

Volume 138 / Number 3 March 2025

# The Postal Record

The monthly journal of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS

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# FIGHT LIKE HELL!

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# READY TO JOIN THE FIGHT?

*Give it a listen wherever you stream your favorite podcasts*

NALC's "Fight Like Hell!" podcast 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 at this pivotal moment. Our jobs, our service and the entire Postal Service are on the line. We need everyone's help as we fight like hell against these attacks. Together, we will send a loud, clear message: HELL NO to dismantling the Postal Service.



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# 'Fight Like Hell!'



**Brian L.  
Renfroe**

**L**ast month, NALC launched a new campaign to guide our union's work at every level, "Fight Like Hell!" Since the founding of our union 135 years ago, NALC members have fought for everything we have achieved and we have fought against every attack that has come our way, and that's exactly what we're doing now.

We held a kickoff event at NALC Headquarters on Feb. 13, where NALC members and leaders, along with members and leaders of other unions, came together

to commit to all the fights ahead. There's a lot on our plates, including the fight for a better contract, for safety and protection on the job, and for fair retirement for all letter carriers, and the fight against any efforts to privatize the Postal Service. Just a week after our launch event, one of these fights came into clear focus.

**On Feb. 20, we started hearing reports of a potential executive order from the White House that would dismantle the Postal Service as we know it. According to reports, this executive order would fire the Postal Service Board of Governors and place the independent, self-sufficient agency under the control of the U.S. Department of Commerce.**

Immediately, we and the other postal unions saw this for what it was—a direct attack on letter carriers and all 640,000 postal employees, our universal service, and every person who relies on the Postal Service.

Letter carriers quickly sprang into action, and days later, we held a rally on Capitol grounds where hundreds of NALC members rallied to say "Hell no!"

We sent a powerful message, and as I write this, no executive order regarding the Postal Service has been released. But the threats are real and must be taken seriously.

While letter carriers know and understand the dangers of privatization, it's worth reminding ourselves

what's at stake and how devastating such an order would be for us and every American.

Our members' work is at the center of the \$1.9 trillion mailing industry. We deliver nearly half of the world's mail. Without our work, 51.5 million households and businesses in rural communities would have no guaranteed delivery.

Additionally, this wouldn't just threaten the job of every postal employee—at least 73,000 of whom are veterans—it also would jeopardize the jobs of 7.9 million people employed in the mailing industry.

The Trump administration's goal is to get rid of us and create a fragmented, unreliable and more expensive private version of the Postal Service.

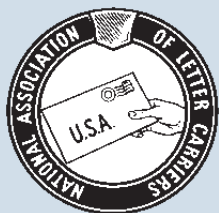
These ideas are dangerous and illegal. The Postal Service, which will celebrate its 250th anniversary this year, is older than our country and it is enshrined in the Constitution. The Constitution gives Congress, not the president, authority in setting postal policy, and if Trump tries to break the law with executive action, we will fight like hell to stop it.

**This will be a tough and ongoing fight, but fortunately, we have the public on our side. Americans love the Postal Service, and it's repeatedly ranked in annual polls as the most-trusted government agency. That's because Americans know they can count on their letter carrier, and regardless of how anyone voted in last year's presidential election, they did not vote to destroy the Postal Service.**

In the coming weeks, check [nalc.org](http://nalc.org) for more information about how you can get involved in our fight. Digital and in-person days of action are ongoing, and to succeed, we'll need everyone fighting like hell together.



For more on Fight Like Hell, scan the QR code above.



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# The Postal Record

The monthly journal of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS



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## Back to basics



Philip  
Dine

**W**e'll take a break this month from the string of tales about the creativity, dedication and valor of letter carriers—their deeds intriguing and even inspirational—and return to a practical activity of our union. One that is encapsulated in the name of the department that produces this magazine—Communications and Media Relations. An activity that is vital to everything else our union endeavors to do. And, notably, one that letter carriers from NALC Headquarters to regions to branches have excelled in: getting the message out.

Indeed, at all levels, the role you have played, whether national leaders or rank-and-file carriers, is unique in the labor movement in

terms of volume, quality and impact.

**Drilling down a bit, the process of getting our word out** involves three steps—determining what the precise message is, crafting it to maximum effect, and dealing with that sometimes odd group known as journalists to deliver it to the public and the politicians.

The first of those (defining the message) varies with the times and the issues at hand, and the third (navigating the media) is one you've mastered in impressive fashion. You know the drill, and the extent to which you've changed the national conversation on postal matters makes that clear.

The second rung in the ladder—how we compose our message, i.e., the words and phrases we use, the clarity and brevity (or lack thereof) that flow from them—is an area in which any organization can always find ways to improve.

And one that can yield significant benefits.

How so?

When you present your message concisely and efficiently, you produce a dual benefit. For starters, your message is more clear, easier for folks to grasp, and thus more persuasive, while you also leave more space (or time) to get to the key points because you have dispensed with unnecessary or flowery verbiage.

Secondly, less obvious but just as important, is the heightened credibility you will cultivate among readers or listeners or viewers. If your grammar is impeccable, your organization logical, your words well chosen and your phrasing flawless, the audience will—consciously or subconsciously—find the content of your argument more convincing. They might not be subject experts in the postal topics you're discussing (pre-funding, privatization...), but if they are impressed by how you construct the message, they're more likely to con-

clude that on the details and nuances of the issue at hand, you probably know what you're talking about.

We're focusing here, to be clear, on theory and process, and haven't cited concrete examples of how to craft the message in ways that are concise and effective and persuasive.

Two reasons for that: In the limited space left, we could scarcely do justice on that score, plus I'd ask you to initially ponder the matter on your own. Look at what you write, turn the printout sideways and this way and that and analyze what you could leave out, what you could say in fewer words, how you could meld a couple of paragraphs into a single one to save space and sharpen the point, which sentences might be redundant and merit deletion.

We'll revisit the topic with examples moving forward.

**But for now, I'll shift gears and turn to how you might consider reacting** (given the chance) to a reporter who's done a news story you find excellent, or to one whose article completely misses the mark. The natural instinct might be to lavish praise on the first reporter and to lash out at the second.

Neither approach would be optimal.

You tell a journalist that you loved her story, and the way she'll interpret it is that she was too favorable to the letter carrier perspective—and therefore should compensate the next time she addresses a postal issue. Better to tell her something like this: You found it balanced and informative, and that while you didn't agree with everything in the story, it was well written and fair. She'll take *that* to mean she's on the right track.

Conversely, to a reporter whose story totally misrepresented the situation or was one-sided, you tell him that and he'll tune you out (in case you haven't noticed, many journalists are either thin-skinned or full of themselves, and don't take criticism well). Instead, tell him what you liked (there's got to be something...) before adding, "On the other hand, there were a few aspects that you might want to re-examine the next time around. Do you mind if I briefly mention them?"

In both instances, you just might forge a constructive relationship moving forward.

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# Letter carriers in action

**T**he last several weeks have been filled with anticipation, uncertainty and, most importantly, a fight for NALC members and everyone who cares about the Postal Service.

On Feb. 20, national media outlets started reporting that the White House was planning to issue an executive order that would restructure the Postal Service, ultimately jeopardizing its future as a self-sufficient public agency.

Immediately, letter carriers banded together to do what we do best—fight for our jobs and our futures.

The reports framed this executive order as imminent, and it was expected to be signed as early as the following day. NALC quickly put out a call to action and, as always, letter carriers delivered.

On Feb. 21, NALC members called House Speaker Mike Johnson’s (R-LA) phone line (which was eventually shut down due to call volume) to urge him to call the White House and put a stop to this executive order. While the threat still exists, that day we were victorious. Thanks to letter carriers’ persistent calls, the speaker contacted the White House, and no executive order was released.

This digital day of action was only the beginning. Less than 72 hours later, NALC organized and hosted a rally in Washington, DC, to say “Hell no!” to dismantling the Postal Service.

On Feb. 24, hundreds of NALC members from across the country, labor leaders and union members attended this event on Capitol grounds.

“I want to be very clear. This is a direct attack on 640,000 Postal Service employees, the universal service we provide, and every citizen who relies on the Postal Service,” NALC President Brian L. Renfroe told the crowd.

“This isn’t about politics. Regardless of how they voted last year, I can guarantee they did not vote for destroying one of our nation’s oldest and most beloved institutions—the United States Postal Service.

“Here today, with all our supporters and friends, when they try to dismantle the Postal Service, what do we say?” The crowd responded with a resounding “Hell no!”

Speakers included House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Ranking Member Gerry Connolly (D-VA), AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Fred Redmond, American Postal Workers Union (APWU) President Mark Dimondstein, AFL-CIO Transportation Trades Department (TTD) President Greg Regan, Communications Workers of America (CWA) President Claude Cummings, Rep. Eric Sorensen (D-IL), Union Veterans Council Executive Director Will Attig, Letters to a Pre-Scientist CEO Lucy Madden, American Guild of Musical Artists Soloist Vice President Andrew Stenson, Association of Flight Attendants-CWA President Sara Nelson, American



President Renfroe addresses the attendees at the Feb. 24 rally.

Federation of Government Employees Vice President Ottis Johnson, Amalgamated Transit Union President John Costa, and Reps. Eric Sorensen (D-IL) and Jill Tokuda (D-HI).

With a successful national event in the rearview mirror, the fight was only beginning.

Two days later, NALC organized another digital day of action, encouraging every letter carrier to contact the White House directly with a clear message: Hands off the Postal Service!

Plans are well underway for local rallies on March 23. Branches, state associations and regions will hold rallies nationwide to bring awareness to everything that is at stake if the Postal Service is restructured or privatized.

“These local rallies nationwide will bring together NALC members and the public to show their support for letter carriers, all postal employees, and the Postal Service,” President Renfroe said. “At a crucial time, this is an opportunity to educate our customers about everything at stake if the Postal Service is privatized or restructured.

“Our jobs, our service, and the entire Postal Service are on the line. We need everyone’s help in our fight like hell against these attacks.

Following the March 23 day of action, NALC will host another event in Washington, DC, on March 25 to keep up the momentum. NALC state association presidents will convene at NALC Headquarters to plan for what’s



President Renfroe and other labor leaders at the rally at NALC Headquarters



ahead and then rally together with NALC members, other union members, and our supporters.

As this magazine was going to print, no executive order regarding the Postal Service had been issued, but letter carriers know that this fight is far from over. The threat is still looming, and NALC will continue activating our members to stand up for our jobs, our customers, and a strong, public Postal Service.

### NALC members hit Capitol Hill

With all the action happening and everything that is in play, NALC state delegations have continued their regularly scheduled lobbying trips to Washington, DC. While we do lots of important work on Capitol Hill every single day, nothing compares to a member of Congress putting a face to the critical service letter carriers provide in their district and state.

In these meetings, NALC members from various states have focused on increasing co-sponsors for our priority legislation. While many members of Congress want to get involved in the fight for the Postal Service, at this time, the most helpful action they can take is co-sponsoring our anti-privatization reso-

lution (H.Res. 70). Increasing co-sponsors for this, the Protect Our Letter Carriers Act (H.R. 1065/S. 463), and the Federal Retirement Fairness Act (H.R. 1522) have been the goal of these meetings.

Regardless of the threats coming our way, we cannot forget about these fights or lose sight of how Congress can most help us, which is to pass our priority legislation.

### What we're fighting for

Before the news broke of the administration's potential plans to restructure USPS, NALC was prepared to fight like hell against this on all fronts.

We launched our "Fight Like Hell" campaign with an event at NALC Headquarters on Feb. 13, where President Renfroe outlined the ongoing major battles NALC is fighting:

- Against any efforts to privatize the Postal Service
- For a better contract with a higher general wage increase
- In defense of the retirement and health care benefits letter carriers have earned
- For safety and protection on the job, including an end to the assaults and robberies targeting letter

carriers on their routes and national standards related to extreme weather

- For fair retirement for all letter carriers, including those who spent time in a non-career position, by passing the Federal Retirement Fairness Act

"There are a lot of people trying to knock us down," Renfroe said. "Whether it's Postal Service manage-

ment, ill-intentioned lawmakers on Capitol Hill, criminals targeting us on the streets or at our stations, or anyone else who tries to attack us and what we've earned, we are ready to fight!"

"Everyone who is against us doesn't know who they're dealing with, but they're about to find out. Because one thing is clear here today—we're fighting like hell!" Renfroe added.

That message was amplified by several media outlets that covered the event, including the local ABC TV affiliate.

At this event, NALC again had broad support from our labor family. AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler, APWU President Dimondstein, TTD President Regan, National Rural Letter Carriers' Association President Don Maston, National Postal Mail Handlers Union President Paul Hogrogian, International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers President Matt Biggs, and AFA-CWA President Nelson also spoke at the kickoff.

### Looking forward

Whether we're saying "fight like hell" or "hell no," one thing is clear: NALC members are fired up and not backing down. Our union is strong because our members are strong. Now is the time to tap into that strength and put everything we have into the fights ahead.

Local rallies on March 23 and another Washington, DC, event on March 25 are only the next two actions on the horizon. More is certain to come, and we need every NALC member's help in every fight.

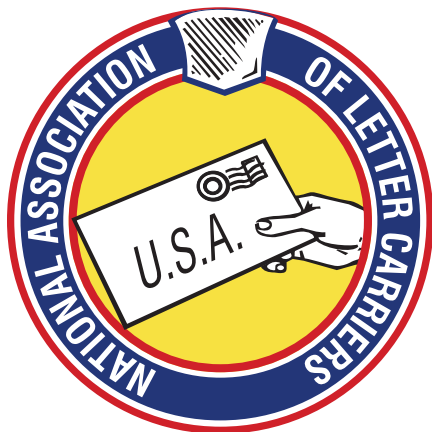
Check [nalc.org](http://nalc.org) and future issues of *The Postal Record* for more information on how to get involved. **PR**



**Letter carriers met with their representatives on Capitol Hill, including Rep. Jim Costa (CA-21) at left and Sen. Jacky Rosen (D-NV) below.**



## Membership rejects tentative collective-bargaining agreement; interest arbitration next step



**T**he active membership of the National Association of Letter Carriers voted to reject the ratification of the tentative 2023-2026 National Agreement with the United States Postal Service. The vote was 63,680 to reject the agreement versus 26,304 to accept it, as reported by NALC's Ballot Committee Chairman **Paul Roznowski** of Royal Oak, MI Branch 3126. The 15-member Ballot Committee monitored and observed the dispatch, receipt and tabulation of the ratification ballot conducted by two independent companies: MOSAIC of Cheverly, MD, and Survey and Ballot Systems of Eden Prairie, MN.

On Jan. 31, NALC President Brian L. Renfroe issued the following statement regarding the vote on the 2023-2026 National Agreement with the United States Postal Service:

NALC has notified the Postal Service of the result of the ratification balloting and our intent to reopen negotiations within five (5) days in accordance with Article 16 of the *NALC Constitution*. Negotiations will not exceed a period of fifteen (15) calendar days from when they are reopened. The NALC Executive Council will meet to discuss whether to send a second ballot to each member for ratification or rejection of a potential new tentative agreement or to proceed to binding interest arbitration. Under the law, decisions of that arbitration board would be final and binding upon the parties.

In a democratic vote, the will of NALC's membership has been made clear—the tentative agreement that represented the best offer the Postal Service put on the table is not good enough for America's city letter carriers. We have earned more and we deserve more.

We will negotiate in good faith with the Postal Service at the bargaining table during the limited timeframe set forth in the *NALC Constitution*. We call on the Postal Service to do the same. As I made clear since the

very beginning of this process, NALC is well prepared to fight like hell for a better contract in interest arbitration, and that is exactly what we will do if the Postal Service is unwilling to reach agreement on terms that fairly compensate and reward our members.

On Feb. 19, the NALC Executive Council met to consider the progress made during the 15-day negotiation period that followed the reopening of contract negotiations with the Postal Service on Feb. 3, pursuant to Article 16 of the *NALC Constitution*. The Council voted unanimously to not agree to terms with the Postal Service that would have produced a modified tentative agreement to be sent to eligible members for a second ratification vote. NALC notified USPS officials that the parties are now at impasse on the terms of a new collective-bargaining agreement.

The parties' ongoing dispute over the terms of a new agreement will now be decided in the interest arbitration process. The parties have selected Arbitrator Dennis R. Nolan to serve as the chairman of the three-person arbitration panel. Information on hearing dates for interest arbitration will be shared as soon as the schedule is confirmed.

"While there was some movement on the issues that matter to letter carriers during this 15-day period of good-faith bargaining, it was not enough to produce a fair contract for the active members of NALC. We have been preparing our case for interest arbitration since before we officially opened this round of contract negotiations," President Renfroe said. "We have built a strong case, and we will fight like hell in interest arbitration to achieve the best collective-bargaining agreement for letter carriers that the process can produce." **PR**





# News from Washington

## Congress reintroduces bipartisan Protect Our Letter Carriers Act

**O**n Feb. 6, bipartisan lawmakers in the House and Senate reintroduced the Protect Our Letter Carriers Act (POLCA). Reps. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA) and Greg Landsman (D-OH) introduced the House version, H.R. 1065, and Sens. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Josh Hawley (R-MO) co-lead the Senate version, S. 463.

The bills are identical to the House and Senate versions introduced last Congress and include three measures to deter the increasing crimes and assaults committed against letter carriers on the job:

- Allocating \$7 billion in funding (appropriated over five years) to replace and modernize postal infrastructure that criminals often seek out.
- Designating an assistant district attorney in each judicial district to prioritize cases involving an assault against a letter carrier in a timely manner.
- Standardizing sentencing guidelines for those who are found guilty of committing these crimes.

While the Postal Service has started to roll out modernized technology in certain areas and the prosecution rates for these crimes have increased some, crimes against letter carriers continue to persist at an alarming rate, and this bill is the next step to stop these crimes from happening.

Between 2019 and 2023 (the most recent data available), the number of serious crimes against postal employees nearly doubled. In 2023, postal inspectors opened 1,367 cases—542 assaults, 628 robberies and 197 burglaries—against postal employees in almost 500 metropolitan

areas. More than two-thirds of these attacks involve a firearm or other weapon. Tragically, five letter carriers have been murdered while dutifully doing their jobs since 2022.

“NALC appreciates Rep. Fitzpatrick, Rep. Landsman, Sen. Gillibrand and Sen. Hawley’s continued leadership on this critical issue that is so important to letter carriers and every community we serve,” NALC President Brian L. Renfroe said.

“Enough is enough. Like all Americans, letter carriers have the right to go to work, do their jobs, and return home unharmed. It’s time for Congress to prioritize what’s important and pass this bill, and we will continue fighting like hell to get it done.”

Days after POLCA was introduced, on Feb. 16, New York, NY Branch 36



Renfroe was joined by Rep. Adriano Espaillat (second from l) at New York Branch 36’s rally on Feb. 16.



# News from Washington (continued)

held a “Fight Like Hell!” rally in Harlem. The event memorialized letter carrier Ray Hodge, who was stabbed in a Harlem deli on Jan. 2, and called on Congress to pass the bill.

Rep. Adriano Espaillat (D-NY) attended the event and spoke to those assembled. “Today, I stand in solidarity with the letter carriers [of] Branch 36 and with NALC President Brian Renfroe to remember the life of Ray Hodge. We embrace Ray’s family and all his brothers and sisters to help stop the violence against letter carriers and ensure they can do their job safely!”

“Enough is enough,” President Renfroe said. “Like all Americans, letter carriers have the right to go to work, do their jobs, and return home unharmed. It’s time for Congress to prioritize what’s important and pass this bill, and we are going to fight like hell to get it done.”

## House introduces anti-privatization resolution

On Jan. 29, Reps. Stephen Lynch (D-MA) and Nick LaLota (R-NY) introduced a House resolution (H.Res. 70) that calls on Congress to take all appropriate measures to ensure that the Postal Service remains an independent establishment of the federal government and not subject to privatization.

“Letter carriers take great pride in the work they do, providing universal service to every address in the nation,” President Renfroe said. “The public service our members provide predates our nation’s founding. Any effort to privatize USPS directly attacks universal service, a safe and reliable Postal Service, and the work our members do every day.

“Every member of Congress represents constituents who depend on the Postal Service. I urge every representative to sign on to this resolution.”

An identical bipartisan Senate resolution is expected to be introduced soon.

## Federal Retirement Fairness Act reintroduced in House

On Feb. 25, Reps. Gerry Connolly (D-VA), Nikki Budzinski (D-IL), David Valadao (R-CA) and Don Bacon (R-NE) introduced the Federal Retirement Fairness Act (H.R. 1522). This bipartisan bill would allow certain federal

employees, including letter carriers, to make catch-up retirement contributions for time spent as non-career employees after Dec. 31, 1988, making it credible service under the Federal Employees Retirement System.

More than 65 percent of current letter carriers began their USPS careers as casuals, transitional employees or city carrier assistants, all of which are non-career positions. More than 132,000 letter carriers who started in non-career positions, in most cases doing the exact same work as career employees, have time currently not credited toward their retirement. H.R. 1522 would allow these affected letter carriers the opportunity to purchase retirement credit for the time they spent in these non-career positions, providing greater retirement security.

The bill was introduced with 24 bipartisan co-sponsors and is identical to the version introduced last Congress, which had 131 bipartisan co-sponsors.

“NALC appreciates Chairman Connolly, Rep. Budzinski, Rep. Valadao and Rep. Bacon’s leadership on this bill that would benefit so many of our members,” President Renfroe said. “This bill is about fairness for public servants. Letter carriers put in the hours and the hard work, and it’s only fair that their time spent in non-career positions count toward their well-deserved retirements. NALC urges the House to pass this bill.”

## Social Security Fairness Act implementation information

On Feb. 25, the Social Security Administration (SSA) announced that starting this week (Feb. 24, 2025), the agency is beginning to pay retroactive benefits and will increase monthly





## PMG DeJoy makes preparations to step down

President Renfroe issued the following statement regarding DeJoy's announcement:

During his tenure, NALC has worked in good faith with Postmaster General Louis DeJoy on behalf of the nation's 200,000 active letter carriers. We remain committed to these efforts in his remaining time as head of the agency.

Notably, we are still fighting for a better contract...[We] are committed to achieving the best results for our members under Postmaster General DeJoy or his successor.

In his statement, DeJoy praised USPS's 640,000 employees and acknowledged our perseverance and adaptability. In his remaining time as postmaster general, we call on DeJoy to bring this to the negotiation table and come to terms on an agreement that gives the nation's letter carriers what we have earned and deserve.

In its search for the next USPS leader, NALC urges the Board of Governors to seek out an individual with the necessary experience and expertise to lead the agency at this critical time. We need someone who values the workforce and is committed to preserving and improving universal service.

The Postal Service is older than our country and is mandated in the Constitution. The next postmaster general must guarantee that letter carriers can continue safely performing their constitutionally mandated service in every community nationwide.

As we always have, NALC will ensure that letter carriers' priorities are known regardless of who leads the Postal Service.

## Bill to establish vote-by-mail nationally introduced in House

On Jan. 24, Rep. Andrea Salinas (D-OR) introduced the Universal

Right to Vote by Mail Act (H.R. 738), which would ensure all eligible voters could vote by mail in federal elections.

The bill would amend the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to allow no-excuse absentee voting in all 50 states and U.S. territories. Currently, 36 states and the District of Columbia allow no-excuse absentee voting by mail. This bill would expand that access to every eligible voter in the country, making participating in elections more accessible and convenient.

Eight Democrats joined as original co-sponsors: Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton (DC) and Reps. Emanuel Cleaver (MO), Juan Vargas (CA), Debbie Dingell (MI), Kevin Mullin (CA), Hank Johnson (GA), Rashida Tlaib (MI) and Mark Pocan (WI). The National Vote at Home Institute, a close partner of NALC, endorsed the bill.

"Letter carriers have delivered ballots safely and securely for more than a century," President Renfroe said. "In the last five years, vote-by-mail numbers have skyrocketed, and thanks to letter carriers' hard work, the Postal Service has maintained an exceptional performance handling election mail each election cycle.

"The American public can count on letter carriers to deliver their ballots and so much more. NALC fully supports this bill, which would make it easier for every American to participate in our democratic process."

To take action to support these priority pieces of legislation, go to [nalc.org/action](https://nalc.org/action). **PR**

benefit payments to people who were affected by the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO).

Beneficiaries who are owed retroactive benefits will receive a one-time retroactive payment. This payment will date back to January 2024, the month when WEP and GPO no longer applied.

Social Security benefits are paid one month behind, so most affected beneficiaries will begin receiving their new monthly benefit amount in April 2025 (for their March 2025 benefit).

The agency has expedited payments through automation but cautioned that complex cases cannot be processed automatically and will require additional time.

Affected beneficiaries are urged to wait until April to inquire about the status of their retroactive payment since these payments will be processed incrementally throughout March.

For more information, please visit SSA's Social Security Fairness Act web page at <https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/retirement/social-security-fairness-act.html>.

# Wildfires take toll on L.A. carriers

**W**ildfires in a populated area are sure to wreak havoc, and that's what Los Angeles experienced in January. The fires killed at least 29 people, destroyed thousands of homes and businesses, and left many people homeless, making the fires among the most destructive in California's history.

No reports of deaths or injuries among postal employees were reported, but nearly a dozen letter carriers lost their homes to the fires.

NALC President Brian L. Renfroe pledged the union's support for the affected carriers and praised them for their perseverance.

"NALC continues to stand with our members affected by the wildfires in the Los Angeles area," he said. "Letter carriers are more than just deliverers of mail. We are an essential part of our communities. In times of crisis, we step up for the people we serve and for each other. Many of our members

have adjusted rapidly to ensure the safe delivery of mail and service to our communities. These members exemplify the standard of service we proudly provide."

Some carriers have also been displaced from their work sites as the fires affected their routes and facilities. The fires were located mainly in three postal districts and caused the closure of six post offices, though two reopened soon after. The Altadena post office burned down, with operations transferred to Pasadena.

After a month of fires fed by high winds, Los Angeles breathed a sigh of relief when the winds died down and rain replaced them in late January, giving a much-needed helping hand to firefighters from California and eight other states, plus Canada and Mexico struggling to fight them. The fires were contained by February.

The La Niña weather pattern this winter caused very dry conditions, with hardly a trace of rainfall in the Los Angeles area since last May. Combined with the high-powered Santa Ana winds that blow each winter from the mountains, the drought created conditions for fires to spread and consume huge swaths of land.

As the smoke cleared and affected letter carriers settled into new homes, Los Angeles Branch 24 President and NALC Board of Trustees Chairman Larry Brown said the attitude in the city is positive.

"It's been traumatic, as you can imagine, very emotional," he said. "The way that the city has come together, man—just outstanding. We will rebuild;





The Palisades Fire

Photo by Toastt21

we will come back. That’s the attitude and it’s ongoing.”

While the fires are over, new challenges remain. Residents must rebuild their lives after some 16,000 homes and businesses were destroyed and many others damaged. Some estimates put the damages at \$250 billion or more. While the rain has helped to control the fires, mudslides and runoff from toxic ash have made many areas unsafe. The process of sorting through and cleaning toxic and hazardous materials from the ruins—the waste from burned paint, rubber, pesticides, batteries, compressed gas cylinders and other items found in homes, cars and shops—could take months. Some of the poisonous ash already is leaking onto beaches and into waterways.

Before the fires were out, the NALC Disaster Relief Foundation (DRF) responded with immediate assistance to letter carriers who had been affected, contacting the carriers or responding to requests for help and providing quick assistance.

“We are assisting 11 carriers who lost their homes and possessions in the fires,” DRF President Christina Vela Davidson said. “DRF responded by finding these carriers and providing immediate help, while offering more long-term assistance down the road as they recover.”

### **‘Nothing standing but the fireplace’**

**Thomas Carter** went to work on Tuesday, Jan. 7, delivering a route in Pasadena as he has since 1986. The Pasadena Branch 2200 member could see smoke and flames from distant fires, but they didn’t appear to pose a threat to his home in Altadena, a few miles north.

On his way home that evening, Carter got a call from a co-worker asking if he and his family were OK. “I wonder what he’s talking about,” he thought at the time. “Are we OK?”

That’s how Carter learned that the Eaton Fire had started very close to his neighborhood, with flames close to his home and high winds spreading the fire fast.

He still wasn’t worried because he was used to wildfires in Los Angeles, but when his wife called to tell him she and their adult children were packing up to evacuate, he knew there was a serious threat. On the way to his house, he saw emergency vehicles heading in the same direction. Then he saw a bulldozer, which is sometimes used to fight fires in urban areas by pushing cars out of the way of advancing fire trucks.

“When I saw the bulldozer, I’m thinking, ‘This is real serious,’ ” Carter recalled. Navigating streets with broken traffic lights, he reached a point where he could see the fire.

## Wildfires take toll on L.A. carriers (continued)

“I could see the blaze, the brightness, and I knew it was there,” he continued. “This was different, because normally in Altadena, when we’ve had fire warnings, they were more along the ridge of the foothills, and they were up higher. But this, you could tell, was within the neighborhood. So, as I got up to the house, I could tell it was only a few blocks away.”

After reaching his home, Carter and his family were at the mercy of the wind. “The wind had died down a little bit and that was a break for us. It would pick up every now and then. As a matter of fact, [at] one point it picked up and you could see it pushing the fire back up the hill. You could tell the smoke was going the opposite direction, which we hoped would happen. But it changed again.”

With three vehicles available and a little extra time, Carter and his family

loaded some valuables and left. His son alerted neighbors to the threat.

“We would get as much as we could, which, thank God, we were able to get a lot out,” Carter said. “You know, some clothes, pictures and important things, of course, papers.”

“Some people didn’t have that time,” he said.

With many other people evacuating, the family struggled to find a hotel with any rooms available, but eventually found one.

The next morning, a neighbor who had gone back to the area reported the damage on social media. “So, we knew early on Wednesday that our block was gone,” Carter said.

It took a few weeks for firefighters to contain the blaze and for authorities to clear the area for hazards like live electrical wires before Carter could view the damage in person. Along with most of the houses in his neighborhood, his home was destroyed, Carter said: “Nothing standing but the fireplace.”

A Branch 2200 steward contacted Carter shortly after the disaster to connect him with the NALC Disaster Relief Foundation. He applied for immediate assistance in the form of a grant, and it arrived within a few days. “It actually was very quick, very smooth and great help,” he said. By early February, with the help of their home insurance, the Carters found a new home to lease and left the hotel.

