have shown nothing but gratitude over the years. While the weekend

was centered around informing our leadership, I can't stop thinking about my favorite part of the entire weekend. It wasn't the beads, mildly inappropriate Letter Carrier Political Fund shirts, Mardi Gras cups, "second line" musicians who kicked us off, or even the tired smiles and laughter around the hotel. Instead, it was beautiful words about "Team NALC."

On Sunday morning, as President Renfro convened the rap session, he called Harold John of Branch 124 to the stage to provide an invocation. Recognizing that NALC is home to many religions and belief systems, this one can hit home for everyone on Team NALC, whether you pray or not.

I cannot do it justice by summarizing. So instead, Harold allowed me to share it with you as a guiding force for 2024 and beyond. I hope it inspires every single reader to keep Team NALC at the top of your hearts and minds as we face challenges with compassion, unity and strength.

Thank you, Brother John, for providing such beautiful words and inspiration to all of us.

Good morning. Can I take a moment of privilege to thank the editor and staff of The Postal Record for their honoring and special edition of and for veterans.

Do we have any veterans in the house? Let's give the editor and staff of The Postal Record a round of applause for their special edition this month honoring our veterans.

Good morning, branch and state leaders, and all the guests in attendance!

Heavenly Father God,

We come to you this morning thanking you for all of the things in life that we sometimes take for granted:

Thank you for our health and strength.

Thank you for providing us with nourishment for our



bodies, but also nourishment for our minds and our souls. Thank you for providing us with wisdom and discernment. Thank you for providing us with the courage to fight for what's right.

Thank you for putting us to sleep last night and waking us up this morning to a new day.

And speaking of sleep, the reason we can sleep so good at night is because we're trying to save and not take someone's job. We're trying to uplift and not divide. We're trying to keep focus to better and not destroy.

Thank you for our leadership as well as our membership.

We know our members are not perfect, Father, but that's why we defend and fight so hard for them because we know that they are human and make mistakes.

We all make mistakes, Father, and that's why you sent your Son—who suffered and died on the cross for our sins and indiscretions.

You provide us with grace and mercy when others try to condemn us.

We thank you for getting us here safely, Father, and ask you to provide us with travel, grace and mercy for our trip home.

Soon we'll be rooting for our favorite teams and one of those teams is Team NALC.

Team NALC puts money in your pockets. Team NALC provides you with health care. Team NALC makes sure your working conditions and working environment are safe and suitable for all employees.

Team NALC is not against Team USPS, but we're definitely for Team NALC.

Watch over our members, Father, as they work in increasingly more hostile work environments and more hostile communities. It is unfortunate that we don't command and aren't afforded the decency and respect our jobs once had.

Watch over all of our fallen members and their families, Father, as some of them have gone on to be with you. May their souls rest in peace.

And speaking of peace, Father, we ask you for:

Peace in our minds, bodies and souls.

Peace in our hearts and peace in our homes.

Peace in our relationships.

Peace in our workplaces.

Peace in our communities.

Peace in our cities and our streets.

Peace in all countries.

And most of all, peace in the Middle East.

These things we ask in your holy name, but we also give you thanks for each and every thing you do for us each and every day.

In Jesus's name we pray. Amen.

The revival of the *NALC Activist* and other resources for representatives



Special Executive Assistant to the President
Tim McKay

One key to being a successful leader in any organization is having the knowledge and resources needed to effectively lead. As a union, NALC takes great pride in providing and creating resources and publications intended to do just that.

Much of the information to educate, assist and inform our members and their union representatives is found in the “Resources” section of the NALC website under the “Workplace Issues” tab. There

you can find the National Agreement, the *Joint Contract Administration Manual (JCAM)* and a multitude of Postal Service handbooks and manuals.

The National Agreement sets our work rules, pay and benefits and establishes a grievance procedure for filing complaints when those rules are not followed. The NALC and the Postal Service have agreed at the national level that the *JCAM* is the definitive interpretation of the National Agreement and should be used to help resolve disputes at each step of the grievance procedure.

Other resources, developed solely by the NALC, such as the *Letter Carrier Resource Guide*, the Materials Reference System (MRS), *Defenses to Discipline* and the *NALC Shop Steward’s Guide*, to name just a few, also can be found in the Resources section.

The *Letter Carrier Resource Guide* includes information on rights and benefits, and relevant changes to these rights and benefits, as letter carriers progress from city carrier assistant to career status. The guide includes chapters on NALC structure, health benefits, pay, uniforms, workroom floor issues, community service, legislation and much more.

The MRS is a collection of contract administration materials assembled by NALC Headquarters’ Contract Administration Unit (CAU), and can assist all NALC representatives who enforce and administer the National Agreement. The MRS contains summaries and, in some cases, the full text of many important national-level materials, including settlements of Step 4 grievances, national-level pre-arbitration agreements, memorandums, USPS policy statements, NALC publications and more. The MRS also contains cross-references to significant national-level arbitration awards.

Defenses to Discipline has in-depth information related to challenging discipline issued to city letter carriers. It summarizes decades of experience and explains the key principles, contract language, national

settlements and arbitration decisions specific to just cause and job security.

The *NALC Shop Steward’s Guide* discusses the many roles carriers play as a shop steward. When the contract is violated, shop stewards must investigate the facts and research the contract before constructing an effective grievance. Then the steward needs to articulate the correct arguments at the earliest steps of the grievance procedure. This is a complete guide to assist shop stewards with fulfilling these duties.

Also found in the Resources section is a library of previous Contract Talk articles and *NALC Activist* publications to reference and study. Contract Talk is a regular column in *The Postal Record*. Written by members of the CAU, Contract Talk provides advice on select issues of interest to NALC contract enforcers.

The *NALC Activist* is a newsletter intended for shop stewards, branch officers and all local NALC leaders. This publication has been around since 1986—and with a couple of pauses along the way—and has been revived this month to continue providing an additional resource to assist in educating and informing local NALC representatives.

The *NALC Activist* is designed with the needs of NALC representatives in mind, addressing issues and problems that arise in our everyday work lives. The publication has proven to be a good training tool and NALC is proud to bring it back to life. With the goal of giving practical advice and skills on such topics as how to effectively run a branch meeting, a training or a branch publication, branch representatives should find the articles useful.

Moving forward, the *NALC Activist* will be published quarterly and will, it is hoped, provide representatives with the tools and knowledge needed to build and maintain strong and effective branches. Each issue will feature articles that will improve your knowledge of the contract and help you better understand the grievance procedure. You will see articles suggesting new ways in which NALC representatives can approach the problems they face while performing their duties. We will cover workplace issues, contract questions and the latest information for local leaders.

The resources described here are just a sampling of what NALC offers. I encourage anyone who is interested in learning more about representing city letter carriers to check out what is available in the Resources section, as well as the individual web pages for each of NALC’s 10 resident national officers, on the NALC website.

To read the newest edition of the *NALC Activist*, go to nalc.org/activist.

Nalcrest

Application and Confidential Questionnaire

**All questions must be answered!
Please print legibly or type.**

I, the undersigned, hereby submit application for an apartment rental at Nalcrest.

Efficiency apartment One-bedroom apartment Two-bedroom apartment
(Rent ranges starting at \$383 per month. Prices subject to change due to periodic trustee approval.
Please call 863-696-1121 for pricing and availability.)

If you are intending to reside at Nalcrest, please remit one month's rent plus the amount equal to one month's rent for a security deposit. If you have already filled out an application and need to update your information, do not send a new form – please call or write the office.

MasterCard, Visa, check or money order payable to Nalcrest Foundation accepted.

FULL NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP: _____

PHONE (contact number required) _____

DATE OF BIRTH: _____ NUMBER OF YEARS AS A NALC MEMBER/LETTER CARRIER: _____

NAME OF SPOUSE OR S/O: _____

CURRENT NALC BRANCH (Location and Branch Number): _____

Are you a Gold Card Member? YES NO
(50 years of membership with NALC)

Are you a Veteran? YES NO

Additional information and photos can be accessed at NALC.org

Nalcrest is committed to the spirit of, and compliance with, the Fair Housing Act and all anti-discrimination and fair housing laws. NALCREST IS NOT AN ASSISTED LIVING FACILITY.

If accepted, you must be willing to sign a 1 year lease.
However, you need not occupy or furnish the apartment immediately upon signing lease.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

NALCREST FOUNDATION, INC.
P.O. Box 6359 Nalcrest, FL 33856-6359

phone: 863-696-1121
fax: 863-696-3333

NALC's retirement community



Nalcrest is located in Central Florida, midway between Tampa and Vero Beach (ten miles from Lake Wales).

500 garden-style apartments arranged in clusters of four to 10 apartments, all ground level, around two large lagoons.

 Find us on Facebook



Nalcrest Foundation, Inc.

Apartments are leased unfurnished, on a yearly basis. Rent includes trash, wi-fi, stove, refrigerator and maintenance.

Applicants must be retired letter carriers and remain members of the NALC in retirement to receive approval to live at Nalcrest.

No pets allowed.

Smoking is only permitted in designated areas.



Monthly CSRS annuity payments for letter carriers who retire on March 1, 2024

The table below provides monthly basic annuity, survivor reduction and reduced annuity amount estimates for letter carriers covered by the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) who plan to take optional retirement on March 1, 2024. Estimates are computed by using the given high-3 aver-

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

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

	CC Grade 1 / High-3 Average ¹ : \$72,238			CC Grade 2 / High-3 Average ¹ : \$73,755		
Years of Service ²	Basic Annuity	Max. Survivor Deduction ³	Max. Survivor Reduced Annuity ⁴	Basic Annuity	Max. Survivor Deduction ³	Max. Survivor Reduced Annuity ⁴
20	\$2,182	\$196	\$1,986	\$2,228	\$200	\$2,028
21	2,303	208	2,095	2,351	213	2,138
22	2,423	220	2,203	2,474	225	2,249
23	2,543	232	2,312	2,597	237	2,360
24	2,664	244	2,420	2,720	249	2,470
25	2,784	256	2,528	2,843	262	2,581
26	2,905	268	2,637	2,966	274	2,691
27	3,025	280	2,745	3,088	286	2,802
28	3,145	292	2,853	3,211	299	2,913
29	3,266	304	2,962	3,334	311	3,023
30	3,386	316	3,070	3,457	323	3,134
31	3,507	328	3,178	3,580	336	3,245
32	3,627	340	3,287	3,703	348	3,355
33	3,747	352	3,395	3,826	360	3,466
34	3,868	364	3,503	3,949	372	3,577
35	3,988	376	3,612	4,072	385	3,687
36	4,109	388	3,720	4,195	397	3,798
37	4,229	400	3,829	4,318	409	3,908
38	4,349	412	3,937	4,441	422	4,019
39	4,470	424	4,045	4,564	434	4,130
40	4,590	437	4,154	4,686	446	4,240
41	4,711	449	4,262	4,809	458	4,351
41+11 months & over ⁵	4,816	459	4,357	4,917	469	4,448

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

1. High-3 averages for both grades (formerly levels) are for carriers who have worked full time on a continuous basis between March 1, 2021, and Feb. 28, 2024, at Step O/P.

2. Years of service includes any unused sick leave.

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

4. If covered by the NALC Health Benefit Plan, a further deduction of either \$523.75 per month if for self plus one (code 323), \$457.82 if for self and family (code 322), or \$223.12 if for self only (code 321) will be made. In addition, premiums for any coverage under the Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance Program will reduce the net annuity further.

5. Under CSRS rules, the maximum allowable yearly annuity cannot exceed 80 percent of an annuitant's high-three average. This limit is reached when an annuitant's years of service amount to 41 years and 11 months. Individuals with more than 41 years and 11 months of service will not get a higher annuity based on additional service, but may get slightly more than 80 percent of their high-3 average on the basis of unused sick leave accumulated under CSRS.

Monthly FERS annuity payments for letter carriers who retire on March 1, 2024

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

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

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

The table below provides monthly basic annuity, survivor deduction and net annuity amount estimates for letter carriers who plan to take optional retirement on March 1, 2024. Estimates are computed by using the given high-3 averages, which are based on the basic pay earned by full-time Step O/P carriers and vary by length of postal/military/federal service. Reduced annuity amounts reflect the difference between the given basic annuity and survivor reduction figures.

Years of Service ²	CC Grade 1 / High-3 Average ¹ : \$72,238			CC Grade 2 / High-3 Average ¹ : \$73,755		
	Basic Annuity	Max. Survivor Deduction ³	Max. Survivor Reduced Annuity ⁴	Basic Annuity	Max. Survivor Deduction ³	Max. Survivor Reduced Annuity ⁴
20	\$1,204	\$120	\$1,084	\$1,229	\$123	\$1,106
21	1,264	126	1,138	1,291	129	1,162
22	1,324	132	1,192	1,352	135	1,217
23	1,385	138	1,246	1,414	141	1,272
24	1,445	144	1,300	1,475	148	1,328
25	1,505	150	1,354	1,537	154	1,383
26	1,565	157	1,409	1,598	160	1,438
27	1,625	163	1,463	1,659	166	1,494
28	1,686	169	1,517	1,721	172	1,549
29	1,746	175	1,571	1,782	178	1,604
30	1,806	181	1,625	1,844	184	1,659
31	1,866	187	1,680	1,905	191	1,715
32	1,926	193	1,734	1,967	197	1,770
33	1,987	199	1,788	2,028	203	1,825
34	2,047	205	1,842	2,090	209	1,881
35	2,107	211	1,896	2,151	215	1,936
36	2,167	217	1,950	2,213	221	1,991
37	2,227	223	2,005	2,274	227	2,047
38	2,288	229	2,059	2,336	234	2,102
39	2,348	235	2,113	2,397	240	2,157
40	2,408	241	2,167	2,458	246	2,213
Each additional year ⁵	60.20	6.02	54.18	61.46	6.15	55.32

1. High-3 averages for both grades (formerly levels) are for carriers who have worked full time on a continuous basis between March 1, 2021, and Feb. 28, 2024, at Step O/P.

2. Years of service includes any unused sick leave.

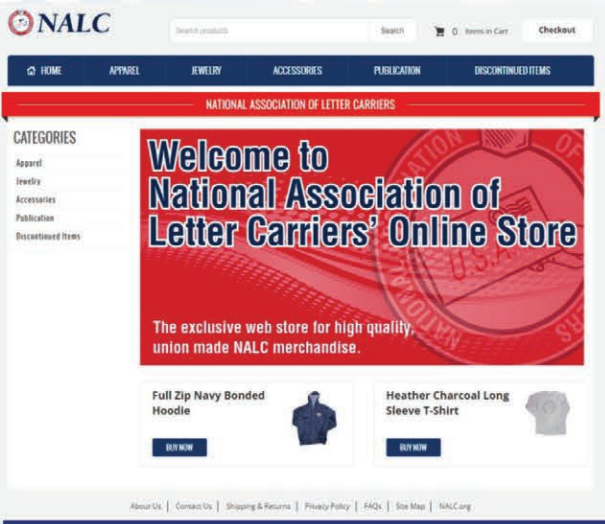
3. The reduction for survivor's annuity is the amount necessary to provide maximum benefits (50 percent of basic annuity) to a surviving spouse.

