

'Tis the season



James D. Henry

As we all enter into the holiday season, most of us look forward with great anticipation toward good food, good gifts and a good time. We anxiously await the joy on our loved ones' faces when their hearts fill with gratitude for the love shown during this time of year. As letter carriers, it is common for customers to also sow seeds of appreciation for the service their carrier has provided without fail throughout the year.

Letter carriers are unique among professions in regard to the impact we have on our customers' lives. During this time of year, a letter

carrier's job goes beyond delivering the mail. Along with delivering that much-anticipated letter, card or package, we often deliver to our customers expressions of love. I distinctly remember while deployed overseas as a Marine, the best part of my day being that of receiving a letter and/or a care package from my friends and family. I also remember seeing the joy in my customers' eyes when I carried mail and delivered communications they were awaiting. What a sense of fulfillment.

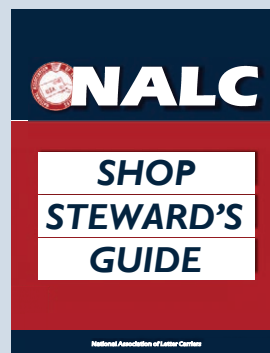
Despite this time of the year being traditionally the most labor-intensive for letter carriers, it is a job we all take pride in doing. Carrying your routes and performing the inordinate amount of work during this season is a labor of love. We all know that it is hard work sometimes, but necessary work that only a special breed of men and women do willingly and cheerfully. Sometimes, the letter carrier is viewed as the joy of the season for certain customers. Our customers can depend on their carrier looking out for their well-being, providing a receptive ear and being the one constant visitor when there are few. It's a responsibility we undertake proudly.

Not only do our customers have reason to be grateful for their letter carriers, we similarly have absolute reason to be grateful. The unfortunate reality is that not all can say they have a job that is able to put food on the table, clothes on our backs and a roof over our heads, in addition to providing our families with most, if not all, of their needs and wants. I'm proud to be a letter carrier and a member of the NALC. We care and help, not only the public, but each other. I encourage all to not be wea-

ry of doing good, but to continue to make a difference in each other's and your customers' lives.

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Letter carriers display care for others, and engage in caring activities throughout the year. 'Tis the season? Yes! 'Tis the season for us all to take a little extra time and make just a little more effort during this time of the year to be a bit more compassionate, thoughtful, considerate, caring and aware of our ability to help someone in any capacity we can. To put a smile on someone's face. To be good to each other. To reaffirm that we are always here for one another. 'Tis the season to be grateful and thankful. 'Tis the season for me to wish you all a Merry Christmas and happy new year!



The NALC Shop Steward's Guide, along with many Grievance Starters, are now available on the Members Only portal. The *NALC Shop Steward's Guide* is written for every NALC member who handles grievances at the Informal Step A and/or Formal Step A of the grievance procedure.

Any other versions of the *Shop Steward's Guide* or Toolkit are obsolete and will no longer be available. The guide will only be available through the Members Only portal. This will allow NALC to update the guide in real time and ensure that all stewards, activists and members have access.

To access the guide from the NALC website, log on to the Members Only portal and click the "Members Documents" button, where you will find the *Shop Steward's Guide* and the available Grievance Starters in a drop-down menu.