Branch 24 President Brown said that carriers are getting help from many sources, and that USPS worked to support carriers who were evacuated, even temporarily. “The Postal Service worked with us, our branch, for those who couldn’t get to their homes because certain areas were restricted,” he said. “They couldn’t even get in



One of the many houses destroyed in the wildfires that raged across Los Angeles

their homes to get their uniforms to go to work.”

Brown also is chairman of the Los Angeles AFL-CIO’s Labor Community Services, which is pitching in to help affected union members with housing costs. And, to help smaller branches in the region, Branch 24 donated \$20,000 to the Disaster Relief Foundation.

### How you can help

You can help your fellow carriers in need by donating to the Disaster Relief Foundation right now.

The foundation identifies carriers who are affected by disasters and disseminates aid as soon as possible. The aid can include emergency grants or supplies such as water, food, clothing and postal uniform items. Working closely with local branch leaders, DRF also helps NALC members whose homes are uninhabitable by offering emergency grants so a member might be able to find temporary housing or transportation, as well as helping them apply for additional grant funds once the weather clears and they are able to assess their damage.

Grants are provided for property damage sustained to a primary residence, automobile or personal property from causes such as, but not limited to, hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, earthquakes or severe storms, along with wildfires, and are provided only to NALC members.

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

The foundation relies on donations from NALC members.

“Our donors make our work possible,” Davidson said. “It’s gratifying to know that you can help a fellow letter carrier in need, and that if you need help someday, DRF will be there for you.”

Every penny of donations to DRF go directly to individual carriers or branches needing assistance—no administrative costs are deducted.

“Your donations are helping NALC members in the path of the wildfires who receive assistance to get back on their feet quickly,” Renfroe said. “Please give to DRF to help them get through this crisis.”

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

“The way the storms keep rolling in,” Davidson added, “you never know when it might be you or someone you love who may need help, so give a little or a lot. It’s for your brothers and sisters, and it’s for a great cause.” **PR**

## Help letter carriers hit hard by wildfires



### NALC Disaster Relief Foundation

Make a donation by sending a check or money order to NALC Disaster Relief Foundation, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144 or by going to [nalc.org/disaster](http://nalc.org/disaster).

# Great Postal Strike remembered with videos available online



Above: Carriers from Dearborn, MI, go out on strike.

Below: The strike crippled the nation's ability to send and receive mail.



**S**ometimes a small act turns into a big one that changes history. The Great Postal Strike of 1970 brought enormous change, making it the most important event in the modern history of NALC and the Post Office. That's why we celebrate its anniversary every March.

Though it lasted barely more than a week, the strike that began on March 18, 1970, ushered in dramatic change for the union, its sister unions and postal operations, and led to letter carriers finally gaining collective-bargaining rights.

## Intolerable conditions

The strike began with a few thousand letter carriers walking off the job in New York City. The causes, though, had persisted for

decades in every station in the country. The only way to get a pay raise was for Congress to vote for one, and lawmakers had failed time and time again to raise postal pay to adequate levels. Low pay caused high turnover—1 in 4 letter carriers left their jobs each year. Some of those who stayed earned so little that they qualified for welfare benefits.

Because letter carriers and other postal workers had no collective-bargaining rights—they could only ask Congress for better wages and benefits, rather than negotiate for them—labor advocates called their situation “collective begging.”

The tension boiled over on March 17, a week after a congressional com-

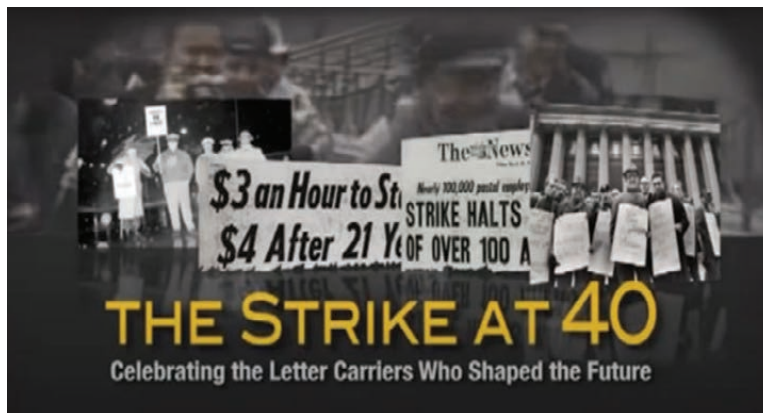
mittee voted for a pay raise for letter carriers so low that carriers considered it insulting. The fact that Congress had raised its own pay by 41 percent the year before didn't help. Led by rank-and-file letter carrier Vincent Sombrotto, who later became president of NALC, New York Branch 36 members that evening voted 1,555 to 1,055 to strike. They acted even though the strike was illegal—they could all be arrested for walking off the job.

At midnight, letter carriers set up picket lines in front of post offices in Manhattan and the Bronx. Members of other postal unions supported the strike by refusing to cross the picket lines to go to work. Soon, NALC branches in other parts of the country began voting to join the strike, potentially making the crisis a national one.

A week after the strike began, the mail was piling up fast. Millions of paychecks, pension checks, bank transfers and other vital mail filled New York's post offices, unsorted and undelivered. In an attempt to break the strike, President Richard Nixon ordered a group of active duty, reserve and National Guard troops to New York City post offices to deliver mail. Hundreds of sailors, airmen and soldiers arrived at the post office on Eighth Avenue and 33rd Street on March 24 and quickly learned how difficult sorting and delivering mail really was. With no training or experience as letter carriers, they couldn't keep up with a day's mail, let alone the mail already piled up during the strike.

Nixon, convinced by Secretary of Labor George Shultz to take the strike seriously, told Shultz to negotiate an end to the crisis. The Nixon administration ended up agreeing to most of the strikers' demands. Letter carriers





returned to work eight days after the strike began, and the landmark event in NALC’s history was over.

Congress responded a few months later by adopting major postal reforms that went beyond a simple pay increase for its workers. It passed legislation creating the Postal Service that we have today—a Postal Service that negotiates pay and benefits with the unions representing its workers, and that funds itself through earned revenue. From that day forward, NALC has represented letter carriers at the bargaining table.

### History on video

Since 1970, NALC staff and independent scholars have gathered historical information about the strike to preserve the participants’ memories and to better understand its effects. This has included many interviews with strike leaders and participants.

To help preserve the history of the strike and memories of those who lived it, NALC has produced a pair of videos that tell this story from 55 years ago in the voices of those who lived it. Both may be viewed on NALC’s YouTube channel, [youtube.com/ThePostalRecord](https://www.youtube.com/ThePostalRecord).

“The Strike at 40” is a 32-minute film produced in 2010 that uses archival news footage and new interviews from strike participants to tell the ground-level story of the strike. Those participants, including Sombrotto, who after the strike would become president of Branch 36 and later of the national union, explain the frustrating conditions that led them to risk their jobs and even risk arrest by going out on strike. The video leads viewers through the historic strike vote at the Manhattan Center and its aftermath. It shows the immediate reaction of the public



and the media to the strike, and how supportive the public was as the strike spread to other cities. It includes historical footage of the National Guard and other military personnel trying to fill in for letter carriers

In 2020, NALC produced a nearly one-and-a-half-hour documentary to add a broader perspective.

“The Revolt of the Good Guys” looks at the strike from the point of view of then-NALC President James Rademacher. The film features interviews, archival footage, long-forgotten records, and even part of a fictional series based on the strike—the Amazon Prime show “Good Girls Revolt.” That fictional account bookends the all-too-real story of letter carriers risking it all. The film starts well before 1970, showing how the Post Office Department was on a “race toward catastrophe” that ultimately led to the strike.

“Letter carriers should always remember how we got to where we are,” NALC President Brian L. Renfroe said. “Our pay, our benefits, our rights and protections—all of these rest on what a few thousand carriers had the courage to do more than a half-century ago. It should inspire us to keep building on what they started.” **PR**

## Disciplinary interviews and Weingarten rights

**P**rior to employees being disciplined by management, they generally will be given a pre-disciplinary interview (PDI) or an investigatory interview (II) by management. If you are given one of these interviews, there is no doubt that your supervisor or manager is looking for information to use against you so that they can issue you discipline.

All letter carriers, regardless of how long they have been employed, have Weingarten rights, which means you have the right to have a union steward present during a meeting in which management asks you questions that could lead to discipline. Exercising the right to union representation during an investigatory interview is one of the most important ways letter carriers can protect themselves during an investigation.

Weingarten rights have been afforded to employees due to federal labor law from the Supreme Court ruling *NLRB v. Weingarten, Inc.*, 420 U.S. 251 (1975). After that ruling, which led to what is known as the Weingarten rule, each employee has the right to representation during any investigatory interview that they reasonably believe could lead to discipline.

Whether or not an employee's belief is "reasonable" depends on the circumstances of each case. Some cases are obvious, such as when a supervisor asks an employee whether they threw away deliverable mail. Other situations may not be as obvious. For example, what if a supervisor casually asks why you were absent from work last week? Should

you request that a steward be present in this circumstance? Generally, if you are asked a question concerning something you allegedly did wrong, you can reasonably believe that discipline could result, and you should request a steward.

The Weingarten rule applies during any investigatory interview—whether management is searching for facts and trying to determine the employee's guilt, or is deciding whether or not to impose discipline. Management could ask these questions during a closed-door meeting, through text messaging, a phone conversation or an informal conversation at the supervisor's desk. In any situation, if the employee reasonably believes that discipline could result, they have Weingarten rights.

Stewards can assist you in any investigation by management and help ensure that you get your "day in court." If called to a meeting with management, U.S. postal inspectors, or an Office of Inspector General (OIG) agent, politely read the following statement to the person you are meeting with before the meeting starts:

If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated, or affect my personal working conditions, I respectfully request that my union representative, officer, or steward be present at this meeting. Without my union representation present, I respectfully choose not to answer any questions or participate in this discussion.

Although Section 665.3 of the *Employee and Labor Relations Manual* requires postal employees to cooperate with postal investigations, carriers still have the right under Weingarten to have a steward present before answering questions. In the event a steward is not made readily available or if a stew-

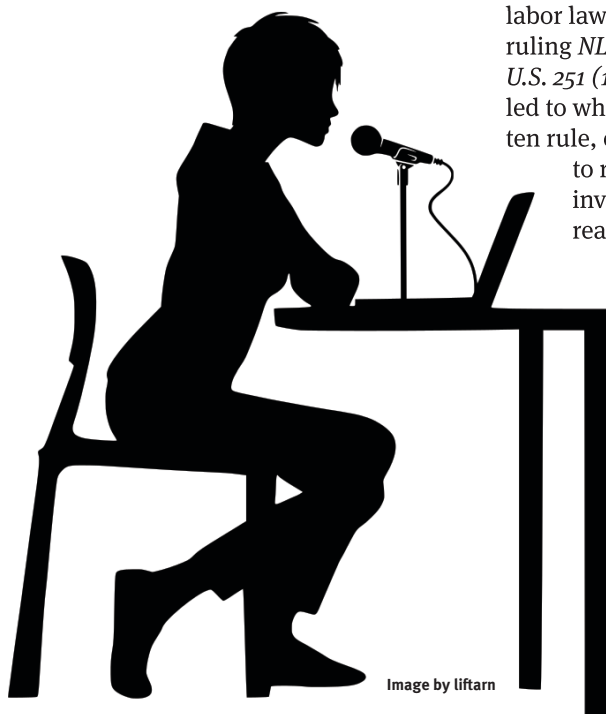


Image by liftarn

ard is not present after you have asked for one, you may respond that you will be happy to cooperate in any investigation, but you will answer questions only once a steward is provided.

Be mindful that a steward cannot exercise Weingarten rights on the employee's behalf. And unlike Miranda rights, which involve criminal investigations, the employer is not required to inform the employee of the Weingarten right to representation. You must ask for representation. If you are new to the Postal Service, you might not be aware of this requirement. Occasionally, unscrupulous managers take advantage of employees who are unaware that they must request a steward. You can ask at any point during an interview, even if you didn't request it in the beginning. No matter how smart you think you are, no matter how innocent you are, you should never under any circumstances participate in an investigative interview without a steward present.

In a Weingarten interview, the employee has the right to a steward's assistance, not just a silent presence. The employer would violate an employee's Weingarten rights if it refused to allow the representative to speak or tried to restrict the steward to the role of a passive observer.

Employees also have the right under Weingarten to a pre-interview consultation with a steward or another union representative. Federal courts have extended this right to pre-meeting consultations to cover Inspection Service interrogations as well. No matter who is questioning you, if you believe the questioning could lead to discipline, then you have the right to have union representation present during the questioning.

*Under the Supreme Court's Weingarten decision, when an investigatory interview occurs, these rules apply. Employees may request union representation before or during the interview. If the employer denies the request for union representation, and questions the employee, it commits an unfair labor practice and the employee may refuse to answer questions.*

**If called to a meeting with management, postal inspectors, or an OIG agent, read the following before the meeting starts:**

"If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated, or affect my personal working conditions, I respectfully request that my union representative, officer, or steward be present at this meeting. Without my Union representation present, I respectfully choose not to answer any questions or participate in this discussion."

**Disclaimer:** *The above recommendation is not legal advice. If you believe that you may be the subject of a criminal investigation, you should consult an attorney.*

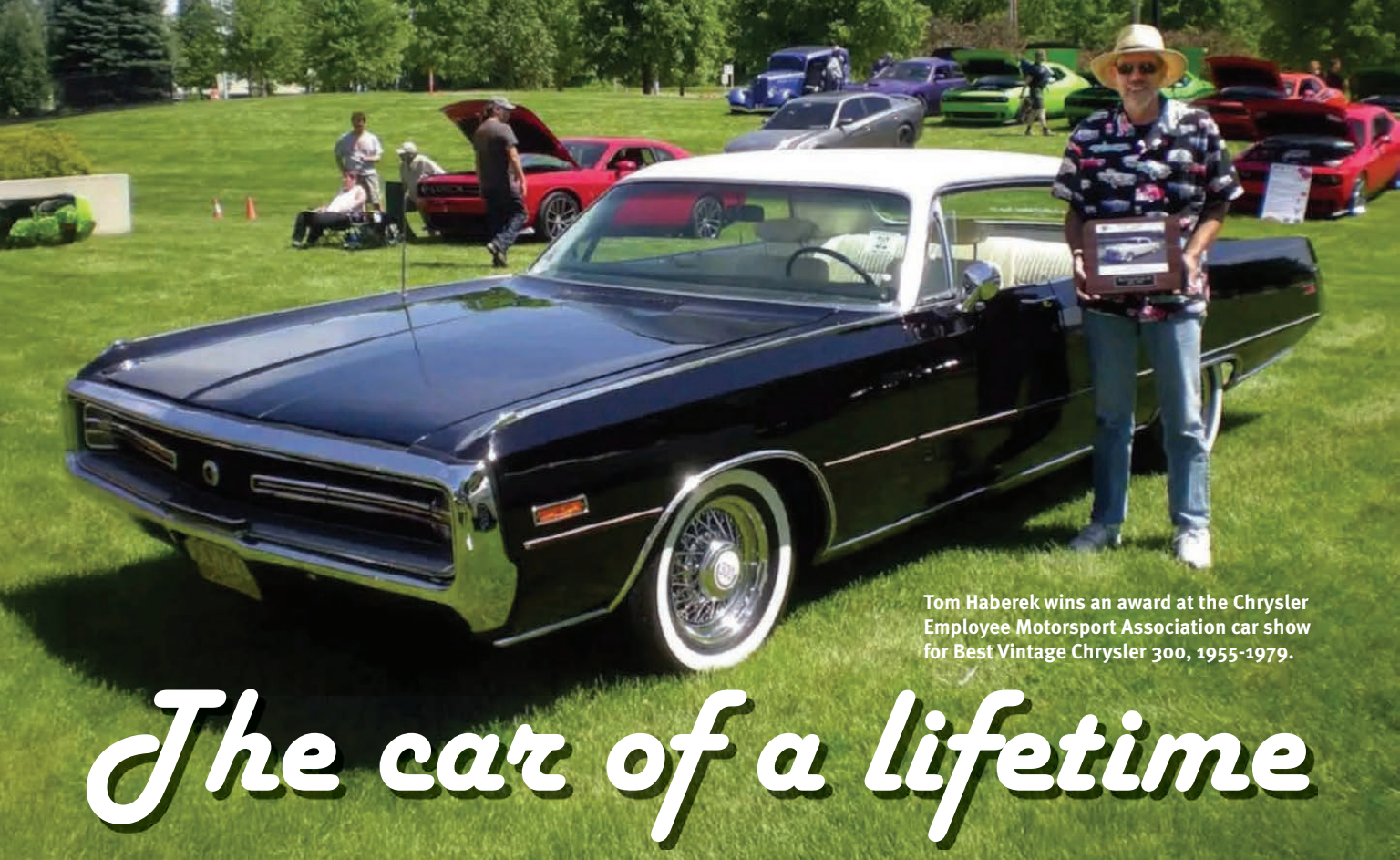
If a postal inspector or OIG agent interviews you, you might be given additional warnings. Most people are familiar from television with Miranda warnings, but there are other warnings that every letter carrier should be familiar with. Garrity and Kalkines are two other types of warnings:

A Garrity warning advises suspects of their criminal and administrative liability for any statements made but also advises suspects of their right to remain silent on any issues that may implicate them in a crime.

A Kalkines warning requires employees to make statements and cooperate, even if it could lead to being disciplined or to being discharged, but it provides criminal immunity for their statements.

If a carrier is given any of these warnings—Miranda, Garrity or Kalkines—and there is reason to believe that the carrier might be subject to criminal prosecution, the individual should consult an attorney immediately, in addition to exercising their Weingarten rights. For more information on Weingarten rights and the warnings mentioned above, read pages 23-27 of the 2023 *Letter Carrier Resource Guide* found at [nalc.org/resourceguide](http://nalc.org/resourceguide). **PR**

**All new NALC members receive a card explaining their Weingarten Rights.**



Tom Haberek wins an award at the Chrysler Employee Motorsport Association car show for Best Vintage Chrysler 300, 1955-1979.

# The car of a lifetime

**A**fter graduating from high school in 1973 and starting at a county college with a job placement service, **Tom Haberek** saw on a bulletin board that the local post office was accepting applications.

He took the postal exam and the Postal Service soon hired him. He realized he'd need a reliable car to get to the Sterling Heights, MI, postal facility to start work in March 1974.

"So, when I needed a ride to go to work, I bought my Chrysler [on] March 28, 1974," Haberek said, remembering the exact date.

Why *that* car—a black 1970 Chrysler 300 four-door hard top?

"When you're young, you wanna have bucket seats and automatic on the floor. You know, you wanna make it look sporty," he said, noting that he added white wall tires with spoke wheels. "But the thing is, it was a four-door, not a two-door car. It's a family car with a four-door. But I've never seen another car, four-door like *that*."

"Plus," the South Macomb, MI Branch 4374 member added, "the car was fully loaded [with] all the options—power seats, power windows, power

antenna, power trunk release. And it was a Chrysler 300." Haberek cited the Chrysler 300's reputation as one of the fastest cars in the '50s.

The car is larger than a modern sedan. "They call them boats. Big car. I mean, huge," he said. "You know, it's 5 feet wide and 18-and-a-half feet long. The front seats are almost like your couch because it's so big."

In those days, the Postal Service sometimes offered carriers a drive agreement while they were serving as a substitute. "You could use your car to deliver mail on park-and-loop," Haberek said. "So, I did use that car a few times to deliver mail in, because it had air conditioning."

Once a man stopped him on the route and asked if it was his vehicle. "It was such a flashy-looking car at the time," Haberek said, adding that when he said it was, the man responded, "They must pay you good money."

Haberek remained with the Postal Service for 36 years and the Chrysler 300 stayed with him, too, though it stopped being his primary means of transportation. "I didn't drive the 300 so much," he said. "It sat until before I retired."

When he was gearing up to retire in 2010, he decided to take the Chrysler traveling and going to car shows. To do so, he knew he needed to do some work on the car.

"In my garage I took the car apart, took the suspension apart, rebuilt the engine, put it all back together, and then we were able to travel on it," Haberek said. "I've got 30,000 miles on it since then."

Haberek has never been afraid to fix any vehicles, including those of friends and relatives, saying he has general knowledge of working on cars. "I don't know how to do everything on cars, but I can do a lot," he said.

He's done a lot of work in his own garage or a friend's. "I set something up so I could sandblast the front end of the car," Haberek said. "I did a lot of detail. And then I had it repainted."

Haberek bought a '70 Chrysler 300 convertible, replacing all of his car's aftermarket parts back to original Chrysler parts. "I threw mine away, my original stuff," he said, "so I needed that stuff to make it look original again."

He rechromed the bumpers from the spare car and put them on. "And I had a



Haberek works on the car in his garage.

new vinyl top put on it. So, the car right now looks better than new,” he said.

Haberek loves showing the car at various auto shows and competitions. The Detroit area has quite a few events, including the Detroit Autorama, the Woodward Dream Cruise, a car show for Chrysler employees at its tech center, the Motor Muster at Greenfield Village and Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, the Eyes on Design car show at the Ford House in Grosse Pointe Shores, and the Jammin’ at the Junction Classic Car Show in Roseville, at many of which Haberek has received awards, including Best in Show.

“Local car shows happen a lot,” Haberek said, including at churches or restaurants. “Almost every day of the week, you can find some place in the Detroit area to take your car. Not to get an award, but to just to hang out.”

Sometimes the competition is stiff. “It does get pretty tough. You see some of these cars [and] every nut and every bolt is absolutely perfect,” he said.

The recognition and awards feel good, too. “I’m quite honored, because, like I said, I’ve always liked the car,” he said.

And when attendees at car shows compliment Haberek’s car, he tells them, “Oh, I’ve had it 50 years,” and they seem amazed. “You always find the guys that say, ‘I wish I would’ve kept my car,’ ” he said. “Well, this one, I’m glad I never got rid of it. Because I didn’t realize when I first bought it how popular car shows would be in this time period, you know? So, I’m lucky.”

While at the Detroit Autorama, Haberek’s Chrysler was noticed by a reporter from *Hemmings* magazine, which covers classic, vintage, muscle and street rod cars and has

been published since the 1950s. Two months later, the man saw Haberek and his wife at a different show and approached him. He was impressed with the Chrysler 300 and had sent his editor a photo and wanted to write an article on the car because he loved Haberek’s story.

The article appeared in February 2024, giving specs of the vehicle and detailing how Haberek had used the car to take his wife to her high school prom in 1979 and then in their wedding in 1982, as well as countless concerts and cruising. “That was really exciting,” he said of the feature. “I was just amazed how much recognition that car got last year.”

Sometimes people try to buy it, asking him to name a price. But he’s not interested in selling it. “Nope. I’ve had it too long,” he tells them.

Despite the praise, Haberek says the Chrysler still needs work so he can continue entering it in competitions. “The frame of this car is not in the best shape,” he said. “It’s one of the last things I’d like to do on this thing.”

As far as the hobby of car shows goes, he’s hoping it continues. “I don’t see that much future in it because I think these younger kids do not care about these little cars, you know? It’s like a dying thing right now,” he said. “I’m just glad that I’m able to appreciate it and have a good time at it at this time in history.”

The generation currently owning these cars

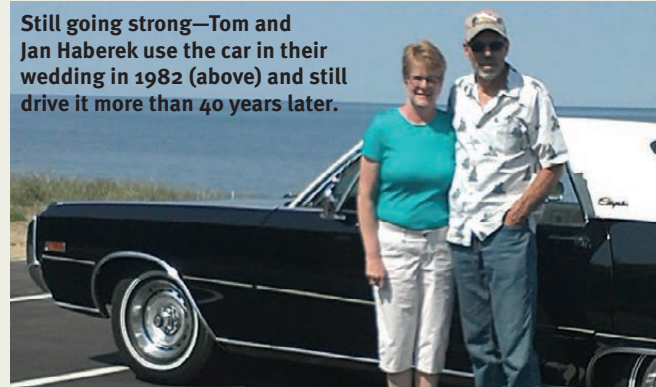
has “some kind of thing for the past, and they want to try to relive the past, but they’re not getting any younger,” Haberek said. “I hope there’s a huge future for it. I do.”

The thing that Haberek loves the most is the pride he gets when people look at his car and he can say that he did most of it himself. “All of my friends tell me, ‘Tom, if it wasn’t for you, this car wouldn’t look like it. It still wouldn’t be here.’ If I didn’t take care of it, it would probably be in a junk yard,” he said.

The Chrysler 300, like his identity as letter carrier, has been a part of his life for a half-century. “You know, I could buy another car, but it won’t be something I’ve had since I was 19,” he said. **PR**



Still going strong—Tom and Jan Haberek use the car in their wedding in 1982 (above) and still drive it more than 40 years later.



# Still time to register for food drive



**L**etter carriers are preparing for the Letter Carriers' "Stamp Out Hunger®" Food Drive—the largest single-day food drive in the country—on Saturday, May 10.

With just two months to go, time is running out for branches to register to guarantee that they will receive postcards.

Registration is easy and requires only a few minutes. Branch presidents simply visit the NALC website at [nalc.org](http://nalc.org), log into the Members Only portal, select the Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive icon, enter the requested information listed under each tab, and click "Complete Registration." Branch presidents have the option to designate a local food coordinator, who will then gain access to the food drive database via their Members Only portal and will be able to register the branch.

To designate a local coordinator, branch presidents should select the "Coordinators" tab and click "Add Coordinator." When a dialog box appears, click "Member Search," key in the member's last name, double-click the member's name to select and click "Submit Search." Click the "Submit" button when the dialog box from the previous page appears and auto-populates with the member's information. The local coordinator will then have access to the food drive database via the Members Only portal.

The registration deadline to receive postcards is March 21. Any branch that registers after the deadline will not be guaranteed to receive postcards. Branch registration will remain open without postcard guarantee until April 21. If a branch has questions, please visit [nalc.org/food](http://nalc.org/food) to find contact information for your regional or state coordinator, who will be able to help.

Hunger exists in every community in the country, and each year food banks depend on letter carriers to help replenish the shelves of food pantries and other charitable organizations in the communities we serve.

"Letter carriers are in every community and can see the needs in their communities," NALC President Brian L. Renfroe said. "We step up by filling the shelves of local food pantries. Our commitment to the largest one-day food drive in the country is unwavering."

Food drive bags have been proven to significantly increase the total amount of food collected. If a branch needs assistance with finding bag sponsors, volunteers, distributing the food, or other details, the branch should first reach out to its regional or state coordinator.

Branches are then encouraged to visit [unitedway.org/find-your-united-way](http://unitedway.org/find-your-united-way) to find contact information for their local United Way. Often, United Way can help branches find local food pantries, coordinate distribution of food and find sponsors for bags, such as local grocery stores. Other partners who may be able to assist include the AFL-CIO, Kellanova, and the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW). You can find your local UFCW by visiting: [ufcw.org/members/find-your-local](http://ufcw.org/members/find-your-local). Please be mindful of the bag deadlines posted here: [nalc.org/toolkit](http://nalc.org/toolkit) under the heading "Important information for coordinators."

Getting the word out is essential to the success of the food drive. Once the branch is registered, the food drive coordinator should visit the Food Drive Tool Kit to review the Coordinator's Manual and order merchandise.

Wearing food drive T-shirts; putting out lawn signs; hanging posters and flyers inside banks, apartment complexes, churches or grocery stores; working with apartment complexes to send out community emails; and sharing information on social media will help boost community support and improve the outcome of the food drive.

From letter carriers to postal customers to volunteers, anyone can order merchandise from the Frank Doolittle Company or online from the Stamp Out Hunger® Store at stampouthungerstore.com. To ensure timely delivery of merchandise, please order before the deadlines listed at [nalc.org/community-service/food-drive/food-drive-toolkit](http://nalc.org/community-service/food-drive/food-drive-toolkit) under the heading “Buy your official Stamp Out Hunger® merchandise online.” Food drive posters can be ordered by branch presidents or coordinators via

the food drive database located on the Members Only portal. All poster orders and payments must be received at NALC Headquarters by April 18. Delivery of orders received after the deadline will not be guaranteed.

NALC’s social media team and the Department of Communications and Media Relations, along with our national partners, will continue spreading the word and raising awareness for the Stamp Out Hunger® Food Drive. Remember to follow the food drive’s official social media accounts on Facebook at [facebook.com/StampOutHunger](https://facebook.com/StampOutHunger) and on X (formerly known as Twitter) at [@StampOutHunger](https://twitter.com/StampOutHunger) to stay up to date and to learn more

about NALC’s national partners. To find or send messages about the food drive on either platform, use #StampOutHunger.

The Letter Carriers’ Stamp Out Hunger® Food Drive on May 10 is just two months away. The drive is held annually on the second Saturday in May, and as this year’s event approaches, it is important for branches to register.

Reminder: To guarantee postcard delivery, the deadline to register is March 21. Regional and state coordinators are available to help. More information about the Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive can be found online at [nalc.org/food](http://nalc.org/food).

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

## A food drive as close as your mailbox

**Bag healthy, non-perishable food items and place near your mailbox. Your letter carrier will do the rest!**

**Solo empaque los alimentos que no se echan a perder y colóquelos cerca del buzón. Su cartero los recogerá todo!**



## Second Saturday in May

NALC thanks its national partners



Premiere Partner   
From your bogger to your butcher, we're the hardworking men and women of your neighborhood grocery union. Together, we are proud to put the food on America's tables.

# NALC appoints legislative director, RGA

**P**resident **Brian L. Renfroe** named **Jennifer Haas** as director of legislative and political affairs at NALC Headquarters in February.

Before joining NALC, Haas served as director of labor engagement for the Harris-Walz presidential campaign. Haas has extensive



**Jennifer Haas**

experience in legislative and political affairs in the labor movement, including as legislative representative for the International Union of Operating

Engineers and as director of labor coalitions for the Democratic National Committee. Haas has also held several political fundraising positions, including national finance director for Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee programs to protect vulnerable incumbents and support challengers in close races. And she has served as deputy chief of staff for two members of Congress.

Also last month, the president appointed **Josh Leeking** of Lancaster, PA Branch 273 as a regional grievance assistant for Region 12 (Pennsylvania, South Jersey and Central New Jersey).