4. If covered by the NALC Health Benefit Plan, a further deduction of either \$523.75 per month if for self plus one (code 323), \$457.82 if for self and family (code 322), or \$223.12 if for self only (code 321) will be made. In addition, premiums for any coverage under the Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance Program will reduce the net annuity further.

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

6. FERS employees who retire at age 62 or later with at least 20 years of service receive an additional 10 percent—their annuities are calculated at 1.1 percent times years of service times high-3 average salary.

NALCSTORE.ORG



Placing an order online is very simple!

- Register by clicking on **Login/Register** on the top right corner. Fill in the necessary fields.
- Once you're registered, you can start adding items to your basket.
- When you're finished, click **Checkout** on the top right. Proceed by filling in the necessary fields. All orders ship via USPS.
- The store accepts Visa, MasterCard and American Express.
- Once you've completed your order, you will receive an order confirmation email.

Veterans' legislative update

In the first session of the 118th Congress, numerous bills have been introduced and moved through Congress that would affect veterans. Below is a sampling of some of these bills and how they would address veterans' unique needs.

On Nov. 13, in honor of Veterans Day, President Biden signed two bills into law that benefit America's veterans:

Korean American VALOR Act—PL 118-20

This law requires the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to extend health care benefits and related services to members of the South Korean armed forces who served in the Vietnam War. It was introduced in the House by Veterans Affairs Committee Ranking Member Mark Takano (D-CA) and in the Senate by Sens. Mazie Hirono (D-HI) and Mike Braun (R-IN).

Wounded Warriors Access Act—PL 118-21

This law streamlines veterans' access to their benefit claim files from the VA. The VA will establish and maintain a secure online tool that allows veterans to request their claim files electronically, instead of having to travel to a regional VA location or mail in a form to receive a paper copy of their claim file. House Democratic Caucus Chairman Pete Aguilar (D-CA) led the legislation in the House, and Sens. Alex Padilla (D-CA) and Braun led it in the Senate.

The following are veterans-focused bills moving through Congress:

Build, Utilize, Invest, Learn and Deliver (BUILD) for Veterans Act of 2023—H.R. 3225/S. 42

This bill was introduced by Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Jon Tester (D-MT) and Sens. Patty Murray (D-WA), Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Mark Warner (D-VA) in

the Senate, and Reps. Chris Deluzio (D-PA) and Frank Mrvan (D-IN) in the House. It would modernize the delivery of VA medical facilities and other infrastructure projects, execute a plan to hire more construction personnel, and examine the disposal or repurposing of unused and vacant buildings owned by the VA, allowing the agency to better serve veterans.

Elizabeth Dole Home Care Act—H.R. 542/S. 141

This bill, which passed with overwhelming bipartisan support in the House (414-5) on Dec. 5, would improve and expand community-based services for aging veterans and improve VA support for veterans and caregivers of all ages. It would expand non-institutional care, allowing veterans to receive the care they need on their own terms. Reps. Julia Brownley (D-CA) and Jack Bergman (R-MI) introduced the bill in the House. A Senate companion bill (S. 141) was introduced by Chairman Tester, Ranking Member Jerry Moran (R-KS) and Sen. Maggie Hassan (D-NH).

Caregiver Outreach and Program Enhancement (COPE) Act—H.R. 3581

On Dec. 4, the House passed this bill, which would increase mental health resources available to veterans' caregivers. Through a VA grant program, it would provide support and mental health care for veterans' caregivers. It was introduced by Reps. Jen Kiggans (R-VA) and Chrissy Houlahan (D-PA). No companion legislation has been introduced in the Senate.

Sen. Tuberville ends blockade for most military promotions

On Dec. 5, Sen. Tommy Tuberville (R-AL) ended his nearly 10-month



hold on hundreds of military promotions.

Tuberville, who objected to the Pentagon's abortion access policy, was stalling high-level Defense Department nominations. While he did not drop all of the holds, his release allowed for the advancement of more than 430 defense positions.

The decision came after Tuberville faced increasing pressure from senators on both sides of the aisle who claimed his blockade was endangering national security. It forced many military officials to delay their retirements. In many posts, interim appointees held high-level leadership positions for months. With the end of Tuberville's protest, the newly appointed leaders will settle into their positions.

For updates on legislation and other congressional action that affects our veteran members, check the "Government Affairs" section on nalc.org.

Correction: Ann Arbor, MI Branch 434 member Christopher R. Matheson's name was listed wrong on the list of Veterans Group members in the November *Postal Record*.

State Summaries

California

I've written about this before, but if your job and earned benefits are important to you, then you need to involve yourself in this year's elections. I know that we got postal reform signed into law, but remember, laws can change. And they change when anti-union politicians propose and bet bills enacted into law.

There is a lot of noise right now in regard to our nation's fiscal health—that is to say, we are approaching \$40 trillion in debt and politicians now talk of reforms to fix said debt. Now when it came to postal reform, the word “reform” was a good word, in that positive changes resulted. But most of the time, reform when it comes to our benefits is more of a term to be feared.

“Reforms” being discussed include cuts such as elimination of the Federal Employees Retirement System supplement, going to high-5 as opposed to high-3 for annuity calculation, elimination of cost-of-living allowances for Civil Service Retirement System and FERS retirees, changing the Social Security COLA from CPI-W to a so-called “chained” CPI. OK, you get the idea. These reforms, taken as a whole, would cost a typical retiree tens of thousands of dollars during retirement. And in many cases, these reforms, if enacted, would make it impossible to retire.

And there are “experts,” such as James Sherk, Donald Trump's federal employee guru, who want to eliminate pensions for newer employees—that is to say, those who have fewer than 15 years of career federal service. And for our craft, that means roughly two-thirds of active letter carriers.

When you came on board to work here, it was with the understanding that your benefits would be this and that. The politicians you vote for should respect that.

Eric Ellis

Colorado

Happy New Year!

The COSALC is working with the Region 4 NBA's office on the Colorado Steward's College happening Jan. 25-27. Hopefully by now, you've already reserved your rooms and approved your stewards to attend this in-depth training. Day 1 will be for new stewards. Days 2 and 3 will be for experienced stewards. Please contact COSALC President Rick Byrne (me) or COSALC Director of Education Se Min Kil for more information. Contact information can be found at cosalc.org.

Preparations are also underway for a legislative trip to Washington, DC, to educate our Colorado legislators on the importance of supporting letter carrier-friendly legislation currently happening in Congress.

We hope all of you had an enjoyable holiday season with family and friends. Thank you for all of your hard work taking care of your customers during this busy season.

Richard Byrne

Florida

Beginning in 2012, state officers, LCCLs and other carriers from the FSALC have joined with the AFL-CIO's Working Family Lobby Corp in Tallahassee during the state's legislative session to lobby for issues important to working men and women and lobby against issues we consider harmful.

There, we join with men and women of other unions each morning at the state AFL-CIO HQ for the day's briefing. We then spend the remainder of the day in the Capitol, meeting with our representatives and senators, urging their support for or opposition to various bills. We get frequent texts directing us to attend committee meetings to speak for or against bills and to attend press conferences. This method has been successful in getting some legislation helpful for working men and women passed and deterring some that would be harmful.

In addition, last year we approached some reps and senators involved in the budget process seeking to get funding into the budget for us to purchase enough printed bags for the Letter Carrier Food Drive so that we could provide bags to more than 9 million households. We were successful in getting \$400,000 into the budget for that process. It was only a partial success, in that the governor struck it from the budget with his line-item veto. While we anticipated his veto, we will keep trying. We spent three years of lobbying to get our vote-by-mail bill passed.

From May 16-18, 2024, the FSALC will hold a combined district meeting of Districts 2, 3, 4 and 5. It will be held at the DoubleTree next to Universal in Orlando. It will consist of political as well as contractual training. The training will be conducted by the NBA's staff. Room rates will be \$149 per night single/double. More information will be provided as it becomes available.

O.D. Elliott

Kentucky

Leap year 2024 has quietly shone a light upon Bluegrass State letter carriers. The NALC national rap session in New Orleans gave us a list of goals from President Renfro. This scribe was glad to attend. The Kentucky state AFL-CIO convention was held in Lexington in late November/early December. Major national union players were there, including UAW President Fain, and the major Teamsters negotiators from Kentucky from the recent strike against UPS. Both unions scored major victories nationwide. Toyota and Amazon are both organize/unionize targets in Kentucky.

The tactics the private companies use to oppress, some say “screw,” the workers, are eerily similar to what USPS tries. Terms like “two-tiered workforce,” as well as passing increased health care costs (including prescriptions) onto the workers, are just two parts of the business model management employs. As your delegate to this annual union labor convention, I was proud that NALC is prepared to bargain or

arbitrate all topics with our employer.

So, this new year may be a jump for new union members, since workers in general seek a larger piece of the profit pie. We are in a unique situation to deal with USPS, Congress, the president, and all those regulatory agencies. NALC needs support with participation and LCPF contributions from members to maximize success. The employer should protect letter carriers from assaults and severe weather conditions, not issue discipline that is unwarranted at their whims!

Attend our KYALC district meeting Feb. 24-25 in Ashland. Info and hot topics will abound. Contact Branch 745 President Jason Haywood at 606-922-1230, KYALC Secretary Steve Terry at 502-681-4512 or me at 859-533-5851.

Bob McNulty

Michigan

Greetings from Michigan.

It's an election year, again. In the past we would be gearing up for the Iowa caucuses, which will be held in just two weeks. But this year, only for the GOP.

Democrats, under President Biden's leadership, moved their opening contest out of Iowa, because Iowa, while beautiful, is predominantly white and focuses on rural voters. The Democratic Party's base is more diverse and urban, just like the NALC is different from the NRLCA. The Democrats made a choice to look more like America.

My old postmaster, who was a big promoter of diversity, used to say, the easiest way to explain diversity was “the only color that matters is green.” For a business, I think that's probably accurate.

For NALC, though, I think we could say diversity is about unity. Everyone should feel included and represented equally. At all levels of leadership.

As the late Justice Ginsburg said: “I subscribe to what Justice O'Connor wrote: “[T]o cultivate ... leaders with legitimacy in the eyes of the citizenry, ... the path to leadership must be visibly open to the talented ... individuals of every

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.

race and ethnicity.” And: “Effective participation ... in the civil life of our nation is essential if the dream of one nation, indivisible, is to be realized.” We will all profit from a more diverse, inclusive society, understanding, accommodating, even celebrating our differences, while pulling together for the common good.

Here in Michigan, I’m proud to say our state association executive board looks like our Michigan membership. We have an 11-member board comprised of seven men and four women, four African Americans, four retired members. Our diversity is our strength. We don’t deny it, we embrace it. Unity.

John Serwach

Tennessee

Happy New Year!
Last month, I spoke about women veter-

erans and their lack of acknowledgement by society. My mother used to say that “Behind every man, there is a woman, with a foot up his behind.”

In the next few words, I would like to commend our National Guard, Air National Guard, and Army and Navy reserves. If it weren’t for these citizen soldiers, we would not have won in World War II. They served in Korea, and yes, they served during the Vietnam War (e.g., Indiana Pathfinder Company).

Lately, I’ve listened to news reporting concerning the war in Ukraine and the congressional debates on its funding. As a retired Army veteran, it troubles me that our congressional representatives are dicker on cutting funding to Ukraine to broker a deal with an increase in Homeland Security funding for the border. My, how history repeats! Back in 1975, congress stopped funding the Vietnamese govern-

ment and we know what happened there.

Now, Congress wants to stop funding the Russian-Ukraine conflict. Why? If Congress stops funding them, then they will possibly in the not-so-near future be funding them with the blood of our sons and fathers! This type of conflict could have serious ramifications for you, your families, and your loved ones.

I would like to ask you to contact your congressional representatives and ask them to reconsider their views on how to fund these issues. As a veteran, and as a father who has a son in the Air Force, and as a veteran who, like all my brothers and sisters, hates war.

A veteran is like a cigarette in a glass vial. Only to be broken to serve in a time of war. And that is where you, the citizen soldier, come into play. Thank you for your service!

Tony Rodriguez

Please note:

There will be no Branch Items, State Summaries or Retiree Reports in the February 2024 *Postal Record*. That edition will be the special annual tribute issue honoring contributors to LCPF during 2023.

In Memoriam

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

John G. Benikosky	Br. 704	Tucson, AZ	Kerran F. Ryan	Br. 1	Detroit, MI	James A. Vitale	Br. 40	Cleveland, OH
Miguel A. Hernandez Jr.	Br. 1100	Garden Grove, CA	Lorraine Smith	Br. 1	Detroit, MI	William P. Oare	Br. 78	Columbus, OH
Jesse E. Johnson	Br. 1100	Garden Grove, CA	Alexander J. Viviano	Br. 3126	Royal Oak, MI	Jeffrey C. Freeman	Br. 100	Toledo, OH
Clarence R. Brewer	Br. 133	Sacramento, CA	Michael Huffman	Br. 9	Minneapolis, MN	Gordon D. Carmean	Br. 182	Dayton, OH
Frank J. Marulo Jr.	Br. 133	Sacramento, CA	Timothy S. Boutwell	Br. 30	Kansas City, MO	Milford E. Bender	Br. 280	Marion, OH
Vashon L. Simms	Br. 70	San Diego, CA	Tiffany A. Hager	Br. 343	St. Louis, MO	Dwayne L. Everly	Br. 280	Marion, OH
Joseph R. Alva	Br. 214	San Francisco, CA	Richard R. Werner	Br. 343	St. Louis, MO	Forrest E. McCune	Br. 280	Marion, OH
Chun K. Chiu	Br. 214	San Francisco, CA	Neal J. Dowd	Br. 1028	Bozeman, MT	George F. Miller	Br. 280	Marion, OH
Ronnie M. Hui	Br. 214	San Francisco, CA	Sanford J. Robertson Jr.	Br. 1028	Bozeman, MT	Robert L. Pitchford	Br. 280	Marion, OH
Louis X. Levy	Br. 214	San Francisco, CA	Troy J. Erhardt	Br. 1680	Hamilton, MT	Jeff E. Giblett	Br. 458	Oklahoma City, OK
Dewey Smith	Br. 214	San Francisco, CA	John L. Bush	Br. 2502	Las Vegas, NV	Aymie D. Sevin	Br. 1358	Tulsa, OK
Jeffrey G. Jewers	Br. 47	Denver, CO	Lavette B. Guirao	Br. 2502	Las Vegas, NV	James R. Gubich	Br. 254	Bethlehem, PA
Aisha E. Bruno	Br. 20	CT Mgd.	Suzanne M. Badders	Br. 709	Reno, NV	Raymond D. Wisniewski	Br. 284	Erie, PA
Cody J. Czaplak	Br. 53	North FL	Frank R. Mooney	Br. 230	Nashua, NH	Kenneth C. Kline	Br. 500	Harrisburg, PA
Cheryl C. Akins	Br. 142	Washington, DC	J. F. Dugan	Br. 540	Camden, NJ Mgd.	Joani K. Sheaffer	Br. 273	Lancaster, PA
Ivory E. Barnett	Br. 11	Chicago, IL	Arthur L. Rossi Jr.	Br. 444	Garden State Mgd., NJ	Joseph P. Powell Sr.	Br. 157	Philadelphia, PA
Oscar L. Cunningham	Br. 11	Chicago, IL	Louis Auriemma	Br. 38	NJ Mgd.	William J. Ehmann	Br. 84	Pittsburgh, PA
Edward R. Warmowski	Br. 11	Chicago, IL	Lawrence V. Burns	Br. 38	NJ Mgd.	Edward W. Maus	Br. 84	Pittsburgh, PA
Kawan M. Harper	Br. 825	Oak Brook, IL	C. H. Terenghi	Br. 38	NJ Mgd.	Robert L. Tyburski	Br. 84	Pittsburgh, PA
Rosalyn J. Szymborski	Br. 4016	S. Suburban Mgd., IL	Donald J. Wojtowicz	Br. 380	Trenton, NJ	Elizabeth Myers	Br. 3902	Charleston, SC
James K. Snyder	Br. 271	Richmond, IN	Ernest F. Schraft	Br. 333	Binghamton, NY	McKinley Edwards	Br. 27	Memphis, TN
Calvin J. Brown Jr.	Br. 124	New Orleans, LA	Norman Sider	Br. 41	Brooklyn, NY	Stephen R. Hines	Br. 27	Memphis, TN
Mark Gormley	Br. 34	Boston, MA	Ira Malofsky	Br. 36	New York, NY	Ciro E. Hernandez	Br. 505	El Paso, TX
Richard W. Stefanelli	Br. 34	Boston, MA	Michael L. Scrivens	Br. 210	Rochester, NY	Melvin L. Wood	Br. 226	Fort Worth, TX
Raymond Boucher	Br. 51	Fall River, MA	Walter Kowal	Br. 99	Staten Island, NY	Michael T. Mangan	Br. 79	Seattle, WA
John L. Stec	Br. 51	Fall River, MA	Edward L. Baxter	Br. 459	Raleigh, NC	Melissa C. Fredricks	Br. 102	Sheboygan, WI
John T. Fitzmaurice	Br. 25	MA Northeast Mgd.	Larry W. Hauser	Br. 461	Winston-Salem, NC	Pam M. Hailer	Br. 102	Sheboygan, WI
Matthew W. Little	Br. 187	Bay City, MI						

When an active letter carrier dies...

