



## Making the Christmas list

**I**t seems like the year has just gotten started and already it is time for my wish, or Christmas, list. A healthy and prosperous new year are always at the top, and as I look back, I see that these wishes have come true for this year.

While I did not get (nor deserve) all that I had hoped for last Christmas, I have been blessed bountifully with the time that I had the privilege of spending with retirees this past year. *Deep apologies are extended to those whom I have met who feel differently.*

**As this year draws to a close, let's look at some changes** that will occur for retirees in 2008:

**COLAs**—The 2008 COLA increases for CSRS and Social Security annuitants have been set at 2.3 percent, and 2 percent for those who have retired under FERS and are eligible for COLAs.

**Salary back pay**—All letter carriers who retired during the period November 21, 2006 through September 14, 2007 are entitled to back pay for *all hours worked* from November 21, 2006 up to their retirement date. The exact pay date for this back pay has not been determined at this time, but it is anticipated to be early next year. Also, OPM will reapply any back pay toward your high-3 earnings to determine your new annuity. This increase and any back pay will be included in a future check from OPM. The time line for this is anticipated to be sometime toward late spring next year.

**Health benefit savings**—Each retired *and* active letter carrier is urged to take advantage of the savings generated by your NALC Health Benefit Plan during the current Open Season.

**Medicare cost increases**—Retirees who are covered by

Medicare B will see a 3.1 percent increase in premiums to a monthly total of \$96.40 next year. Medicare A participants will see their deductibles increase from \$982 to \$1,024.

**FERS sick leave**—While the issue is just starting to be considered, it appears that a movement to provide some compensation for FERS employees' unused sick leave when they retire is gaining support. The powers that be in the system seem to be surprised that FERS employees are using their sick leave prior to retirement rather than losing it at retirement. Go figure. It's not like everyone didn't forecast that this would happen 20-some years ago when the system was first introduced. Information will be provided on this subject as it becomes available.

**One minute, 12 seconds**—Would you consider one minute, 12 seconds a lot of time to invest? The NALC years ago negotiated two 10-minute work breaks daily for city letter carriers. This is time that we are paid for not working, and it is in fact a gift from the NALC to ourselves. At the current rate of pay, one minute, 12 seconds each day, if earmarked to COLCPE, will be your Gimme Five and will help keep your breaks and paychecks protected. I have often spoken of COLCPE as job insurance. We all have health insurance and sometimes even life insurance with plans to never use them. But insurance protects us and our families in the event it is ever needed. Your job allows you to pay for those other insurances; why not consider protecting your job?

For active letter carriers, President Young is asking for \$5 for COLCPE each payday. That equates to one minute, 12 seconds a day, or six minutes a week of your salary, to COLCPE. The next time you are on break, why not time one minute and 12 seconds? You will see that it is a very small portion of one break. I believe that if you are honest with

yourself, you will admit that you will not miss that time, nor the money that you contribute. With the recent pay increases, now is a good time to get on board.

**In closing, from the staff and myself in the Retirement Department, may your holidays be filled with the joy of Christmas and the blessings the season can bring.** ☒

### NALC Retirement Department

Toll-free number: 800-424-5186

Available Monday, Wednesday and Thursday only  
from 10 a.m. to noon and from 2 to 4 p.m. (Eastern time)  
*This toll-free number is answered ONLY during these hours  
on the days indicated.*

If your question concerns hospitalization and you are a member of the NALC Health Benefit Plan, call 888-636-6252.