Leeking began his career as a carrier in 2012. He has served as a stew-

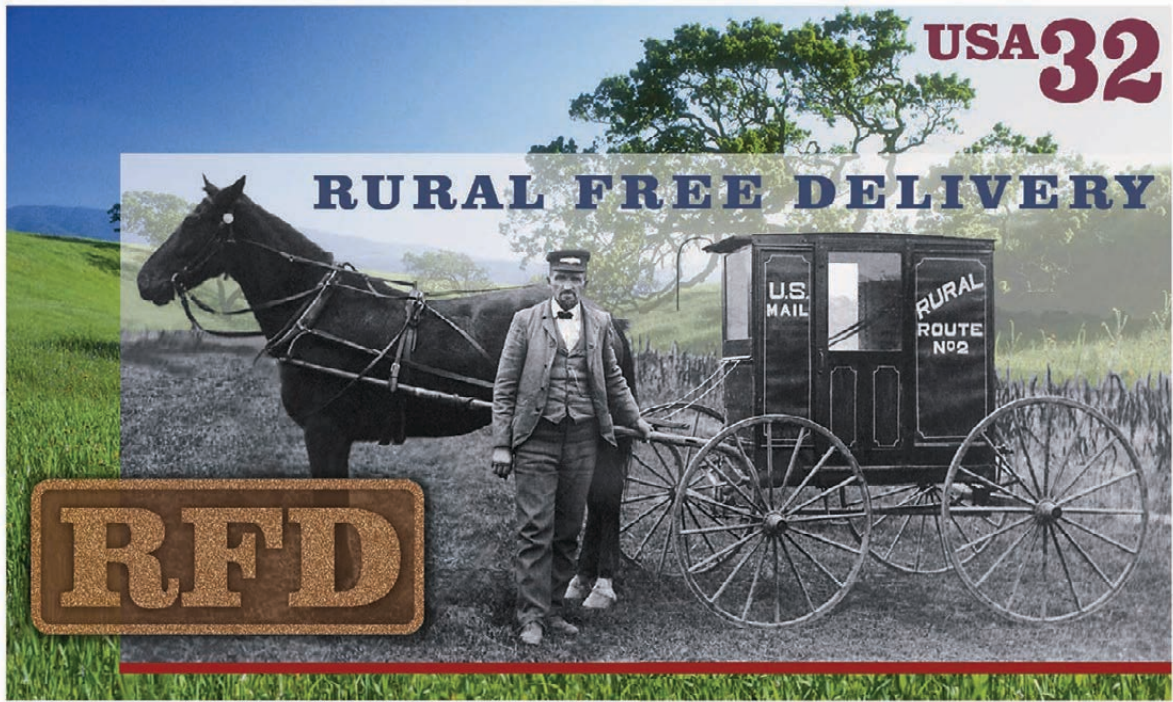
ard, Formal Step A representative, backup member of the Central Pennsylvania/South Jersey dispute resolution team and branch vice president.

Leeking is an arbitration advocate and national assigned assistant for Region 12 and for the past year has been working with NALC Headquarters as part of a group creating a standardized Shop Steward Training program.

Leeking graduated from the NALC Leadership Academy in 2023. **PR**



**Josh Leeking**



1996

## How mail delivery connected rural America

**I**n 1863, city delivery began, allowing residents in urban areas to receive mail delivered to their residences rather than having to travel to the post office for their mail. It was popular, profitable and provided employment for many Civil War veterans (see “Free city delivery” in the January 2021 issue of *The Postal Record*). But it also pointed to the divide between urban and rural residents.

“Why should the cities have fancy mail service and the old colonial system still prevail in the country districts?” one farmer was quoted in the 1891 *Annual Report of the Postmaster General* as asking.

It would take time—and it wouldn’t be easy—but eventually rural free

delivery connected Americans in a way that they never had been before.

By 1890, nearly 41 million Americans—more than 65 percent of the country—still did not receive mail delivery at their residences. This was before radios, telephones or even

long-distance newspaper deliveries. If they wanted to know about the world, they had to travel over often poorly maintained rural roads, sometimes waiting long periods when the weather was bad, to a distant post office to pick up their mail. If they wanted it faster, or if they wanted newspapers or packages, they had to pay private—and often expensive—couriers to deliver the mail or other supplies to their homes.

Milton Trusler, a farmer from Fayette County, IN, started talking up the idea of mail delivery to rural areas. As the president of the Indiana Grange—a social and political organization that would advocate for farmers—he spread the idea across his state. He insisted that if farm families were paying the same postage rates as city dwellers, they deserved the same service. Spreading beyond Indiana, the idea caught on like wildfire and soon the National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry lobbied Congress to make it a reality.

But the calls weren’t universal. The Postal Service’s historian wrote in 2013, “One Kansas farmer expressed concern that rural people would become lazy if they did not have to pick up their mail.”

Those in power in Washington were hesitant, too. Though city delivery had

A rural letter carrier in Nebraska





proven both profitable and popular in the preceding decades, many in Congress thought rural free delivery would be a financial disaster because U.S. geography was simply too large to support such a program. That said, some in Congress thought rural delivery would be politically popular, as about three out of every four Americans lived in rural settings. That ratio would change over time, as today about four out of five Americans live in urban settings.

Members of Congress were also being lobbied by those opposed to free delivery. Private couriers were afraid that they would lose their business, and many town merchants worried that if farm families didn't have to come to town for the mail, they would use the postal system to obtain their goods instead.

However, one merchant saw that as a financial opportunity—and a way to improve the lives of many Americans at the same time—and he used his government position to start the process of making it a reality. That man, Postmaster General John Wanamaker, the owner of a major Philadelphia-based department store chain, argued that it made more sense to have one person deliver the mail rather than making 50 people ride into town to collect it. He also thought that mail delivery could ease the isolation of rural living.

"I think the growth of the Farmers' Alliance movement and the other farmers' movements in the past few years has been due to this hunger for something social as much as to anything else," Wanamaker wrote in 1891.

With the combined support of the farmers and the postmaster general, Congress began to consider rural delivery. In 1892, Michigan Rep. James



A rural letter carrier delivers in 1908.

O'Donnell introduced "A Bill to Extend the Free Delivery System of Mails to Rural Communities," calling for \$6 million to create the service. President Grover Cleveland was hesitant about the expense and called it a "crazy scheme." The daunting price tag ensured that the bill did not make it out of committee.

The next year, Rep. Thomas Watson of Georgia took a more scaled-back approach, introducing legislation that appropriated \$10,000 to experiment with Rural Free Delivery (RFD). However, the next postmaster general, Wilson S. Bissell, didn't pursue the experiment, saying he needed at least \$20 million to create RFD. (The \$20 million price tag was later determined to be mere guesswork.)

In 1895, new Postmaster General William L. Wilson said he'd be willing to research RFD if Congress appropriated more funding, which it did, allocating \$40,000. With the funding, on Oct. 1, 1896, the Post Office began service to five routes, covering 10 miles in Jefferson County, WV. (West Virginia was selected because it was the postmaster general's home state.) Days later, the Post Office Department expanded the test to 44 rural routes in 29 states.

On Oct. 6, 1896, Joshua Corbin became the first rural carrier in Maryland by beating the three other carriers at the Westminster Post Office out the door and onto his wagon hitched to his horse Harry. Corbin's route through the southern end of Carroll County aver-

aged about 30 pieces of mail per day. He was paid \$25 a month and worked 27 days a month.

"At first, the farmers didn't like the service too much," Corbin told a reporter decades later. "They thought they would have to pay for it and getting free mail from the government didn't make much sense at all. But after some time had passed, they were very pleased with it."

Such a view was expressed by an Arizona citizen who wrote to the Postal Service in 1897:

I am more than ever proud of being an American citizen. ... I live three and a half miles from the Tempe post-office, and have been sick for a week past, yet my mail is brought to my door every morning, except Sunday. ... It looks as if 'Uncle Sam' had at last turned his eye in our direction.

In 1898, Post Office officials announced that any group of farmers could have free delivery by sending a petition with a description of their community and roads to their congressman. More than 10,000 petitions flooded in over the next few years.

To receive service, residents needed to have good roads and a good mailbox.

The first mailboxes were everything from "lard pails and syrup cans to old apple, soap and cigar boxes," a USPS historian wrote in 2013. By 1902, the Post Office Department had issued required specifications for mailboxes, or service would not be provided. Boxes could be square, oblong, circular or semicircular, but:



This photo of a Rural Free Delivery vehicle appeared in the September 1905 edition of *Popular Mechanics*.

- The box must be made of metal, 6 by 8 by 18 inches, and be weather- and dust-proof.
- Boxes should be constructed so they can be fastened to a post at a height convenient to the carrier without dismounting from a horse.
- Keys for customers' boxes should be easy to use by a carrier with one gloved hand in the severest weather.

Manufacturers stenciled the words "Approved by the Postmaster-General" on satisfactory boxes.

Because of their distance from the nearest post office, rural carriers operated as traveling post offices, selling stamps, money orders and registered letter services. Unlike city carriers, they also had to supply their own transportation—usually horse and wagon until 1929, when the Post Office noted that motor vehicles had become the norm. Congress passed the Rural Post Roads Act of 1916 to improve the roads, providing federal funds for the construction of any public road over which mail was transported.

Quickly judged a success, RFD became a permanent service effective July 1, 1902.

It wasn't long before rural carriers felt they were underpaid. Corbin, Maryland's first rural carrier, quit after three years because he couldn't afford to live on the pay. To advocate for better pay, the rural carriers moved to unionize, with the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association formed in 1903.

From 1901 to 1910, rural carriers' routes increased from 100,000 miles to almost a million miles. The word "free" was dropped in 1906, since by then it was understood.

A reporter in Michigan rode along with a rural carrier in 1903 and talked to a resident about the service. "It's one of the things that seems to bring back to us farmers some of the money we've been paying out for years for taxes," the reporter quoted the man. "Congress votes money, lots of it, for armies, and war ships, and river and harbor improvements, and public buildings in cities and towns, and a good many of us live and die and never see none of 'em. But here is something that comes right to our very doors, and we can't help seeing and feeling the good of our money."

At a time when the written word was the main means of communication, RFD brought the country a little bit closer together. But in 1913, mail took on more importance with the creation of Parcel Post. Until then, parcels weighing

more than 4 pounds were required by law to travel by private couriers.

Parcel Post allowed the distribution of millions of dollars of sales in mail-order merchandise. While this was a boon to the mail-order companies—such as Sears, Roebuck, and Co.—culturally this meant that rural families could receive books, fashion, and any other product available to urban America.

As a USPS historian wrote, "By bringing farm families newspapers, magazines, and mail-order catalogs, it brought the world to their door. Life in rural America wasn't isolated anymore."

Rural carriers still deliver for the nation's residents. USPS has about 133,000 rural letter carriers serving more than 40 million customers along 80,000 rural delivery routes. Rural routes range from 10 to 175 miles. Rural carriers collectively drive 3.5 million miles every delivery day. They deliver in every state, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. **PR**



A modern rural letter carrier in Hermiston, OR

# Carriers and the mail make news online

**M**ail-centered stories frequently appear on social media and online news sites. The following are a few that have come to NALC's attention recently. If you find a story you'd like us to consider featuring, send it to [postalrecord@nalc.org](mailto:postalrecord@nalc.org).



## 65-year letter carrier honored by Iowa representative

Cedar Rapids, IA Branch 373 member **Ernie Topness**, 91, was the second-longest-serving letter carrier in the country before his retirement in late November. He was a letter carrier for 65 years and during that time he drove more than 3 million miles.

Before his postal career began in 1959, he served in the Army from 1953 to 1955.

"It's been a pleasure delivering mail to all these people. They're all so friendly," Topness told the local ABC TV affiliate.

Topness was recognized by Rep. Ashley Hinson (R-IA), who stood up on the House floor to say a few words about him.

"I rise today to recognize Mr. Earnest Topness for his distinguished and impactful career serving both our nation and the people of Cedar Rapids, IA. Ernie's dedication is unmatched. When others would sit out a snow day or call

in sick, he was always known to show up," Hinson said, according to the local CBS TV affiliate. "Mr. Topness, your legacy is one of unwavering dedication and inspiring service. We wish you all the best in your well-deserved retirement."

Even when a hurricane hit Cedar Rapids, Topness was out delivering mail. His truck ended up getting pinned down by a tree, and community members helped him and his truck get out.

"And then he finished his route," his son, Tim Rion-Topness, told *The Gazette*. "Now, how many people would do that?"

Rion-Topness said his father personified the Postal Service's unofficial motto, "Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds."

## Pennsylvania carrier creates Eagles shrine

**Walter Shaw** is a Philadelphia, PA Branch 157 letter carrier who indubitably loves football, specifically the Philadelphia Eagles.

He has been decorating his window with jerseys during the NFL season for the past decade to show his love and support for his home team.

Shaw told Metro Philadelphia, "No matter what, if we're a lousy team or not, I'm going to do it."

He has been collecting jerseys for the past 10 years, a hobby he began after his divorce. In addition to the Eagles jerseys, Shaw adds one jersey from the opposing team. He nor-



Walter Shaw (r) displays Eagles jerseys in his front window.



Photos by Jack Tomczuk/Metro Philadelphia

## Online news (continued)

mally only has football jerseys, skipping out on jerseys from other sports. However, he occasionally makes exceptions, like honoring basketball and baseball players who have died by displaying their jersey.

When he is not arranging his jerseys for display, Shaw thrifts bar stools and tables and decorates them to rep the teams his friends and family support.

### Customer cries after receiving a card from her letter carrier

Madison Vaughan lived in the same house for 22 years and saw her letter carrier, Tim, frequently. She recently moved out of her mother's home and into a new apartment, which was not part of Tim's route. So, Vaughan wrote her mailman a thank-you note before she moved. To her surprise, the carrier reciprocated with his own handwritten card. Filming her response on TikTok, Vaughan had a tear-filled response to the carrier's words.

"He wrote such a thoughtful thing," she said: "It has been a pleasure being your mailman."

Vaughan told *People* that Tim was there to deliver important mail to her throughout the years. In the video she talks about how Tim watched her grow

**Madison Vaughan reads the card from her mailman on her TikTok video.**



up and she watched him grow up, too. He has gotten gray hair and developed a bad knee over the years. He delivered her school schedules and college acceptance letters. Although she said she wasn't particularly close with Tim, he was a consistent "background character" in her life.

In the video, she says that Tim wrote that he will be retiring in a few months after 27 years of service, so Vaughan wouldn't have had him as her letter carrier for much longer anyway.

### Community celebrates 35-year Massachusetts carrier

Massachusetts Northeast Merged Branch 25 letter carrier **Alan Robidoux** is retiring after 35 years. The entirety of those 35 years has been spent on the same route in Leominster, MA.

"The customers mean a lot to me," Robidoux told *The Concord Bridge*. "They are almost like family. I've known a lot of them for many years."

About a month before his retirement in December, four of his customers organized a goodbye potluck. Around 50 of his customers and friends from his route attended.

His route spanned 30 miles and 345 customers. But the people on his route aren't the only ones who will miss him. He kept a box of dog treats in his trucks to give to dogs in his neighborhoods and would keep an eye out for lost dogs on his route.

He has been there for so long, he has seen kids grow up and have their own kids and has been there to keep an eye



**Alan Robidoux**

on the elderly. On one occasion he even helped an elderly customer who had fallen, broken her knee and was yelling for help when Robidoux came to the door.

“Every dog loves him, and every family loves him,” one of Robidoux’s customers, Molly Delehey, told the newspaper. “He’s an integral part of our lives.”



### Florida carrier and 11-year-old boy forge a friendship

Clearwater, FL Branch 2008 letter carrier **Jamesha Keaton** formed an unlikely friendship with 11-year-old customer Jayden Langworthy, who lives on her route. Every day when Keaton arrives, he is waiting to ask if she has any packages for him.

Keaton began filming these interactions and posting them on her TikTok page, @meshababieeee. In one of her viral videos, Langworthy asks if she has his bike. Using her social media platform, she was able to raise money to get Langworthy his bike.

Langworthy told the local NBC TV affiliate that he loves the bike but that his friendship with Keaton is more important. Langworthy said, “I feel about her that she’s nice.”

“As long as he’s happy, I’m happy, and that’s what makes my day,” Keaton said.

### Dog owned by celebrity couple tries his hand at letter carrying

A married celebrity couple, John Legend and Chrissy Teigen, dressed up their dog, Petey the poodle, as a letter carrier and showed him off in a Jan. 30 Instagram post.

The couple launched Kismet, a dog food brand, in May.

In the post, Petey delivers boxes from Chewy, an online pet store. Petey stands at the door in a USPS hat, shirt and pants holding a package labeled “Chewy,” along with several other packages. Teigen skips to open the door then discovers Petey and says, “Stop, oh my God! Who’s the most handsome mailman?”

Legend told People that dogs have been a part of their relationship for almost its entirety, with him gifting Teigen an English bulldog named Puddy shortly after they started dating in 2008.



Petey the poodle

### Connecticut community organizes special sendoff for 40-year carrier

**Charlie Seefeldt**, a Branch 60 letter carrier, has been delivering mail since 1985, and the past decade has been spent on one route in Stamford, CT.

“I’m an outdoor person,” Seefeldt told News12 Connecticut. “I like being out in the weather, [whether] it’s a sunny day or it’s a spring day, but I even like it when it’s bad weather.”

In December, the community got together for a party, which celebrated his retirement and honored his service.

“The love was there,” Seefeldt said. “What they meant to me [and] what I meant to them is special.” **PR**

Residents thank Charlie Seefeldt.



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 202-662-2420 or at [postalrecord@nalc.org](mailto:postalrecord@nalc.org). We'll follow up with you to obtain news clippings, photos or other information.

# Honoring heroic carriers

**H**eroism, 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 their 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.



Edward "Lee" Craft

## Carrier alerts neighbor of piled up mail

**Edward "Lee" Craft** has been a Columbus, OH Branch 78 letter carrier for about 35 years and has been on the same route for the last six or seven years, so he has come to know his customers.

One elderly woman on his route picked up her mail from the mailbox almost every day. One March day last year, Craft returned from vacation and noticed that the woman hadn't picked up her mail for a few days.

"I knew this particular lady, and I know she got her mail every day," Craft said. "So, I knocked on the door; I rang the doorbell—no answer."

Finding that odd, Craft went to speak to Karen, who lived across the street. She told him that just a week earlier she had been given the phone number of the elderly woman's daughter.

Karen called the daughter, who arrived and found her mother on the floor, where she had been for nearly three days after falling.

"She had nothing to eat or to drink—nothing for the whole time she was on the ground," Craft said.

The elderly woman had sustained a few minor injuries, including bruises. Her family employed a day nurse to come in to keep watch of her. A few months later she moved to a senior-living facility.

Craft is glad that he was there to help, and said he thinks that if "she laid there a little longer or another day or whatever, she probably could've passed away."

## Letter carrier rescues elderly woman

Nine-year letter carrier **Jared Matesic** was two hours into his route in Blasdell, NY, on Jan. 2 when he pulled up to a home in a mobile home community. His customer was elderly, so he usually brought her mail up to the door and knocked. As the Buffalo-Western New York Branch 3 letter carrier did so, he thought he heard a faint, "Help me," but he wasn't sure.

"So, I knocked again, and I definitely heard her yelling, 'Help me.'" Matesic said. He opened the door and found her on the ground. He asked her if she was OK. "She was a little disoriented and wasn't really giving me straight answers, so I picked her up and put her on the couch," he said.



Jared Matesic



He wrapped a blanket around her and got her a glass of water. When he told her that he was going to call 911, the elderly woman didn't seem to understand. Matesic just sat with her for the next few minutes and kept telling her that everything was going to be all right, until the paramedics arrived. But when EMTs started to take her blood pressure, she fell off the couch.

"She was having a hard time, I think, staying lucid at that time," Matesic said.

He hung around and made sure she got into the ambulance. Then, he went back to his postal vehicle.

"[Going back to his truck] was kind of a hard reset. It's almost like a whirlwind of feelings," Matesic said.

Matesic talked to the owner of the trailer park, who regularly checks on the elderly woman, and he said that she had had a stroke. As of late January, Matesic heard from the trailer park owner that she was still receiving treatment.

## Carrier raises alarm for absent resident

Framingham, MA Branch 334 letter carrier **Robert Quinlan Jr.** has delivered mail for about 20 years and has been on the same route for the last eight of them.

One of his customers is a retired schoolteacher named Sally who has mobility issues, and her mailbox is at the end of her driveway. Quinlan regularly goes up to her side door, which she would leave unlocked, opens it and puts her mail down on a table just inside. Sometimes, they would briefly chat. Sally would inform Quinlan if she wasn't going to be there the next day so he could put the mail in the mailbox on those days.

One hot day last June, Quinlan went up to the house and noticed that the garage door was open, the lights were on in the house and the side door was locked, which was unusual for Sally.

"I just said 'OK, maybe it's nothing,'" he recalled.

The next day when Quinlan arrived, the house was in the same state, which made him suspicious.

Quinlan asked a neighbor, Carol, if she had seen Sally recently. Carol had Sally's phone number and tried calling her, but there was no answer. While Quinlan returned to his route, Carol alerted another one of Sally's neighbors, who had a key to Sally's house. They went into the house and found Sally on the floor, lying in a pool of blood.

Quinlan found out the next day that Sally had fallen and had been on the floor for almost two days.

"She had hit her head, and she was bleeding," Quinlan said. She was taken to the hospital, where she stayed for about a week and a half. She then went to a rehab facility.

Quinlan visited Sally, who thanked him. The neighbors told the letter carrier that Sally is recovering slowly, but they are unsure whether she will return to her home.

He said that he missed their chats but was glad that he had been able to help her.

"[Sally was] one of the customers that I was really quite friendly with," he said. "She was one of the friendliest people on my route. I talked to her almost every day."

## Carrier investigates piled-up mail

In late October, **Joie Morgan**, a 25-year letter carrier, returned from a long weekend and after a couple of days,

noticed that her customer, who normally emptied her mailbox every day, had a pile of accumulated mail.

The Findlay, OH Branch 143 member decided to go up to her door and ring the doorbell.

"Then, I knocked, and I could barely hear, 'Help. Help me,'" Morgan said. "It was crazy. I knocked again and I heard it, and I said, 'Ma'am, do you need me to call 911?' and she said, 'Help me' again."

Morgan called 911 and the woman asked her to stay there until the ambulance arrived. But the door was locked,

"I could tell she was super weak and I asked her, 'Do you have a key someplace?'" Morgan said.

She heard the woman say something about the air-conditioning unit. When the carrier walked around to the AC unit, she saw the resident through a sliding-glass door. Morgan stayed next to her until the emergency responders got there.

"She had fallen and broken her wrist and couldn't get herself up, and had been there since Saturday and this was Wednesday morning," Morgan said.

Emergency responders found her dehydrated and weak from lack of food. They took her to the hospital, and she has since moved into an assisted-living facility.

Morgan gave her a card and went to see her, but her customer wasn't awake during the visit. The woman's daughter expressed her gratitude and said that her mother was grateful that her letter carrier had come to see her.

"I felt like it was divine intervention, because something told me to go to the door," she said. **PR**

Joie Morgan



# Veterans Group

For more information, go to [nalc.org/veterans](http://nalc.org/veterans).



## Join the NALC Veterans Group today

**V**eterans of the U.S. Armed Forces comprise almost a quarter of the membership of the National Association of Letter Carriers—active NALC members as well as retired members. As of right now, we have 19,747 members in the Veterans Group; however, there are thousands of members who are veterans and have not signed up.

These veterans traded their military uniforms for letter carrier uniforms, and they continue to serve their communities and this great nation.

The creation of the NALC Veterans Group is intended to be something tangible and useful.

The NALC Veterans Group is designed to provide NALC members who are military veterans access to the information and tools specific to veterans' rights and benefits within the U.S. Postal Service. It also is intended to give veterans a sense of family and more brotherhood/sisterhood. It seeks to provide all NALC members who are also military vet-

erans—active full-time and part-time letter carriers, as well as retired letter carriers—resources, rights information and a sense of camaraderie.

NALC has made it easier for all veterans to sign up for the group. You can fill out the form on the website and mail it in, or you can fill out the form shown below and mail it in.

And you can go to [nalc.org/join-veterans](http://nalc.org/join-veterans), which will generate an email. You then will need to enter the information requested—name, address, branch number, military branch and any affiliated veterans groups. Once the fields are completed, press “send.” You will then be entered in our NALC Veterans Group and you will be sent an NALC Veteran pin.

**Don't forget about the Veterans Group memorabilia** that is available to purchase if you are a member of



**Joining the Veterans Group online is easy. Simply go to [nalc.org/join-veterans](http://nalc.org/join-veterans), click the link to generate an email and send your information to NALC Headquarters.**

the Veterans Group. These items would make a great gift from a branch to its veterans; check out [nalcstore.org](http://nalcstore.org) to order. All proceeds go toward future Veterans Group projects.

## Veteran profile: Amy Shea

**A**my Shea, a Port Angeles, WA Branch 1906 letter carrier, has been carrying mail for a little more than 10 years. Before that, she joined the Navy after high school and served from 2003 to 2007.

“I was one of those kids that didn't have, like, a ‘This is what I want to be when I grow up.’ I just never could figure that out,” she said.

Although she was unsure about her future, when she was 18 years old, she was training to work at a fire department. She remembers being in the middle of training on Sept. 11, 2001, when two jets collided with the

Twin Towers.

“I sat on the floor in front of the TV for hours while [everyone in] the department cried and prayed together for our brothers and sisters,” Shea said. “That was the deciding factor in my enlistment.”

She entered a contract with the Navy for eight years, four years active and four years inactive. She began as



Shea joined the Navy in 2003.

an electrical engineer and was part of a team that hooked up ships to shore power when they docked.

“I didn't really enjoy that too much, so I studied and cross-trained over to weapons,” Shea said. Then, she became a small arms weapons instructor.

She was stationed in Pearl Harbor, HI, on the *USS Hopper*, a guided missile destroyer (DDG 70).

They went on deployment around the world and stopped in places includ-



cluding Hong Kong, Singapore, Australia, the United Arab Emirates and the Seychelles.

She remembers jumping into the middle of the ocean to do swim calls, with divers surrounding them watching for sharks. “We would just dive right in the water, super fun,” Shea said.

“What I really do miss [about the military] is having those people that you wouldn’t know, like, who you wouldn’t have met, but now they’re family for life,” she said.

After leaving the military in 2007, she went to college, had her son, became the assistant to the director at the New Mexico School of Music and worked as a security guard.

Shea’s mother-in-law was a rural letter carrier, so she kept encouraging her to join the Postal Service until Shea eventually decided to apply.

“I really liked the idea of just being on my own and, you know, being out delivering and having that freedom and independence,” Shea said. “When you deliver the mail, you don’t

have anyone looking over your shoulder. ... That’s one of the fun things about working for the post office for the majority of the day—you’re just doing your job, kind of solo, and get to pet dogs and talk to really nice people.”

She has worked as a letter carrier in Washington and New Mexico. Her former branch president, **Craig Golden**, “taught me how to be a steward and went above and beyond in my NALC education,” she said.

“He’s like, ‘Not only am I going to teach you everything, I’m going to push you to be the best person and the best steward you can be.’ He was just an amazing, amazing president,” she said.

She became vice president for her branch and a part of the Joint Statement on Violence and Behavior in the Workplace team for NALC Region 2 in January.

Shea drew comparisons between her mail career, union involvement and military experience. She likened the importance of following orders in the military to the importance of fol-

lowing the contract when it comes to the union.

“Attention to detail is a big part of all three worlds,” she said.



Shea is a member of Port Angeles, WA Branch 1906.

## Join the NALC Veterans Group

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

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

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



You continue to serve your country—  
**THANK YOU!**

## NALC Veterans Group

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

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY, STATE, ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_  
NALC BRANCH NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_ BRANCH OF SERVICE: \_\_\_\_\_

I BELONG TO THE FOLLOWING VETERAN GROUP(S):

AMERICAN LEGION  DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS  VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS  
 OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_

**Free**  
to join

## A fair day's work for a fair day's pay



**Paul  
Barner**

**O**n a daily basis, nearly every letter carrier must go through the process of evaluating the workload of their assigned duties and estimate the time associated with completing those duties. When a letter carrier believes that the route they were assigned to carry has more work than they can complete within eight hours, or they believe they cannot complete all of the work assigned to them for the day within their scheduled time, the letter carrier is responsible for notifying management. Likewise, management is required to inform the letter carrier of what to do. Many times, the resulting evaluations culminate in disagreements.

**Contractually enforceable provisions addressed in Handbook M-39, Management of Delivery Services; Handbook M-41, City Carriers Duties and Responsibilities; and several national-level settlements have defined a process that both letter carriers and managers are required to follow when a letter carrier determines they will be unable to complete their daily assignment within their normally scheduled time frame. Additionally, specific information on the Delivery Operations Information System (DOIS); PS Form 3996, Carrier-Auxiliary Control; and PS Form 1571, Undelivered Mail Report can be found beginning on page 85 of the 2019 NALC Letter Carrier Resource Guide and are also available in the "Resources" section of the NALC website under "Workplace Issues." Here is some advice on how to handle these situations.**

- 1. Verbally inform management:** Section 131.41 of *Handbook M-41* requires the letter carrier to verbally inform management when they are of the opinion that they will be unable to case all mail distributed to the route, perform other required duties, and leave on schedule or when they will be unable to complete delivery of all mail.
- 2. Request PS Form 3996:** Section 122.33 of *Handbook M-39* requires management to provide, upon request by the employee, a PS Form 3996, after the supervisor has been verbally informed as to the reason for the request. The employee shall not be denied the form, and upon request, a duplicate of the completed form will be provided to the employee.

Remember, you must request the PS Form 3996 and verbally inform the supervisor of the reason for the request. If management refuses to provide a PS Form 3996, immediately request to see your steward.