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

When a retired letter carrier dies...

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

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



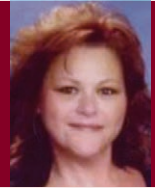
National Auxiliary Board

News and updates from the officers

Cynthia Martinez
President



Crystal Bragg
Secretary



Samantha Yerg
Treasurer

From the President

Hello, sisters and brothers. I hope everyone had a lovely holiday season. It finally cooled off in the desert and we were so excited. The weather was perfect for the “Enough is enough” rally.

The rally took place on the afternoon of Nov. 30 at Wesley Bolin Plaza in Phoenix. It was an inspirational backdrop for the event. It was cool and breezy to top it off. The speakers were all concerned about the welfare of our carriers. Attacks on letter carriers have risen considerably in the last four years. Our carriers need our support, so whatever our auxiliaries can do to raise awareness of this issue is a huge help.

National Association of Letter Carriers President Brian Renfro was the highlight of the rally. He was passionate about the real problems that letter carriers face, especially with packages and parcels around the holidays. Crimes against letter carriers have risen since the pandemic to 2,000 incidences. President Renfro wants more of these cases to be prosecuted to deter these crimes. The use of firearms against carriers is an escalating issue. Prosecutors seem to be reluctant to prosecute the crimes against letter carriers. President Renfro is shedding light on the seriousness of situation.

On an exciting note, it is time to start planning for our convention in early August in Boston. Let’s start making our plans to attend. The registration fee will be \$30 until June 30 and will increase after that date.

We hope everyone is working on items for our Country Store. Crystal’s husband has graciously volunteered to help with it again. The Country Store welcomes any and all donations.

Dues are due again this month; it is still \$20 a year.

I am looking forward to our updated bylaws books. They should be ready by late spring.

Happy new year to everyone!

Cynthia A. Martinez

Phoenix ‘Enough is enough’ rally



Clockwise from top left: 1. NALC Auxiliary President Cynthia A. Martinez, NALC President Brian L. Renfro and Arizona State Association President Tim Fisher. 2. Renfro, Arizona Merged Branch 1902 member Shirley Hise and Region 4 National Business Agent Dan Versluis. 3. Phoenix Branch 576 President Cynthia Staley with Phoenix Aux. #377 members Maryann Ward, Martinez and Faith Wysocki. 4. A reporter interviews Renfro. 5. Renfro, Martinez, Ward, Versluis, Staley, Aux. #377 member Jana Maron and Wysocki.

AUXILIARY OFFICERS

Cynthia Martinez, President
3532 W. Mauna Loa Lane
Phoenix, AZ 85053
602-505-2215
camslm@yahoo.com

Crystal Bragg, Secretary
835 Westland Drive
Mt. Zion, IL 62549
217-864-4684
cbragg5414@comcast.net

Samantha Yerg, Treasurer
4553 County Road 137
Gibsonburg, OH 43431
419-410-6162
samanthayerg@yahoo.com

Union Member Rights and Officer Responsibilities under the **LMRDA**

The Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRDA) guarantees certain rights to union members and imposes certain responsibilities on union officers. The Office of Labor-Management Standards (OLMS)

enforces many LMRDA provisions while other provisions, such as the bill of rights, may only be enforced by union members through private suit in federal court. Below is a summary of the LMRDA:

Union Member Rights

Bill of Rights—Union members have:

- equal rights to participate in union activities
- freedom of speech and assembly
- voice in setting rates of dues, fees, and assessments
- protection of the right to sue
- safeguards against improper discipline

Copies of Collective Bargaining Agreements—Union members and non-union employees have the right to receive or inspect copies of collective bargaining agreements.

Reports—Unions are required to file an initial information report (Form LM-1), copies of constitutions and bylaws, and an annual financial report (Form LM-2/3/4) with OLMS. Unions must make the reports available to members and permit members to examine supporting records for just cause. The reports are public information and copies are available from OLMS.

Officer Elections—Union members have the right to:

- nominate candidates for office
- run for office
- cast a secret ballot
- protest the conduct of an election

Officer Removal—Local union members have the right to an adequate procedure for the removal of an elected officer guilty of serious misconduct.

Trusteeships—Unions may only be placed in trusteeship by a parent body for the reasons specified in the LMRDA.

Prohibition Against Certain Discipline—A union or any of its officials may not fine, expel, or otherwise discipline a member for exercising any LMRDA right.

Prohibition Against Violence—No one may use or threaten to use force or violence to interfere with a union member in the exercise of LMRDA rights.

Union Officer Responsibilities

Financial Safeguards—Union officers have a duty to manage the funds and property of the union solely for the benefit of the union and its members in accordance with the union's constitution and bylaws. Union officers or employees who embezzle or steal union funds or other assets commit a Federal crime punishable by a fine and/or imprisonment.

Bonding—Union officers or employees who handle union funds or property must be bonded to provide protection against losses if their union has property and annual financial receipts which exceed \$5,000.

Labor Organization Reports—Union officers must:

- file an initial information report (Form LM-1) and annual financial reports (Forms LM-2/3/4) with OLMS.
- retain the records necessary to verify the reports for at least five years.

Officer Reports—Union officers and employees must file reports concerning any loans and benefits received from, or certain financial interests in, employers whose employees their unions represent and businesses that deal with their unions.

Officer Elections—Unions must:

- hold elections of officers of local unions by secret ballot at least every three years.
- conduct regular elections in accordance with their constitution and bylaws and preserve all records for one year.
- mail a notice of election to every member at least 15 days prior to the election.
- comply with a candidate's reasonable request to distribute campaign material at the candidate's expense.
- not use union funds or resources to promote any candidate (nor may employer funds or resources be used).
- permit candidates to have election observers.

Restrictions on Holding Office—A person convicted of certain crimes may not serve as a union officer, employee, or other representative of a union for up to 13 years.

Loans—A union may not have outstanding loans to any one officer or employee that in total exceed \$2,000 at any time.

Fines—A union may not pay the fine of any officer or employee convicted of any willful violation of the LMRDA.

The above is only a summary of the LMRDA. Full text of the Act, which comprises Sections 401-531 of Title 29 of the United States Code, may be found in many public libraries, or by writing the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Labor-Management Standards, 200 Constitution Ave. NW, Room N-5616, Washington, DC 20210, or by visiting www.dol.gov.

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

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



Additionally, the national secretary-treasurer's office handles

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



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

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

75-year pins

Frank J. Arlotta	San Francisco, CA	Br. 214
George J. Chamorro Jr.	San Francisco, CA	Br. 214
Frank A. Ruggiero	San Francisco, CA	Br. 214
Franklin W. Reimert	Allentown, PA	Br. 274

70-year pins

Albert B. Davis Jr.	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
James P. Griffith	Pensacola, FL	Br. 321
Donald E. Renner	Tampa, FL	Br. 599
David D. Delancey	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512
George W. Brimmer Jr.	Allentown, PA	Br. 274
Richard E. Forgay	Allentown, PA	Br. 274
Charlie R. Smith	Newport News, VA	Br. 609

65-year pins

Philip E. Belvees	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
William R. Hargis	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
James M. Hartsuck	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Stephen M. Radosevich	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Raymond A. Root	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Gene A. Trujillo	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Joe H. Chan	San Francisco, CA	Br. 214
Howard L. Gengras Jr.	San Francisco, CA	Br. 214
Paul H. Iwata	San Francisco, CA	Br. 214
David D. Lee	San Francisco, CA	Br. 214
Edward P. Lovrin	San Francisco, CA	Br. 214
Jackson L. Mar	San Francisco, CA	Br. 214
Robert F. Babcock	Centennial, CO	Br. 5996
G. N. Farr	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Eugene D. Fobel	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Jean L. Morneau	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
James M. Williamson	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Jarrett V. Langston	Tampa, FL	Br. 599
Oscar A. Valdes	Tampa, FL	Br. 599
Donald H. Weik	Tampa, FL	Br. 599
Eugene T. Blackston	Augusta, GA	Br. 263
Charles R. Koss	Augusta, GA	Br. 263
Gilbert B. Lemay	Lexington, KY	Br. 361
Richard G. Green Jr.	Allentown, PA	Br. 274
Ronald C. Levan	Allentown, PA	Br. 274
Holmes S. Maher	Allentown, PA	Br. 274
Thomas D. Ramsey	Galveston, TX	Br. 23

60-year pins

Clifford L. Bishop	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Walter R. Zaniewski	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Samuel E. Jackson	Wilmington, DE	Br. 191
James L. Gilley	Pensacola, FL	Br. 321
Charles D. Kennedy	Augusta, GA	Br. 263
Ronald V. Mathews	Decatur, IL	Br. 317
Ralph R. Lagrue	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124
Irwin L. Rousseau	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124
Charles J. Vigeo	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124
Walter A. Wilson	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124

Arthur D. Woodworth	Detroit, MI	Br. 1
Donald W. Morrison	Butte, MT	Br. 621
Ronald F. Baker	Omaha, NE	Br. 5
Robert G. Gatzemeyer	Omaha, NE	Br. 5
Orin K. Priest	Omaha, NE	Br. 5
Wilfried P. Womack	Omaha, NE	Br. 5
N. Magalnick	Brooklyn, NY	Br. 41
Angelo J. Nizzico	Brooklyn, NY	Br. 41
Garland H. Keeker	Salem, OR	Br. 347
Gary W. Snyder	Allentown, PA	Br. 274
Robert C. Trinkle	Allentown, PA	Br. 274
Joseph Lomax Jr.	Richmond, VA	Br. 496
Keith W. Rustin	Richmond, VA	Br. 496
Theodore L. Spurlock	Richmond, VA	Br. 496
William T. Taylor	Richmond, VA	Br. 496
Landon C. Turner	Richmond, VA	Br. 496
J. Wright	Richmond, VA	Br. 496

55-year pins

David E. Blackwell Jr.	Mobile, AL	Br. 469
W. B. Brown	Mobile, AL	Br. 469
Don R. Buell	Mobile, AL	Br. 469
Frank E. Bumpers	Mobile, AL	Br. 469
Richard E. Demoruelle	Mobile, AL	Br. 469
Willie D. Dunning III	Mobile, AL	Br. 469
Bobby W. Ellis	Mobile, AL	Br. 469
Lorenzo Hall	Mobile, AL	Br. 469
Willie J. Harris	Mobile, AL	Br. 469
Louis J. Backus	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Delmar C. Bambrough	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Thomas W. Behrens	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Donald O. Bock	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Maurice E. Brisbin Jr.	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Edward Bruffett	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Peter A. Bruno	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Francisco G. Celaya	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Robert L. Chute	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Cheryl A. Dreyer	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Lawrence M. Dreyer	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Arthur O. Duarte	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Robert R. Fregoso	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Fred A. Giammona Jr.	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Gary P. Hammonds	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Theodore J. Holmes	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Thomas A. Kempster	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Paul W. Krienitz	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Robert Lopez	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Edward Luna	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Arthur Mann Jr.	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Guillermo A. Monje	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Elizabeth R. Offutt	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Jerry G. Pierce	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Philip A. Rousseau	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Gerald H. Small	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
James D. Smith	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
James Spaulding	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Herbert A. Stanwood	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704

Dennis J. Synan	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Robert S. Tapia	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Manuel F. Trujillo	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
James M. Whitmire	Tucson, AZ	Br. 704
Francis Lucero	Centennial, CO	Br. 5996
Donald K. Gettman	Greeley, CO	Br. 324
Richard L. Holmes	Greeley, CO	Br. 324
John C. Valdivieso	Greeley, CO	Br. 324
Charles J. Adamski	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Reynold H. Andrewsikas	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Lawence J. Benes	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Robert G. Bermani	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Arthur W. Black	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Charles J. Blouin	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Patrick E. Burke	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
John J. Burns	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Lawrence V. Busnardo	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
John E. Cannon	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
James P. Chagnon	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
G. J. Chesaneck	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Allan R. Chichester	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Richard L. Cofchfski	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Donald J. Desrosiers	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
R. L. Dougherty	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
J. B. Enright	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Gary R. Fleming	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Donald A. Gagliardi	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Robert J. Galante	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Joseph Garofalo	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Thomas Gorski	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Robert J. Goulette	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
D. W. Grass	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Henry J. Henaire Jr.	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Arthur B. Hines	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
David J. Huria	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Donald W. Johnson Sr.	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Barry K. Kagan	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
David P. Krinjak	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Terry T. Kuhnly	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Robert H. Lajeunesse	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
John J. Leahy	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Robert J. Lupi	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Ronald M. Mailhot	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
William R. Mcgrath	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Gregory E. Menard	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Dale A. Nightingale	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Richard D. Pawlich-Pagliccio	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Patrick W. Piazza	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Dale S. Rowland	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Edward Shensie Jr.	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Nathan W. Slemovitch	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Harold I. Starr	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
James W. Tracy	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Robert C. Wirag	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
James A. Zarick Sr.	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Robert E. Zotter	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Edward J. Antonietti	Clearwater, FL	Br. 2008
Helene V. Bagg	Clearwater, FL	Br. 2008

