

# COLCPE catch-up

## Carrier calculates a major



April Stoltz

**A**fter taking an early-out and retiring from the USPS in February, April Stoltz had some extra time on her hands and she put it to good use. “I went through my mental to-do list,” she recalled. “I thought things like, ‘I should do this, I should do that.’”

One of the “things” she had always thought about doing during nearly 24 years of carrying the mail as a member of Cleveland, Ohio Branch 40, was contribute to COLCPE, the NALC’s political action fund.

But she was put off by the idea that political campaigns seemed to be all about money. “That really bothered me. I didn’t want to be part of that,” Stoltz said, so she didn’t give.

As she entered retirement, she was undergoing a change of heart. “The last eight years were just so horrible,” she said. “I eventually realized how important giving is.”

Shoring up her new mindset was “the fact that I was able to walk away from my job, to take early retirement, and still have a health plan,” Stoltz said. “I realized how fortunate I am, that what I have, I have because of my union, and COLCPE helped me get that.”

This spring she did some rough calculating, figuring out how much she would have given had she been signed up for “Gimme 5”—\$5 a pay period in direct contributions—through all her years.

Multiplying all those years times all those pay periods times \$5, she came up with the figure \$3,120. So that’s what she gave—all at one time. One big check, payable to the Committee on Letter Carrier Political Education.

### A way to give back

“I’ve always been grateful for the union,” said Stoltz, who at various times

## Contest pulling in converts

**S**ince the 2009 COLCPE sign-up contest kicked off in the March issue of *The Postal Record*, nearly 950 active and retired letter carriers, plus members of the NALC Auxiliary, have decided to take the pledge—to make automatic donations to the non-partisan Committee on Letter Carrier Political Education at the “Gimme 5” level or higher.

The table at right shows the top branches so far in each of the five main size categories, listed by branch number. With four full months to go before

the contest ends, there is still time for members to recruit their brothers and sisters and push their branch into contention for one of the top prizes—\$1,000 gift certificates for lucky donors in each category.

“There’s no denying that money is a great megaphone when you’re trying to get the attention of senators and House members,” said NALC President Fred Rolando. “COLCPE gives us some added volume.”

“Congress is under a lot of pressure to make some tough decisions that will

# donation is due

served Branch 40 letter carriers as a steward or assistant steward. “I thought I should give back, say thank you. And COLCPE goes beyond what our dues are allowed to do,” she added, mindful that federal law forbids the use of union dues to support political candidates.

“We know very well just how generous our members can be, but not many are this generous,” NALC President Fred Rolando said. “Of course, we’re grateful for all the active and retired members who have stepped up to support COLCPE, to give to the fund that helps protect our pay and benefits, the middle class lifestyle for our families.”

Stoltz’s gift might have stayed under the radar for a while, according to NALC Political Director Tucker McDonald, who helps manage COLCPE funds. “We might not have picked up on it until the February *Postal Record*,” the annual special issue of the magazine that lists

affect the Postal Service and our jobs,” he added. “That means it’s more important than ever to educate our current friends on the Hill—and to make some new ones.”

This year’s contest is geared toward improving participation as measured at the branch level. The goal, as always, is to convince as many members as possible to sign up to automatically contribute at least \$5 per pay period using either payroll deduction or electronic funds transfer from a checking account. (Retired members qualify as Gimme 5

COLCPE contributors during the previous year. “But she got in touch with us, wanting to make sure her catch-up donation didn’t go above the maximum allowed by law.” In fact, individual contributions to COLCPE are limited to \$5,000 a year.

“She said she wanted to do the right thing, to make up for lost time,” McDonald said.

For her part, Stoltz has a message for other retirees and active members, too. “There are important ideological battles going on, over health care, over saving the Postal Service.

“I tell people, ‘You have your benefits because of the union,’” she said. “People say the union’s not perfect. Well, nothing is. But you can get involved, go to a union meeting, and make your voice heard.”

And, of course, give to COLCPE. “We all put things off,” she said, “but really, it’s never too late to give.” ✉

contributors when they sign up to automatically give \$5 or more monthly from their annuity payments or by EFT.)

The contest deadline is December 31. Complete rules, the list of prizes and the latest branch standings are posted at [nalc.org](http://nalc.org). Winners will be announced in the special COLCPE edition of *The Postal Record* in February. ✉

**Note:** Contributions to COLCPE are 100 percent voluntary and are not tax-deductible. Absolutely no union dues money is used to support political candidates.

## Top branches in each size category, listed in branch number order:

### Branches with 2,000 or more members:

- ◆ Minneapolis, MN Br. 9
- ◆ San Diego, CA Br. 70
- ◆ Atlanta, GA Br. 73
- ◆ Seattle, WA Br. 79
- ◆ South Florida Br. 1071

### Branches with 1,000 to 1,999 members:

- ◆ Nashville, TN Br. 4
- ◆ Louisville, KY Br. 14
- ◆ Massachusetts Northeast Merged Br. 25
- ◆ Portland, OR Br. 82
- ◆ Austin, TX Br. 181

### Branches with 500 to 999 members:

- ◆ Salt Lake City, UT Br. 111
- ◆ Mid-Michigan Br. 256
- ◆ Knoxville, TN Br. 419
- ◆ Birmingham, AL Br. 530
- ◆ Honolulu, HI Br. 860

### Branches with 100 to 499 members:

- ◆ Newport, RI Br. 57
- ◆ Aurora, IL Br. 219
- ◆ Eugene, OR Br. 916
- ◆ Lafayette, LA Br. 1760
- ◆ Houma-Thibodaux-Lockport, LA Br. 2464

### Branches with 50 to 99 members:

- ◆ Zanesville, OH Br. 63
- ◆ Danville, VA Br. 595
- ◆ Hattiesburg, MS Br. 938
- ◆ Longview, WA Br. 2214
- ◆ Wahiawa, HI Br. 4837