- 3. Fill out the PS Form 3996 completely:** Instructions for completing the form can be found on the back of the PS Form 3996. In the "Reason For Use of Auxiliary" section of the form, identify why you believe you cannot complete your assignment in eight hours. Fully explain the reasons for your request. Provide as much specificity as possible in lieu of using more general comments such as "heavy volume" or "route overburdened." Supervisors may deny your request using DOIS projections as their justification. Multiple national-level settlements (e.g., M-01664 and M-01769) have held that these time projections cannot be used as the sole determinant of daily workload. Keep in mind, you are the professional letter carrier tasked with performing the duties of the assignment, and nothing can replace your estimate of how long that will take.
- 4. Keep your cool:** While being challenged can be frustrating and demeaning, there is no benefit to getting angry. The best course of action is to remain calm and professional while following the process outlined. If your manager denies the request, advise them you will do the best you can. In a professional manner, ask the manager for instructions as to what to do in the event you are unable to complete the assignment in the approved allotted time frame.
- 5. Don't argue:** There is no reason to argue with your manager at this point. Request a copy of the PS Form 3996 and continue with your assigned duties. Always work professionally and safely. You should never skip breaks or lunch to complete your assignment.
- 6. Don't make decisions:** Management is obligated to make decisions in accordance with contractual provisions. Once you realize that you will not be able to complete your assigned duties within the time frame approved by management, you should place the decision-making burden back on them by notifying management and requesting further instructions in accordance with any local directives. If no local directives exist, try contacting management two hours prior to the expiration of the approved time, or as soon as reasonably possible after confirming your

*(continued on page next page)*

## United we stand



**James D. Henry**

**T**here is nothing fairer than workers having unions for their mutual benefit. The history of the labor movement needs to be taught in every school in the United States of America. This country is living testimony to what free men and women, organized in free democratic trade unions, can do to make a better life.

**Where there is unity, there is always victory.** All things are relative; what we do to everything, we do to ourselves. All is really one. Every branch number is preceded by the acronym of NALC. No matter our geography, background or ethnicity, we're all brothers and

sisters of the same union, with one common cause: the advancement and security of letter carriers.

Henry Ford once said, "Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success." The NALC is currently at a pivotal moment that will determine the standard of living and quality of work life for current and future letter carriers. To achieve a living wage commensurate with the worth of letter carriers' labor, to obtain a respectful work environment, and to ensure stability and security, we must rally around one another for the greater good. In unity there is strength!

Our union advocates to keep us safer, healthier and able to enjoy a higher quality of life. All letter carriers should expect a better workplace and for their union to negotiate for them wages and benefits they deserve. A fair day's wage for a fair day's work! Growth is never by mere chance. It is the result of forces working together.

We must continue to demonstrate that we are a strong union, we must give our membership what they



deserve, we must raise the income of all letter carriers—whether career or city carrier assistant—and we must continue to provide benefits, security and affordable health insurance. Moreover, we must give letter carriers a voice when it comes to negotiating and enforcing our contract. Failure is not an option! Too much is at stake. We must persevere!

**Union represents togetherness, not sameness.** It does not mean we're divided if we disagree or have a different opinion. Democracy isn't just when you agree with it. Rather, we must strive to remain together in our pursuit of our common causes. A union is only as strong, effective and powerful as the members who participate in its activities. Only by binding together as a single force will we remain strong and unconquerable.

Togetherness is essential for us to reach our goals, whether big or small. By coming together and pooling our efforts, we can tackle bigger tasks and overcome any obstacle. When we come together as union brothers and sisters, we can achieve more than any of us could on our own.

*United we stand; empowered we thrive!*

## A fair day's work for a fair day's pay (continued)

*(continued from previous page)*

inability to complete the assignment within the allotted time. Notify management of your location and estimated time to complete the assignment. Again, ask management for further instructions and follow the instructions that management gives you.

**If management refuses to tell you what to do, or if you can't finish your assigned duties in the amount of time initially specified by management, you should return to the office in the allotted time and ask for further instructions. Once again, you should follow whatever instructions management gives you.**

# IRS, Labor Department reporting and other important reminders



**Nicole Rhine**

**A**ll branches, whatever their income and whether or not they receive local dues, must file the Internal Revenue Service Form 990, 990-EZ or 990-N yearly. The appropriate form should be filed by the 15th day of the fifth month after the end of the branch's fiscal year. The branch officers are responsible for ensuring that the form is filed. Generally, the branch president or treasurer completes the form. The income and assets of the branch determine which form should be filed:

- **Form 990**—Branches whose annual gross receipts are generally \$200,000 or more or whose total assets are \$500,000 or more at the end of the fiscal year.
- **Form 990-EZ (or 990 if the branch prefers)**—Branches whose annual gross receipts are generally less than \$200,000 and whose total assets are less than \$500,000 at the end of the fiscal year.
- **Form 990-N**—Also referred to as the e-Postcard. It involves only a few questions. Branches receiving \$50,000 or less in income per year, including branches with no income at all, must file a Form 990-N (easiest); however, a Form 990-EZ or Form 990 may be filed in lieu of a Form 990-N. You can access the filing site directly at [irs.gov/charities-non-profits/annual-electronic-filing-requirement-for-small-exempt-organizations-form-990-n-e-postcard](https://irs.gov/charities-non-profits/annual-electronic-filing-requirement-for-small-exempt-organizations-form-990-n-e-postcard).

Note: Failure to comply can result in fines, penalties and interest. A branch that fails to file required information returns for three consecutive years will automatically lose its tax-exempt status.

**As a reminder, per the Taxpayer First Act enacted July 1, 2019, all 990 forms must be filed electronically for tax years ending on July 31, 2021 and later.** To file the form electronically, the filer must use software that can provide the correct data in the proper format for processing by the IRS. The IRS website has a list of providers that have passed the IRS Assurance Testing System (ATS) requirements for its software. To access the list of providers on the IRS website, go to [irs.gov/charities-non-profits/tax-year-2020-exempt-organizations-](https://irs.gov/charities-non-profits/tax-year-2020-exempt-organizations-modernized-e-file-mef-providers-form-990)

[modernized-e-file-mef-providers-form-990](https://irs.gov/charities-non-profits/tax-year-2020-exempt-organizations-modernized-e-file-mef-providers-form-990). Local tax professionals also might have the necessary software.

Note: Branch officers should be aware that in addition to filing an appropriate 990, the branch still might be liable for taxes on its *unrelated business income*, if it received \$1,000 or more in such gross income. The branch must complete a Form 990-T, Exempt Organization Business Income Tax Return and pay any tax due. This form has the same filing deadlines as the Form 990s and also must be filed electronically. A branch subject to tax is also required to make quarterly estimated tax payments. Items usually considered to be unrelated business income and therefore reportable on the Form 990-T and taxable if the branch or state has income of \$1,000 or more from these sources include:

- The excess of advertising income from a branch or state publication over the cost of the publication
- Rental income from “debt-financed property,” such as a branch-owned building subject to a mortgage.
- Reimbursements for NALC Health Plan members (associate members).

More information on filing Form 990, 990-EZ, 990-N and 990-T is available on the IRS website at [irs.gov](https://irs.gov).

**Officer information list:** Many branches installed officers in the past few months. If you have not already done so, please immediately update the NALC Membership Department via letter or a “Branch Information Record” card.

**Reporting to the Department of Labor:** 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 on the total annual receipts of the branch. The Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRDA) requires that unions file the report within 90 days after the branch's (or state association's) fiscal year. Most branches have fiscal years ending on Dec. 31, so most should be filing by March 31. Branch presidents and secretary-treasurers are responsible for ensuring that required reports are filed in a timely and accurate manner. The LMRDA does not provide for or permit an extension of time for filing for any reason. Please reference my January 2025 *Postal Record* article for more information on filing requirements for LM reports—including the requirement that all LM reports be filed electronically.

## Fighting the good fight



**Mack I.  
Julion**

**I** will start my column this month by thanking everyone for all the love and support extended to my family and me concerning the transition of my wife, Veronica Julion. She fought a courageous battle with breast cancer and was a three-time survivor. To the very end, I can attest that she never stopped fighting. She displayed the true spirit of a city letter carrier in a way that would make us all proud.

Not only was she a phenomenal mail lady, but she was also a loving mom and dedicated wife. She was the backbone of our home and a true partner to me in every sense. The sacrifices she endured

as the wife of this union officer cannot be understated. She was proud to be the “first lady” of Chicago Branch 11, and was active in her own local.



**It was because of** her activism that we first met. It was at a union training in Peoria, IL. She was a union steward for the Carlton Sauer Branch 2076 in Des Plaines, IL. Eventually she became the branch secretary, and in 2022, she was elected vice president.

Throughout her tenure as a representative of city letter carriers, she also was advocating and supporting those like herself, who were fighting and surviving breast cancer. In 2013, when Branch 11 began hosting an annual walk and brunch for breast cancer awareness, she was always there every year, walking and sharing her experience. Each time that she was diagnosed and received chemo treatment, she seemed even more determined to overcome not only for our family, but to return to work and to serve her customers. She loved being a city letter carrier!

The third time she was diagnosed, she endured both chemo and radiation. It seemed unlikely that she would return to work, especially as a carrier. Disability retirement appeared to be on the horizon. But once her treat-

ment was completed and she was told once again that the cancer was in remission, she defied the odds and returned to work. She literally had to learn to walk again. Initially, when she went back, she was primarily casing the mail. Fortunately, she secured a bid on a mounted assignment and was back on the overtime trail! This was her passion: her co-workers, her customers, and carrying mail. She did this for 30 years. She said that she would work until we could retire together.



Veronica was equally passionate about fighting for letter carriers. We shared the same disdain for postal management and defending the rights of carriers. She also was active when it came to making phone calls or knocking on doors to support candidates who supported us. We did a lot of that together. Probably the most memorable moment was in 2008 when President Obama won his first presidential election. We were there for that historic event, sitting in a tree among thousands in Grant Park!

**In the end, “Ronnie” still had a lot of fight in her,** but her body couldn’t keep up. If she were still here, she would be gearing up for whatever fight was ahead of us. And there are some fights ahead: for a fair contract that will appropriately reward letter carriers for our hard work; the attacks that will come against labor and the Postal Service from a hostile administration; and, of course, those ever-present battles on the workroom floor.

To paraphrase Paul the Apostle: She fought the good fight, she finished her race, and she kept the faith. The rest is now left to us.

# Collection box reassignment



**Christopher Jackson**

In late November 2024, NALC received notification that the Postal Service would be reviewing the assignment of collection boxes across the country. The review would begin in December 2024 and continue into 2025. According to the Postal Service, the focus of this review was to reassign collection boxes to carrier routes within the appropriate line of travel.

The notice from the Postal Service did not provide any details on how this review would be conducted, nor did it reveal the steps that would be taken to reassign collection boxes. To get

a complete understanding of their plans, I scheduled a meeting with the Postal Service. In this month's column, I will share the details from our discussion, which I believe every carrier should be mindful of since this action could have a massive impact on our city carrier craft.

On Dec. 16, 2024, NALC met with the Postal Service to discuss the collection box review. USPS explained that the review had already been completed and the effort to reassign collection boxes stemmed from a recent Collection Point Density Test where collectors were asked to report mail volumes taken from collection points between September and October. After conducting the density test and the collection box "review," USPS determined that many collection boxes were underutilized.

Based on this determination, USPS has developed a plan to accomplish two objectives. The first is to reduce the number of collection boxes on the street. Examples of collection boxes or collection points that are being considered for removal are those that are found inside of some office or residential buildings, "duplicate collection boxes" on the street that are within a block of one another or lined up outside of retail lobbies, and snorkel boxes. The Postal Service's second objective is to reassign all other collection boxes to carrier delivery routes.

USPS plans to complete their objectives in two phases. The first phase is to be executed in all offices scheduled for route count and inspections (RCI) during the

spring of 2025 (contact your national business agent's office to find out if your office is involved in the spring RCI). It is the goal of the Postal Service to have all collection boxes in these offices reassigned or removed prior to the start of the inspections. The second phase will be executed later in all other offices.

During the meeting, NALC explained that executing this plan without adhering to postal handbooks and manuals would have an impact on city carriers, beginning with those currently assigned to collection and combination routes. Unfortunately, our discussion with Postal Service management did not change their intentions of following through with this action.

After our meeting with the Postal Service, I am convinced that they have failed to show how these changes are being made in accordance with applicable handbooks and manuals, specifically Chapter 2 of *Handbook M-39, Management of Delivery Services*.

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**"It's important that every union officer, and letter carrier in general, monitors any movement or reassignment of collection boxes in their units and on their routes."**

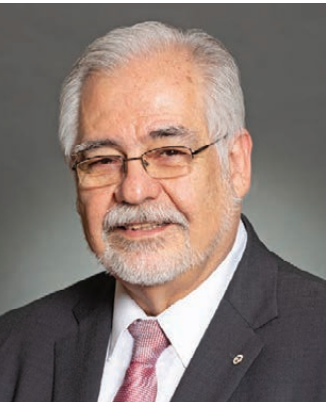
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The Postal Service is obligated to complete a route evaluation and collect current inspection data prior to reassigning boxes from the collection and combination routes to delivery routes. It's clear from our discussion that the Postal Service intends to make these changes before the spring RCIs and without conducting any studies on the affected routes in accordance with *Handbook M-39*.

It's important that every union officer, and letter carrier in general, monitors any movement or reassignment of collection boxes in their units and on their routes. Any movement or reassignment of collection boxes should be thoroughly investigated and grieved, if appropriate, at the local level. I have provided additional information to every national business agent's office to help address any contractual violations regarding this action.

I will continue to monitor this action and provide updates to the membership. Be sure to read my article each month and visit [nalc.org](http://nalc.org) for updates.

# It hit the fan



**Manuel L.  
Peralta Jr.**

**I**n its first three weeks, the current presidential administration has issued a flurry of executive orders that will wreak havoc on the rules and regulations that protect you as well as the process by which those rules are created. We are bound to lose some rules/regulations that have protected us through the years. We will also be faced with not gaining ground on safety, as there is almost always “\$Cost” associated with adoption of new safety rules.

Corporate America looks at the cost of safety as a burden it does not want to shoulder. When an employee dies, those in charge look only at the statistics, making

clear to us that the life lost is not worthy of their attention. When rules are proposed to prevent such a death or serious injury, corporate America shows up, pounds the table and claims the rule to be an unreasonable burden. It's too costly to prevent another death or serious injury.

Unions, on the other hand, look at the value of safety and have the expectation that every employee should come home at the end of a day's work without suffering any injury. We pray for the dead and fight like hell for the living, as was said by Mother Jones more than 100 years ago.

## Heat safety

As an example, USPS management recognizes the need for Heat Illness Prevention Program (HIPP) training, based on what we have learned through the years following the deaths of John Watzlawick (July 2012), Daniel Rosenbach (June 2018), Peggy Frank (July 2019), Rosalyn Westfall (June 2019), Dalvir Bassi (June 2021) and Eugene Gates Jr. (June 2023), as well as the thousands of letter carriers who suffered heat illness injuries as reported to USPS, some of which required a period of hospitalization.

Executive Order 14192, issued on Jan. 31, Unleashing Prosperity Through Deregulation identifies its purpose as:

...The ever-expanding morass of complicated Federal regulation imposes massive costs on the lives of millions of Americans...To that end, it is important that for each new regulation issued, at least 10 prior regulations be identified for elimination. This practice is to ensure that the cost of planned regulations is responsibly managed and controlled through a rigorous regulatory budgeting process...

The “goal” of eliminating at least 10 rules in exchange for the creation of one rule is an outrageous and arbitrary edict that will cost workers both life and limb.

**For the last 12 years, the NALC has been aggressively** lobbying for an Occupational Safety and Health administration (OSHA) rule to protect our workforce from injury and death caused by working in the heat.

Our National Agreement, in Article 14, requires that the employer develop a safe working force. The USPS, as a result of the above-referenced letter carrier deaths, has acquired and issued a HIPP, which comes with an annual requirement that each and every city letter carrier and their supervisors be trained by April 1.

In the summer of 2019, Rep. Judy Chu (CA-28) submitted H.R. 3668, a bill designed to have OSHA issue an occupational safety and health standard to protect workers from heat-related injuries and illnesses. That bill did not receive a vote.

On Sept. 20, 2021, the White House issued the following message:

Today, President Biden is launching a coordinated, inter-agency effort to respond to extreme heat that threatens the lives and livelihoods of Americans, especially workers, children, and seniors...During the June 2021 heat wave in the Pacific Northwest, states reported hundreds of excess deaths and thousands of emergency room visits for heat-related illness...The Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is responsible for setting and enforcing standards to ensure safe, healthy working conditions. Heat is a growing workplace hazard, with the climate crisis making extreme heat more frequent and severe...OSHA is announcing today the issuance of an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM) on heat illness prevention in outdoor and indoor work settings. This is a significant step toward a federal heat standard to ensure protections in workplaces across the country.

That proposed rule-making process has not made it to the finish line as of this writing.

Sadly, OSHA presently only has the General Duty Clause as its tool to issue a citation to an employer for injuries cause by the heat. Further, I have recently been notified that two OSHA citations on heat safety, which were scheduled for trial before the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission, have been postponed so that the new administration can review and decide whether or not to go forward and defend the citations as issued.

**Make sure that your supervisors conduct the required annual HIPP training and that it is documented honestly.** Keep an eye on each other.

## Updates



**Dan Toth**

**T**he Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO) were first enacted in 1983, more than 40 years ago. These Social Security Administration (SSA) provisions negatively affected employees with a Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) component, by unfairly reducing their and their survivor's SSA benefits.

Fortunately, the 118th Congress passed the Social Security Fairness Act of 2023 in the House and the Senate, and it was signed into law by President Biden on Jan. 5, 2025.

This law repeals the WEP and GPO effective Jan. 1, 2024. It has taken decades of hard work by letter carriers and their families at the branch, state, regional and national levels. Repealing the WEP and GPO is a huge achievement, and everyone should take a moment to appreciate the dedication that went into this legislation.

Due to the retroactive nature of the law, SSA will owe affected beneficiaries for any reductions to benefits made in 2024 through the time it takes to implement the unreduced benefit amount. Updates from SSA can be found at [ssa.gov/benefits/retirement/social-security-fairness-act.html](https://ssa.gov/benefits/retirement/social-security-fairness-act.html) or by using the QR code. The Jan. 24, 2025, update explains:



SSA is finalizing its plan to implement the Act while limiting negative effects on our regular workloads and services to the public. We cannot yet provide an estimated timeframe for when we will adjust a person's past or future benefits, but we will continue to provide updates on this webpage. We thank the public for its patience.

**Federal Retirement Fairness Act:** Unfortunately, one vital piece of legislation still requires some work to get it passed into law. This is the Federal Retirement Fairness Act, which would allow Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) carriers credit for periods of non-deduction service (e.g., transitional employees and city carrier assistants) performed after 1988. This bill would affect a majority of active city carriers and is an important step toward recognizing the contributions of non-career service.

**Improving Access to Workers' Compensation for Injured Federal Workers Act:** Although it is not directly related to retirement, I also oversee our network of regional workers' compensation assistants, who are available to help members with the complex issues surrounding on-the-job injuries. A major problem we face in the field is the lack of physicians able and willing to provide care for those with a federal workers compensation claim. The Improving Access to Workers' Compensation for Injured Federal Workers Act would expand the role of nurse practitioners and physician assistants in providing services to injured federal workers. Currently the law limits these activities to physicians, and if passed, this bill would make it easier for injured employees to seek treatment and receive medical rationales necessary for claim adjudication.

These last two bills have not been reintroduced into the 119th Congress at this time. For updates, be sure to follow the Government Affairs section on the NALC website, read the *NALC Bulletin* and *The Postal Record*, and follow NALC on social media.

**Equal COLA:** The Equal COLA Act aims to correct the partial cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) that FERS retirees receive. Under current law, FERS retirees receive a reduced COLA compared to CSRS retirees. FERS COLAs are reduced by up to 1 percent, while there is no reduction to CSRS COLAs. These reductions make a big difference to those on a fixed income, especially as these reductions compound year after year. This bill has been reintroduced as H.R. 491.

**Early-outs and incentives:** Another retirement update relates to voluntary early retirement and incentives to retire. Recently both the American Postal Workers Union and the National Postal Mail Handlers Union reached agreements with the Postal Service on a one-time retirement incentive of \$15,000 and an early-out for eligible employees. There has not been any discussion between the NALC and the Postal Service for a similar agreement, nor is one expected in the near future. In my opinion, this is simply because the Postal Service can't downsize the city carrier craft and still get the mail delivered. Early-outs and incentives typically only come when the retiring workforce can either be replaced or downsized.

**Our retirement benefits are derived through the law and** are therefore affected by our legislators. Whether we are active or retired, we must remain engaged in the politics that affect our retirement wallets. Letter carriers deserve to retire with a modest safety net after decades of physical labor for their country and government.



# Individual Disability Income



**James W.  
"Jim" Yates**

**D**o you have disability insurance? Are you covered, and will you be able to pay your bills if you are unable to work due to injury or illness?

As postal employees, city letter carriers are not covered by disability insurance provided by our states. Additionally, the federal government does not provide us with disability insurance. If you are ill or injured (off the job) and have exhausted all of your sick and annual leave, your only option is leave without pay.

**The Mutual Benefit Association (MBA)** offers short-term disability insurance with MBA Individual Disability Income (IDI).

The MBA IDI helps cover you when the unexpected happens. It helps ensure that you have the money you need and are able to continue living the lifestyle you've worked for if you are hurt or too sick to work. The policy will pay even if you are using your leave or being paid by the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs.

MBA IDI is available to purchase for all active NALC members between the ages of 18 and 59. Spouses and family members are not eligible. The plan is guaranteed renewable to age 65. As long as the premium is paid on time, we cannot change any benefits or refuse to renew your policy. However, we reserve the right to change premiums.

Premiums will not be changed on an individual basis. Premiums will be based on the table of rates in effect for all people insured under the policy who have the same issue age and policy date and are in the same class as you. Any premium paid after age 65 for a period not covered by your policy will be returned.

Premiums may be paid through biweekly payroll deduction or directly to the MBA office on a monthly or annual basis. Electronic funds transfers are also an option for paying premiums. To calculate the annual premium, multiply the appropriate biweekly premium amount by 26. For a monthly premium amount, divide the annual premium amount by 12.

The MBA designed this plan specifically for letter carriers. The plan is offered at three monthly benefit levels and two benefit periods. Your options are a benefit

level of either \$650, \$1,350 or \$2,000 per month, for a period of either six or 12 months. Choose the plan that meets your needs.

The MBA IDI contains a 14-day elimination period as compared to longer periods found with other disability products offered by other private insurers. Disability benefits start after the elimination period as defined in the policy. The elimination period begins the day your total disability starts.

Biweekly premium rates						
Issue age	Benefit period/amount					
	6-month			12-month		
	650	1,350	2,000	650	1350	2000
18-29	8.25	14.00	19.50	11.00	19.25	27.00
30-39	8.75	15.25	21.50	12.00	21.50	30.25
40-44	9.75	17.00	24.00	13.50	23.25	34.50
45-49	10.50	19.00	26.75	15.00	27.50	39.25
50-54	11.75	21.50	30.50	17.00	31.50	45.25
55-59	13.50	24.75	35.50	19.75	37.25	54.00

**Pre-existing conditions:** MBA IDI does contain a pre-existing condition limitation. A pre-existing condition is defined as a condition for which symptoms existed that would cause an ordinary prudent person to seek diagnosis, care or treatment within a one-year period preceding the policy date, or for which medical advice or treatment was recommended or received by a physician within a two-year period preceding the policy date.

The pre-existing condition limitation states that if total disability starts within two years from the policy date, and is due to a pre-existing condition, benefits will not be paid unless you have gone for a period of one year while the policy is in force without receiving any medical advice or treatment for that condition.

**Recurrent disabilities:** For the purpose of determining the benefit period, we will treat a total disability as a recurrence of a prior disability if: a) it is due to the same or related cause applicable to the prior period of total disability, and b) it occurs within 180 days after the end of the prior total disability. If it is determined that your disability is a recurrence, your payments will be limited to the remaining balance of your purchased term. If your disability does not meet these criteria, it will be treated as a new disability and be payable for your full purchased term.

**For more information about the MBA IDI plan or any of the MBA products,** please call the MBA office at 202-638-4318, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Eastern time. You can also visit our website at [nalc.org/mba](http://nalc.org/mba).

# Postal Service Health Benefits transition



**Stephanie  
Stewart**

**O**ver the last year, officers and staff of the National Association of Letter Carriers and the Health Benefit Plan have continually written and spoken about the Postal Service Health Benefits (PSHB) transition. From branch meetings and articles to presentations at the national convention, we have tried to prepare our NALC family for the forthcoming changes.

While a vast majority of postal employees transitioned to PSHB without issue, we recognize that there still are some eligibility discrepancies that remain open, and we are working diligently to guide our members on how best to address

their individual issues. In many of the remaining cases, the Postal Service and/or the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) will need to take action to correct the problem.

Considering everything that went into this Open Season, I need to express my gratitude for the cooperation and support of branch representatives and officers. Everyone involved played a significant role by helping members with their questions and uncertainty throughout this change. I also applaud the wonderful staff at the NALC Health Benefit Plan for their hard work and dedication to our members. They have done an amazing job preparing for the transition, and despite the challenges, were steadfast in their determination to help our members and make this a successful experience.

Given the magnitude of changes this legislation required, things would have been much different without the remarkable support of our branches. Thank you.

## 2025 and beyond

**While this remains a collaborative effort on all fronts,** OPM has notified health insurers that we are moving into the next phase of PSHB—requiring future changes to a member’s policy to follow the designated process. Through the transition, PSHB plans were able to update certain member demographics as a temporary solution to help transition everyone; however, per OPM, this responsibility now shifts to the individual member and owner of the insurance file.

Our Plan will continue to do member outreach where we can assist our members, but to ensure that you are informed about changes to your health care benefits, I implore you to open and review all mail received from the NALC Health Benefit Plan. Your involvement is piv-

otal to making sure your file is up to date and claims can be processed without delay.

## What changed?

**Beginning in 2025, the Postal Service Reform Act** designated OPM as the system of records for PSHB. This new role for OPM limits each PSHB plan’s ability to make policy changes on behalf of members, such as adding/removing a dependent, marital updates, and address changes and others. If you have moved, have a child turning 26, get married or divorced, or need any other changes to your eligibility records, all updates must now go through your employing office—the Human Resources Shared Service Center for active postal employees and OPM for annuitants.

Note: If you are not receiving mail from the Plan, please contact us to verify that the address listed on your 2025 PSHB enrollment is accurate. After mailing ID cards, an abnormal amount of mail has been returned to the Plan with bad addresses.

You can contact the Plan for verification or questions by calling 888-636-NALC (6252), by registering for our Member Access Portal where you can chat with an agent via online ticketing, or by using the Postal Service to mail us a letter. If mail is your preferred method of contact, please address your letter to 20547 Waverly Court, Ashburn, VA 20149.

## Medicare

**Keeping your Coordination of Benefits (COB) information** up to date is imperative for claims processing and the accuracy of benefit payment.

If you are a new member with Medicare Part A and Part B, or a preceding (2024 and earlier) member who obtained Medicare coverage during the USPS Special Enrollment Period, please notify the Plan so we can update your file. Unfortunately, failure to provide the correct COB could result in a delay of payment.

## Make your health a priority

**As we start the new year, it’s always a great time to** check in on your health and complete our free Health Assessment. This is an online program that analyzes your health-related responses and gives you a personalized plan to achieve specific health care goals.

Eligible high option members or dependents over the age of 18 will receive a choice of health rewards upon completion. A new reward option for 2025 is the Fitbit Aria Air smart scale.

**For more information, visit our website at [nalchbp.org](http://nalchbp.org)** or reach out to our Customer Service Department, where we will help you get started.

# Administrative leave for acts of God

**W**hen acts of God, such as extreme weather or natural disasters, occur that prevent letter carriers from reporting to work or completing their shifts, postmasters and other installation heads have the authority to approve administrative leave. This article will cover some of the relevant provisions and provides guidance on how to document the criteria necessary to determine if a letter carrier is entitled to administrative leave.

The rules and regulations, which are incorporated into the National Agreement via Article 19 pertaining to acts of God, are found in Section 519 of the *Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM)*.

Section 519.211 of the *ELM* defines acts of God:

Acts of God involve community disasters such as fire, flood, or storms. The disaster situation must be general rather than personal in scope and impact. It must prevent groups of employees from working or reporting to work.

Section 519.215 explains that career letter carriers may receive administrative leave when they are either unable to report to work, or prevented from working, due to an act of God:

Employees scheduled to report who are prevented from reporting or, who after reporting, are prevented from working by an act of God may be excused as follows:

- a. Full-time and part-time regular employees receive administrative leave to cover their scheduled tour of duty not to exceed 8 hours.
- b. Part-time flexible employees receive administrative leave, subject to the 8-hour limitation, for their scheduled workhours, as provided in 519.214c.

**Section 519.211 of the ELM sets three criteria for determining the appropriateness in granting administrative leave for acts of God.** First, it must create a community disaster. Second, the event must be general rather than personal in scope and impact. Third, the event must prevent groups of employees from working or reporting to work. Most arbitrators agree that all three criteria must be met before a request for administrative leave will be considered appropriate.

The first criterion identified in Section 519.211 of the *ELM* requires that an act of God must involve community disasters such as a fire, flood or storm. In most cases, the act of God in question must have been of unusual severity. In considering whether these events fit the definition of an act of God, arbitrators typically consider factors such as the amount of snow or rain; the length of the storm; the wind strength; the temperature; and the amount of destruction caused by the

event. However, more important than these elements are whether the event created disastrous conditions. News articles, information from local authorities, and weather data should be used to document the severity of the situation. It may be useful to include information from websites that provide historical weather data, such as Weather Underground ([wunderground.com/history](http://wunderground.com/history)). Pictures and videos of the event and its aftermath can also document the severity. Proof that there was a shutdown of community services and any warnings or directives issued by local officials will go a long way in showing there was a community disaster.

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**“Section 519.215 explains that career letter carriers may receive administrative leave when they are either unable to report to work, or prevented from working, due to an act of God.”**

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The second criterion set forth in Section 519.211 of the *ELM* requires that an act of God be general in scope and impact. This can be established by looking at the direct impact on the community, and the reaction of the general population. Evidence to establish that the impact of the catastrophic event overwhelmed the community and was not limited to the Postal Service should be included in any grievance file. Reports of property damage estimates, vehicle accidents, casualties, utility outages, road closures, school and business closures, disruption of community services, and “state of emergency” declarations can be used to prove the widespread impact of the event. Keep in mind, Section 519.211 imposes no requirement that the office be closed or operations curtailed before employees may receive administrative leave.

