



It's been fun

This is my final article in *The Postal Record* as NALC's director of city delivery. I'm taking this opportunity to thank a number of brothers and sisters whom I have been extremely fortunate to have worked with.

It has been my honor to have served on the NALC Executive Council for NALC Presidents Sombrotto, Young and Rolando. Vince, Bill and Fred all had and have extremely divergent styles of managing this great union, but each one had and has a dedication to provide an equally diverse group of city delivery letter carriers with the best representation possible. Letter carriers have been extremely blessed to have had the quality of leadership that we have been provided by our presidents and I just count myself as fortunate to have been there to have seen it.

As the years have come and gone, I have witnessed the makeup of the NALC Executive Council change with the times. Without any denigration intended for any prior Executive Council, the one that exists as I write this column is the best composite of union activists that I have seen. To Fred, Gary, George, Jane, Nicole, Brian, Myra and Tim, it has been great to have worked with you at Headquarters these past four years. I've seen firsthand the hard work and dedication that you all believe is a mandate for your respective positions.

To the national business agents and the regional administrative assistants in their offices, it has been an extreme pleasure to have engaged in the type of no-holds-barred interchanges that we've had together on virtually every topic that was important for letter carriers. I hope that you enjoyed that free flow of ideas half as much as I did.

Most letter carriers do not have the advantage of seeing firsthand the outstanding contribution of letter carriers who don't hold any office, but serve necessary and invaluable functions to the NALC. They serve a very meaningful role in the Contract Administration Unit, assist officers with arbitration and administration, provide assistance to officers in meetings with postal management, and have an invaluable role in virtually everything this union does at the Headquarters level. Al Apfelbaum, Bob Williams, Linda Giordano, Mark Sims, Sue Wellhausen, Bill Bothwell, Ron Watson, Greg Dixon and Dave Miller are secret weapons of this union and have provided unparalleled expertise in assisting your national resident officers. My personal thanks to all of you.

I am not sure that I would have made it through these past four years without the hard work and protection of Kathy Carriere and Cyndi Chaney. They were integral in

filling some very vital roles, like ensuring that the sixth floor was cleared of any sensitive ears when I lapsed into certain colorful language, usually with one-syllable words beginning with a unique letter, while engaged in meaningful dialogue on a matter of extreme consternation. They came to fully understand the wide application of the concept, "Tis better to give than receive," even when it wasn't the holiday season.

Your new director of city delivery, Brother Lew Drass, will be tasked with diving in to all matters dealing with city delivery. Having known Lew for years, I am extremely happy that he agreed to take on this job. Lew is extremely innovative, very hands-on, highly intuitive, assertive, dedicated and knowledgeable, without being condescending or self-absorbed. I think he is the perfect person for the job and will serve President Rolando and letter carriers in a highly capable fashion. I can think of no one better suited for this job. You might say he was selected for the position and elected by acclamation the old-fashioned way—*he earned it*.

The biggest joy during my term has been talking to and responding in writing to letter carriers. With the growing pains that were IRAP, MIARAP and JARAP, those interchanges were many times not laudatory. But that's a necessary part of the perpetuation of a free union, the ability of the members to engage in questioning dialogue with their officers. I believe that if a member asked me a tough question or disagreed with me and I couldn't appropriately respond, I didn't deserve to hold this office. It has always been my pleasure to have worked with you as just another letter carrier.

The next four years offer challenges of such a degree that it will take the best of this union to be successful. We have the leadership, but leaders are only as good as the membership's support. My confidence in the future is not only based on the skill of our national president and other officers, it is reliant on our members to do what they always have done. They'll ask the tough questions, argue with each other and sometimes even raise their voices in anger, but at the end of the day, they will come together and support our union's leadership. That support will be critical in this union's prevailing over all those challenges.

To all letter carriers, thanks for giving me the opportunities to work with you in different capacities. Whatever your faith or belief is, please accept my best wishes for a joyous holiday season for you and your loved ones.

It's been fun. See ya around. ☒