Honor Roll

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

Susan T. Barkman	Clearwater, FL	Br. 2008	Dennis L. McKee	Decatur, IL	Br. 317	Warren C. Smith	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124
Earl L. Bernhardt Jr.	Clearwater, FL	Br. 2008	Dwight K. Smith	Decatur, IL	Br. 317	Jerry D. Spruille	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124
Robert M. Busch	Clearwater, FL	Br. 2008	Thomas A. Wayne	Decatur, IL	Br. 317	Arthur J. Stewart Jr.	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124
Raymond E. Carlson	Clearwater, FL	Br. 2008	Merle D. Weaver	Decatur, IL	Br. 317	Raymond A. Thibodaux	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124
Robert A. Leopardi	Clearwater, FL	Br. 2008	Lawrence L. Whitten	Decatur, IL	Br. 317	Nichls J. Tranchina	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124
Ralph A. Lombardi	Clearwater, FL	Br. 2008	Mauric P. Casey	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512	Winston Tuckerson	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124
Harold R. McCabe	Clearwater, FL	Br. 2008	Robert L. Cochran	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512	Harrison Tyler	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124
Vincenzo P. Parigi	Clearwater, FL	Br. 2008	Robert L. Conrad	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512	Henry T. Vinet	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124
Wendell S. Parker	Clearwater, FL	Br. 2008	William E. Denton Jr.	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512	James P. Washington	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124
Thomas R. Bolton	Deland, FL	Br. 2591	Robert D. Dixon	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512	Ronald J. White	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124
J. M. Anderson Jr.	Pensacola, FL	Br. 321	Duane J. Ford	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512	August Williams	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124
Travis O. Arnett	Pensacola, FL	Br. 321	Ronald L. Goodell	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512	John J. Williams Jr.	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124
John M. Barker	Pensacola, FL	Br. 321	Robert G. Goodrich	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512	Wardie J. Jarvis Jr.	Eastern Shore, MD	Br. 902
James M. Brooks	Pensacola, FL	Br. 321	Ronald L. Hansen	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512	Jasper H. Johnson	Eastern Shore, MD	Br. 902
Lawrence R. Cannon	Pensacola, FL	Br. 321	Richard L. Hicok	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512	Roland W. Morgan Jr.	Eastern Shore, MD	Br. 902
James L. Gilley	Pensacola, FL	Br. 321	Neil F. Jackson	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512	Graham R. Truitt	Eastern Shore, MD	Br. 902
Harold E. Goff Jr.	Pensacola, FL	Br. 321	James R. Johnston	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512	Glenn H. Wenzel	Detroit, MI	Br. 1
Roger C. Hallada	Pensacola, FL	Br. 321	Nicholas J. Keiderling	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512	Juanita White	Detroit, MI	Br. 1
James H. Hardy	Pensacola, FL	Br. 321	William J. Knapek	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512	Hugh R. Whiting	Detroit, MI	Br. 1
Wilfred E. Lacy	Pensacola, FL	Br. 321	Raymond E. Leitz	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512	Geo N. Williamson	Detroit, MI	Br. 1
Richard M. McGuire	Pensacola, FL	Br. 321	Micaela Lorenz	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512	Lillian E. Wilson	Detroit, MI	Br. 1
David L. Miller	Pensacola, FL	Br. 321	Marvel D. Pearce	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512	Clifford Woodards	Detroit, MI	Br. 1
Henry D. Morgan	Pensacola, FL	Br. 321	Marvin D. Ralston	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512	Jerome L. Wozny	Detroit, MI	Br. 1
Joe G. Polk	Pensacola, FL	Br. 321	Sandra M. Scarbrough	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512	Frank R. Wright	Detroit, MI	Br. 1
Donald E. Retherford	Pensacola, FL	Br. 321	Dean J. Schultz	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512	Ruby J. Zackery	Detroit, MI	Br. 1
Gary L. Rhodes	Pensacola, FL	Br. 321	Thomas J. Shea	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512	Richard L. Anderson	St. Cloud, MN	Br. 388
Michal L. Rockwell	Pensacola, FL	Br. 321	Michael J. Simbric	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512	Rodney A. Benson	St. Cloud, MN	Br. 388
Joel M. Rose III	Pensacola, FL	Br. 321	Robert C. Spiering	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512	Kenneth W. Bentler	St. Cloud, MN	Br. 388
Deborah T. Schultz	Pensacola, FL	Br. 321	Dale L. Culbertson	Wichita, KS	Br. 201	Lawrence L. Brambrink	St. Cloud, MN	Br. 388
Charles W. Thomas	Pensacola, FL	Br. 321	Benjamin E. Linn Jr.	Wichita, KS	Br. 201	Victor J. Bromschenkl	St. Cloud, MN	Br. 388
Hiram J. Torrance	Pensacola, FL	Br. 321	Richard W. Pohlman	Wichita, KS	Br. 201	Harlan W. Darkenwald	St. Cloud, MN	Br. 388
Gilbert Cabanas	Tampa, FL	Br. 599	Robert J. Combs Jr.	Lexington, KY	Br. 361	Aloise D. Dudek	St. Cloud, MN	Br. 388
Johnny W. Davis	Tampa, FL	Br. 599	Richard A. Dowd	Lexington, KY	Br. 361	Robert D. Endersbe	St. Cloud, MN	Br. 388
James G. Dean	Tampa, FL	Br. 599	Ted M. Hill	Lexington, KY	Br. 361	Michal J. Frank	St. Cloud, MN	Br. 388
Michael J. Loredo	Tampa, FL	Br. 599	Robert R. Lowry	Lexington, KY	Br. 361	Marvin J. Jurek	St. Cloud, MN	Br. 388
Lomax McIntyre Jr.	Tampa, FL	Br. 599	William D. Messer	Lexington, KY	Br. 361	Marvin C. Krippner	St. Cloud, MN	Br. 388
Louie A. Myers Sr.	Tampa, FL	Br. 599	Charles L. Traugott	Lexington, KY	Br. 361	Keith A. Miller	St. Cloud, MN	Br. 388
Dennis A. Owen	Tampa, FL	Br. 599	Joseph B. Crout Jr.	Gretna, LA	Br. 2730	Raymond E. Peka	St. Cloud, MN	Br. 388
Larry M. Tharrington	Tampa, FL	Br. 599	Charles A. Ferdinand	Gretna, LA	Br. 2730	Howard A. Perkins	St. Cloud, MN	Br. 388
Myron L. Thomas	Tampa, FL	Br. 599	Benjamin Jeffery	Gretna, LA	Br. 2730	Lawrence M. Stern	St. Cloud, MN	Br. 388
Henry T. Ballard	Augusta, GA	Br. 263	Clifton Jones	Gretna, LA	Br. 2730	Richard M. Tholl	St. Cloud, MN	Br. 388
Ronald E. Brack	Augusta, GA	Br. 263	Burnell H. Age	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124	David E. Lewis	Hattiesburg, MS	Br. 938
Russell V. Dye	Augusta, GA	Br. 263	J. D. Allmon	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124	Francis D. Berberich	Crystal City, MO	Br. 4050
Lewis M. English	Augusta, GA	Br. 263	Ernest V. Amedee	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124	Samuel H. Litton Jr.	Crystal City, MO	Br. 4050
George L. Heath	Augusta, GA	Br. 263	Stephn C. Belcher	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124	Kenneth L. Renfro	Crystal City, MO	Br. 4050
Isaac Jackson Jr.	Augusta, GA	Br. 263	Woodroe Bonds	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124	Robert L. Bugni	Butte, MT	Br. 621
Charles D. Kennedy	Augusta, GA	Br. 263	Levy J. Bouligny Jr.	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124	J. J. Burns	Butte, MT	Br. 621
Ronald F. Kucera	Augusta, GA	Br. 263	Ivory Brimmer Jr.	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124	George H. Curnow	Butte, MT	Br. 621
John K. Moody	Augusta, GA	Br. 263	Clarence Brooks Jr.	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124	Walter K. Hendrickson	Butte, MT	Br. 621
Ralph M. Moxley	Augusta, GA	Br. 263	Milton Burns	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124	George E. Keto	Butte, MT	Br. 621
Charlie J. Price	Augusta, GA	Br. 263	Joseph A. Cancienne	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124	Lee E. Masters	Butte, MT	Br. 621
Julian P. Rachels Jr.	Augusta, GA	Br. 263	Avery J. Dagonis III	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124	Michael J. McGrath	Butte, MT	Br. 621
Joe T. Romero	Augusta, GA	Br. 263	Richard Dimes	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124	Merlin B. Norbury	Butte, MT	Br. 621
Douglas R. Strakosch	Augusta, GA	Br. 263	Ronald Dixon	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124	James J. Riley	Butte, MT	Br. 621
Hector R. Torres Jr.	Augusta, GA	Br. 263	William B. Edward	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124	John P. Sullivan	Butte, MT	Br. 621
George M. Webb	Augusta, GA	Br. 263	Wendel M. Eugene	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124	Larry E. Taylor	Butte, MT	Br. 621
Robert D. Wilkerson	Augusta, GA	Br. 263	Louis W. Fernandez	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124	Clarence R. Van Elsberg	Butte, MT	Br. 621
Melvyn J. Leong	Aiea-Pearl City, HI	Br. 4682	Henry J. Gaspard	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124	James D. Winston	Butte, MT	Br. 621
Gregg K. Tanaka	Aiea-Pearl City, HI	Br. 4682	Isaac R. Gillard	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124	D. F. Allen	Omaha, NE	Br. 5
Junich C. Uno	Aiea-Pearl City, HI	Br. 4682	Ernest M. Harding	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124	Eugene J. Demkowski	Omaha, NE	Br. 5
Russell M. Hoffmann	Belleville, IL	Br. 155	Mervin A. Jackson	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124	Tom A. Dow	Omaha, NE	Br. 5
Allen D. Babcock	Decatur, IL	Br. 317	Wilson J. Jeanpierre Jr.	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124	Thomas A. Galus	Omaha, NE	Br. 5
Theodore A. Born	Decatur, IL	Br. 317	Lucien F. Justin	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124	James R. Gulizia	Omaha, NE	Br. 5
Russell J. Floyd	Decatur, IL	Br. 317	Adam M. King	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124	Robert J. Halac	Omaha, NE	Br. 5
Michael R. Hawkins	Decatur, IL	Br. 317	John A. Marrero Jr.	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124	Gayle K. Heigl	Omaha, NE	Br. 5
James A. Hibbard	Decatur, IL	Br. 317	David R. McGowan	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124	Laurie B. Mays	Omaha, NE	Br. 5
Lynn E. Hofst	Decatur, IL	Br. 317	Kenneth A. Monette	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124	Eugene F. Wyman Sr.	Omaha, NE	Br. 5
Marvin L. Hubbell	Decatur, IL	Br. 317	Napoleon Morris Jr.	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124	Gabriel J. Alves Jr.	NJ Mgd.	Br. 38
William A. Hurley	Decatur, IL	Br. 317	John M. Pierce	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124	R. D. Antonaccio	NJ Mgd.	Br. 38
Kent L. Kirby	Decatur, IL	Br. 317	Joseph H. Reed Jr.	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124	Joseph W. Bella	NJ Mgd.	Br. 38
Roy L. Knicley	Decatur, IL	Br. 317	Donald R. Richardson Sr.	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124	Dimetrius F. Blackwell	NJ Mgd.	Br. 38
Jack L. Landers	Decatur, IL	Br. 317	William Robinson Jr.	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124	John M. Leiggi	Princeton, NJ	Br. 268
Carolyn R. Mack	Decatur, IL	Br. 317	Lloyd E. Rogers	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124	George J. Madden	Brooklyn, NY	Br. 41