The third criterion cited in Section 519.211 of the *ELM* requires the disaster to affect groups of employees. Some arbitrators have required that 50 percent or more of the employees being unable to report to work is necessary to prove this element, while other arbitrators have rightly pointed out that the *ELM* sets no such arbitrary figures, and that the circumstances of each case must be considered. Time records can be used to

*(continued on next page)*

# Administrative leave for acts of God (continued)

*(continued from previous page)*

document the number of letter carriers who were able and unable to report that day. These records will also show what kind of leave was charged for the absences.

Although some arbitrators consider the employee reporting percentages of the office as a whole when determining the impact on the group, other arbitrators give consideration, when documented, to groups of employees within the office who are from a certain area more adversely affected and, as such, were unable to report to work. Maps are useful in demonstrating areas where employees live and whether the event prevented employees from specific areas from reporting to work. Union representatives should document the reasons why letter carriers were unable to report and identify the similarities and differences between those who did and those who did not report to work. Employee statements are crucial pieces of evidence in establishing impact. Arbitrators may consider one employee's particular difficulties in getting to work, but if other employees from the same area were able to report, the arbitrator may consider the disaster personal rather than general and not grant administrative leave.

**Section 519.213 of the *ELM* addresses how management determines the cause of the absences:**

Postmasters and other appropriate postal officials determine whether absences from duty allegedly due to 'acts of God' were, in fact, due to such cause or whether the employee or employees in question could, with reasonable diligence, have reported for duty.

Because management must weigh the amount of reasonable diligence the affected employees showed in attempting to report to work in accordance with Section 519.213 of the *ELM*, arbitrators may likewise evaluate the efforts of the employee. Some arbitrators will look at general conditions and not require specific proof of individual attempts to come to work; however, in other cases, arbitrators have required that employees present evidence of their diligence. Arbitrators may require an employee to show that alternative means were unavailable, or the effort would have been futile.

Information that demonstrates carriers' diligence is best documented by interviewing the carriers and obtaining statements. If carriers made multiple attempts to report, that should be included in their statement in detail. The following are examples of some of the questions that can be asked and answered: How long did they work trying to dig out? How far away is the closest

bus station? Was there any alternative transportation? Were buses or other public transportation even running? Were the roads closed? Did the police turn them away? Was there a mandatory evacuation? In addition to employee statements, newspaper articles and website posts from local media outlets from the time frame in question also may help provide some of the documentation and substantiate the carriers' claims.

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**“Administrative leave for an act of God may still be appropriate for carriers who reported to work but were then sent home early because of the weather or event.”**

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**Administrative leave for an act of God may still be appropriate for carriers who reported to work but were then sent home early because of the weather or event.** Maybe the mail did not make it to the office, or conditions worsened so delivery was suspended, and there was no other productive work available.

Section 519.214 of the *ELM* addresses early dismissal due to an act of God:

When employees are dismissed from duty before the normal completion of their duty due to an act of God, the following applies:

- a. Full-time employees are entitled to credit for hours worked plus enough administrative leave to complete their tour of duty. This combination of work and leave is not to exceed 8 hours in any one day.
- b. Part-time regular employees are entitled to credit for hours worked plus enough administrative leave to complete their scheduled hours of duty. This combination of work and leave is not to exceed 8 hours in any one day.
- c. Part-time flexible employees are entitled to credit for hours worked plus enough administrative leave to complete their scheduled tour. The combination of straight time worked and administrative leave may not exceed 8 hours in a service day. If there is a question as to the scheduled workhours, the part-time flexible employee is entitled to the greater of the following:
  1. The number of hours the part-time flexible worked on the same service day in the previous service week.

*(continued on page 44)*

# New administration rescinds policies for schedule awards, CA-9 form



Regional Workers' Compensation Assistant Coby Jones

**O**n Feb. 10, OWCP in *FECA Transmittal 25-04* fully rescinded *FECA Transmittal 25-03* that it had implemented just one month earlier. The NALC is deeply disappointed by this policy reversal.

The rescinded *FECA Transmittal 25-03* fully revised *FECA Procedure Manual 2-0808*, "Schedule Awards and Permanent Disability Claims" to enact new policies to permit the use of either the fifth or sixth editions of the *AMA (American Medical Association's) Guides to Evaluation of Permanent Impairment* in calculating impairment for schedule award purposes under the FECA. As part of implementing the new policy, OWCP had created a new form, the CA-9, Claim for Schedule Award, to streamline the process. Below is a summary of what OWCP under the new administration just rescinded.

Under 20 CFR §10.404, evaluations of permanent impairment under the FECA are made in accordance with the edition of the *AMA Guides* specified by OWCP. Historically, OWCP has selected the most recent edition of the *Guides* for the calculation of the degree of impairment and had been using the sixth edition since May 1, 2009, based on the assumption that the most recent edition best reflected current scientific and medical thinking on rating impairments. OWCP's own research and analysis since adopting the sixth edition, however, had concluded that "prior editions of the *Guides*, in some circumstances, may more accurately measure the effects that an injury has on an individual's ability to meet physical work demands."

The rescinded new policy to include the fifth edition represented a sea change in OWCP's thinking—a change that would have benefited many injured workers who have suffered permanent impairments. When the policy change was first proposed in the March 8, 2024, *Federal Register* (Vol. 89, No. 47, p. 16800), with an attached draft policy paper, the NALC responded with a strong endorsement of the proposed policy revisions, especially the expansion to include the fifth edition of the *Guides*. According to OWCP's own analysis in the policy paper:

Following the move from the Fifth to the Sixth Edition, experience has shown that, in some situations, monetary compensation to federal employees with impairments has been reduced by an amount that was not anticipated at the time of the move to the Sixth Edition and is of such amount that

OWCP finds that this rating would not adequately compensate the claimant.

**Our own experience with our members supported the conclusions of the policy paper that many impairment ratings had been unnecessarily reduced under the sixth edition when compared to earlier editions. And, as we pointed out in our response to the *Federal Register*, this went against the broad remedial intent of the FECA.**

In addition, our members have found that many physicians will not do impairment ratings under the sixth edition. This is due both to the fact that many state injury compensation systems still currently use earlier editions of the *Guides* and to the fact that some physicians find the sixth edition cumbersome to use. OWCP in its policy paper came to the same conclusion:

Some state governments (and their corresponding workers' compensation programs) have not adopted the Sixth Edition of the *Guides*... As a result, many states lack physicians trained in utilization of the Sixth Edition and its new impairment paradigm. As a national program, FECA should not require claimants to travel significant distances to find a physician qualified in the use of this particular Guide, especially given its potentially detrimental impact on the level of compensation to which they may be entitled under the federal Act.

In conjunction with the policy revisions to the *Procedure Manual*, OWCP on Jan. 10 released a new form, the CA-9, to be used when claiming a schedule award. The new form has also now been rescinded. The DOL sent a prototype of this form to the NALC in September 2022 for comment and feedback. We found the prototype vastly superior to the CA-7 form that claimants were currently using. The problem with using the CA-7 form for schedule awards is that it is primarily used for other purposes: wage-loss compensation and leave buy back. Much of the information solicited on the CA-7, while relevant for its primary purpose of applying for wage-loss compensation, is not relevant for obtaining a schedule award and was confusing for claimants seeking schedule awards.

Moreover, apart from the checkbox in Section 2 on the CA-7 indicating that the claimant was requesting a schedule award, the CA-7 provides no further information regarding schedule awards. In order to understand the process, claimants have to rely on external sources such as the *FECA Procedure Manual*, published articles or the internet to navigate the process. Every section of the new CA-9 solicited information directly relevant to

(continued on next page)

# Policies recinded (continued)

(continued from page 42)

the schedule award process. The new CA-9, when read with the attached instructions, constituted almost a one-stop shop for claimants and their attending physicians that explained and walked them through the entire process.

The new CA-9 also recognized that some claimants live in “provider deserts”—areas where it is hard to find a physician who will do impairment ratings. Section 3 of the form contained a checkbox for the claimant to

request that OWCP arrange for them to be examined by an appropriate specialist.

**At this point, a number of our members have already** either undergone impairment exams or have scheduled exams under the fifth edition based on the now-revoked policy. Again, the NALC expresses its disappointment that OWCP under the new administration has revoked such positive policy revisions that greatly benefited injured workers just one month after issuing them.

## Contract Talk

by the Contract Administration Unit

# Administrative leave for acts of God (continued)

(continued from page 42)

2. The number of hours the part-time flexible was scheduled to work.
3. The guaranteed hours as provided in the applicable national agreement.

Once a full-time employee reports, they are entitled to eight hours’ work or pay. Part-time flexible employees are entitled to enough hours to complete their scheduled tour. Carriers are not required to take annual leave if sent home and should use PS Form 3971, Request for or Notification of Absence to request administrative leave in such a situation. If administrative leave is denied, this will document that the request was made and show that management sent them home. As always, city carrier assistants should receive their guaranteed hours (either two or four, depending on the size of the installation) if they were scheduled and reported to work in accordance with Article 8, Section 8 of the National Agreement.

**As provided for in Section 519.216 of the ELM, employees who were already using annual leave, sick leave or leave without pay are not entitled to administrative leave:**

Employees on annual leave, sick leave, or LWOP remain in such status. They are not entitled to administrative leave.

**If city carriers believe they have been unfairly denied**

administrative leave in community disaster situations, they should contact their shop steward to investigate and, if necessary, file a grievance. Shop stewards should attempt to show that all the criteria listed in Section 519.211 of the *ELM* existed and that carriers exercised reasonable diligence in trying to report to work. To assist shop stewards when filing a grievance over the denial of administrative leave due to an act of God, the NALC has created grievance starters that can be used as a starting point for the grievance.

These grievance starters include a sample issue statement, examples of facts and contentions, recommended documentation needed for the file, and potential remedies. These grievance starters are available in the Members Only section of the NALC website. After logging in to the Members Only page, click on the “Member Documents” button, then select the “Shop Steward’s Guide/Forms” category, which will show all the grievance starters created by NALC. Each grievance starter can be downloaded and edited to fit the specific circumstances caused by the act of God.

**Shop stewards and members who need additional information or assistance regarding acts of God can contact the national business agent (NBA) who represents their region. Contact information for each NBA is available on the NALC website at [nalc.org/union-administration/nalc-regions](http://nalc.org/union-administration/nalc-regions).**

# Advocating for the MDA community

**F**or 75 years, Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) has led the way in accelerating research, advancing care, and advocating for the support and inclusion of families living with neuromuscular disease. The NALC has been there for 73 of these years, raising money to help deliver a cure. During these years, MDA has been lobbying Congress to improve conditions for these families.

Every year, MDA partners with NALC branches across this great land to organize fundraisers. Proceeds from these entertaining events help families cope with MD and other neuromuscular disorders. In addition to “Delivering the Cure,” our mission is to provide comfort and hope to patients and caregivers. People go to amazing lengths to advance this cause daily, including dedicated medical specialists involved in patient care and treatment.

MDA provides a comprehensive program of services, including clinics at multiple hospitals, a summer camp for children ages 6 to 17, a “loan closet” with durable medical equipment, and millions of dollars in funding for neuromuscular disease research.

Just as NALC has a great legislative agenda to ensure that our letter carriers are treated fairly and given what they deserve through legislation, MDA does the same by advocating for better public policies to further MDA’s mission. And as we have tool kits to help our members understand the details, facts, sources and numbers of our agenda, so does MDA. It, too, has an action center where one can get up to date with all the current issues or find information on ways to help: [mda.org/get-involved/advocacy](http://mda.org/get-involved/advocacy).

The MDA Action Center is the advocacy page where you can learn more about policies and issues affecting the MDA community and about ways you can get involved. Every letter carrier is important to the cause; every MDA advocate is essential to progress. MDA welcomes everyone, and hopes that you will join in making a difference.

MDA is dedicated to advocating public policies and programs that empower children and adults with neuromuscular disease.

**MDA’s advocacy pillars are for its patients to have access to care, to accelerate therapeutic development, and for patients to be empowered with independence.** Below are the recent victories MDA secured in previous years.

- Access to care:
- Expanded and invested in newborn screening
  - Prescription drug affordability

- Telehealth flexibilities
- Investment in key government programs
- LGMD diagnostic codes
- Seat elevation systems

**Accelerating therapeutic development:**

- FDA and clinical trial reforms
- ACT for ALS implementation
- Research funding and investments

**Empowerment and independence:**

- ABLE Age Adjustment Act
- Accessible air travel

**The MDA celebrated several legislative victories in 2024, including the FAA Reauthorization Act and the Accelerating Kids’ Access to Care Act.**

**FAA Reauthorization Act:**

- It includes significant improvements in air travel accessibility.
- It requires training for airport and airline staff who assist passengers with disabilities.
- It creates a pathway for wheelchair spots on airplanes.
- It holds airlines responsible for reporting damage to wheelchairs.
- It gives the disability community a seat at the table when the government makes decisions about air travel.

**Accelerating Kids’ Access to Care Act:**

- This law provides access to health care for children with rare diseases.

**Other legislative victories include:**

- The Rare Pediatric Disease Priority Review Voucher Program, which encourages the development of treatments for rare pediatric diseases
- The Supplemental Social Security Income (SSI) Penalty Elimination Act, which would increase SSI asset limits
- The HCBS Access Act, which would increase access to in-home caregiving
- The HCBS Relief Act, which would provide temporary additional funding for HCBS services

**As we look on to this new year, remember that a gift of any size can help transform lives through better care and more chances at a cure. NALC often reminds people: “You never know when it might be you.” God bless you all.**

## Monthly CSRS annuity payments for letter carriers who retire on April 1, 2025

The table below provides monthly basic annuity, survivor reduction and reduced annuity amount estimates for letter carriers covered by the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) who plan to take optional retirement on April 1, 2025. 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 <sup>1</sup> : 74,626			CC Grade 2 / High-3 Average <sup>1</sup> : 76,193		
Years of Service <sup>2</sup>	Basic Annuity	Max. Survivor Deduction <sup>3</sup>	Max. Survivor Reduced Annuity <sup>4</sup>	Basic Annuity	Max. Survivor Deduction <sup>3</sup>	Max. Survivor Reduced Annuity <sup>4</sup>
20	\$2,254	\$203	\$2,051	\$2,302	\$208	\$2,094
21	2,379	215	2,163	2,429	220	2,208
22	2,503	228	2,275	2,556	233	2,323
23	2,627	240	2,387	2,683	246	2,437
24	2,752	253	2,499	2,810	258	2,551
25	2,876	265	2,611	2,937	271	2,665
26	3,001	278	2,723	3,064	284	2,780
27	3,125	290	2,835	3,191	297	2,894
28	3,249	302	2,947	3,318	309	3,008
29	3,374	315	3,059	3,445	322	3,123
30	3,498	327	3,171	3,572	335	3,237
31	3,622	340	3,283	3,699	347	3,351
32	3,747	352	3,395	3,826	360	3,465
33	3,871	365	3,507	3,953	373	3,580
34	3,996	377	3,619	4,079	385	3,694
35	4,120	389	3,730	4,206	398	3,808
36	4,244	402	3,842	4,333	411	3,923
37	4,369	414	3,954	4,460	424	4,037
38	4,493	427	4,066	4,587	436	4,151
39	4,617	439	4,178	4,714	449	4,265
40	4,742	452	4,290	4,841	462	4,380
41	4,866	464	4,402	4,968	474	4,494
41+11 months & over <sup>5</sup>	4,975	475	4,500	5,080	485	4,594

1. High-3 averages for both grades (formerly levels) are for carriers who have worked full time on a continuous basis between April 1, 2022, and March 31, 2025, 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 \$576.50 per month if for self plus one (code 323), \$516.58 if for self and family (code 322), or \$238.29 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.

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



# Monthly FERS annuity payments for letter carriers who retire on April 1, 2025

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

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

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

The table below provides monthly basic annuity, survivor deduction and net annuity amount estimates for letter carriers who plan to take optional retirement on April 1, 2025. 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 <sup>2</sup>	CC Grade 1 / High-3 Average <sup>1</sup> : 74,626			CC Grade 2 / High-3 Average <sup>1</sup> : 76,193		
	Basic Annuity	Max. Survivor Deduction <sup>3</sup>	Max. Survivor Reduced Annuity <sup>4</sup>	Basic Annuity	Max. Survivor Deduction <sup>3</sup>	Max. Survivor Reduced Annuity <sup>4</sup>
20	\$1,244	\$124	\$1,119	\$1,270	\$127	\$1,143
21	1,306	131	1,175	1,333	133	1,200
22	1,368	137	1,231	1,397	140	1,257
23	1,430	143	1,287	1,460	146	1,314
24	1,493	149	1,343	1,524	152	1,371
25	1,555	155	1,399	1,587	159	1,429
26	1,617	162	1,455	1,651	165	1,486
27	1,679	168	1,511	1,714	171	1,543
28	1,741	174	1,567	1,778	178	1,600
29	1,803	180	1,623	1,841	184	1,657
30	1,866	187	1,679	1,905	190	1,714
31	1,928	193	1,735	1,968	197	1,771
32	1,990	199	1,791	2,032	203	1,829
33	2,052	205	1,847	2,095	210	1,886
34	2,114	211	1,903	2,159	216	1,943
35	2,177	218	1,959	2,222	222	2,000
36	2,239	224	2,015	2,286	229	2,057
37	2,301	230	2,071	2,349	235	2,114
38	2,363	236	2,127	2,413	241	2,171
39	2,425	243	2,183	2,476	248	2,229
40	2,488	249	2,239	2,540	254	2,286
Each additional year <sup>5</sup>	62.19	6.22	55.97	63.49	6.35	57.14

1. High-3 averages for both grades (formerly levels) are for carriers who have worked full time on a continuous basis between April 1, 2022, and March 31, 2025, 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 576.50 per month if for self plus one (code 323), 516.58 if for self and family (code 322), or 238.29 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.

## 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 [serviceline.opm.gov](https://www.serviceline.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](mailto: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.

## Florida

There will be a 2025 NALC Region 9/FSALC contract training on Friday, May 16, and Saturday, May 17, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. both days. Training will be conducted by NBA Eddie Davidson. Additionally, there will be a retirement seminar on Sunday, May 18, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Breakfast and lunch will be provided to attendees. This training will be held at the Branch 1071 union hall, located at 4225 Flamingo Road, Miramar. The hotel for those wishing to attend is the Hilton Garden Inn Miramar, 14501 Hotel Road, Miramar. Its phone number is 954-438-7700. Room rates are \$143 per night, single/double.

The 78th FSALC convention and training seminars will be held Aug. 14-16 at the Double-Tree by Hilton, 5780 Major Blvd., Orlando. Its phone number is 407-351-1000. Room rates are \$149 per night, single/double. This rate includes parking and internet access. When making your reservations, indicate that you are with the FSALC.

Delegate registration is \$50 per delegate. You may go to the FSALC website for registration forms. The registration forms and fees must be received by the state secretary by June 8 (no exceptions). On Thursday night, there will be a family night dinner for \$45 per person (children 12 years of age or younger are free). Ads for the convention booklet are \$225 for full inside page of the front or back cover, \$125 for a full page, \$75 for a half-page and \$50 for a quarter-page.

Personally, and on behalf of the 27 Branch 1477 members who suffered significant losses from Hurricanes Helene and Milton, I wish to thank the NALC's Disaster Relief Foundation for speedy and much-needed assistance. I encourage members to make donations to the DRF. They can be sent to NALC Disaster Relief Foundation, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144.

*O.D. Elliott*

## Indiana

In April of 2022, the Postal Service Reform Act was signed. In January of 2025, the Social Security Fairness Act was signed. Two very important bills in one presidential term. Expect for members of Congress to introduce the Federal Retirement Fairness Act (formerly assigned as) H.R. 5995, and the Protect Our Letter Carriers Act (formerly assigned as) H.R. 7629 and S. 4356.

Violence and crimes against letter carriers have gone on long enough. Criminals have lost respect for letter carriers. Several months back, rural carriers organized a rally in support of the bill in Indianapolis. It was amazing to see how much rural carriers had been paying attention. They have been affected by violence and crimes as well. We should appreciate their attention and action, but we need to earn the attention of the public, and more

specifically, the attention of this next Congress, the 119th.

Often when I speak to letter carriers who will be affected by the Federal Retirement Fairness Act, they ask, "Why should I pay for something that I should automatically be getting anyway?" No federal employee will receive time served for the time spent as a non-career employee as we speak. This bill meets in the middle with lawmakers and others who oppose the change by adopting a practice already implemented for military veterans working back under the federal government.

The 119th Congress is made up of fewer lawmakers who support unions, especially in Indiana. We have no choice but to find relations with these lawmakers regardless of our differences. Sometimes we might think we have differences and when we discuss what they are, the differences are not what we thought they were. There is always something in common among the opposition. Find it and connect. We are our brother's and sister's keeper.

*Kieaunta Roberson*

## Kentucky

As the winds of change swirl in 2025 with the new administration and congressional leaders, Bluegrass State letter carriers should continue visiting [nalc.org](http://nalc.org) to make their voices heard, and all should contribute to LCPF. We will need our friends on both sides of the aisle to help play defense and pass legislation that benefits us. Updates for this new Congress include the Protect Our Letter Carriers Act, the Federal Retirement Fairness Act, the anti-privatization of USPS resolution (H.Res. 70), and investing three retirement funds of USPS from low-yield Treasury bonds.

KYSALC state convention information: Sunday, June 8-Monday, June 9 in Bowling Green, with Branch 468 as host. On Sunday, the E-board starts at 2 p.m.; we should conclude by early to mid-afternoon. Ben Abrams is branch president (270-320-8318). They will welcome us. The site is Holiday Inn University Plaza & Sloan Convention Center, 1021 Wilkinson Trace, Bowling Green. Phone contacts: 270-745-0088 or 270-393-8667. Room rates are \$119.95; deadline is Friday, May 16. Booking link is NALC-KY State Meeting, and the block code is NAL. Registration is \$50 for delegates/attendees. Checks should be made out to NALC Branch 468. That deadline is May 16.

More information will be coming from KYSALC State Secretary Steve Terry (502-681-4512) by letter/email, including an agenda. Stay tuned for details and any changes. We will have information and training, a national officer, LPO Matt Tanner, NBA's office and our KYSALC officers.

*Bob McNulty*

## Tennessee

Hello, brothers and sisters!

History repeats itself. During the two Bush administrations, the GOP did research on privatizing the USPS. Neither finding supported it. That is when Bush said, "If I cannot privatize you, I'll make you go broke." And the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act nearly broke us.

Trump Version 1 discussed it, but didn't have the votes to see it through. Well, this time he has his proxy (DeJoy) in place and a super majority. With President Musk, the GOP might pull it off with a Trump blessing and a GOP Congress. Who wins? Well, it's not the rural areas in this great country, and it is not the middle class. It's the wealthy! The GOP seems to think that taxes are used to fund the USPS. Yes, it does for congressional mail and braille customers. The Post Office has the lowest mailing rates in the world, and if it goes private, rest assured that the billionaires who buy it will raise the rates to make more money. What will happen to the union? A Trump executive order might try to decertify the union, knowing that a new owner assumes the current contract.

To my brothers and sisters who voted in this election for him, one cannot escape the consequences of one's actions. I hope I'm wrong and everything will be hunky dory, but current DeJoy policies are slowing first-class delivery to a ridiculous level (e.g., On Jan. 31, I mailed a Priority parcel to Indiana from Knoxville and as of Feb. 9, it is still sitting in Greensboro, NC). By slowing the mail, the GOP slows communication, which mean a reliance on inaccurate social media, which is owned by President Musk and Trump's policy of public misinformation, which results in a misinformed society.

*Tony Rodriguez*

## 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.

# Honor Roll

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

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



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

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

Additionally, the national secretary-treasurer's office handles

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

### 75-year plaques

Mack Mata Jr.	Escondido, CA	Br. 2525
Daniel Handler	Sacramento, CA	Br. 133
Gabriel Herrera Jr.	Albuquerque, NM	Br. 504
John P. Joljola	Albuquerque, NM	Br. 504
Joseph C. Martinez	Albuquerque, NM	Br. 504
Daniel Krlcic	Cleveland, OH	Br. 40
Anthony J. Mainiero	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
Donald A. Hildeman	Appleton, WI	Br. 822
George L. Pfeffer	Manitowoc, WI	Br. 490

### 70-year plaques

Jacques G. Volpei	Burbank, CA	Br. 2086
Herman L. Johnson IV	Greater E. Bay, CA	Br. 1111
Dick L. Marquette	Sacramento, CA	Br. 133
Robert O'Donnell	Sacramento, CA	Br. 133
Raymond L. Pagel	Sacramento, CA	Br. 133
Charles W. Sams	Tampa, FL	Br. 599
Denio I. Sanchez	Tampa, FL	Br. 599
Wayne A. Alexander	Peoria, IL	Br. 31
Dan D. Bulbuk	Detroit, MI	Br. 1
George F. Lee	Detroit, MI	Br. 1
Frank J. Matynowski	Detroit, MI	Br. 1
Robert J. Rudolph	Detroit, MI	Br. 1
Frank R. Wisniewski	Detroit, MI	Br. 1
Arthur E. James	Kansas City, MO	Br. 30
Frank J. Serrone	Kansas City, MO	Br. 30
Micheal P. Tedesco	Syracuse, NY	Br. 134
Jack M. Harshbarger	Findlay, OH	Br. 143
Raymond J. Baldelli	Youngstown, OH	Br. 385
Jerome C. Crist Jr.	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
Anthony Iannacchione	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
Edward G. Schaffer	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84

### 65-year pins

Jordan Brown	Garden Grove, CA	Br. 1100
William G. O'Neill	Garden Grove, CA	Br. 1100
Kevin E. Costello	Greater E. Bay, CA	Br. 1111
Marlin A. Coulombe	Sacramento, CA	Br. 133
Bernard B. Ledebach	Sacramento, CA	Br. 133
Joseph J. Nannery	Sacramento, CA	Br. 133
Angelo S. Pellegrini	Sacramento, CA	Br. 133
Benifacio T. Reynoso Jr.	Sacramento, CA	Br. 133
John G. Torres	Sacramento, CA	Br. 133
Anthony N. Perrotti	Tri-Valley, CA	Br. 2902
Edward F. Smith	Tri-Valley, CA	Br. 2902
John A. Johnson	Denver, CO	Br. 47
Rosario J. Lombardo	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Burdett F. Webb Jr.	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Orbe H. Andux	Tampa, FL	Br. 599
William S. Henderson	Tampa, FL	Br. 599
Jack L. Hixon	Augusta, GA	Br. 263
Frank L. Melton	Augusta, GA	Br. 263
Charles A. Preston	Idaho Falls, ID	Br. 1364
Theodore F. Ginther	Peoria, IL	Br. 31
Duane T. Maloney	Peoria, IL	Br. 31

Robert J. Lehner	Davenport, IA	Br. 506
Jack D. Chase	Bay City, MI	Br. 187
Kenneth R. McDaniel	Detroit, MI	Br. 1
Walter Udzik Jr.	Jackson, MI	Br. 232
Dennis A. Lent	Billings, MT	Br. 815
James P. Delgado	Albuquerque, NM	Br. 504
Edward E. Getz	Buffalo-Western NY	Br. 3
James F. Hayes	Buffalo-Western NY	Br. 3
Jacob D. Kurczewski	Buffalo-Western NY	Br. 3
Russell N. Millace	Buffalo-Western NY	Br. 3
Bernard A. Pollutro	Buffalo-Western NY	Br. 3
Frank J. Cerasia	Northeastern NY	Br. 358
Paul A. Granum	Fargo-W. Fargo, ND	Br. 205
Theodore M. Babiy	Akron, OH	Br. 148
Joseph P. Gonsiewski	Akron, OH	Br. 148
Jerry K. Mobley	Akron, OH	Br. 148
Raymond D. Phillips	Akron, OH	Br. 148
Estel E. Schofield Jr.	Akron, OH	Br. 148
Ewell L. Cassidy	Dayton, OH	Br. 182
Larry M. Jones	Dayton, OH	Br. 182
Bobby G. Peters	Dayton, OH	Br. 182
Gerald E. Pater	Hamilton, OH	Br. 426
Howard W. Brandt Jr.	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
Brian C. Conroy	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
Ralph D. Deer	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
Philip G. Demmel	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
Edward J. Gannis	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
Wayne F. Griffith	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
Clarence Hill	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
Ronald P. Hoffman	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
Walter L. Jackson	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
W. J. Kerelitch	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
E. J. Krepley	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
Edward H. Madey	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
Guy Priano	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
Vaughn P. Swatsworth	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
John A. Yelich	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
Chester D. Kubat	Bethlehem, PA	Br. 254
Kenneth E. Zeiner	Bethlehem, PA	Br. 254
Willard E. Williams	Memphis, TN	Br. 27
Arnold L. Wanek	Manitowoc, WI	Br. 490

### 60-year pins

Antonio Moreno	Burbank, CA	Br. 2086
Paul R. McLaren	Garden Grove, CA	Br. 1100
Whitney Younger	Garden Grove, CA	Br. 1100
Charles R. Lewis	Greater E. Bay, CA	Br. 1111
Timothy J. Cline	Sacramento, CA	Br. 133
Everett S. Johnson	Sacramento, CA	Br. 133
Dennis W. Thibideau	Sacramento, CA	Br. 133
Israel E. Turner	Sacramento, CA	Br. 133
Alven J. Kendall	Van Nuys, CA	Br. 2462
Casimer J. Marko	Van Nuys, CA	Br. 2462
Daniel L. Rathbone	Van Nuys, CA	Br. 2462
Irwin A. Schnyder	Van Nuys, CA	Br. 2462
Stuart M. Aven	Denver, CO	Br. 47
Lowell E. Byers	Denver, CO	Br. 47
Donald L. Keuter	Denver, CO	Br. 47

Bob Mayorga	Denver, CO	Br. 47
Manuel D. Salazar	Denver, CO	Br. 47
Fred Torres Jr.	Denver, CO	Br. 47
Thomas J. Torrez	Denver, CO	Br. 47
Salvatore A. Carnemolla	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Franklin W. Hall	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
James P. Jeffrey	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Robert Martin	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Dennis T. Schwalbendorf	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Allen J. Wind	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Claude D. Milam	Peoria, IL	Br. 31
William F. Parr	Lafayette, IN	Br. 466
Ralph E. Kronfeld	Davenport, IA	Br. 506
Robert J. Lehner	Davenport, IA	Br. 506
Edmund T. Bobowski	Detroit, MI	Br. 1
Kenneth G. Hutchison	Detroit, MI	Br. 1
Gordon W. Isaacson	Detroit, MI	Br. 1
Richard Z. Stekier	Detroit, MI	Br. 1
Clyde R. Watkins	Detroit, MI	Br. 1
Robert D. Scherr	Billings, MT	Br. 815
Charles D. Hartz	Albuquerque, NM	Br. 504
Robert S. Alessi	Buffalo-Western NY	Br. 3
A. J. Zuppa	Buffalo-Western NY	Br. 3
Charles J. Powers	Long Island Mgd., NY	Br. 6000
Daniel L. Reardon	Northeastern NY	Br. 358
Joseph S. Trzeciak	Northeastern NY	Br. 358
Robert M. Medico	Syracuse, NY	Br. 134
Harry J. Ziegler	Syracuse, NY	Br. 134
Roderick L. Davis	Akron, OH	Br. 148
Gerald J. Moss	Akron, OH	Br. 148
Louis L. Zuzak	Akron, OH	Br. 148
James F. Soyk	Cuyahoga Falls, OH	Br. 1629
Raymond G. Eggeman	Dayton, OH	Br. 182
Charles M. Frederick	Dayton, OH	Br. 182
Thomas C. James	Dayton, OH	Br. 182
Thomas L. Lykins	Dayton, OH	Br. 182
Julius A. Farrar	Eugene, OR	Br. 916
David J. Lee	Eugene, OR	Br. 916
Charles R. Knytych	Salem, OR	Br. 347
John A. Illigasch	Bethlehem, PA	Br. 254
Robert P. Maracci	Erie, PA	Br. 284
Edward G. Bernhard	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
Robert C. Busch	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
William A. Charley	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
Richard A. Dangelo	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
Andrew M. Janosco	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
Darryl A. Kirschner	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
Ronald J. Molinaro	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
Richard A. O'Brien	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
Francis D. Sipko	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
Philip J. Wagner	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
Robert D. Wolny	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
Ralph F. Ziemiwski	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
R. C. Houtz	State College, PA	Br. 1495
Joseph B. Armes	Lynchburg, VA	Br. 325
Marvin R. Clark	Lynchburg, VA	Br. 325
C. L. Kirkpatrick	Lynchburg, VA	Br. 325
Lloyd D. Ciha	Manitowoc, WI	Br. 490
Stanley A. Junk	Manitowoc, WI	Br. 490

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

### 55-year pins

Edwina B. Treat	Burbank, CA	Br. 2086
James H. Bemis	Garden Grove, CA	Br. 1100
Robert P. Farmer	Garden Grove, CA	Br. 1100
Anthony J. Fiduccia	Garden Grove, CA	Br. 1100
Laura Y. Holmdahl	Garden Grove, CA	Br. 1100
Pamela G. Laswell	Garden Grove, CA	Br. 1100
Roland R. Pollerana	Garden Grove, CA	Br. 1100
Vernon E. Topp	Garden Grove, CA	Br. 1100
Bruce R. Watson	Garden Grove, CA	Br. 1100
Louis F. Beyke	Greater E. Bay, CA	Br. 1111
Robert M. Bishop	Greater E. Bay, CA	Br. 1111
Anne P. Blount	Greater E. Bay, CA	Br. 1111
Ezekiel Z. Bradley III	Greater E. Bay, CA	Br. 1111
Kenneth R. Brown	Greater E. Bay, CA	Br. 1111
Verle G. Craven	Greater E. Bay, CA	Br. 1111
Rosie L. Demry	Greater E. Bay, CA	Br. 1111
Samuel Green	Greater E. Bay, CA	Br. 1111
Loretta J. Scott	Greater E. Bay, CA	Br. 1111
Ronald J. Alonzo	Sacramento, CA	Br. 133
Willie G. Burr	Sacramento, CA	Br. 133
Robert O. Cary	Sacramento, CA	Br. 133
Clifton K. Forsyth	Sacramento, CA	Br. 133
William E. Goldman Jr.	Sacramento, CA	Br. 133
Larry A. Marshall	Sacramento, CA	Br. 133
Alex J. Ramos	Sacramento, CA	Br. 133
John D. Wentzel	Sacramento, CA	Br. 133
Terry A. Beauvais	Van Nuys, CA	Br. 2462
Anthony C. Kirk	Van Nuys, CA	Br. 2462
Richard L. Pawelczyk	Van Nuys, CA	Br. 2462
Edward J. Sinai	Van Nuys, CA	Br. 2462
Stuart M. Aven	Denver, CO	Br. 47
Edsel E. Bolden	Denver, CO	Br. 47
Daniel A. Carbone	Denver, CO	Br. 47
Albert B. Cisneros	Denver, CO	Br. 47
Gilbert J. Dominguez	Denver, CO	Br. 47
Raymond G. Drasky	Denver, CO	Br. 47
Thomas L. Duncan	Denver, CO	Br. 47
Vernon H. Evenson	Denver, CO	Br. 47
David A. Kolenc	Denver, CO	Br. 47
Edward J. Laurson	Denver, CO	Br. 47
Tom J. Lehnerz	Denver, CO	Br. 47
Jerry W. Lofdahl	Denver, CO	Br. 47
Albert L. Manzanares	Denver, CO	Br. 47
Miguel A. Romero	Denver, CO	Br. 47
Ralph Ruiz	Denver, CO	Br. 47
Margreto D. Sanchez	Denver, CO	Br. 47
Castullo M. Santistevan	Denver, CO	Br. 47
Frank J. Schafer	Denver, CO	Br. 47
Howard I. Tuck	Denver, CO	Br. 47
C. W. Walker	Denver, CO	Br. 47
Patricia A. Carr	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Michael M. Clancy	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
John F. Condon Jr.	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Larry J. Desmarais	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
James C. Holter	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Ronald C. Jacobs	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
John E. Marasco	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
T. R. Matthias	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
Robert S. Murray	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
James A. Perry	Hartford, CT	Br. 86
John L. Amos Jr.	Sarasota, FL	Br. 2148
Joseph A. Angers	Sarasota, FL	Br. 2148
William M. Barker	Sarasota, FL	Br. 2148
Mahlon J. Care	Sarasota, FL	Br. 2148
Edward L. Confer	Sarasota, FL	Br. 2148
Deborah E. Salt	Sarasota, FL	Br. 2148
Howard B. Print Jr.	Spacecoast FL	Br. 2689
Samuel W. Irwin	Tampa, FL	Br. 599
Clarence E. Rebman	Tampa, FL	Br. 599
Richard L. Rossell	Tampa, FL	Br. 599
Christine H. Johnson-Morris	Peoria, IL	Br. 31
Robert L. Rumbold	Peoria, IL	Br. 31
Raymond P. Cavanaugh	Lafayette, IN	Br. 466
Oscar E. Miller Jr.	Lafayette, IN	Br. 466
Larry W. Hillebrand	Mishawaka, IN	Br. 820

William R. Bullis	Davenport, IA	Br. 506
Ralph E. Kronfeld	Davenport, IA	Br. 506
Robert J. Lehner	Davenport, IA	Br. 506
Alberta D. Rodriguez	Davenport, IA	Br. 506
Derryl G. Van Dee	Davenport, IA	Br. 506
Terrence M. York	Davenport, IA	Br. 506
Glen M. Bazil	Emporia, KS	Br. 185
Aaron A. Bura	Emporia, KS	Br. 185
James A. Gray	Emporia, KS	Br. 185
Donald C. Wamser	Emporia, KS	Br. 185
Ora W. Alsip	Cumberland Falls, KY	Br. 2242
Randolph Beckner	Cumberland Falls, KY	Br. 2242
Mood C. Cassim	Cumberland Falls, KY	Br. 2242
Roger S. Elliott	Cumberland Falls, KY	Br. 2242
James R. Helton	Cumberland Falls, KY	Br. 2242
William Blunt	Bay City, MI	Br. 187
Harold J. Couture	Bay City, MI	Br. 187
Janet M. Holka	Bay City, MI	Br. 187
Ulysses R. Bennett	Detroit, MI	Br. 1
Dennis J. Bresz	Detroit, MI	Br. 1
Bernita Y. Brown	Detroit, MI	Br. 1
Willie Brown	Detroit, MI	Br. 1
Charles D. Curtis	Detroit, MI	Br. 1
Mildred Edwards	Detroit, MI	Br. 1
Reginald E. Koldner	Detroit, MI	Br. 1
Thrie Hill Jr.	Detroit, MI	Br. 1
Carol A. Jourden	Detroit, MI	Br. 1
David C. Laverty	Detroit, MI	Br. 1
Merry Z. MacRae	Detroit, MI	Br. 1
Robert G. Manning	Detroit, MI	Br. 1
Timothy A. Martin	Detroit, MI	Br. 1
Terry H. Owens	Detroit, MI	Br. 1
Joann Phillips	Detroit, MI	Br. 1
Elmo J. Smith	Detroit, MI	Br. 1
Cynthia M. Straughn	Detroit, MI	Br. 1
Peter P. Suhay	Detroit, MI	Br. 1
Darlene L. Turner	Detroit, MI	Br. 1
John W. Charles II	Jackson, MI	Br. 232
Dennis L. Shuster	Jackson, MI	Br. 232
Randall L. Jarvis	Crystal City, MO	Br. 4050
Michael S. Benzon	Kansas City, MO	Br. 30
William E. Clark	Kansas City, MO	Br. 30
John E. Holeyfield	Kansas City, MO	Br. 30
Ronald G. Murray	Kansas City, MO	Br. 30
Jack R. Northrup	Kansas City, MO	Br. 30
Johnny D. Parker	Kansas City, MO	Br. 30
Jerry L. Parks	Kansas City, MO	Br. 30
Grace A. Porter	Kansas City, MO	Br. 30
D. E. Prevo	Kansas City, MO	Br. 30
Joseph E. Pulley	Kansas City, MO	Br. 30
Gary L. Greenwood	Southwest MO	Br. 366
Gale L. Wade	Southwest MO	Br. 366
James K. Hall	Billings, MT	Br. 815
Michael F. Hirning	Billings, MT	Br. 815
Herbert J. Keller	Billings, MT	Br. 815
Milton E. Romick	Billings, MT	Br. 815
Steven L. Schaff	Billings, MT	Br. 815
Herman Gesch Jr.	Lincoln, NE	Br. 8
Stanley M. Harroun	Lincoln, NE	Br. 8
Robert L. Klapperich	Lincoln, NE	Br. 8
Daniel P. Wendt	Lincoln, NE	Br. 8
Patrick J. Clancy	Albany, NY	Br. 29
Vincent J. Commisso	Albany, NY	Br. 29
Charles C. Finnegan	Albany, NY	Br. 29
William T. Finnegan Jr.	Albany, NY	Br. 29
Robert W. Zaiser	Albany, NY	Br. 29
Guy J. Blodgett	Buffalo-Western NY	Br. 3
Joseph A. Desiderio	Buffalo-Western NY	Br. 3
Samuel N. Jarrett	Buffalo-Western NY	Br. 3
Victor Kopack	Buffalo-Western NY	Br. 3
Francis E. Krajewski	Buffalo-Western NY	Br. 3
Paul L. Meyer	Buffalo-Western NY	Br. 3
David L. Militello	Buffalo-Western NY	Br. 3
Robert C. Morawski	Buffalo-Western NY	Br. 3
Zygfryd M. Pieczynski	Buffalo-Western NY	Br. 3
Leonard S. Pszeniczny	Buffalo-Western NY	Br. 3
Nicholas S. Santora	Buffalo-Western NY	Br. 3
William J. Tobin	Buffalo-Western NY	Br. 3

Randal T. Ward	Buffalo-Western NY	Br. 3
Ronald G. Woelfle	Buffalo-Western NY	Br. 3
Kenneth P. Zotara	Buffalo-Western NY	Br. 3
T. G. Butler	Northeastern NY	Br. 358
Ronald P. Courtney	Northeastern NY	Br. 358
Bartholomej. Grovenger III	Northeastern NY	Br. 358
Charles A. MacDougal	Northeastern NY	Br. 358
Robert R. Riley Jr.	Northeastern NY	Br. 358
Richard J. Zegers	Northeastern NY	Br. 358
Michael G. Hubbs	Oneonta, NY	Br. 97
Gary L. Costigan	Syracuse, NY	Br. 134
Harold W. Black	Fayetteville, NC	Br. 1128
Charles R. Covell	Fayetteville, NC	Br. 1128
John R. Reinert	Bismarck, ND	Br. 957
Charles P. Beeber	Fargo-W. Fargo, ND	Br. 205
William D. Ankeny Jr.	Akron, OH	Br. 148
Richard L. Carmack	Akron, OH	Br. 148
Sereno D. McCreery	Akron, OH	Br. 148
Jim C. Wise	Akron, OH	Br. 148
David R. Oblisk	Cuyahoga Falls, OH	Br. 1629
Phyllis R. Fulcher	Dayton, OH	Br. 182
Paul G. Keen	Dayton, OH	Br. 182
James A. Kempton	Dayton, OH	Br. 182
Daryl L. Pegg	Dayton, OH	Br. 182
Robert R. Vogelmann	Dayton, OH	Br. 182
James D. Wetzel	Dayton, OH	Br. 182
Stephen J. Bahn	Findlay, OH	Br. 143
Joseph L. Edman	Findlay, OH	Br. 143
Michael J. Harpst	Findlay, OH	Br. 143
Donald M. Hibbard	Findlay, OH	Br. 143
Jack W. Sidenstricker	Findlay, OH	Br. 143
Gary L. Sites	Findlay, OH	Br. 143
Grover A. Stoll	Findlay, OH	Br. 143
Edward J. Wentling	Findlay, OH	Br. 143
William C. Ewing	Newark, OH	Br. 281
Eric E. Leek	Newark, OH	Br. 281
Timothy A. Tharp	Newark, OH	Br. 281
Jeffery L. Hinkle	Eugene, OR	Br. 916
Terry E. Hopes	Eugene, OR	Br. 916
Madeleine C. Nordella	Eugene, OR	Br. 916
Boyd A. Snow	Eugene, OR	Br. 916
John P. Deckard Jr.	Salem, OR	Br. 347
Vernon D. Schneberger	Salem, OR	Br. 347
Merle W. Aikens Jr.	Erie, PA	Br. 284
Arthur D. Beckerink	Erie, PA	Br. 284
Laird P. Deemer	Erie, PA	Br. 284
William T. Gress Jr.	Erie, PA	Br. 284
Jerome T. Nowacinski	Erie, PA	Br. 284
Joseph A. Talarico	Erie, PA	Br. 284
Charles H. Bingle	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
George R. Cametti	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
Steven J. Fabry	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
John C. Frasca	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
Ronald R. Grech	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
Gary L. Litvany	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
D. M. Mosley	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
John A. Quattro	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
David C. Wenzel	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
James K. Dempsey	Richardson, TX	Br. 4784
Juan C. Rivera	Charlotte Amalie, VI	Br. 6412
Alford A. Williams	Charlotte Amalie, VI	Br. 6412
James R. Scott	Lewis County, WA	Br. 1266
William H. Siegwarth	Lewis County, WA	Br. 1266
Rudy J. Painter	Beckley, WV	Br. 2420
Michael A. Hodges	Appleton, WI	Br. 822
Bruce W. Fehrman	Manitowoc, WI	Br. 490
Warner D. Jones	Manitowoc, WI	Br. 490
Norbert L. Wehrmann	Sheboygan, WI	Br. 102
Allan D. Woepse	Sheboygan, WI	Br. 102

### 50-year gold cards and pins

Douglas Davis Jr.	AZ Mgd.	Br. 1902
Reuben C. Gardella	AZ Mgd.	Br. 1902
Larry L. Larson	AZ Mgd.	Br. 1902
Gary R. Lee	AZ Mgd.	Br. 1902
Stephen G. Scott	AZ Mgd.	Br. 1902
Jack E. Swank Jr.	AZ Mgd.	Br. 1902

# Honor Roll

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

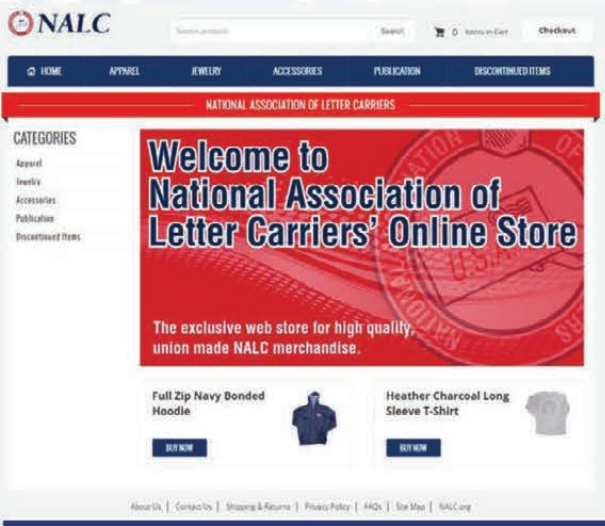
David C. Webb	AZ Mgd.	Br. 1902	Mood C. Cassim	Cumberland Falls, KY	Br. 2242	Edward J. Mesher	Akron, OH	Br. 148
Paul F. McCarthy	Bakersfield, CA	Br. 782	Kenneth L. Hisel	Lexington, KY	Br. 361	Patrick E. Tummel	Akron, OH	Br. 148
John M. Allard	Garden Grove, CA	Br. 1100	Anthony A. Dattilio	Detroit, MI	Br. 1	Kenna B. Wilson	Akron, OH	Br. 148
Anthony Andreas	Garden Grove, CA	Br. 1100	Thomas M. Dertz	Detroit, MI	Br. 1	Garry V. Beatty	Dayton, OH	Br. 182
Walter J. Morris	Garden Grove, CA	Br. 1100	John M. Kisic	Detroit, MI	Br. 1	Larry J. Dillhoff	Dayton, OH	Br. 182
Michael A. Risola	Garden Grove, CA	Br. 1100	Sandra D. Laemmel	Detroit, MI	Br. 1	Jack W. Sidenstricker	Findlay, OH	Br. 143
George J. Schaeffer	Garden Grove, CA	Br. 1100	Raquel Lee	Detroit, MI	Br. 1	Grover A. Stoll	Findlay, OH	Br. 143
Peter L. Provençal	Sacramento, CA	Br. 133	Teresa P. Martin	Detroit, MI	Br. 1	Edward J. Wentling	Findlay, OH	Br. 143
James P. Fleck	Van Nuys, CA	Br. 2462	Karl R. Reel	Detroit, MI	Br. 1	William C. Ewing	Newark, OH	Br. 281
Bruce C. Bettinger	Denver, CO	Br. 47	Rodney D. Robinson	Detroit, MI	Br. 1	John D. Loughran	Eugene, OR	Br. 916
Peter F. Blette	Denver, CO	Br. 47	Bruce A. Romeo	Detroit, MI	Br. 1	Daniel L. Carr	Salem, OR	Br. 347
John C. Buchholz	Denver, CO	Br. 47	Stanley L. Wilson	Detroit, MI	Br. 1	Jack W. Gilmore	Salem, OR	Br. 347
William J. Garone	Denver, CO	Br. 47	Thomas J. Boregasser	Kansas City, MO	Br. 30	George J. Baran	Erie, PA	Br. 284
James L. Goodloe	Denver, CO	Br. 47	Stanley R. Peery	Kansas City, MO	Br. 30	Edward R. Barrett	Levittown, PA	Br. 4973
Conrad A. Martinez	Denver, CO	Br. 47	William H. Stewart	Kansas City, MO	Br. 30	Raymond P. Galenty	Levittown, PA	Br. 4973
Franklin H. Strickland	Denver, CO	Br. 47	Jerry R. Walker	Southwest MO	Br. 366	Dennis M. Desimone	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
Donald J. Desoto	Greeley, CO	Br. 324	Charles L. Focht	Lincoln, NE	Br. 8	Anthony E. Fischer	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
Leslie K. Ellsworth	Greeley, CO	Br. 324	Robert W. Pielhau	Scotch Plains, NJ	Br. 4102	Frank R. Gutman	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
Irving G. Clark Jr.	Hartford, CT	Br. 86	Robert M. Santillo	Scotch Plains, NJ	Br. 4102	Daniel J. Kliber	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
Roger S. Durant	Hartford, CT	Br. 86	John J. Geleta	Albany, NY	Br. 29	William H. Martin Jr.	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
Richard Morales	Central FL	Br. 1091	John V. Yanson	Albany, NY	Br. 29	Dennis M. Naujelis	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
Leroy Smokes	Central FL	Br. 1091	Brian E. Beckman	Buffalo-Western NY	Br. 3	Bernard Olare	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
Linda C. Alger	South FL	Br. 1071	Richard N. Carlson	Buffalo-Western NY	Br. 3	Gary A. Rhodes	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
Stanley D. Askwed Jr.	Spacecoast FL	Br. 2689	Roger C. Hubbard	Buffalo-Western NY	Br. 3	James E. Skalos	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
Terrence L. Gilfillan	Peoria, IL	Br. 31	Nicholas R. De Meo	Northeastern NY	Br. 358	Walter L. Tambellini	Pittsburgh, PA	Br. 84
Robert J. Grant	Peoria, IL	Br. 31	John J. Foley	Northeastern NY	Br. 358	James M. Boyer	Reading, PA	Br. 258
William R. Bullis	Davenport, IA	Br. 506	Thomas J. Sgambato	Northeastern NY	Br. 358	Valerie Clay	Memphis, TN	Br. 27
John A. Erps	Davenport, IA	Br. 506	David A. Violyn	Northeastern NY	Br. 358	David Cantu Jr.	McAllen, TX	Br. 2130
Virginia C. Filbrandt	Davenport, IA	Br. 506	David F. Wallace	Northeastern NY	Br. 358	James K. Dempsey	Richardson, TX	Br. 4784
James C. Frangipane	Davenport, IA	Br. 506	John E. Mihalek	Syracuse, NY	Br. 134	Larry E. Reid	Richmond, VA	Br. 496
Eugene L. Laake	Davenport, IA	Br. 506	Edwin N. Baez	Fayetteville, NC	Br. 1128	Larry P. Robinson	Richmond, VA	Br. 496
Robert J. Lehner	Davenport, IA	Br. 506	Robert A. Poppe	Bismarck, ND	Br. 957	James M. Clark	Manitowoc, WI	Br. 490
Robert B. Mink	Davenport, IA	Br. 506	Melvin E. Boykins	Akron, OH	Br. 148	James W. Meyer	Manitowoc, WI	Br. 490
Alberta D. Rodriguez	Davenport, IA	Br. 506	Philip G. Brillhart	Akron, OH	Br. 148	Wayne L. Slegler	Manitowoc, WI	Br. 490
Derryl G. Van Dee	Davenport, IA	Br. 506	Charles R. Cater	Akron, OH	Br. 148			

# In Memoriam

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

Ariel Melena	Br. 704	Tucson, AZ	Gary L. Smart	Br. 374	Northern KY	Cecil R. Fullerton	Br. 148	Akron, OH
Joseangel Pro Enriquez	Br. 704	Tucson, AZ	Charles F. Cantu	Br. 129	Baton Rouge, LA	Ronald L. Miller Jr.	Br. 148	Akron, OH
Cedric L. Walker	Br. 3745	North Little Rock, AR	Gerald E. Brown	Br. 176	Baltimore, MD	Gary L. Gudge	Br. 182	Dayton, OH
Jan L. Burr	Br. 2525	Escondido, CA	Wilfred C. Racicot	Br. 46	Western MA	Wallace M. Conerly	Br. 458	Oklahoma City, OK
Mary F. Arnold	Br. 24	Los Angeles, CA	Gerard L. Pothier	Br. 12	Worcester, MA	Ellis G. Smith	Br. 916	Eugene, OR
Jerald R. Broeske	Br. 24	Los Angeles, CA	Susan M. Garcia	Br. 1	Detroit, MI	Timothy J. Boscoe	Br. 254	Bethlehem, PA
William G. Davis	Br. 24	Los Angeles, CA	Emonte D. Hunt	Br. 1	Detroit, MI	Merle W. Aikens Jr.	Br. 284	Erie, PA
Patrick C. Guinto	Br. 70	San Diego, CA	Thomas E. Mazur	Br. 1	Detroit, MI	Francis J. Karle	Br. 284	Erie, PA
Steven W. Chen	Br. 214	San Francisco, CA	Edward Turnbow	Br. 1	Detroit, MI	John J. Rogers	Br. 284	Erie, PA
David Perez	Br. 213	Stockton, CA	Robert M. Koskey	Br. 386	Ishpeming, MI	Dennis C. Webber	Br. 284	Erie, PA
Robert L. McElreath	Br. 1469	Porterville, CA	Martin J. Kubanek	Br. 13	Muskegon, MI	Chauncey R. West	Br. 284	Erie, PA
Roy Shelton	Br. 47	Denver, CO	Bruce L. Parminster	Br. 13	Muskegon, MI	Robert D. Zollars	Br. 284	Erie, PA
Omar Guzman	Br. 86	Hartford, CT	Robert E. Visscher	Br. 13	Muskegon, MI	Joseph L. Zenobi	Br. 725	Southeast PA Mgd.
Keith A. Walker	Br. 142	Washington, DC	Marion R. Akra	Br. 3126	Royal Oak, MI	F. T. Arbogast	Br. 520	Uniontown, PA
Thomas E. Vayne Jr.	Br. 2550	Fort Lauderdale, FL	John E. Wisniewski	Br. 4374	South Macomb, MI	Elliot N. Rizer	Br. 520	Uniontown, PA
Thomas G. Brown	Br. 2072	Fort Myers, FL	Harlan W. Darkenwald	Br. 388	St. Cloud, MN	John D. Wright	Br. 27	Memphis, TN
Donald E. Retherford	Br. 321	Pensacola, FL	Aloise D. Dudek	Br. 388	St. Cloud, MN	Richard M. Giro Jr.	Br. 181	Austin, TX
Robert E. Gibson	Br. 1477	West Coast FL	Marvin C. Krippner	Br. 388	St. Cloud, MN	Robert T. Grissom	Br. 181	Austin, TX
Frank J. Patterson	Br. 73	Atlanta, GA	Curtis L. Berry	Br. 1080	Greenwood, MS	Juan J. Villarreal	Br. 181	Austin, TX
George S. Pang	Br. 860	Honolulu, HI	Janeshia L. O'Neal	Br. 1080	Greenwood, MS	Arturo J. Salas	Br. 505	El Paso, TX
Robert T. Couch	Br. 11	Chicago, IL	Corey T. Nelson	Br. 343	St. Louis, MO	Victor M. Villalva	Br. 505	El Paso, TX
Tommy L. Fanning	Br. 11	Chicago, IL	Arthur M. Fernandes	Br. 2502	Las Vegas, NV	Valerie M. Morris	Br. 283	Houston, TX
Charles L. Fields	Br. 11	Chicago, IL	James P. Toye	Br. 444	Garden State Mgd., NJ	Jimmy L. Murphy	Br. 1227	Wichita Falls, TX
Lawrence C. Kveton	Br. 11	Chicago, IL	Joseph S. Barnish	Br. 38	NJ Mgd.	James W. Saddler	Br. 567	Alexandria, VA
Albert Todd	Br. 11	Chicago, IL	Jeffrey P. Dubhorn	Br. 4102	Scotch Plains, NJ	S. P. Vermillion	Br. 567	Alexandria, VA
Walter Chatman Jr.	Br. 319	E. St. Louis, IL	Ronald Berge	Br. 2128	Toms River, NJ	Maxwell F. Hausenfluck	Br. 694	Winchester, VA
Ronald W. Carnaghi	Br. 305	Joliet, IL	Tara M. Kaufman	Br. 3	Buffalo-Western NY	Kenneth A. Titus	Br. 791	Snohomish Co., WA
Robert E. Weller	Br. 305	Joliet, IL	Albert Chersakin	Br. 36	New York, NY	Frank L. Mungin	Br. 1104	Vancouver, WA
Ivan J. Wessels	Br. 318	Moline, IL	Ronald J. Elligott	Br. 358	Northeastern NY	James D. Hamann	Br. 2	Milwaukee, WI
Richard H. Behler	Br. 1197	Southern IA Mgd.	Ron H. Prenoveau	Br. 358	Northeastern NY	Robert C. Hutchinson	Br. 2	Milwaukee, WI
Robert E. Bishop	Br. 352	Central IA Mgd.	Alford J. Williams	Br. 504	Albuquerque, NM	Allen V. Jelinek	Br. 2	Milwaukee, WI
Duane N. McCloskey	Br. 352	Central IA Mgd.	Larry H. Feyler	Br. 43	Cincinnati, OH	Leslie A. Koepsel	Br. 2	Milwaukee, WI
Paul A. Anslay	Br. 104	Lawrence, KS	Jerry J. Brdicka	Br. 40	Cleveland, OH			
Robert L. Carroll	Br. 14	Louisville, KY	Andy B. Carden	Br. 148	Akron, OH			

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- The store accepts Visa, MasterCard and American Express.
- Once you've completed your order, you will receive an order confirmation email.

## Retiree Reports



**Top: Bergen County Merged, NJ Branch 425 retirees Joe Hecht, Rich Robertson, Kevin Gleason, Jerry Diguilio and Tony Alcuri join together at a recent gathering.**

**Below: Branch 425 President Paul Bounassi and Branch Director of Retirees Dennis Spoto present retiree Vincent Tedesco with a watch.**



### Anchorage, Alaska

Well, the HR manager continues to chase off people with his threats and intimidation. Recently the postal nurse ran for the door and now it's the OWCP specialist. And then we come to find out that the confidential fax machine employees send their medical information to for the postal nurse is monitored by the HR manager and the manager of safety.

And that labor relations manager I wrote about—who was delusional about his arbitration prowess—was promoted to a regional labor job. If this is the talent that management believes is their best and brightest, the NALC will only benefit from his incompetence at that level.

And how's that labor representative who used to be one of our stewards doing? Well, his detail ended, and he found out he couldn't bid for the labor rep job unless he had been a supervisor. This same guy who said he would never supervise is now...supervising. So much for honesty and integrity. He was recently seen wearing one of those collars to keep fleas away

(you know the saying about laying down with dogs).