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

J. J. Marshall	Brooklyn, NY	Br. 41	Clarence A. Hinton	Richmond, VA	Br. 496	Paul M. Cerny	Tampa, FL	Br. 599
Jose A. Martinez	Brooklyn, NY	Br. 41	James A. Holbrook	Richmond, VA	Br. 496	Jasper R. Etheridge	Tampa, FL	Br. 599
Joseph A. Martinez	Brooklyn, NY	Br. 41	Henry C. Houston Jr.	Richmond, VA	Br. 496	Nicholas Garcea	Tampa, FL	Br. 599
Ciro P. Masso	Brooklyn, NY	Br. 41	Leroy Jefferson	Richmond, VA	Br. 496	Angus P. Grace Sr.	Tampa, FL	Br. 599
Robert J. Mauriello	Brooklyn, NY	Br. 41	Earl S. Johnson	Richmond, VA	Br. 496	Roger K. Harmon	Tampa, FL	Br. 599
Anthony J. Mazzariello	Brooklyn, NY	Br. 41	Howard W. Kimble	Richmond, VA	Br. 496	Kenneth Hodge	Tampa, FL	Br. 599
James J. McBride	Brooklyn, NY	Br. 41	Harold R. Lighty	Richmond, VA	Br. 496	Kermit S. Shoemaker	Tampa, FL	Br. 599
C. E. McGann	Brooklyn, NY	Br. 41	B. A. Marrin	Richmond, VA	Br. 496	James M. Taylor	Tampa, FL	Br. 599
Karl A. McIntosh	Brooklyn, NY	Br. 41	Norman P. Martin	Richmond, VA	Br. 496	Linda N. Coats	South FL	Br. 1071
James E. McNeil	Brooklyn, NY	Br. 41	Santa A. Mealy	Richmond, VA	Br. 496	Susan J. O'Brien	South FL	Br. 1071
Jorge Melendez	Brooklyn, NY	Br. 41	Matthew L. Melvin	Richmond, VA	Br. 496	Russell M. Hoffmann	Belleville, IL	Br. 155
Vincent Mercado	Brooklyn, NY	Br. 41	Samuel N. Mosby	Richmond, VA	Br. 496	Robert L. Conrad	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512
Lerion Moore	Brooklyn, NY	Br. 41	Mcadoo W. Pleasant	Richmond, VA	Br. 496	William E. Denton Jr.	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512
Leona Nichols	Brooklyn, NY	Br. 41	Ronald W. Roberts	Richmond, VA	Br. 496	Robert D. Dixon	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512
E. S. Oumano	Brooklyn, NY	Br. 41	James J. Sette Jr.	Richmond, VA	Br. 496	Duane J. Ford	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512
Carlo E. Dipasquale	Flushing, NY	Br. 294	William A. Smith III	Richmond, VA	Br. 496	Ronald L. Goodell	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512
Paul T. Alexander	Staten Island, NY	Br. 99	James L. Strother	Richmond, VA	Br. 496	Robert G. Goodrich	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512
Thomas E. Bobo	Athens, OH	Br. 997	Willie C. Thompson	Richmond, VA	Br. 496	Ronald L. Hansen	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512
Buford L. Brown	Athens, OH	Br. 997	John S. Townes	Richmond, VA	Br. 496	Richard L. Hicok	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512
Lloyd M. Goodwin	Athens, OH	Br. 997	W. E. Tyler	Richmond, VA	Br. 496	Neil F. Jackson	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512
Terry L. Holbert	Athens, OH	Br. 997	Michael H. Whitaker	Richmond, VA	Br. 496	James R. Johnston	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512
Charles E. Nelson	Athens, OH	Br. 997	Raymond A. Wilson Jr.	Richmond, VA	Br. 496	Nicholas F. Keiderling	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512
Larry L. Russell	Athens, OH	Br. 997				Raymond E. Leitz	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512
Carl W. Venham	Athens, OH	Br. 997				Micaela Lorenz	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512
James L. Williams	Athens, OH	Br. 997				Judith K. Nolting	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512
Ward B. Woodyard	Athens, OH	Br. 997				Marvel D. Pearce	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512
Robert G. Yerkes	Athens, OH	Br. 997				Marvin D. Ralston	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512
Jerry W. Fuller	Muskogee, OK	Br. 1042				Sandra M. Scarbrough	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512
Carl D. Gilley	Muskogee, OK	Br. 1042				Dean J. Schultz	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512
Boyd L. Hamby	Muskogee, OK	Br. 1042				Thomas J. Shea	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512
George L. Williamson	Muskogee, OK	Br. 1042				Michael J. Simbric	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512
Robert L. McCleery	Salem, OR	Br. 347				James A. Batcheller	Fort Dodge, IA	Br. 645
Dennis S. Sanderson	Salem, OR	Br. 347				Glen R. Johnson	Lexington, KY	Br. 361
Jerry E. Schurter	Salem, OR	Br. 347				William S. Logan II	Lexington, KY	Br. 361
Robert F. Fronza	Allentown, PA	Br. 274				Raymond J. Serafini	Lexington, KY	Br. 361
Albin R. Giniewski	Allentown, PA	Br. 274				Scotty L. Smith	Lexington, KY	Br. 361
Kevin J. Herman	Allentown, PA	Br. 274				Charles A. Ferdinand	Gretna, LA	Br. 2730
Victor A. Izzo	Allentown, PA	Br. 274				Benjamin Jeffery	Gretna, LA	Br. 2730
G. M. Janci	Allentown, PA	Br. 274				Clifton Jones	Gretna, LA	Br. 2730
Francis P. Kollar	Allentown, PA	Br. 274				Glenn D. Englade	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124
Phillip M. Milani	Allentown, PA	Br. 274				Roy E. Paul	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124
Leonard J. Perch	Allentown, PA	Br. 274				Wardie J. Jarvis Jr.	Eastern Shore, MD	Br. 902
William W. Pettinato	Allentown, PA	Br. 274				Jasper H. Johnson	Eastern Shore, MD	Br. 902
John A. Selady	Allentown, PA	Br. 274				Roland W. Morgan Jr.	Eastern Shore, MD	Br. 902
D. C. Seng	Allentown, PA	Br. 274				Graham R. Truitt	Eastern Shore, MD	Br. 902
Edward Sommer	Allentown, PA	Br. 274				Michael J. Dyer	Omaha, NE	Br. 5
Richard D. Young	Allentown, PA	Br. 274				Jeffrey A. Frans	Omaha, NE	Br. 5
Oliver W. Bailey	Ponce, PR	Br. 826				Larry J. Gibilisco	Omaha, NE	Br. 5
Agapito Bonilla	Ponce, PR	Br. 826				Daniel L. Huerter	Omaha, NE	Br. 5
Efrain Colombani	Ponce, PR	Br. 826				Fred J. Marasco	Omaha, NE	Br. 5
A. C. Cruz	Ponce, PR	Br. 826				Robert C. Martens	Omaha, NE	Br. 5
G. B. Escalante	Ponce, PR	Br. 826				Anthony Mateljan	Omaha, NE	Br. 5
C. Munoz	Ponce, PR	Br. 826				Richard P. Miller	Omaha, NE	Br. 5
A. M. Ortiz	Ponce, PR	Br. 826				Arthur T. Palma	Omaha, NE	Br. 5
Jose L. Rosa	Ponce, PR	Br. 826				Donald E. Parr	Omaha, NE	Br. 5
William Rosado	Ponce, PR	Br. 826				William J. Raymond	Omaha, NE	Br. 5
Floyd Kelley	Galveston, TX	Br. 23				Frederick G. Scurlock	Omaha, NE	Br. 5
David Marabillas	Galveston, TX	Br. 23				Stanley A. Skikus Jr.	Omaha, NE	Br. 5
Reymundo Santos	Galveston, TX	Br. 23				Gustav M. Wielandt	Omaha, NE	Br. 5
Wilbert Young	Galveston, TX	Br. 23				Stanley J. Wzorek	Omaha, NE	Br. 5
Richard K. Boydrobertson	Victoria, TX	Br. 1221				Gabriel J. Alves Jr.	NJ Mgd.	Br. 38
Albert Guajardo	Victoria, TX	Br. 1221				R. D. Antonaccio	NJ Mgd.	Br. 38
Mark A. Hanson Sr.	Victoria, TX	Br. 1221				Joseph W. Bella	NJ Mgd.	Br. 38
James C. Hurta	Victoria, TX	Br. 1221				Dimetrius F. Blackwell	NJ Mgd.	Br. 38
Mary L. Lum	Victoria, TX	Br. 1221				Bernard P. Reed	Gallup, NM	Br. 2990
Max Sturm	Victoria, TX	Br. 1221				George J. Madden	Brooklyn, NY	Br. 41
Nicolas Torres	Victoria, TX	Br. 1221				Jose A. Martinez	Brooklyn, NY	Br. 41
Robert D. Wall	Victoria, TX	Br. 1221				Joseph A. Martinez	Brooklyn, NY	Br. 41
Leslie G. Wanjura	Victoria, TX	Br. 1221				Ciro P. Masso	Brooklyn, NY	Br. 41
William L. Gilliam	Richmond, VA	Br. 496				Robert J. Mauriello	Brooklyn, NY	Br. 41
Edward Greene	Richmond, VA	Br. 496				C. E. McGann	Brooklyn, NY	Br. 41
Peter L. Hajacos	Richmond, VA	Br. 496				James E. McNeil	Brooklyn, NY	Br. 41
Bert E. Hargrave Jr.	Richmond, VA	Br. 496				Jesus Mejias	Brooklyn, NY	Br. 41

50-year pins and gold cards

Colin C. Rammelkamp	Sacramento, CA	Br. 133
Theodore Santos	Sacramento, CA	Br. 133
David A. Coleman	Centennial, CO	Br. 5996
Martin T. McMahon	Centennial, CO	Br. 5996
Tim Navarro	Centennial, CO	Br. 5996
Gilbert A. Sanchez	Centennial, CO	Br. 5996
Michael J. Zerumski	Centennial, CO	Br. 5996
Patrick E. Burke	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Michael J. Gland	Wilmington, DE	Br. 191
Walter W. Johnson Jr.	Wilmington, DE	Br. 191
James J. Mellon Jr.	Wilmington, DE	Br. 191
Robert C. Phillips	Wilmington, DE	Br. 191
Paul D. Spadaro	Wilmington, DE	Br. 191
Donald J. Anderson	Clearwater, FL	Br. 2008
Earl L. Bernhardt Jr.	Clearwater, FL	Br. 2008
Robert M. Busch	Clearwater, FL	Br. 2008
Raymond E. Carlson	Clearwater, FL	Br. 2008
Jerome P. Fogerty	Clearwater, FL	Br. 2008
David A. Hooley	Clearwater, FL	Br. 2008
Robert A. Leopardi	Clearwater, FL	Br. 2008
Harold R. McCabe	Clearwater, FL	Br. 2008
Michael W. Morrison	Clearwater, FL	Br. 2008
Vincenzo P. Parigi	Clearwater, FL	Br. 2008
Wendell S. Parker	Clearwater, FL	Br. 2008
Billy J. Scarbrough	Clearwater, FL	Br. 2008
Carl W. Slater	Clearwater, FL	Br. 2008
Ronald B. Tinch	Clearwater, FL	Br. 2008
Travis O. Arnett	Pensacola, FL	Br. 321
John M. Barker	Pensacola, FL	Br. 321
James M. Brooks	Pensacola, FL	Br. 321
Lawrence R. Cannon	Pensacola, FL	Br. 321
Harold E. Goff Jr.	Pensacola, FL	Br. 321
Roger C. Hallada	Pensacola, FL	Br. 321
James H. Hardy	Pensacola, FL	Br. 321
George H. Howard	Pensacola, FL	Br. 321
Wilfred E. Lacy	Pensacola, FL	Br. 321
Richrd M. McGuire	Pensacola, FL	Br. 321
David L. Miller	Pensacola, FL	Br. 321
Henry D. Morgan	Pensacola, FL	Br. 321
Joe G. Polk	Pensacola, FL	Br. 321
Donald E. Retherford	Pensacola, FL	Br. 321
Gary L. Rhodes	Pensacola, FL	Br. 321
Michal L. Rockwell	Pensacola, FL	Br. 321
Joel M. Rose III	Pensacola, FL	Br. 321
Deborah T. Schultz	Pensacola, FL	Br. 321
Charles W. Thomas	Pensacola, FL	Br. 321
Hiram J. Torrance	Pensacola, FL	Br. 321
Oscar Alvarez Jr.	Tampa, FL	Br. 599
Arthur F. Bell	Tampa, FL	Br. 599

Paul M. Cerny	Tampa, FL	Br. 599
Jasper R. Etheridge	Tampa, FL	Br. 599
Nicholas Garcea	Tampa, FL	Br. 599
Angus P. Grace Sr.	Tampa, FL	Br. 599
Roger K. Harmon	Tampa, FL	Br. 599
Kenneth Hodge	Tampa, FL	Br. 599
Kermit S. Shoemaker	Tampa, FL	Br. 599
James M. Taylor	Tampa, FL	Br. 599
Linda N. Coats	South FL	Br. 1071
Susan J. O'Brien	South FL	Br. 1071
Russell M. Hoffmann	Belleville, IL	Br. 155
Robert L. Conrad	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512
William E. Denton Jr.	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512
Robert D. Dixon	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512
Duane J. Ford	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512
Ronald L. Goodell	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512
Robert G. Goodrich	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512
Ronald L. Hansen	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512
Richard L. Hicok	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512
Neil F. Jackson	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512
James R. Johnston	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512
Nicholas F. Keiderling	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512
Raymond E. Leitz	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512
Micaela Lorenz	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512
Judith K. Nolting	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512
Marvel D. Pearce	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512
Marvin D. Ralston	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512
Sandra M. Scarbrough	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512
Dean J. Schultz	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512
Thomas J. Shea	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512
Michael J. Simbric	Waterloo, IA	Br. 512
James A. Batcheller	Fort Dodge, IA	Br. 645
Glen R. Johnson	Lexington, KY	Br. 361
William S. Logan II	Lexington, KY	Br. 361
Raymond J. Serafini	Lexington, KY	Br. 361
Scotty L. Smith	Lexington, KY	Br. 361
Charles A. Ferdinand	Gretna, LA	Br. 2730
Benjamin Jeffery	Gretna, LA	Br. 2730
Clifton Jones	Gretna, LA	Br. 2730
Glenn D. Englade	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124
Roy E. Paul	New Orleans, LA	Br. 124
Wardie J. Jarvis Jr.	Eastern Shore, MD	Br. 902
Jasper H. Johnson	Eastern Shore, MD	Br. 902
Roland W. Morgan Jr.	Eastern Shore, MD	Br. 902
Graham R. Truitt	Eastern Shore, MD	Br. 902
Michael J. Dyer	Omaha, NE	Br. 5
Jeffrey A. Frans	Omaha, NE	Br. 5
Larry J. Gibilisco	Omaha, NE	Br. 5
Daniel L. Huerter	Omaha, NE	Br. 5
Fred J. Marasco	Omaha, NE	Br. 5
Robert C. Martens	Omaha, NE	Br. 5
Anthony Mateljan	Omaha, NE	Br. 5
Richard P. Miller	Omaha, NE	Br. 5
Arthur T. Palma	Omaha, NE	Br. 5
Donald E. Parr	Omaha, NE	Br. 5
William J. Raymond	Omaha, NE	Br. 5
Frederick G. Scurlock	Omaha, NE	Br. 5
Stanley A. Skikus Jr.	Omaha, NE	Br. 5
Gustav M. Wielandt	Omaha, NE	Br. 5
Stanley J. Wzorek	Omaha, NE	Br. 5
Gabriel J. Alves Jr.	NJ Mgd.	Br. 38
R. D. Antonaccio	NJ Mgd.	Br. 38
Joseph W. Bella	NJ Mgd.	Br. 38
Dimetrius F. Blackwell	NJ Mgd.	Br. 38
Bernard P. Reed	Gallup, NM	Br. 2990
George J. Madden	Brooklyn, NY	Br. 41
Jose A. Martinez	Brooklyn, NY	Br. 41
Joseph A. Martinez	Brooklyn, NY	Br. 41
Ciro P. Masso	Brooklyn, NY	Br. 41
Robert J. Mauriello	Brooklyn, NY	Br. 41
C. E. McGann	Brooklyn, NY	Br. 41
James E. McNeil	Brooklyn, NY	Br. 41
Jesus Mejias	Brooklyn, NY	Br. 41

Honor Roll

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

Jorge Melendez	Brooklyn, NY	Br. 41	Larry L. Russell	Athens, OH	Br. 997	G. G. Kratzer	Allentown, PA	Br. 274
Vincent Mercado	Brooklyn, NY	Br. 41	Carl W. Venham	Athens, OH	Br. 997	Dale A. Lakatos	Allentown, PA	Br. 274
D. A. Minerva	Brooklyn, NY	Br. 41	James L. Williams	Athens, OH	Br. 997	Stephen C. Pramick	Allentown, PA	Br. 274
Lerion Moore	Brooklyn, NY	Br. 41	Ward B. Woodyard	Athens, OH	Br. 997	Joseph R. Sipe	Allentown, PA	Br. 274
Leona Nichols	Brooklyn, NY	Br. 41	Roy E. Justice	Muskogee, OK	Br. 1042	Joseph J. Unger	Allentown, PA	Br. 274
E. S. Oumano	Brooklyn, NY	Br. 41	George L. Williamson	Muskogee, OK	Br. 1042	Dana L. Galbreath	Galveston, TX	Br. 23
Duane R. Bace	Buffalo-Western NY	Br. 3	Roger A. Bachelder	Salem, OR	Br. 347	David H. O'Neal Jr.	Galveston, TX	Br. 23
Gunther M. Clemens	Buffalo-Western NY	Br. 3	Larry J. Halverson	Salem, OR	Br. 347	Richard K. Boydrobertson	Victoria, TX	Br. 1221
Robert S. Emery	Buffalo-Western NY	Br. 3	Gary M. Hulett	Salem, OR	Br. 347	Albert Guajardo	Victoria, TX	Br. 1221
Richard A. Hise	Buffalo-Western NY	Br. 3	Jerome S. Larson	Salem, OR	Br. 347	Mark A. Hanson Sr.	Victoria, TX	Br. 1221
E. J. Magiera	Buffalo-Western NY	Br. 3	Daniel W. Miller	Salem, OR	Br. 347	James C. Hurta	Victoria, TX	Br. 1221
Brian S. Placta	Buffalo-Western NY	Br. 3	Jay A. Orand	Salem, OR	Br. 347	Mary L. Lum	Victoria, TX	Br. 1221
Joseph Ruisi	Buffalo-Western NY	Br. 3	Donald P. Parise	Salem, OR	Br. 347	Max Sturm	Victoria, TX	Br. 1221
Richard J. Szczerbiak	Buffalo-Western NY	Br. 3	Donald C. Atwell	Allentown, PA	Br. 274	Robert D. Wall	Victoria, TX	Br. 1221
Carlo E. Dipasquale	Flushing, NY	Br. 294	Rickey L. Brown	Allentown, PA	Br. 274	Leslie G. Wanjura	Victoria, TX	Br. 1221
Thomas E. Bobo	Athens, OH	Br. 997	Wayne H. Connellan	Allentown, PA	Br. 274	Philip H. Page	Richmond, VA	Br. 496
Buford L. Brown	Athens, OH	Br. 997	Robert L. Dougherty	Allentown, PA	Br. 274	Carl Smith	Richmond, VA	Br. 496
Lloyd M. Goodwin	Athens, OH	Br. 997	Carl H. Ernst	Allentown, PA	Br. 274	Ralph W. Dennis Jr.	Morgantown, WV	Br. 783
Terry L. Holbert	Athens, OH	Br. 997	George O. Gaugler	Allentown, PA	Br. 274	Eugene A. Roberts	Morgantown, WV	Br. 783
Charles E. Nelson	Athens, OH	Br. 997	Samuel A. Kraftician	Allentown, PA	Br. 274			

Retiree Reports

Anchorage, Alaska

The branch ended the year in great shape financially. And the past year has been one of the best on record for success at arbitration. Having an arbitration advocate in the branch has paid tremendous dividends.