The co-author of Project 2025 was just appointed as the director of OMB. Federal workers are a big target of this administration. The benefits you currently enjoy will be gone if this administration has its way. FERS supplement, health benefits, pension, workers' comp, and the list goes on. Your benefits are way too generous and need to go away. Elections have consequences, and some people didn't do their homework. Federal workers are clearly in their sights. Please donate to the LCPF.

We recently had our retiree banquet. And again, our VP, Jospur Villegas, brought his group from Midtown to support the branch. He gets his people out to support branch events in a great show of solidarity!

*Jim Raymond, Branch 4319*

### Bergen Co. Mgd., New Jersey

Since we had our last retirement luncheon back in October 2023, we have had quite a few carriers joining our retiree group. They are John Shannon, Donna Nawrocki, John Basile, Martin Silverio, Dawn Teller, Betty Pope, Alvaro Ruiz and Jack Weinstein. I apologize if I missed anyone. Welcome to the land of no alarm clocks and every day is Sunday.

Please enjoy your retirement, as you all have certainly earned it. Join our group on Facebook, "NALC Branch 425, Bergen County Merged."

*Dennis Spoto, Branch 425*

### Centennial, Colorado

With a resounding "no," the letter carriers have spoken in regard to the tentative agreement proposed by the USPS. As I write this, the contract has not been decided. Although the union has been in this situation before, there is an undercurrent of uncertainty with the existing political administration in control. But there is power in numbers, and the increasingly strenuous job of a letter carrier demands better compensation.

Now, more than ever, we have to stick together to make our voices heard. Although we have taken an allegiance to not strike, there are prevailing ways to make our demands known, one of which is a demonstration. Similar to the "Enough is enough" campaign,

maybe we need to inform the general public of the importance of being treated fairly for the hard work we are doing. If your local branch is offering this opportunity, take advantage of it. Getting the American public to see our side will only help our cause.

On a more local note, our branch came to an agreement at the January meeting to accept a budget for the upcoming year. It includes a retiree brunch for 2026! We haven't had one in a few years because of staff shortages and the pandemic, but the executive board knows the importance of recognizing the hard work of retired carriers, and so this was worked into the annual review. It will serve as celebration along with a swearing-in for the upcoming officers, as it has been in the past. With six years of pensioners to recognize, it promises to be a worthwhile party to attend. It will be held in January 2026, so get ready to celebrate those who have gone before us to make NALC a great union.

In unity—

*Barb Larson, Branch 5996*

### Paterson, New Jersey

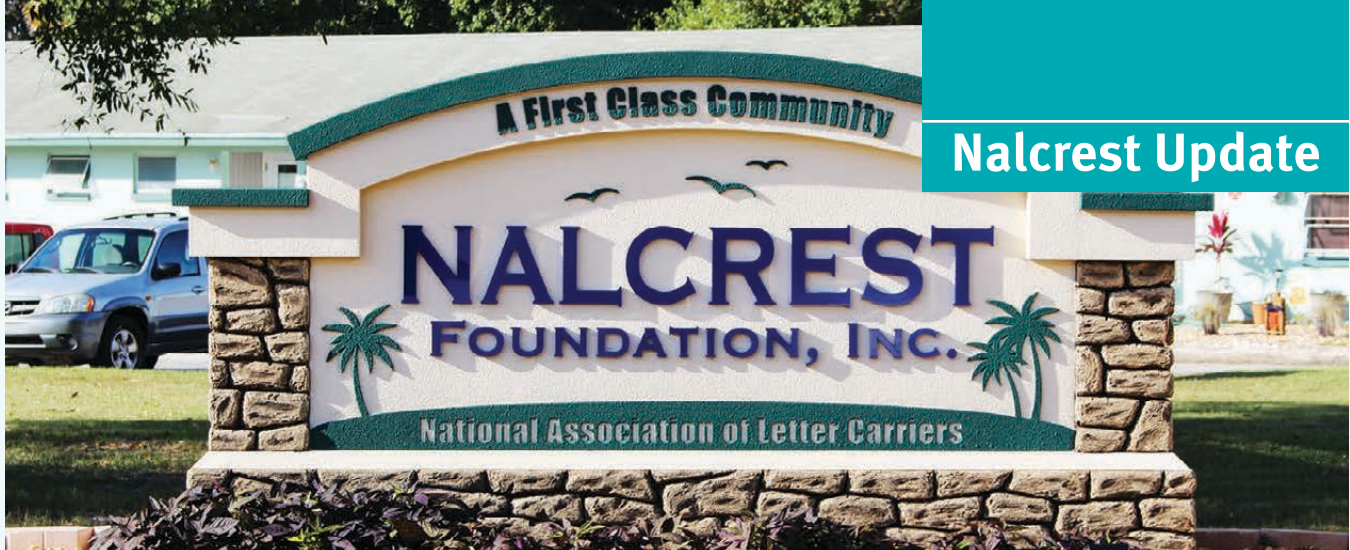
At one time, the American public (especially senior citizens) used to be able to start their day by the delivery of our nation's mail, paying their bills on that very same day or answering their mail as quickly as possible. That does not seem to be the norm today. Customers are reporting the variations of delivery times of mail to their homes and businesses with very little or no consistency. This may lead to a lesser dependency on mail services and confidence in our mail system. If we want to expand our Postal Service system, we must start from the basic steps in reliability and stability in our delivery times. Once we accomplish this, the American public can once again set their times and daily schedules to first getting their mail on a regular and routine basis.

*Joseph Murone, Branch 120*

### 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.





## Nalcrest Update

### From the Trustees

To say it has been an honor to serve as Nalcrest trustee with Matty Rose would be an understatement. I only wish I could have served more time with him.

Matty served as president of the Nalcrest Trustees a few months shy of 15 years. Matty was appointed by then-NALC President Fred Rolando to save the drowning Nalcrest community. Matty requested Tom Young and Don Southern to serve with him as trustees. Their tireless work, dedication, and tough decision-making saved Nalcrest from collapse.

When Tom Young retired as trustee, he was replaced with President Emeritus Fred Rolando, and I replaced Don Southern after he retired. Working with Matty and Fred, both NALC legends, for more than a year and a half has been a great experience. Matty spent countless hours educating Fred and me about the ins and outs of the everyday operations of Nalcrest. Our monthly two-day meetings and countless Zoom calls have full agendas, and tough decisions are made for the betterment of the community we serve. When issues are discussed, Matty's famous words to Fred and me are: "Let me give you some background, brothers." He then explained, and we had a better understanding of that particular situation and

how it had been previously addressed.

Matty served as a trustee and treated Nalcrest as if it were his own. He, as well as Tom and Don, questioned expenditures and reviewed operations to ensure our beautiful place in paradise would survive for years and years to come. Our last meeting together was Nov. 14-15, and until business was completed, Matty was as focused on his duties as president of the Nalcrest Trustees as if it were his first day. I have known Matty for many, many years, and have always respected his knowledge and leadership. I thank him for the appointment to serve as Nalcrest trustee.

Matty is union through and through and has been a great ambassador to and for the NALC. He will be missed at Nalcrest; his legacy, though, is one to be so proud of. He did his part and more to preserve the dream of President Emeritus William Doherty: the dream of a union-sponsored low-rent retirement community that started with purchasing a piece of swamp land in the middle of nowhere. It now remains the only union-sponsored retirement community in the country. Fred and I will attempt to carry on the incredible work that Matty, Don and Tom provided to the NALC and the Nalcrest community. I believe Matty's appointment to Nalcrest trustee by Fred will go down as Fred's most satisfying appointment in

his many successful years as NALC's president.

For those of us who know Matty, there will be another chapter for him within the NALC. Whatever that chapter may be, you can be assured that it will be better off with Matty Rose.

*Tony Diaz*

### Apply to live at Nalcrest

For an application to live at Nalcrest, visit [nalc.org/nalcrest](http://nalc.org/nalcrest), call 863-696-1121 or fax 863-696-3333.

## Nalcrest Trustees

NALC Executive Vice President Paul Barner

NALC Secretary-Treasurer Nicole Rhine

NALC Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Mack I. Julion

NALC Director of Retired Members Dan Toth

Nalcrest Trustees Vice President Fred Rolando

Nalcrest Trustees Vice President Tony Diaz

## Scholarships available for Florida colleges

The Costas G. Lemonopoulos Scholarship Trust, established by the late West Coast Florida Branch 1477 member Costas G. Lemonopoulos, will award scholarships to children of NALC members attending public, four-year colleges or universities supported by the state of Florida, including St. Petersburg College (no private colleges, universities, or junior colleges).

For an explanation of the rules governing the awards and instructions on how your son or daughter can compete, fill out and send the form at right by **June 1** to the Costas G. Lemonopoulos Scholarship Trust, NALC, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144.

### Lemonopoulos Scholarship Application

*(Please print clearly)*

Date \_\_\_\_\_  Check if renewal

Please send details on how I can compete for a scholarship award.

I am the \_\_\_\_\_ of active letter carrier \_\_\_\_\_

son retired \_\_\_\_\_ (Name)

daughter deceased \_\_\_\_\_ (Name)

of Branch No. \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

My name is \_\_\_\_\_

My home address is \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of NALC parent member  
(or spouse if deceased)

Signature of branch officer

NALC parent's Social Security No. \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Branch Items

## Albany, New York

**B**ranch 29 is committed to education. We have had eight stewards graduate from the Region 11 Shop Steward School offered by the NBA's office. We have one Formal A and Beyond graduate with two more scheduled to attend this year. We have had two members pass DRT certification and currently serve on the Step B team. We currently have one member scheduled to attend Arbitration Advocate Training and another currently enrolled in Leadership Academy. We have made a huge investment in our people to help better represent our members, and those investments are already paying dividends. We are not letting off the gas anytime soon.

The Region 11 rap session is scheduled nearby in March and we plan on bringing as many members as we can to this fantastic training opportunity the NBA's office provides each year. We were also fortunate to have two of our stewards selected to attend National's new standardized shop steward training and help provide feedback for this new program as it rolls out. We have taken steps to ensure that our branch not only has staunch union advocates, but is placed to be successful for many years to come.

I want to thank all of the members who have sacrificed time away from home to attend these trainings and for putting in the work to get the most out of them. When I look toward the future of NALC Branch 29, it looks so bright...I gotta wear shades!

*Norris Beswick, Branch 29*

## Atlanta, Georgia

**A**nnual meeting notice: The Atlanta Letter Carriers, Inc. of Branch 73, NALC will hold its annual meeting on Thursday, March 13, at Branch 73's union hall, located at 1842 Candler Road, Decatur, GA, near the intersection of Glenwood Road. The meeting will begin at 5:30 p.m. prior to the regular branch meeting.

*Ben Jackson, Branch 73*

## Charlotte, North Carolina

**B**ranch 545 would like to wish everyone a very happy spring. We want to say thank you to all our members who attended the North Carolina state spring seminar in Durham and look forward to them sharing all that information with our fellow branch members. We also would like to thank all our members who were able to attend the Charlotte Hornets game in January and appreciate their contribution to raising money for MDA.

We would like to congratulate our fellow members on their recent retirements. Nancy Daley, a longtime Branch 545 steward, retired from the Concord Main Station on Sept. 30, 2024. She had 29 years of USPS service.

Tim Texidor, who also served Branch 545 as a steward, retired on Jan. 10. Tim had 10 years of service in the USPS, after 10 years serving our country in the U.S. Army.

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 on the third Tuesday of every month for anyone who is interested in attending. 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. Also, if anyone is interested in participating in our local union in any capacity, please contact our local union office or speak with the union steward in your office.

*Justin Fraley, Branch 545*

## Cincinnati, Ohio

**F**ellow carriers, as I sit here on this Super Bowl Sunday writing this article, we are all waiting for what is next with our contract, since the last tentative agreement was voted



**At the branch's retiree luncheon, Philadelphia, PA Br. 157 recognizes new 50-year members with gold cards. Pictured (l to r) are Branch Vice President Bill Schneider, Robert Monica, Ronald Servetnick, Gregory Swider, Michael Ragan, Branch President Tim Mulvenna and Branch Secretary-Treasurer Steve Kepler.**

down 63,680 to 26,304. I'm not surprised by this number; what I am surprised about is that only 89,984 votes were cast. I hear quite a bit from fellow carriers that they believe their vote would not mean anything—not true; every vote means a lot.

Let's get this voice out there, please, because as we just witnessed from the Feb. 4 National Thank a Mailman Day, nothing was said or done for us in any form from any person in management. But, I guarantee, when baseball season is here in the Queen City, all management will have several days down at the ball yard on the Post Office's expense. Delivering for America is working so well these days—not.

It is ridiculous how many times a week we get mail back on our case with yellow stickers stating "unable to forward" when the address and name was correct in the first place. There were a few instances when it was a month late coming back with the sticker for a business receiving a check—ouch. My sister, who lives in Apex, NC, just sent me a picture of an invitation she mailed on Feb. 16, 2024, to Raleigh, NC, 11 miles away, and it was returned with a yellow sticker on Jan. 9, 2025. That is just downright embarrassing.

Thank you again, fellow carriers, for another solid month of delivering the mail and packages. Keep up the great work until we talk again

next month. Union meetings are every second Tuesday of the month in Forest Park.

In solidarity!

*Chris Rought, Branch 43*

## Emerald Coast, Florida

**O**n many occasions, the officers and stewards have attempted to advise the carriers in the branch of their rights and the protections they have under federal law. One of these protections is the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). This law protects you and your family in case of absences from work due to a medical condition that you or a family member may have.

This information has been shared during our monthly meetings and during office stand-ups. It appears that the information that is being shared is going unheeded. There has been an increase of fact-findings concerning unscheduled absences. One of the first questions management is asking is "Do you have FMLA protections?" The majority of the answers are "No." During the investigation, it is discovered that there is a condition that involves the carrier or a family member. Had they followed the suggestions of the officers of the branch, we would not be in the conference room explaining their absence.

The NALC has generated a form that is accepted by the Postal Service and much simpler to fill out than the form provided by the Department of Labor. It is strongly suggested that if you have a condition that you feel will qualify you for FMLA, then you should submit this form for your protection.

Management has started to take a hard line on unscheduled absences and have begun to issue discipline. Taking a few minutes to have your doctor complete the form will save you from a lot of headaches and unnecessary problems. The law is there to protect you, so please use it.

*Percy Smith Jr., Branch 4559*

## Escondido, California

**B**elow are NALC Branch 2525's spin awards for 2025.

Congratulations to the following Branch 2525 members for their years of service with the NALC union for 2025:

45 years: Danny Ash.

40 years: Timothy Woolston, Olivia Quinn, Michael Kelly, Laura Freitas, Karen Rosales, Sandra Megan, Stephen Cosgrove, Keith Suddaby and James Ferguson.

35 years: Christine Drey, Lydia Navarro, Lynda Farley, Isaac Swanson, Bruce Drey, Stephanie Medina, John Blanchard and Maria Badillo.

30 years: Alan Medina and Shirley Fahrng.

25 years: Cecil Faamatuainu and Elizabeth Robinson.

Thank you for your continued support even in retirement. Union strong!

*Dawn S. Dann, Branch 2525*

## Fargo-West Fargo, North Dakota

**G**reetings to everyone. We are in the midst of our cold and not-so-enjoyable seasonal climate of the year. There may be some benefit to our typical cold spells. In January when we had a stretch with a few days in the 30s followed by a few days below zero, schools and carriers suffered with sicknesses. The consistent cold weather likely kills off some of the “bad bugs.”

It's a little tiring to face the cold and work safely. Often the sidewalks and steps are not given the attention they should be by the homeowners and management companies in a timely fashion. The roads get cleared all right, but it can make for narrow streets after repeated plowing. For all of the carriers, take the extra time needed to use the equipment that is available and needed. Make sure you know what is available for us and make sure they are taken to the street, such as cleats, hand warmers, footwear, head lamps, etc.

By the time this is printed, there should be some movement on our contract. As most know, our most recent contract was overwhelmingly voted down by 70 percent. The NALC has notified the Postal Service of its intent to reopen negotiations. There could be a second ballot sent out on a potential new tentative agreement or proceeding into binding interest arbitration.

Thanks to the efforts of our members, \$705 was raised at a bingo event at our holiday party. Some smaller events may be planned in the future. Everything helps!

Welcome to our newest carriers:

Fargo PTF—Tyler, Kamari, Dalton, Ray, Ola, Tom, Jared, Jarid, Alex.

West Fargo CCA—Juan.

Enderlin CCA—Mike, Pamela.

Just a thought.

*David Steichen, Branch 205*

## Fresno, California

**P**rivatize the Postal Service. What a stupid idea. Our current president four-plus years ago had research done on it. Some people in public, in the House, the Senate and, of course, President Traitor. This subject will come up for discussion. Serious discussion. An attempt to complete what he wanted to do during his last term. Just like Austria, Germany, Netherlands. Canada is on its way. It's just that the only interest in Canada's postal service is in its parcel delivery. Just think, with the Trump/Putin team controlling social media already, controlling our private mail, voting material and ballots, even our medication. Private businesses having access to our mailboxes for a fee. Just think how mail theft could go up.

We must be active in reaching out to Congress to help us, and our patrons. We need their help, and they need ours. The Postal Service is in the Constitution. The same Constitution that President Traitor wants to get rid of. This is not making up stories. That crazed president has already mentioned privatizing our Postal Service just a month ago. Even the Supreme Court is stacked in their favor.

*Jesse Dominguez, Branch 231*

## Kansas City, Missouri

**F**irst, congratulations to the 2024-2025 East St. Louis, IL, football team. My alma mater (Class of '75) won its 11th Illinois Division Class 6A Championship with a 13-1 record, and are currently ranked 26th nationally.

In what continues to become a tradition of preparation, commitment and excellence, the “East Side Flyers” are reminiscent of what the USPS was. There was a sign overlooking the workroom floor, which read: “When in doubt, deliver it.” Sound advice for a young, inexperienced NALC carrier, initially overwhelmed by the lunacy I'd soon learn to manage. It was an aura and attitude that made the USPS the most trusted agency in the United States.

Inside of the champions' locker room hangs a sign: “Winners never quit; quitters never win.” This simple and powerful affirmation has served me personally and professionally for decades. It is about being responsible and accountable to do one's job to the best of one's abilities. In a team-oriented operation, it is imperative for everyone to show up and show out for a unit to have continuous success.

Speaking of success, the Branch 30 Christmas party never disappoints. It was a well-timed mental boost before the madness of our season got really cray cray. Terry “Party Poohbah” Myers and the entertainment committee, whom he describes as outstanding, believe in what they are presenting. For the 250-plus attendees, Jack Stack BBQ started the party off, providing fuel for a night of merriment. The Masters of the Mix kept the flow, let's say fluid, while Djgeleven was definitely all up in it. I'm certain that those in attendance should be good until New Year's Eve. Then?

With the new year upon us, what happens next? Will the NALC hold or fold? Deeper still, is PMG NoJoy gone?

In solidarity—

*Calvin Davis, Branch 30*

## Knoxville, Tennessee

**H**ello, brothers and sisters!

It's been a while since many of us have participated in a six-day count and inspection. For several years, we had joint route adjustments such as IARAP, MIARAP and JARAP, which were based on the carrier's actual performance over a given period. Management wasn't capturing enough routes, so now we are back to the traditional six-day count and inspection.

The NALC has excellent guidance on route inspections. The 2018 NALC Guide to Route Inspections features a large-print manual that simplifies route inspection procedures. There is an accompanying CD that has sample requests for information and sample grievances. It also quotes various relevant excerpts from the M-39 and M-41 Handbooks. This is a great tool that all stewards need to be familiar with prior to a route inspection.

Even if local management has good intentions in a route inspection, if the adjustments are done using Carrier Optimal Routing (COR), look out! This program is notorious for wreaking havoc on routes and cheating letter carriers out of street time. It will have carriers criss-

crossing dangerous streets and each other. It creates the most illogical lines of travel imaginable.

If your office is due for an inspection in the next few months, it would definitely be in your best interest to read up on route inspections. If you are unable to get a hard copy of the 2018 NALC Guide to Route Inspections, you can download it off nalc.org. Also, Chapter 2 (Office Time Preparation) and Chapter 9 (Mail Count and Route Inspection) of the M-49 Handbook, which is in your case, are good references. Chapter 2 of the M-39 Handbook also references route inspection. If you carry your route in accordance with the manuals listed above, you should be OK.

*Tony Rodriguez, Branch 419*

## Lima, Ohio

**A** lot has been going on—contract voted down and 15 days for a new proposal and then to arbitration. Stay informed and vote what is best for you and letter carriers as a whole. Me being retired doesn't see what is really happening on the workroom floor. I still attend union meetings and can't believe that with all that going on, nobody shows up! A lot of you complain but don't do anything to help. This is a great opportunity to become involved. Unions have a tough job and the only way to be successful is with cooperation from the members. Everyone should feel obligated to the cause. In the long run, it can only benefit you and all letter carriers!

Locally, the food drive is on May 10. Plan your annual leave accordingly. The union has a trip June 24-25 for the legislative breakfast in Washington, DC. A funny story, there was a bar behind Headquarters called My Brother's Place. When asked why I was going to DC, I would say I was going to My Brother's Place. Some of them thought I actually had a brother who lived there! That place is long gone, but I have so many memories of how strong National was then and still is today. Letter carriers should be proud of what we represent and not the reality of what it has become.

Union meetings are held at Rigali's Pizza Village at 7 p.m. every second Tuesday of the month. Next meeting is March 11. Some of you older carriers, bring someone new so we can all be on board! There are good people trying to help, but they can't do it alone! If anyone is interested in becoming scribe, let me or Matt know. I am out of touch, not on the workroom floor.

*Jeffery Steegman, Branch 105*

## Monterey, California

**G**reetings from the West Coast. Our hearts go out to our brothers and sisters in Southern California who have suffered loss in the recent wildfires. I just can't imagine. I encourage each one of you to open your pocketbooks and send a donation to the National Disaster Relief Foundation.

Well, Monterey had another labor-management meeting/labor-management meeting. This time, the district labor representative and

## Branch Items

a representative from the NBA's office were in attendance. I'm not too confident that anything will change, but at least there will be a signed agreement to add to grievances.

Know that you don't have to be treated with disrespect or harassed or abused to make the numbers. This language is in 115.4 of the *M-39* and the Joint Statement on Violence and Behavior in the Workplace. You've got to take a stand and be willing to speak up to make a change. If you are afraid, talk to your steward or call EAP to discuss your concerns. That is an option open to all.

The rain will soon come, so be safe out there. Don't take shortcuts that put you in jeopardy of hurting yourself.

State union training will be coming up in a few months. If you're tired of what is happening in the office, go to a meeting and volunteer to help. Training is always available. Try it; you might like it.

The chaos in Washington, DC, is hitting pretty close to home. The plan to dismantle the Postal Service as we know it is on the table. Be ready to call, write or protest, if asked. I'd be watchful of six-day delivery. Privatization won't help anyone! We can only hope we survive!

United we bargain; divided we beg.

*Patty Cramer, Branch 1310*

### Norristown, Pennsylvania

Greetings, leaders of the P.O.!

When you say P.O., everyone thinks of the mailman, or should I say letter carrier? They never think of a supervisor who works the floor, or a supervisor who supervises the supervisors, or even the DM or even the POOM. Maybe the postmaster general, 'cause he made a fool of himself on TV when he covered his ears 'cause he didn't like being scolded by one of his congressional bosses! I should try that the next time my boss comes over to my case. LOL!

Getting back to my point, we as letter carriers should take pride in our job, as we are the poster children for the USPS. (But the TA does not reflect this...sad.) I am part of a fading generation of carriers. Sad that I had to spell the word "vacant" and tell the meaning of the word so newer carriers would hopefully listen and not put mail in the boxes. Quality of service is paramount in my book, but I digress. I'll leave knowing I did the best job like the way I was trained. (You guys have already been mentioned in a previous scribe).

It's weird to think that I've been doin' this for over 30 years (we used to laugh at the old heads and now I'm one of them). When I go, I'll be replaced in a heartbeat (but they way they treat the new hires, it'll probably be about five or six hires till one can make it through the BS and hang on).

And in closing, in addition to being the scribe, I am the treasurer also, and if you're interested in taking over one of these jobs, give me a shout!

Remember: "Be the windshield, not the bug!"

*Joel Stimmler, Branch 542*



**North Florida Br. 53 members celebrate the branch's new building name**

### North Florida

Branch 53 held a memorial celebration by naming its building after Lloyd Nash Pearson Jr. The ceremony was held with a standing-room-only crowd, which included his friends, family and Branch 53 members. This dedication to a man who has achieved so much in unionism, civil rights, and ensuring that people vote will now be properly memorialized.

The February issue of *The Postal Record* acknowledged those who donated to the Letter Carrier Political Fund last year. In Branch 53, out of 1,238 members, only 77 members donated. When you look at the entire list nationwide, fewer than a quarter of the members donated.

It is past time that all NALC members take another look at what is important to them and their families. The new administration wants to privatize USPS, in addition to many other policy changes that negatively affect working families. Your donations help to ensure that members of Congress support our issues. Please take advantage of the forms or instructions included in the February issue and donate so letter carriers can keep their jobs and benefits.

Branch 53 was set to participate in this year's MLK parade on Feb. 17. The parade was postponed from MLK Day due to inclement weather.

*Bob Henning, Branch 53*

### Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

New year, new you!

As we enter 2025, many people like to take stock of their lives and make resolutions. While you are making promises to better yourselves, and possibly your family, may I make a suggestion? How about resolving to become more active in your local branch? We see many individuals criticize from the sidelines but do nothing to step up and be the change they wish to see. Of course, these individuals have the same excuses: "I'm too busy," "Those in power won't let me," and "I don't even know when my branch has meetings." That last one came from an individual on social media who was very vocal but when told he should attend a branch meeting, he didn't even know when or where their meetings were held.

You get what you paid for, and social media is free, which is why most of the information coming from these sources is not worth a plugged nickel. Whenever a member tells me something they read on Facebook or Reddit, I roll my eyes and explain how 99.9 percent of the information on social media is, at least, incorrect and, at most, nothing more than trying

to rile people up with blatantly false information.

We see this far too often as well. "Keyboard warriors" are ready to battle but when the rubber meets the road, they are nowhere to be found. If these individuals were to bring half of that passion to representing their fellow carriers or becoming active in their branches, we would become a force to be reckoned with: on the workroom floor, in grievance meetings, in Congress, and even within our leadership.

If you are not happy with the way things are progressing, step up and become active. Don't just be the vocal minority we see online, who complain about everything but refuse to do anything to better themselves, their fellow carriers, or the NALC.

In solidarity for all—

*Eric E. Beu, Branch 458*

### Phoenix, Arizona

Howdy from Arizona! January and early February are very busy here. We have new officer installation by Executive Vice President Paul Barner, our retirees luncheon with Director of Retired Members Dan Toth and Region 4 NBA Dan Versluis, followed by the retirement training seminar put on by the Arizona State Association at which the two Dans provide excellent training.



**The new president of Phoenix, AZ Br. 576, Jack Van Dyke (at podium), with the newly installed branch officers**

We also have our "one of a kind" golf tournament—the Waste Management Open featuring the Greenest Show On Grass and our wild 16th hole!

I met Paul Barner for the first time; he is a great fella and we are lucky to have him at Headquarters. A very smart and informed leader.

It was great to see Dan Toth, as we both served as RAAs in our respective regions about 20 years ago. He is terrific and knows his stuff.

We appreciated our NBA, Dan Versluis, taking part in our installation and seminars, along with attendance by Legislative and Political Organizer John Beaumont.

As I near close to 45 years in the NALC, I am so grateful for the awesome leadership we have in our great union. We really need it, with what is going on in DC right now. Let's all hope for a good year for our union and the USPS.

*Al Linde, Branch 576*

## Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Happy New Year! Hopefully, you enjoyed the holidays with your family and friends because you've earned it.

Well, it's a new year again. That means it's also "Thank you for your efforts during peak, now...get running" time of year again. For newer employees, almost *everything* in the post office is cyclical. Make sure you're submitting 3996s as needed.

The National Labor Relations Act and our National Agreement grant letter carriers the right to be represented during a management investigation, but representation needs to be *requested* by the carrier.

That brings us to PS Form 1017-B. You know when management goes around the office asking carriers what took them so long the day prior? Yeah, those. *You have a right to request representation for 1017-Bs.* Think about it—there is obviously an intent to build a case for discipline. Is management trying to discover information from you? Yes, and that is an *investigation*. Are they asking you questions? That is an *interview*. It all adds up to an "investigative interview," and you *are entitled to representation for any investigation that may lead to discipline*. Also, if a request for representation cannot be immediately accommodated, it must be honored first thing the following business day.

As always, if you have any questions, feel free to reach out to the branch hall.

*John Conger II, Branch 84*

## Portland, Oregon

In the fall of 2021, the Region 2 rap session was held in Anchorage, AK. It was one of the first events that attempted to go forth and navigate around the pandemic. It was so nice to see people again and get back to some version of normality, but it also felt risky. Despite all that, it was a lot of fun and full of Alaskan experiences. One of the many highlights was visiting Branch 4319's then-new union hall. President Jim Raymond described the journey of embarking on a new building. I remember thinking what a nice place it was; their sense of accomplishment and pride was palpable. I also remember feeling dread knowing that we at Branch 82 had to start down that same road—obstacles, potholes, and all.

I am thrilled to report that we have completed that journey. As I write this, our officers are moving into their new offices. I asked during an executive board meeting if we were going to move via little red wagon, and that is essentially how it's been going—one carload or trailer at a time. Our open house was held last week, and I've heard nothing but good things from the members who attended. The building is much bigger with ample parking. It's a place that Branch 82 can grow into, while some of our meetings at the last place had become standing room only. Our first general membership meeting in the new hall will take place in a few days, and it is a relief to be on the other side of this huge undertaking. There is still a ton of work to do, but it feels like the hardest part is over. Amidst all the current chaos, it's

lovely to have one big thing checked off the list.

*Suzanne Miller, Branch 82*

## Providence, Rhode Island

We held an inspection training session at the end of January conducted by Jerry Ugone for the upcoming inspections at the Corliss station. The training went well. However, the lack of attendance was concerning. With only 47 carriers in attendance, there was hope for a lot more.

The latest labor management meeting discussed much of the same past issues, with attendance and uniforms remaining the hot topics. Injuries continue to be underreported or not reported immediately. Please report injuries—or at least that you may have been injured—by the end of your work shift to help prevent complications.

At February's meeting, a motion was made for us to participate in this year's food drive; stay tuned for more details.

Also, safety squads are sent out from either District or National, mainly looking for carriers who are not wearing their seat belts or wearing Bluetooth devices, especially while driving, etc. Regardless, it's just a reminder to always work as if somebody is watching you.

Lastly, management was caught falsely editing carriers' clock rings in my station. If it's happening here, I'm sure it's also happening elsewhere. A class-action grievance was filed and settled between the union and Providence management, who agreed to allow the union to audit clock rings every two weeks for one full year. Also, each carrier affected will have their time paid back and an additional lump sum of \$100 for the severity of this violation. A cease and desist was also agreed upon, with remedies for continued violations escalating. Special shout-out to Chris Casci and Cam Dilorio for fighting like hell to get this done.

Until next time, be safe.

*Anthony Turcotte, Branch 15*

## Racine, Wisconsin

As a scribe the past 10 years or so, I've noticed a shift in postal demographics. I'm getting older, carriers are getting younger. My "need to know" nostalgia is often misunder-

stood by younger carriers unless they google it. Not their fault, just wasn't their time.

How would the youngins know mosquitoes have 47 tiny teeth unless I told them? This article is dedicated to the class of the overhead projector when the kid in the back of the room had to dim the lights and the paper had to be adjusted just right on the projector. Not an easy task. An honorable mention to all those who fell asleep when TV cut programming at midnight after the national anthem played and you were left with just static or a multicolored bull's-eye until programming resumed in the morning. Where antennae ruled and we didn't need 900 channels to be entertained. Cheers!

January saw another successful and well-attended branch Christmas/retiree party orchestrated by our VP, Josh Driver. Lots of hard work; thanks, Josh! Congratulations to our newly minted gold card members: Frank Eser, Bob Matson, Mike Rasmussen, Larry Spaulding, Gary Martin, John Sanders, Gary Shwarm, Dean Kreuziger, Robert Kaisle, Dave Klimek and Harvey Kost. Without a doubt, retirees are the backbone of any branch. Much appreciation goes out to the dogged, tireless efforts of Jim Buhler for making the gold cards a reality. Thanks, Jim, for your selfless and dedicated service to Branch 436.

Great job goes out to West Racine carrier Lish Pascoa for organizing and running Branch 436's blood drive in honor of her sister. Well done, Lish! Thank you also to Tina Morris for making breakfast burritos for both stations the day of the blood drive. Branch 436 proud.

*Chris Paige, Branch 436*

## Rochester, New York

It is with great sadness to report the passing of one of our own, President Emeritus Norman LeFrois. He was a gold card lifetime member of the National Association of Letter Carriers. He served as president of Branch 210 (1974-1989) and then as regional administrative assistant until his retirement in 1997. He served on the executive board of the New York State Association of Letter Carriers and on the NALC Retirement Committee. Norm was just as dedicated in retirement as he was as an active



**Norman LeFrois**

## COLA: Cost-of-living adjustment

- The 2026 projected COLAs for the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) is **0.8 percent**, and for the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), **0.8 percent**, following the release of the January consumer price index (CPI). The 2026 COLAs will be finalized with the publication of the September 2025 CPI in October 2025.
- The 2026 projected COLA under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA) is **0.7 percent** following the release of the January CPI. This COLA will be based on the change in the CPI between December 2024 and December 2025.
- Visit [nalc.org](http://nalc.org) for the latest updates.

## Branch Items

member. He was knowledgeable, steadfast, a gentleman and a mentor, but mainly a friend to us all.

To sum it up, he was a leader—the best leader I have ever met. Our branch thrives today, and I believe that began with Norman C. LeFrois leading the way.

There will never be another Norm. The branch will miss Norm and will continue to honor his legacy. This begins with the motto we use in the branch regularly, which is, “What would Norm do?” May you rest in peace, friend.

*Monique Mate, Branch 210*

### Rockville, Maryland

Steve Klein won another inequitable distribution of overtime grievance at the Gaithersburg Main Office. After winning eight carriers a total of \$2,870 in the third quarter of 2024, Steve won another \$1,056 for five carriers for Quarter 4 of last year. Nice work, Steve!

Melissa Limage won a carrier 72 hours of continuation of pay, worth about \$2,000, at the Pike Annex. Great job, Melissa!

As I wrote in my January scribe article, it's a shame that we must file grievances to get continuation of pay. After all, management is violating the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA)—a law passed by Congress! At our Frederick office, chief steward Chuck Clark won an extra \$100 each for three carriers who were the successful bidders after management failed to post the assignments timely. Management reaffirmed that they would post assignments within 14 days of becoming vacant or established. As usual, great work, Chuck!

Route inspections have been completed for the Rockville Main Office. Our Derwood section is being inspected as I write this. It is too early to tell if management is going to adjust routes fairly or, as in the past, management violated everything they could in order to eliminate routes. Many times we prevailed in the grievance procedure to have the inspections thrown out. It's crazy that management fights for overburdened routes. All this does is put overtime and double-time in our members' pockets and hurts service to our customers. Not one carrier has been removed for using too much time on a route over the last 46 years! In fact, no carrier has been successfully disciplined for unauthorized overtime as long as they submitted a 3996 and called back to inform management that they could not complete their assignment in the allotted time.

In the struggle—

*Kenneth Lerch, Branch 3825*

### St. Louis, Missouri

When I received the call about Tom Harman's passing, it wasn't unexpected. After all, Tom was 100 years old. Up until December of 2023, Tom was a regular attendee at our monthly retiree luncheons.

When we received the call in January, it was hard to feel sadness. It was one of those rare dichotomies where you mourn the loss of a respected colleague, yet couldn't help but smile at the thought of the joy he brought to so many people.

Tom was a World War II veteran, a husband to his beloved Evalee, a father, grandfather,

brother, and a letter carrier, and he served as a respected shop steward. Tom is one of the last surviving members of the branch to take part in the 1970 Great Postal Strike vote.



*Tom Harman*

In 1981, Tom was tapped to take charge of our local political action fund. Tom was tall and lean, with steely blue eyes, a toothy grin like a Cheshire cat, and a booming voice. His infectious smile and hearty handshake became his weapon of choice to render even the

most ardent of politicians to listen to the concerns of letter carriers.

From 31 years, Tom was the legislative face of the letter carriers union. He earned the respect of politicians from both sides of the aisle at the local, state and national levels, whether he was fundraising, campaigning, or lobbying members of Congress in Washington, DC. Candidates often sought out Tom regarding legislation on postal issues.

Tom left a legacy for us to follow. He knew as letter carriers that we must always remain politically engaged and to be vigilant in our efforts to seek out and support our political friends.

Rest easy, old friend. Thank you for a life well lived and a job well done.

*Tom Schulte, Branch 343*

### St. Paul, Minnesota

With the busy season finally winding down, we here at Branch 28 were able to get some final grievance numbers and take stock of what last year brought. The final tally of grievances received at Formal A was 1,313. Of course, this doesn't represent the mountain of grievances resolved at the station level. What it does represent is a continual willingness by management to disregard the National Agreement. I'm sure management has these same grievance figures in one of their endless spreadsheets or “dashboards,” but the lesson they'll take isn't that they're failing to adhere to what's been agreed upon. Instead, they'll decide that it's the carriers who are the problem; that we're lazy thieves who dare to ask for fair pay and humane working environments. None of us know what the new year will bring, but we can be sure that the fight for what we've been promised will continue on, just as it always has.

In other news, we recently got a pre-arbitration settlement on an improper start time change grievance. These have been hard-fought in the past but rarely won. Luckily, one of the most recent arbitration losses came with a “road map” of what the union needed to prove in order to win. Thanks to that road map and some excellent work at the station, Formal A and Step B levels, the branch was awarded a victory and a clear process on how to fight against the improper and oftentimes punitive moving of carrier start times. This win was yet another example of how if we all pull together to fight against an injustice, we can do more than standing alone.

Solidarity forever!

*Kaylee Veazey, Branch 28*

### Seattle, Washington

I go to the gym. It's free for me. A perk of my health benefits program. My wife calls it working out. I call it outrunning my demons. My golden years seem to have more drawbacks than takeaways. There's quite a few old-age boogeymen, as it were, lurking in the bushes—Alzheimer's, strokes, dementia, Parkinson's—to mention just a few of the bugaboos. You can't beat them off with a stick. So, I read that pedaling up a sweat is the best way to keep the monsters at bay. So, I pedal.

Now, most everybody at the gym is far, far away from my age group, and as I watch these other calorie-counters go about the process of toning their bodies, getting ripped, shredded, and ground to a pulp, I note that some climb those endless stairs-to-nowhere, others carry large heavy objects around in circles, either on their back or hanging from their arms, very few do as I do. And I think to myself, “Hey, I did that same stuff for 30-plus years in the Postal Service.” Plus, I got retirement benefits, a TSP account, and did it all without having to torture myself at the gym. And, as an added plus, I never had to buy bigger pants. Yes, I never got too big for my britches.

The letter carrier job, as unskilled labor goes, is a sweet deal. I'm not saying it's fun or entertaining. It's grunt work, for sure. You'll get your 10,000 steps in, no sweat. You have to stay focused, to stay on track, to stay out of trouble, but if you're going to have to carry large heavy objects around in circles and climb endless stairs to stay in shape, you might as well be getting paid for it. Right?

*Don Nokes, Branch 79*

### Southeast Pennsylvania Merged

On Feb. 5, NALC Region 12 Business Agent Brian Thompson and his staff (Leo Zachwieja, Steve Wiley and Beth Lloyd) attended our meeting to install our executive board. Also in attendance was NALC LPO Marc Ashmon. After installation, an impassioned Q&A ensued.

One of the best things we can do to dispel the plethora of bad information that is out there concerning letter carriers is to speak accurate information to bullsh\*t!

While it would be edifying to rip management for their inept depth of character and lack of empathy for the very people who make them earn their bonuses, the focus must be what we do to prevent them from attacking us.

Just look around and see how our culture has moved to place us in a very vulnerable position. So many carriers walk/drive around with earpieces (bright white for effect) just waiting to be placed on emergency placement by the “new guard” of postal management. So many carriers walk around with accents to their uniforms that would make most proud retired letter carriers' skin crawl. When has burnt orange, hot pink, etc., been incorporated into our uniform color scheme? The ties and dress shoes of the far past have been replaced by leggings under shorts of a color I can't even pronounce (but not red, blue or silver, let alone black).

Management has employed a safety team (not including union representatives) that has been out already. Their stated agenda is to place letter carriers on emergency placement for safety violations (i.e., earbuds, no safety belts secured while driving). Also, carriers will be written up for uniform non-compliance and not doing their routes in line-of-travel order.

Let's not give them what they want! Stay safe.

Also, please use PS Form 3996 daily (if appropriate).

*Eric Jackson, Branch 725*

## Springfield, Ohio

**T**here's no smoke without a fire; there's no heat without a flame." Great song by Bad Company and a very apt description of the tentative agreement. The smoke is coming from the TA as it went down in flames. With just shy of 90,000 votes cast, two-thirds voted "no." The original contract expired in March 2023. We could have gone to binding arbitration as early as July 2023. Instead, the NALC negotiated for more than 500 days. The new contract will expire in March 2026, and we'll do it all over again.

Many offices recently went through the TIAREAP route adjustment process. Like the TA, this also took much longer than expected. We started in January 2023 and were still wrapping up in the fall of 2024. One provision of the TA would reduce fixed office time by 13 minutes. Adding 13 minutes to each route in our office would eliminate two routes.

Springfield is growing for the first time in 20 years. One new development is planned for 1,200 housing units. We'll be in a constant state of adjustment for the next several years regardless. I recently finished working on a long-neglected line-of-travel adjustment on a route with a lot of new construction. Having worked on route adjustments for the last 20 years, this was by far the worst one I have ever seen. It took approximately 12 hours of painstaking work and multiple edit sheets to correct all the problems. Well-maintained red books really do matter.

A customer approached me recently at an apartment complex cluster box and inquired of me what it would take to get a job as a carrier. He said, "After all, driving around listening to my music while delivering mail can't be that hard." It gave me a good chuckle.

*Jerry Martens, Branch 45*

## Staunton, Virginia

**W**hat is solidarity? Dictionary.com defines it as "union or fellowship arising from common responsibilities and interests, as between members of a group or between classes, peoples, etc." This sums it up in a technical way, but others have given it life.

"If you come only to help me, you can go back home. But if you consider my struggle as part of your struggle for survival, then maybe we can work together." —Aboriginal wise woman

"Upon the conduct of each depends the fate of all." —Alexander The Great

"The people united will never be defeated." —Cesar Chavez

"When spiders unite, they can tie down a lion." —Ethiopian Proverb

"Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success." —Henry Ford

"We must learn to live together as brothers or we are going to perish together as fools." —Martin Luther King, Jr.

"There is no greater calling than to serve your brother. And, no greater satisfaction than to have done it well." —Walter Reuther

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." —Margaret Mead

To me, solidarity is the very core of unionism. It's also an intentional action. Something we strive to do to lift working families up together. I'm no expert, but feel it in my heart when I see it.

Solidarity isn't just flashy rallies; it is a broad-based grassroots ground game. Doing it with Branch 513 and 518 in our food drive planning. Feel it when I contact my representatives on behalf of letter carriers and other union members. Will see it at the Region 13 officers' training and Virginia state convention.

What time is it? Union time!

Solidarity forever—

*Cindy Connors, Branch 513*

## Toledo, Ohio

**A** quarter of the scheduled arbitrations in Region 11 in February and March are for Branch 100. At least one scheduled arbitration per week has become the norm. We recently received our 2024 1099-Misc from the Postal Service for the \$27,000 paid for corrective measures in arbitration awards. That tidy sum provided some relief from all the unnecessary expenses that the branch incurred by repeatedly taking the same cases to arbitration. This allowed us to hold normal gatherings with food and beverages at Mud Hen and Walleye games, as well as the Christmas lights at the Toledo Zoo.

For 2024, we had a record 2,470 grievances filed. The number filed in January totaled nearly 300. If that's any indication of how this year is going to be, we are prepared. As long as upper management continues to allow their underlings to ignore the contract, the upward trend in grievances will continue.

Management is still struggling to get the mail delivered at our Reynolds Corners and Oregon offices, after they butchered the data from their route inspections. I'm sure the stress level at those stations is off the charts. Congrats to our members, who are hanging in there during this debacle. This, too, shall pass; we just don't know when.

With February being Black History Month, ethnic food was provided for our regular meeting by Tim Spears, one of our own members. Those of us in attendance wish to thank him for providing a delicious buffet.

Branch 100 will be hosting the Ohio State Association's convention in August. Our convention chairman, Brent Harbaugh, is pulling all the details together. We expect all elected

delegates to participate in our hosting obligations. A good time will be had by all.

*Ray Bricker, Branch 100*

## Tri-Valley, California

**H**ello, fellow NALC members. The votes are in, and the members of our great union have overwhelmingly rejected the tentative agreement. Our branch officers/shop stewards did an excellent job encouraging active members to exercise their voice by utilizing their power to vote. The voices of the membership were loud and clear when expressing that the tentative agreement fell well short of the anticipated historic contract that was promised.

President Renfro spent many months building up expectations while providing vague information about the ongoing contract negotiations, which probably led to some carriers' anger/disappointment in this deal. Nevertheless, it's more likely that an arbitrator will decide our new contract. It may be better, worse or the same; there are no guarantees. And, if the parties are able to reach another tentative agreement, will members continue to have the understanding that the greatest risk may be the allowing of a compromise to become a source of defeat? Response: Maybe.

I've received questions about what happens next. And, despite my efforts to educate members about the consequences (good/bad and in between), during the ratification process, members appeared to be confused and disappointed about the outcome. Some members celebrated the rejection of the TA as a win, but were not aware that the ongoing dispute may take additional time to adjudicate. They believed that a better TA would be presented to the membership for ratification within 15 days of the tabulation count. Meanwhile, others have expressed disappointment in the vote, believed that money was left on the table, and don't want to continue working without a contract.

Some may see the glass as half full or empty under our democracy. Either way, we should continue to stand in solidarity and be patient while waiting to see what comes next. Stay tuned.

*James C. Perryman Jr., Branch 2902*

## Washington, DC

**H**appy retirement and best wishes to Branch 142 letter carrier John Martin!



**John Martin**

We are honoring our special friend and colleague in recognition of 52 years of dedicated service to the USPS. John carried Route 8220 for 35 years in the West Hyattsville, MD 20782 station. He exemplified the values of honesty, integrity and teamwork, and maintained an amazing commitment to our organization.

With great appreciation and love. Your friends and co-workers will miss you dearly.

*Karen Clark, Branch 142*

# Election Notices

## Aiken, South Carolina

This is an official notice to all members of Branch 1569 that nominations for the following officer positions will be held at our regular branch meeting at 7 p.m. on April 3 at Gregg Park Civic Center, Graniteville: president, vice president, secretary-treasurer, recording secretary, HB/mutual benefits representative, sergeant-at-arms and three trustees. The term for these positions is two years.

If needed, elections will follow by mail ballot on May 1. This will be in accordance with the *NALC Constitution* and the branch bylaws.

*Donald Jackson, Pres., Br. 1569*

## Colorado

This is official notice that nominations/elections will be held for the following offices at the state convention at the Hilton on 425 W. Prospect Way in Fort Collins on April 16 (nominations) and April 17 (election). The following officers and positions will be up for election: president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, director of retirees and director of education, as well as six executive board positions and host city of the 2026 convention. These positions are for a two-year term and will run starting April 18 until the state convention election in 2027, except for the host city, which is for one year.

Nominations will be accepted from the floor of the convention or, if needed, by submitting a nomination to the secretary, in writing, before the beginning of business on April 16.

Election results will be announced by the end of business on April 17 by the election committee.

*John Woolley, Sec., COSALC*

## Garden Grove, California

This is official notice that, pursuant to Article 5 of Branch 1100 bylaws, nominations for officers for the 2025-2028 term will be held at the regular branch meeting at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, June 10, at Branch 1100's meeting hall, 13252 Garden Grove Blvd., Garden Grove.

All members in good standing must be present and/or signify, in writing, their willingness to accept the nomination and may accept nomination for only one position.

At the time of nomination, candidates must certify that they have not applied for or served as a supervisor, either temporary or permanent, during the 24 months preceding nomination.

All elected offices are open for nomination and are for a term of three years. In addition, those elected for a position shall, by virtue of that position, be a delegate to all state and national conventions during the term of office.

The election shall be conducted by secret ballot.

Ballots must be returned by 11:30 a.m. on Monday July 7, at to be counted. All others will be void.

*Sharon Peralta, Exec. Sec./HBR, Br. 1100*

## Los Angeles, California

This is an official notice to all Branch 24 members of nominations and elections for the following positions: president, executive vice president,

vice president, recording secretary, financial secretary, treasurer, board of trustees (three positions), service relations (three positions), board of audit (three positions), sergeant-at-arms, ill and injured steward, health benefits representative (HBR), and MBA/NSBA representative.

The term of office will be three years, from June 2025 to June 2028. Nominations will be held at 774 Valencia St. in Los Angeles during the regular branch meeting on May 3. Nominations will be a separate order of business. All regular members shall be eligible to hold any office or position in the branch except as provided under Article 5, Section 2 (subordinate branches) of our *NALC Constitution*. (This section disqualifies any member who holds, accepts or applies as a 204B/supervisor in the last two years.) Every regular member shall have the right to nominate a candidate(s). Those persons nominated must submit their written acceptance to the branch recording secretary.

The elections will be by secret ballot. Ballots will be mailed to the last known address of every Branch 24 member (as of April 1). Ballots will be mailed on Friday, May 16. If there are two or more candidates for any office, the plurality of all votes cast for such office shall be necessary to elect. There shall be no write-in votes for candidates not officially on the ballot. Any such write-in shall not be counted, but will not invalidate the rest of the ballot. The ballots must be received no later than 9 a.m. on June 7. Adequate safeguards to ensure a fair election shall be provided, including:

1. Observers: Candidates may act as observers. All candidates have the right to have an observer throughout each phase of the election, as outlined in the official *NALC Regulations Governing Branch Election Procedures*, Parts 11.8, 11.81, 11.82, 11.83, 11.84, 14.1 and 17.1.

2. Campaign ads: All person(s) intending to place campaign ad(s) in the May-June 2025 branch publication *Angel City Carrier (ACC)* must pay in full and submit their campaign ad(s) to the ACC publisher, ready for print, no later than April 10. The cost of a one-page ad will be \$150. If candidates want ads printed in additional ACC issues, the deadline is the 10th of the prior month.

3. Address labels: For those candidates who wish to mail campaign literature to Branch 24 members, address labels must be advance ordered at the cost of \$100 per each full set. Labels must be paid in full to the financial secretary prior to literature being mailed.

4. Mailing of campaign literature: Prepared campaign literature must be brought to the union hall and presented to the election committee (the envelopes must be sealed with correct postage affixed) at 9 a.m. on May 12, May 13, May 14 or/and May 15, unless the candidate(s) makes other advance arrangements with the election committee. Labels will be affixed by the candidates under the observation of the election committee, or by the election committee at no additional cost. After address labels are affixed, the election

committee will be responsible for the mailing of all campaign literature.

*Libya Floyd, Rec. Sec., Br. 24*

## Massachusetts

This is an official notice to all delegates of the Massachusetts State Letter Carriers Association 93rd state convention. Nominations and elections will be held May 16-18 at the Double-Tree by Hilton in Hyannis for the following positions: president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, director of retirees, director of education and eight executive board members.

Members who have held, accepted or applied for a supervisory position are ineligible to run for or hold office for a period of two years after termination of such status.

Nomination and election (if necessary) will take place during the May 17 session during the convention. The installation of newly elected officers will take place later in the same evening.

*Joe Desrosiers, Sec., MSLCA*

## Michigan

Nominations for the Michigan State Association of Letter Carriers will take place April 28 at the Michigan state biennial convention in Traverse City for the following positions: president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, director of education, director of retirees and five trustees.

The election will be held Tuesday, April 29.

The convention will take place at the Great Wolf Lodge, 3575 N. U.S. Hwy. 31 S., Traverse City.

*Jayme Romine, Sec., MISALC*

## Monterey, California

In accordance with Article 5 of the *NALC Constitution*, this is official notice that nominations for branch officers will be held at the regular meeting of Branch 1310 on April 17. All members in good standing are eligible for nomination.

If you have held a supervisory position in the previous 24 months prior to nomination, you are not eligible for nomination.

If you are unable to attend the meet-

ing, you must submit a letter in writing saying that you will accept a nomination. Send it to Branch 1310, P.O. Box 1383, Monterey, no later than 5 p.m. on April 17.

Elections will be held in May by secret ballot.

*Scott Bedell, Sec., Br. 1310*

## New Hampshire

In accordance with Article IV of the *New Hampshire State Association Constitution* and bylaws, this is official notice that nominations and elections of state officers will be held during the 125th New Hampshire state convention at Mill Falls at the Lake in Meredith June 6-8. The offices which shall be open for election are president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, two congressional liaisons, one state legislative liaison, retiree trustee, five-year trustee and two-year trustee.

*Paul Nee, Sec., NHSALC*

## Santa Fe Springs, California

This is official notice to all members of Branch 4941 that nomination for branch officers will take place at the regular branch meeting on May 21.

The election will be at the regular branch meeting on June 18.

*Dave Donovan, Pres., Br. 4941*

## Virginia

This will serve as notice to the members of the Virginia State Association of Letter Carriers of the upcoming elections at the state convention which will be held at the Sheraton on the Beach in Virginia Beach May 29-31. Nominations for the following positions will take place on Friday, May 30, beginning at 9 a.m.: president, vice president, secretary-treasurer, director of education, director of retirees and 11 state board members.

Elections, if necessary, will take place on Saturday, May 31, at 9:30 a.m.

*Jenny Hall, Sec.-Treas., VSALC*

## Regarding Election Notices

**Election Notices** must be submitted to *The Postal Record*, not to other offices at NALC. *The Constitution for Government of Federal and Subordinate Branches* requires that notice be mailed to members no fewer than **45 days before the election** (Article 5, Section 4). Branch secretaries must remember the time difference between deadline for submission of notices—the 10th of the month—and publication of the subsequent issue of the magazine, e.g., March's deadline is for the April publication.

**To submit items by mail:** Mail to *The Postal Record*, 100 Indiana

Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144. Include the following information: type of item (Election Notice), where it comes from, the person sending it, and how to contact the sender.

**To submit items by email:** Send to [postalrecord@nalc.org](mailto:postalrecord@nalc.org) with the branch city and state as the subject. The item can be in the body of the email or as an attachment in Microsoft Word. Include the same information as listed above for items sent by mail. If you do not receive an acknowledgment that your email was received, please call *The Postal Record* at 202-662-2851.





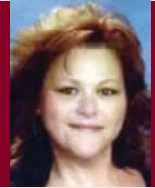
## National Auxiliary Board

News and updates from the officers

Cynthia Martinez  
President



Crystal Bragg  
Secretary



Samantha Yerg  
Treasurer

### From the President

Dear sisters and brothers, We can all breathe a sigh of relief with the holidays now behind us. Although we acknowledge that it is a burdensome time for letter carriers, everyone so appreciates what they do, getting all of those special Christmas cards and packages to their destinations.

With just a bit of winter weather this year in Arizona, it has been quite refreshing. We



Letter Carrier Barbie enjoys her time in Phoenix.

had our NALCA Christmas luncheon at the Golden Corral, a local buffet. The food was delicious, and the company was outstanding. We had 10 members in attendance and had a voluntary gift exchange, which was really fun.

We were surprised in January by a new letter carrier transfer, Barbie, sent to us from National Secretary Crystal Bragg. Looking lovely in her postal uniform, she was very congenial and eager to get started on her route. Already adept at carrying mail, Barbie was very efficient and therefore able to pick some lemons along the way, as well as take her break by some cactus. She couldn't wait to attend a union meeting at Branch 576's union hall in Phoenix; she even insisted on venturing upstairs and visiting the office, where she snapped a quick selfie. She will be leaving here, making her way around the country to experience many other routes in different states, so keep an eye out for her, as she just might show up at your branch or station!

To kick off the new year of 2025, our Branch 576 had its retirees' luncheon on Feb. 1. We



The Phoenix Auxiliary gathers at its Christmas luncheon.

were honored to have Dan Versluis, national business agent for Region 4 (which includes Arizona and Colorado), as well as NALC Director of Retired Members Dan Toth, who answered many questions pertaining to retirement. They are both experts in the field and are generous when sharing their knowledge, adding that their doors are always open to anyone who might find themselves needing additional help. So, many thanks to both of them. The food was wonderful, as we've become able to expect, and a huge thank-you goes out to all of the Branch 576 volunteers who make it happen. You guys are fantastic!

*Cynthia Martinez*

### AUXILIARY OFFICERS

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## Include me in the fight for letter carrier rights

### Sign me up as an Auxiliary member!

Branch No. \_\_\_\_\_ Branch City \_\_\_\_\_ Auxiliary No. \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No. (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

I am a family member of NALC member \_\_\_\_\_ of Branch \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

# Mutual Exchanges

**CA: Burbank (6/15) to Fresno, Clovis, CA.** Regular city carrier. Great work environment, strong local union, and good weather. Not far from amazing beaches. Both Sun Valley and Burbank in bidding cluster. Overtime available. Taron, 818-299-1763 or taron299@gmail.com.

**CA: Los Angeles (6/01) to Tucson, AZ.** May bid stations; lots of OT, if desired. Great weather year-round. Reg-

ular city carriers only. Family reasons. Saul, 626-590-4950 or sauloliveros@sbcglobal.net.

**FL: Saint Petersburg (9/07) to Olympia, Tacoma, WA.** City carriers only. OT available. Fun in the sun. 727-481-4528.

**NV: Las Vegas (6/19) to Houston, TX or surrounding areas.** Call or text with any questions. Jarrell, 832-800-7017.

**NJ: Old Bridge (9/21) to Polk or Bre-**

**vard counties, FL.** Great people; nice suburban town. Angus, 201-320-3309 (text).

**OH: Hilliard (10/04) to Washington County, PA or surrounding area.** Seeking mutual exchange for regulars only. Small associate office of Columbus. Scott, 614-329-5703 (call or text) or marplecott5@gmail.com.

**OR: Portland (5/18) to Brunswick, ME.** Regular city carrier. Great co-

workers and work environment. Strong local union. Fun city with lots to do and easy to get around. Mild weather. Damien, 631-747-5659 (call or text).

**WI: Waukesha (10/22) to Milwaukee, WI.** Is it time for a driving route? Then it's time to come to Waukesha/New Berlin! Great co-workers. Overtime available. Kitty, 505-615-3044 or ninjetkitty@gmail.com.

## How to place a Mutual Exchange ad

The cost of Mutual Exchange ads is \$15 for up to 30 words and \$25 for 31-50 words per month. Ads must be received by the 5th of the month preceding the month in which the ad will appear (e.g., March's deadline is for the April 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.

## MISSING CHILD



**Georghina Guadalupe Vargas**

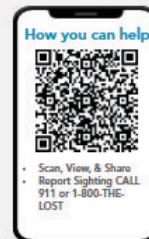
NCIC# M198224263

Missing Since: November 18, 2024

Compton, CA

Age Now: 3 Years Old

Female



How you can help

Scan, View, & Share Report Sighting CALL 911 or 1-800-THE-LOST

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (California) 1-310-605-6500



NCMEC: 2037/30

Georghina was last seen on November 18, 2024. She may be in the company of her father.

## MISSING CHILD



**Jeremy Holley**

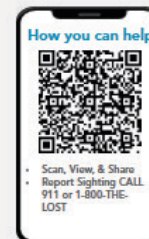
NCIC# M628221857

Missing Since: December 4, 2024

Edmond, OK

Age Now: 15 Years Old

Male



How you can help

Scan, View, & Share Report Sighting CALL 911 or 1-800-THE-LOST

Edmond Police Department (Oklahoma) 1-405-359-4338



NCMEC: 2038355

Jeremy may still be in the local area or may travel to Midwest City or Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.



# 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**

# 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**