We first had James Frankford as a local branch advocate. He soon had the highest win rate in the country. And with that came attention from the national officers. And now James is the RAA for Region 2 and is continuing to do a fabulous job service all six states.

Then we had local steward and branch officer Andrew Grant, who started advocating cases not only locally, but he is working on grievances through the region. He matched and exceeded the success at arbitration that brother Frankford enjoyed.

While the general membership might not recognize these accomplishments, those who have been represented by brothers Frankford and Grant witnessed some of the best arbitration advocates the NALC possesses. Please congratulate and thank them for their hard work representing letters carriers. We are very fortunate to have them.

If you are contemplating retiring this year, please reach out and schedule time with me to go over what to expect. I recommend that members review their life insurance beneficiaries. Having contingent beneficiaries is smart planning and will reduce a stressful situation in the future. Lastly, if you've filed a workers' compensation case at some point in your career, that needs to be listed on the application for retirement. Many members struggle knowing what their claim number and when their dates of injury happened. Be prepared when meeting to complete your forms.

And ask yourself, "Was this the last Christmas I delivered?" If the answer is yes, thank you for your service.

Jim Raymond, Branch 4319

Bergen Co. Mgd., New Jersey

Some of my "getting ready to retire" guidelines: It was a great feeling when I decided on a date that I would be leaving. It gets better when your accumulated sick time reaches your leaving date—I had about eight months of sick leave in April of 2010, and with a target date of Jan 2, 2011, I felt home free.

Just be prepared for your first couple of annuity checks to be less than what you are supposed to get. They told me that eventually they would catch up. It is important to have some annual leave when you leave. I had about three weeks, and that was included in your very last check.

I look forward to everyone getting to their leaving date, throwing out all those alarm clocks and just enjoying life.

Stay informed; attend your union meetings.

Dennis Spoto, Branch 425

Centennial, Colorado

Hey fellow retirees!

Short, dark cold days of winter were never my favorite time of year. It's after the holidays when you have to start thinking of taxes, going on another diet, or redoing your budget. But slowly, the days get longer, and travel plans will begin forming and the world continues to spin.

At the December union meeting, Branch 5996 was notified that the annual budget will be given at the January meeting for membership approval. One of the most important meetings of the year, this is every member's chance to have a voice in how their dues are being spent. Do you want to see more training opportunities, more social gatherings, or more fellowship meals? The executive board will be gathering to hash out a plan and present it to the membership.

How do you have your voice heard? In this day and age, there are people who are feeling disenfranchised or left out. I think this is why our society is fracturing. A democracy is based on all people agreeing on something that will benefit the majority. So, we negotiate or give passionate debates trying to sway others to agree with us. When that is absent, those who show up make the decisions. So, if you are happy with letting other people decide what is best for the group, take the night off. But if you want to see change, show up, speak up, and then listen. We don't know what you want if you are not there. And you don't know what the constraints are if you are not there.

My shout-out this month is for Marcie Miller and her crew who trains new carriers, and Roy Zuniga for organizing them into this great union. Great job!

In unity—

Barb Larson, Branch 5996

Paterson, New Jersey

Oct. 11, 2023, marked another milestone for Branch 120.

Our strike president/leader, Murray Ross, turned 100 years old. We are proud and honored to have Murray not only as our past president, but also as our consultant. We are so excited that we have him here today.

Although Murray resides in California, we honor his dedication, strength and courage that started the wave of a strike here in New Jersey. This strike led to better working conditions, better bargaining rights, wages, and better wages and benefits.

Although years have passed, we will always remember Murray for that. Strong union leaders are difficult to find. Happy birthday, Murray.

Joseph Murone, Branch 120



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

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

The app's features include:

- Workplace resources, including the National Agreement, *JCAM*, MRS and CCA resources
- Instantaneous NALC news with personalized push notifications and social media access
- Interactive Non-Scheduled Days calendar
- Much more
- Legislative tools, including bill tracker, individualized congressional representatives and PAC information

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

Branch Items

Albany, New York

In the Northeast section of the country, management at every level began refusing to sign any settlement with cease-and-desist language a few years ago. I'm sure many of you across the nation have experienced similar reluctance.

Rather than impassioned every single grievance to arbitration for "magic language," we tried "Management will abide by Article 8 and refrain from future violations." Now I'm just a letter carrier, not an attorney, but I felt this was practically the same as cease and desist. Instructional in nature and it basically says to follow the contract and stop future violations. It took plenty of negotiating to get to that language, and management reluctantly started to sign grievances using it.

My feeling was dead wrong! As a regional arbitrator so eloquently put recently: "The Step B Decisions do not include the term of art 'Cease-and-Desist' with known and understood consequences. Rather, the parties negotiated for the language used. It means something more than complying with 8.5.G, but something less than a Cease-and-Desist. There is no evidence presented by either side to show what consequences might have been anticipated by the parties by using the 'refrain from' language."

There you have it, folks—learn from my mistake. After all, mistakes are the seeds from which trees of knowledge grow. "Cease and desist" is a term of art with known and understood consequences and it's the only instructional resolution that matters in our fight for contractual compliance. We need to ensure we tighten up our case files! Many more grievances will be headed to arbitration until management is so inundated with cease-and-desist orders awarded at arbitration that they begin to understand the union can accept nothing less than this term of art, cease and desist!

Norris Beswick, Branch 29

Boston, Massachusetts

On behalf of the Branch 34 officers and executive board, I would like to take this opportunity to wish all my fellow union brothers and sisters and their families a happy new year, merry Christmas, happy Hanukkah, happy Kwanzaa, or to the holiday throughout the year you observe as special. May you and your entire family enjoy this special time of the year.

I have to start by giving a big shout-out to all the letter carriers for another successful holiday season. You are the city letter carriers who put smiles on kids' faces, connect long-lost friends, and keep families connected by working long hours—all while being extremely understaffed and giving our customers the service they deserve. Take a bow; you've earned it.

Finally, the books are closed on 2023 and I'm happy to report that our branch is on solid financial ground and the modernization of our union operations is almost complete.

Now is the time to set our goals for 2024. As everyone knows, Boston is a very large branch.

Communicating with all our members is sometime challenging.

With that said, I would like to introduce your new NALC Branch 34 Mobile App. This app provides Branch 34 members with a tool to connect with their union and stay on top of major events, learn about their rights in the workplace, download their representatives, contracts and more. Members can download this app from Apple store, Google Play or by using the QR code at left.



In closing, my No. 1 goal for 2024 is to grow, strengthen and fully modernize our branch operations with the specific design of providing our membership with the highest quality of representation they've earned and deserve. Again, happy new year!

Tom Rooney, Branch 34

Camden Merged, New Jersey

I hope everyone enjoyed the holidays. And I hope we all have a safe, healthy and happy new year. As I write this article, we are in the throes of the holiday rush. By the time you read this, it will all be over. For those of us who have been through this busy season a few times, it's a normal part of the year. But it can be a very hectic and fretful time for our newest members. Here's hoping we all survived the holidays!

Branch 540 is holding our shop steward elections. While this fact may not normally be newsworthy, for us this year, it is. Not only are steward elections not an every-year occurrence in our branch (it's been tough trying to get new blood to step up and get active), but this year we are holding shop steward elections in three of our offices. I find this to be exciting, and I feel it brings a good energy to the branch. The chair of our election committee, Rich Coniglio, is not so thrilled. He has asked our executive board to think about changing when we hold our steward elections in our bylaws. Nominations for our shop stewards have always been in November, and elections are held in December. This year he and his committee must run elections in three offices during the peak of the holiday season. That's a bit much for anybody.

I was looking at my January Branch Item from last year (2022). I wrote about things getting back to normal as we were all learning to live with Covid. Our branch had started meeting in person again. What a difference a year makes.

Chuck Goushian, Branch 540

Charlotte, North Carolina

Branch 545 would like to wish everyone a happy new year. We want to show our appreciation to all the stewards who were able to attend higher education/training courses in 2023. Thanks to your efforts, our branch is better prepared to deal with the challenges that will come in the year 2024 and beyond. Our branch has officially tripled the number of certified Formal A stewards from one to three, and

several of our Informal A stewards graduated from the Steward College. We are continuing to move in the right direction and are getting even stronger as a 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

Another year in the books for the hardworking letter carriers here in the Queen City, and what a year it was. Rain, snow, heat, cold and even the idiots who rob us of our keys might kick us down for a second, but with resilience, we get back up and complete our job with pride and confidence, even when we are told by the so-called supervisors who couldn't make their way out of a wet paper bag with a hole in it that you suck, because we all know the public depends and loves to see us every day.

We all know that once the holidays are over and the volume gets kicked back down, the micromanagement will be back in full force, as per usual. Selective hearing is a great tool to have every day when dealing with what we deal with in the office. New Year's resolutions have never been my thing in the past, but going forward, I'm going to try to be a nicer person until someone gets under my skin, so Jan. 2, that will probably be out the door.

Thank you to all in every station for your exceptional job in getting the mail and packages delivered. I know that a lot of people never hear what a great job they do, only the negative things are pointed out every day. For the new carriers out there, please just stick with it; this job is very rewarding eventually. Remember, we are a family, and we should always stick together. Management doesn't care about us, so we need to care for each other.

Branch meetings are every second Thursday of the month in Forest Park. All are welcome.

Union strong!

Chris Rought, Branch 43

Cumberland, Maryland

Happy new year to all. Branch 638 of Cumberland will be accepting nominations for branch officers starting January through February 2024. The election will be held at the March meeting, with the installation of officers to be held at the April meeting. The branch meetings are held the third Wednesday of each month.

Start the new year off by getting informed and educated on your contractual rights. Many questions can be answered by attending your meetings, listening to other carriers who may have your same issues.

Paul Kirby, Branch 638

Emerald Coast, Florida

We are constantly hearing about getting out of the office, we must break the geofences, on and on. We as carriers take pride in our work and are dedicated workers trying to serve the public. It is frustrating when we try to do



Trenton, NJ Br. 380 honors Frank Cuiule, age 99, for 75 years of NALC membership. Pictured (l to r) are Branch Vice President Ken Van Aken, Branch President John Clark, Cuiule, Branch Secretary Rick Zerkner and Region 12 NBA Brian Thompson.

our job but are not allowed to do it.

Recently we have been instructed to take only DPS, SPRS and packages to the street and when you return, you case the mail you delayed in the morning for the next day. Let's make it make sense—we delay the mail, only to return and case for the next day. Now we are taking two days of mail when we could have done this correctly and taken all the mail for the day and been done with it. I believe in working smarter, not harder.

Now when they get into their feelings, it's take SPRS and packages only and hit the street. Now this is on a Saturday, so now you have three days of mail to handle on Monday. Sure, we will follow the instructions of supervision or postmaster—and yes, we have carriers calling out, we get that—but they need to analyze, supervise and make the adjustment. Formulate a plan and carry it out. We don't prioritize what goes out for the day, such as packages over the mail; it should be all the mail including packages all day, every day.

In my opinion, the Postal Service has changed a lot over the many years that I have worked here. I wish we could return to the days that delivering the mail was *important*, not “we deliver it when we can.”

Keep your heads up, keep delivering the mail. Let's hope things change for the best.

Percy Smith Jr., Branch 4559

Fresno, California

“You only lose the fight for justice when you give up, or stop fighting.” These are the words of Cesar Chavez when he led the United Farm Workers. Simple words, yet powerful. Those words apply to Labor, OWCP, voting rights. Also, human rights. Sure, there are already laws and rights on the books. That does not mean management adheres to them. If you allow them to, they will! It's a

seemingly never-ending fight. Just like Cesar Chavez said: Do not give up the fight.

It upsets me to read or hear some of our own members criticize our national, state and local representatives, yet refusing to help in any way. No writing supporting statements, no reporting abuse of co-workers by management, no running for a union position. If you are going to complain, help in solving the problem. There is nothing wrong with that. Our rights and benefits are there to help us. All of us. They did not come about because management was being supportive. They had to be fought for over long periods of time. The voice of our membership is valuable, as our actions forced our employer to agree to working conditions standards, safety conditions, wages. Turning on your union, and helping abusive management divide our members, is not being united. Postal management loves when we are not united. None of us are perfect, including you.

Stand united in our fight for rights and benefits. Those very rights and benefits help in the survival of the Postal Service. You must live unity, not just talk it.

Jesse Dominguez, Branch 231

Greensboro, North Carolina

To my brothers and sisters,

What's more important, the mail or the safety of the carrier? This is a question I find myself asking management often when I am conducting an investigation. Every single time, management answers, “The carrier,” because they know if they answer any differently, then their secret would come out. *Actions!* Speak louder than words.

When management puts time constraints on our brothers and sisters, they subtract the time for our safety. The majority of the time, all they are looking at are the numbers and basing your departure from the office and return to the office off of their projections, which in itself is a grievance.

Safety is not just making sure we do not have an on-the-job injury, it is also making sure we are aware of our surrounding and making sure we do not get robbed at gunpoint and threatened with our life. This month alone I have had to deal with a handful of robberies and incidents that involved a firearm and putting some of our brothers and sisters in harm's way.

Our brothers and sisters deserve to be treated better than paper and keys. And we also need not to let them treat us less than. Look out for tampering with your cluster boxes and parcel lockers, and report it to management and let them follow the proper procedures. Informing management and letting them actually do their job can *possibly* stop an act of violence against us. And if there is a possibility to stop just one, then it is worth it.

Do your part in keeping yourself and our brothers and sisters safe. If management does

not do their part, we make sure we hold them accountable. Safety is No. 1 in all scenarios.

In solidarity—

Anthony Kennedy, Branch 630

Jackson, Michigan

I'm sure the nation has heard of the University of Michigan's scouting scandal. If not, it's a good soap opera.

The concern I have is how it brings out the good and bad in everyone. Some will say, “It's only a game—who cares? Some will say, “Rules need to be followed.” Some will say, “Everyone does it.” Some will say, “You're jealous because you hate the Wolverines.” All have valid points, I suppose. My concern is how this sports team, that is basically for entertainment, has brought out the ugly in everyone.

Where does this fit in to a person's life? Is it only entertainment and one should just enjoy the game? Is it a learning moment where you tell your children that cheating in any way is wrong, no matter if everyone's doing it? Is our society gone to this? Is this why little things in the workplace can be overlooked—because everyone is doing it? Do we have no more morals, integrity or pride? Is winning at all costs where we are at?

Is it OK to cut corners at work? Is it OK to not deliver a piece of mail because everyone is doing it? Where do we draw the line? When is it too far?

Is our society at the point of overlooking wrongdoing because everyone is doing it? Or, should we hold people accountable for their actions? Is it only a game, or is it a society that has gone down the wrong path and uses the “everyone is doing it” excuse, so it's OK to do?

Please help me understand. Is it different for a sporting event to be compared to real-life actions? Am I missing something?

Mark Raczkowski, Branch 232

Kansas City, Missouri

There were numerous committed Branch 30 members, still delivering the nation's mail, in the gloom of night who missed the Branch 30 Christmas party. As it now stands, RUMor CONTROL has not verified if Branch 30 will be included in the 2024 Party-Hearty Calendar of “Must Attend Events” schedule. Amazingly, Terry “Party Poohbah” Myers and the Branch 30 entertainment committee continually present outstanding affairs for its members. For the 200 attendees who were fortunate enough to take part in the festivities, they should be good to go until peak season has passed. Everyone else is going to have to hold out until New Year's Eve or the family gathering. Nonetheless, party goers indulged on Jack Stack Bar-B-Que while getting their jam on with Djgeleven.

However, when the lights come on, the party haze fades, and reality comes back into focus. What comes next?

If serious issues with attendance, street crime, improved retention of new active NALC carriers and an overall change in perspective doesn't happen (quickly, I might add), animosity and low morale may affect the NALC like

Branch Items

never before. In some situations, it is apparent that postal management's lack of dignity and respect may be the contributing factor.

Does anyone want to address the white elephant on the workroom floor? Seemingly those of us who dutifully "show up and show out" are being subjected to increased physical and mental stress by our casemates, who must believe CCA means "can come, anytime" or PTF, which is "part-time, flexible" concerning their hours. It would seem as though job satisfaction is no longer an element of a career position.

Branch meetings are held at the union hall on the second Thursday of the month, except in June (first Wednesday). Get involved, stay involved.

Calvin Davis, Branch 30

Knoxville, Tennessee

Happy new year, brothers and sisters!

Last month, the branch had its elections of officers and delegates to lead the branch into the next two years. We had an election for president and national convention delegates. All will take their positions this month to begin their terms.

Congratulations to the following carriers: President James Collins II, Vice President Reba Campbell, Recording Secretary Robert Gryder, Financial Secretary Carlos Jimenez, Branch Treasurer Scott Liedel, HBP/MBA/Director of Retirees Jody Cardwell, Sergeant-at-Arms Sam Frye, and Trustees Chad Harding, William Heller and James Peppers. Shop stewards are Tom Howell (Burlington), James Collins II (Cedar Bluff), Jordan Kegley (Concord), Robert Gryder (Lonsdale), Robert Gryder (Norwood), Bobby Walker (West Hills), Brandon Cummings (North), Greg Bray (Fountain City), Ben Kizer (South), Josh Gillispie (Maryville), Reba Campbell (Oak Ridge) and Kevin Brooks (Jefferson City).

It makes no difference if you are in your first year or your 30th year. You have sworn an oath to protect the interests of the collective-bargaining agreement, the *Joint Contract Admin-*

istration Manual (JCAM), M-41, M-39 Handbooks, and their letter carriers' union rights. Remember, you are not alone. Do not become blind to contract violations. If you have a question or issue, do not be afraid to talk with your president or vice president. Make yourself known to your brothers and sisters, particularly newly assigned city carrier assistants (CCAs). Help them out through those first 90 days. You are not expected to know all the answers, but you must be the kind of person who enjoys finding them.

Tony Rodriguez, Branch 419

Monterey, California

A few times in your life you meet some amazing people; Manny Sanchez, retired, was one of those people. When I transferred to Monterey, he was No. 1 on seniority. Manny was a great trade unionist and let everyone know how he felt.

In management's infinite wisdom, they tried to discipline Manny. I was so proud when I found out that the majority of his customers came to the Monterey Post Office and picketed, supporting Manny! Now that's what I call amazing.

Manny was so proud of his blue truck, you could probably eat off the hood if you wanted to. His mail truck was no different. He had this swanky metal cover made for the back of his truck and expected everyone to take great care if they drove it.

I am honored to have had Manny in my life and cherish the memories. RIP, my brother. You will never be forgotten.

Congratulations to Phil Padick on his work saving two carriers' jobs. The job can be stressful at times, but he prevailed. On that note, I'm hoping someone will think about getting more involved in the branch. Our branch is more than 100 years old and has a lot of history. Think about it!

Many thanks go out to all of the carriers who worked hard to make everyone's holidays special. Be careful out there—it ain't what it used to be. Wouldn't it be nice if management appreciates you for once, instead of trying to bully carriers? One can wish.

Stick together, support each other, and stop arguing. It's a great job—enjoy! Watch out for porch pirates; they are everywhere.

United we bargain—divided we beg.

Patty Cramer, Branch 1310

New Orleans, Louisiana

Greetings, my fellow letter carriers.

I hope you all had a merry Christmas, and I wish you a happy new year! 2023 was year full of challenges as well as full of accomplishments. As we look forward to 2024, we are hopeful for many great things coming to letter carriers. Here's wishing everyone a great Martin Luther King Jr. holiday. I truly wish the incoming year brings you good health, happiness and prosperity! I sincerely hope you achieved your New Year's resolutions. Mine never changes: a smaller waistline and a fatter wallet!

You CCAs, take courage in anticipating better things in the coming months as pertaining to the new contract! Continue to come to work on time and roaring to go like a well-oiled engine built for the task at hand. Attend your union meetings! Participate, run for office, become a shop steward. The sky is the limit. Continue to give to LCPFF!

I would like to commend the newer ones who attended the state convention. I look forward to congratulating you at the national convention in Boston. Keep on keeping on! Remember, the goal is to reach retirement. Keep getting up, continue to grind; you will achieve your goal. Let's be safe out there. Safety first. We strive to be the best we can be the very best.

We have a saying: When the going gets tough, the tough get going! Whatever we do, we deliver with pride and gusto. Keep delivering! The Postal Service on the move. We can, we will, we shall remain the best postal service in the world. A shout-out to all the letter carriers in the 50 states, Guam, Puerto Rico and all U.S. territories.

Yours in unionism—

Marshall Wayne Smith, Branch 124

Norristown, Pennsylvania

Here we go—surprise, surprise

Packages are on the rise

Why doesn't it cross their mind

It's every year at Christmastime

We never have enough people

We never have enough vehicles

Upper management thinks we do

But we all know what is the truth

Christmas comes but once a year

It's not something we should fear

We bring shopping to their door

So they don't have to go to the store

Gifts for everyone all at one time

A click of a mouse, the ease of online

Shippers depend that we will deliver

Summers shine and the dead of winter

We do our jobs, we aim to please

Swift delivery with the greatest of ease

Packages piling up in our trucks

Stacked with precision, so wish us luck

If it says fragile, we treat it with care

Put it on top, 'cause it belongs there

Seasoned carriers care about service

We wouldn't do anything to hurt us

All the newbies are in a panic

Piles of cards are becoming gigantic

Hours are long, but we will survive

Unfortunately, this takes a lot of our time

Our family misses us as we deliver smiles

To every house for thousands of miles

Thanksgiving to New Year's becomes a blur

Sunrise to sunset, no room for error

Bad addresses delivered with ease

Knowing your customers 'cause we aim to please

And when it's over, we can be proud

We'll be very tired, without a doubt

Happy holidays for everyone is for what we strive

Delivering for America since 1775

And on that note, I'll bring this to an end

Next year we'll do it again

And management will still be unprepared

But the carriers will be the ones who care

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.

From my family to yours, let's go enjoy some cheer Merry Christmas and happy new year

Joel Stimmler, Branch 542

North Florida

Branch 53, North Florida Letter Carriers, will be the host branch for the spring 2024 NALC Committee of Presidents meeting. This meeting will be held Sunday, March 3, through Monday, March 4. You *must* pre-register no later than Feb. 9. For registration and hotel information, go to branch343.org/COP. We have had this meeting in Jacksonville before, and we look forward to seeing you all again.

For those smaller branches that funding limits travel and you live close to Jacksonville, this is an opportunity to meet with other branch presidents from all over and hear concerns and get answers. Being close cuts costs to the branch. It is also a good time to hear how new testing that affects letter carriers is being done in certain parts of the country. That way you will already have some of the pros and cons of what is coming.

As a letter carrier congressional liaison, I have been contacting my representative and the two Florida senators for several months to have Sen. Tuberville release his hold on military promotions. I got nowhere with the senators, but Rep. Rutherford did agree to help end the hold. Hopefully, Congress will do something to stop one person from doing that again.

Branch President Thigpenn is working with the sheriff's office to discuss crime against letter carriers. Please be alert to your surroundings while delivering, and stay safe.

Bob Henning, Branch 53

Providence, Rhode Island

Many rumors are going around about the postmaster job in Providence. There's a decent chance it will be awarded to someone outside Providence, but to be determined. As for now, it's been a cluster (expletive), to say the least.

There have been many bizarre and poor decisions made. Management decided to wait until the December rush to move start times back in a couple stations, while simultaneously announcing we would not be coming in early for parcel runs. This has resulted in carriers, both CCAs and career, working as late as 10 p.m.

Please work as safely as possible when working in the dark. This added stress, on top of the usual stress of the holiday season, is unnecessary, to say the least. Hopefully, everyone was able to enjoy their holiday season. It is believed management wants all start times to be pushed back, and it's just a matter of time.

The union will file grievances in any station that enacts start time changes that are not done correctly. Keep in mind, however, that these grievances are not a guarantee. Start-time grievances are not impossible to win, but they are difficult. Nationally, only about 46 percent are successful when they go to arbitration. There are a lot of factors at play when it comes to start time changes, and it's happen-



Two carriers are sworn in to branch offices while attending Leadership Academy. Pictured (l to r) are Rockville, MD Br. 3825 MBA Representative Melissa Limage and Santa Fe, NM Br. 989 steward Adriana Rivera.

ing in more places than just Providence. Will keep you all up to date in future *Postal Records*. Take care until next time.

Anthony Turcotte, Branch 15

Racine, Wisconsin

Remember cigarette machines? They disappeared along with Tang, powdered milk and video games that actually used quarters. Certain things get more difficult as one gets older. Aside from the Centrum Silver and being a rewards member with your doctor, difficulty with names, aches and pains that take longer to heal, increased meds and a tighter grip on that handrail are all signs of the process. Minus a couple rotator cuff tears, I'm fortunate to walk away (eventually) from my career the same way I started it. Intact.

Shocker—the mark-up system is broken. What happened to premium forwarding? That was a good idea. No one presses that anymore. Much better and more efficient than the current mark-up system. Snowbirds must be pulling their hair out. Ever notice that parcels that are sent to markup don't come back, yet most of the letters do? Perhaps a revamped markup system is part of the 10-year plan. Fingers crossed.

Signing for the Arrow Keys is fine. However, that's not going to prevent them from being stolen on the street. That just means we are not

coming back with them if that happens. Signed or not. Who knows?

We made it through another holiday season. Hats off to all my hardworking and tired co-workers. Couple of months from now, we'll be looking at spring. Lastly, thanks to everyone in Branch 436, active and retired, kids and grandkids who decorated wagons, and all who turned out for Racine's Christmas parade walking the parade route collecting letters to Santa. We start out strong in the front and yet quickly fall behind. Why is that? That, my friends, is the mailman's gift of gab.

Chris Paige, Branch 436

Rockville, Maryland

We had an arbitration on Dec. 7, for inequitable distribution of overtime for our Pike Annex unit out of Rockville. After a couple of hours, management agreed to pre-arb this case for 106.75 hours for six ODLs. At \$32 per hour, this worked out to a \$5,124 settlement! I want to thank our NALC advocate, Jeannine Gasper, and her technical assistant, Linda Brightful, for knowing our 800-page case file backward and forward. These two NALC advocates were tremendous. I also want to thank our chief steward, Miryam Peralta, out of the Pike Annex for the outstanding job she did in putting this case together. This was a great team effort!

I want to recognize Melissa Limage, who graduated from the Leadership Academy on Dec. 8. She is a steward in two cities and is handling about 20 OWCP cases for our branch. Thank you, Melissa!

Our vice president, Chuck Clark, recently won an additional 200 percent for a non-ODL out of our Frederick office, who was forced to work overtime in violation of Article 8. This means that management is paying triple time and a half to the non-ODL and double time to the ODL. For each hour of violation, this works out to \$126 per hour for the non-ODL and \$72 per hour for the ODL, for a total of \$198 per hour of violation (using \$36 per hour). Now that's an incentive for management to comply with Article 8!

At our Damascus unit, management has issued many seven-day suspensions for using sick leave. Fortunately, management charged

COLA: Cost-of-living adjustment

- The 2025 projected COLAs for the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) and the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) are **0.0 percent** following the release of the November 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 **3.5 percent** following the release of the November CPI. This COLA is based on the change in the CPI between December 2022 and December 2023.
- Visit nalc.org for the latest updates.

Please note:

There will be no Branch Items, State Summaries or Retiree Reports in the February 2024 *Postal Record*. That edition will be the special annual tribute issue honoring contributors to LCPF during 2023.

the grievant with a violation of the *ELM*, Section 665.11, not being loyal to the United States government. Needless to say, all the discipline was rescinded. You can't make this stuff up!

In the struggle—

Kenneth Lerch, Branch 3825

St. Louis, Missouri

It is with great sadness that I report the passing of longtime St. Louis Muscular Dystrophy Association coordinator August "Gus" Frank on Nov. 16.

For more than 40 years, Gus was the face for Branch 343, serving as our MDA chairman, fundraising cheerleader and branch representative at numerous events to raise awareness and money for "Jerry's Kids." It was a position that he embraced and relished. There was no one more enthusiastic to serve as our representative than Gus Frank.

Appointed by Branch 343 President Charles J. Coyle in 1976 as our MDA coordinator, Gus was the perfect man for the job. Gus was a

family man, devoted to his wife, Janet, and his three children, and his church. He was a man of deep faith. Gus loved to talk, and as his son relayed at his funeral service, "Dad could make a friend of anyone; he never knew a stranger."

Gus had the gift of gab, and in social situations he was anything but a wallflower. He was the guy who, with great ease, could walk up to any stranger and strike up a conversation. This extraordinary gift served him well raising funds for the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

During his tenure, Branch 343 raised thousands of dollars for MDA, and Gus was the spearhead. Our annual golf tournaments, bass tournaments, card tournaments, trivia nights, washer tournaments, and basketball and softball tournaments were more than just fundraisers, but an opportunity for letter carriers and their families to share quality time and camaraderie with one another whilst helping those individuals and their families with neuromuscular diseases.

At his funeral, many people spoke of him as a loving, devoted family man, coach and mentor who never seem to have a bad word to say about anyone. Thank you, Gus. Godspeed, old friend.

Tom Schulte, Branch 343

Seattle, Washington

You may have noticed that there are quite a few regulations for letter carriers to follow, and maybe even more handbooks and manuals—the *M-39*, *M-41*, *ELM*...ad infinitum, with lots of odd caveats for carriers to adhere to. There's very few of us who seek to break any of these many rules, and yet we do. The way I look at it, there's only two rules to do. Ta-da!

If you're not pilfering anything, you have little to nothing to worry over. The one biggie, the rule that will get a carrier into so much hot water that not even the best of shop stewards can fish them out of it is: stealing! Don't! Don't take somebody's bad idea and run with it. "Look—free samples." Don't take 'em. The

union can usually get you out of most messes that letter carriers can fall into, but stealing stuff is a capital-N No-No.

There's another large no-no which should go without mention, but I'm going to say it anyway: Don't punch somebody out. That would punch your ticket out of the Service. No matter how much some other employee may have it coming, don't give it to them. We're all different, we're a flock of strange birds as it were, and as I recall, everybody's got their own way of doing the job. Getting 'er done gets to be a matter of personal preference, not protocol. And most of time, it's not going to be your fellow workers who are shoving burrs under your saddle anyway.

It's management personnel who seem to be experts in argumentation. I don't know if it's a class they teach or just that certain *je ne sais quoi*, that right stuff the management team looks for when trying to fill their ranks. "This person's as bitchy as a dog in heat. They're perfect! You're hired."

Don Nokes, Branch 79

Southeast Pennsylvania Merged

New year, and we ain't (sic) taking no sh*t. I say this to let people know not to take our kindness as weakness. We work so hard. We may not be perfect, but we are not saying we are. The same letter carrier called a "bum" by management becomes a 204-B and thinks their athlete's feet don't stink.

Letter carriers are embarking on a new year that is different from all other aspects of life. Where in the world can you be the best in the world at what you do, yet still be treated like second-class citizens? But we are so strong that we take these hits year after year.

The time has come for us to galvanize in intellectual reasoning. We simply must embark on the supreme challenge to *educate* all letter carriers on our rights and responsibilities. Management is quick to threaten us with our responsibilities but always neglects to inform us of our rights.

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.

OK, it's sexy to tell the brutal truth about management (lest we forget, they are only human) but how about us. The most successful people exercise self-awareness. So here we go. Right now, we may be our own worst enemy. We tend to let the games management plays separate us at every level.

NALC and USPS signed a contract. The binding contract protects the interests of both parties. This is fair play. However, things get dicey when one party reneges on their written agreements. How about this: Pay us what you promised and treat us like the partners we are! NALC will have it no other way!

This company has led the industry even with governmental constraints. But it's only because of the dedication and loyalty of its workforce. Respect us! Otherwise, we all fail.

#WeWorkToProvideForOurFamilies
#ThePowerOfEducationIsReal

Eric Jackson, Branch 725

Staunton, Virginia

Our November branch meeting was a lively one! We elected officers and delegates, prepared for the upcoming labor-management meeting, talked about OWCP, the national rap session, food drive fundraising and more. What impresses me most is the comradery and consensus despite the wide range of thoughts and ideas presented. Proof that a branch does not have to be large to provide dedicated representation to its members and that the members are the union!

Thank you to the returning officers, President Stoney Caricofe, Vice President Jon Toman and Secretary Treasurer Dorwin Lam. Trustees are Megan Vernon and me. I'm also thankful for the opportunity to represent the branch as delegate to the national convention in 2024.

At the national rap session, we received a detailed update from nearly every department. Additionally, I assembled a sort of to-do list for when I got home. Some highlights:

For me: Read the May 2018 Contract Talk regarding heat issues and check out Director of Safety and Health Manny Peralta's page for helpful info. Read the January 2019 Contract Talk, "Vehicle fires in an aging fleet." Check out the updated *Steward's Guide*.

For my branch representatives to look into: Are our bylaws digitized at HQ yet? Is local management doing yearly required vehicle inspections and maintenance? Are we having monthly labor-management meetings and quarterly safety meetings? Were our safety captains chosen by the NALC? Has local management changed the process for getting Arrow Keys? Are ProMasters being used for mounted routes? Is management still falsifying training records? And how do we handle dues for members on long-term LWOP? So much to do, so little time. But it's a perfect opportunity to get more members involved.

Happy and safe holiday season to you all!

Cindy Connors, Branch 513

Toledo, Ohio

Many hours were spent decorating the hall for our Christmas party. Many thanks to Deb Pipes, Samantha Yerg, Rachelle Roy and high-climbing V.P. Andy Adkinson for turning our meeting hall into a Christmas wonderland.

At our December branch meeting, I was honored with the presentation of my gold card. I have served our branch in one capacity or another for most of those 50 years.

Another of our long-serving members, Bob Michalak, passed away at the end of November. Bob served as our health benefits representative for a record number of years. He never missed a branch meeting until his health began to decline. His dedication to serving our membership was exceptional.



Members of Del Rio, TX Br. 2511 organized a nighttime Christmas parade along with co-workers from the clerk and rural crafts. Children were asked to bring letters to Santa to the parade, and the carriers collected 220 letters while walking the parade route.

The renovation of our office space and conference rooms has taken on a new sense of urgency. Progress is being made. The materials have arrived for updating the exterior of the building. We are attempting to apply for a revitalization grant from the city of Northwood. Unfortunately, the city requires that three estimates be presented to make their approval, but we have been frustrated by the lack of response from the contractors we have contacted.

We anticipate just more than 1,700 grievances by the end of the year. Our Formal A representatives have been working diligently with their management counterparts to clear the backlog of grievances. We are now current with the majority of our cases.

So, it's on to 2024, a year that promises to be interesting, to say the least.

Roy Bricker, Branch 100

Tri-Valley, California

I enjoy reading newspapers and magazines as my source of gathering information. Unlike most people now, the source of acquiring information is more likely to come from a phone/tablet, which is OK. What matters is that we take the time to stay informed on facts and not social media rhetoric. My point is that we stay focused on matters of importance involving our lives, our families, and our jobs.

In regard to our jobs as letter carriers, the source may be your local branch newsletter and/or the NALC national publication (*The Postal Record*). One drawback to monthly publications may be time delays to distribute pertinent information.

Letter carriers should be aware that local branch newsletters and NALC publications are designed to provide up-to-date resources and

information. Our branch's newsletter (*The Mail Bag News*) provides information on grievance decisions, scholarship information, legislative information updates, and current and past issues of Tri-Valley letter carriers.

If you prefer to use a social media platform, you can follow NALC at facebook.com/nalc.national, on X (formally known as Twitter) @NALC_National, on Instagram @lettercarriers and on NALC's YouTube channel @lettercarriers.

A well-informed carrier is vital to the success of the union. Knowing your rights and responsibilities empowers you to make definitive decisions to protect yourself and your fellow brothers and sisters from misinformed or abusive managers. Use all tools available to you to stay informed when it comes to your rights.

No matter which communications connection method you choose, letter carriers should avoid the self-serving, dishonest and untrained fake impostures that claim to have experience/knowledge, which is untrue. And most of all, the best thing you can do to stay abreast of all current information is to attend your monthly regular local branch meetings.

James C. Perryman Jr., Branch 2902

Western Wayne County, Michigan

The new calendar year will be special in Branch 2184 as we observe our centennial, the 100th anniversary of our original charter as an NALC branch in Dearborn, MI, on Nov. 25, 1924. Letter carriers in Branch 2184 and throughout the United States will begin the new year in an unsettled environment, with a looming contract settlement or arbitration award on the horizon and the continuance of a dysfunctional and antagonistic workplace atmosphere in far too many places.

Branch 2184 recently concluded an election of branch officers and station stewards, and there will be several new officers and stewards serving our membership. My first Branch 2184 election experience was in 1976, where I quickly learned that union politics can be as contentious and unpleasant as any other kind of politics. Almost 50 years later, nothing has changed.

Perhaps such is inevitable. Our human species has evolved to be contentious and disagreeable creatures at times, and personal agendas can sometimes override our common cause as trade unionists. Legitimate and necessary debate about union policies and direction sometimes gets lost in the fog of emotion. Nonetheless, we remain responsible to each other and to ourselves as members of a union and as brothers and sisters united in a shared mission.

The passage of time has repeatedly proven that together we are stronger than anything that stands against us. Every member of the NALC, from the national president to the newest letter carrier hire, has an equal ownership of our union and an equal stake in ensuring that the rights of all are protected. We may not always like each other, and we are by nature very imperfect beings. Yet, in spite of ourselves, we must never stop working toward a more perfect union.

Joe Golonka, Branch 2184

Mutual Exchanges

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.

FL: Satellite Beach (1/21) to Dover, Portsmouth, NH or surrounding

area. One hour from Orlando on the east coast of FL. Adam, 603-988-8246 or awoodbury11@yahoo.com.

IN: Lafayette (7/12) to Bloomington, IN or surrounding areas. Graham, 765-409-0663 (call or text) or michaelfieldi24@hotmail.com.

SD: Rapid City (6/23) to Santa Barbara, CA. Seeking mutual exchange. Paul, 805-456-9202 (call or text).

How to place a Mutual Exchange ad

The cost of Mutual Exchange ads is \$15 for up to 30 words and \$25 for 31-50 words per month. Ads must be received by the 5th of the month preceding the month in which the ad will appear (e.g., January's deadline is for the February publication). Mail ad with check (payable to NALC) to: Mutual Exchange Ads, Postal Record, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144.

Ads are published for NALC members only. A branch officer or steward must endorse the ad to certify membership. 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.

Election Notices

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

Burlington, North Carolina

This is official notice to inform all active and retired members of Branch 2262 that nominations for delegates to the spring training seminar in High Point March 22-23 will be held at the regular stated monthly branch meeting on Jan. 23 at The Cutting Board, 2699 Ramada Road, Burlington.

Elections will be by secret ballot, if needed, at the regular stated monthly branch meeting on Feb. 27 at The Cutting Board.

Mark Bare, Pres., Br. 2262

Mobile, Alabama

This is official notice to all members of Branch 469 that nominations of national and state convention delegates will be held during the regular meeting at 7:30 p.m. on Jan. 11.

If after nominations an election is in order, it shall be done and concluded at 7:30 p.m. on Feb. 8 during the regular meeting.

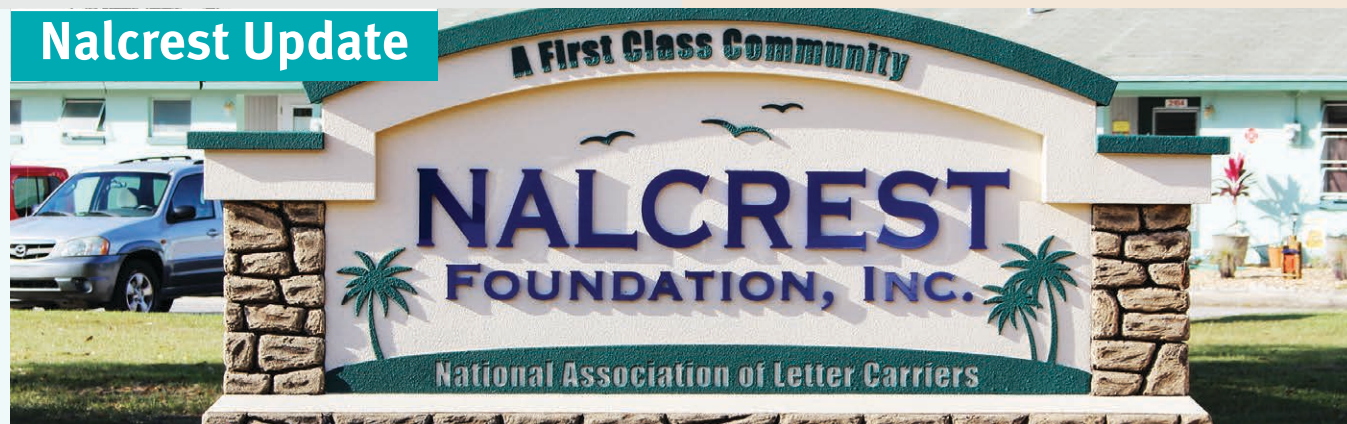
Kawanda James, Sec., Br. 469

Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

This is the official notice to all branch members of Branch 4645 that nominations for the following officer positions will be held at our regular branch meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 11, at 4705-E Oleander Drive, Myrtle Beach: president, vice president, recording secretary, secretary-treasurer, health benefit rep, three trustees, sergeant-at-arms, two station stewards in Myrtle Beach, and one station steward in North Myrtle Beach. These are three-year terms.

Joni Evans, Pres., Br. 4645

Nalcrest Update



From the Trustees

Happy 2024, Nalcrest! It is a new year with lots on the horizon. It's amazing that 10 years ago, Nalcrest was on the brink of financial disaster and today the place is full with a waiting list of more than 340 retired NALC members. Many supporters and the strength of our union has made Nalcrest a one-of-a-kind place to live, feel safe and enjoy the Florida lifestyle. Thanks to all who continue to make it a success.

One element of why Nalcrest is a great success story is the way it is promoted. All of the national officers have continuously promoted Nalcrest as they travel around the country. Articles and updates are in *The Postal Record* each month written by the trustees on a rotating basis. Also, every major NALC event has a Nalcrest trustee in attendance, addressing the members, making available brochures and an-

swering inquiries. From Nov. 18-19, I attended the NALC rap session in New Orleans promoting our Nalcrest community. Along with me was former NALC President Fred Rolando, who has remained a Nalcrest trustee after his retirement.

Another milestone will be reached Feb. 1-2—the 60th anniversary of Nalcrest. On location with the entire NALC Executive Council, residents and guests will have an opportunity to be a part of history. Follow "Nalcrest Foundation, Inc." on Facebook and check out nalc.org/nalcrest for updates and info about Nalcrest.

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.

Everyone at Nalcrest hopes all NALC members and their families have a healthy and happy new year.

Matty Rose

Nalcrest Trustees

NALC President Fredric Rolando

NALC Secretary-Treasurer Nicole Rhine

NALC Director of Retired Members Dan Toth

NALC Trustee Mike Gill

Nalcrest Trustees President Matty Rose

Nalcrest Trustees Vice President Tom Young

Nalcrest Trustees Vice President Don Southern

Looking for the latest NALC news? Give it a listen wherever you stream your favorite podcasts!

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.



Listen on
 Apple Podcasts



Listen on
 Spotify Podcasts



Help your NALC family affected by natural disasters

The **NALC Disaster Relief Foundation** provides hands-on relief for carriers affected by natural disasters, such as wildfires, hurricanes, floods and tornados. It receives donations to be used to assist regular NALC members affected by natural disasters.

NALC response teams throughout the country are activated to go to disaster locations and offer assistance to NALC members and their families who live in the same household. Basic supplies, including uniforms and food, are available for those who need assistance.

Financial support may be available depending on the availability of funding and qualifying criterias. Any regular member of NALC who has faced hardship as a result of a natural disaster will be able to apply for assistance.

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

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

The foundation is a 501(c)(3). Your contribution to the NALC Disaster Relief Foundation may be eligible for a tax deduction. It is recommended you seek further advice from your tax advisor.



**NALC
Disaster
Relief
Foundation**