

The Postal Record

Volume 138/Number 12

December 2025

The monthly journal of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS

In this issue	
President's Message	1
National Officers	42
Branch Items	58
Branch Election Notices	65

NATIONAL RAP SESSION



COLLECTIVE BARGAINING IS A COLLECTIVE EFFORT

—PAGES 4-8



DOHERTY & DONELON SCHOLARSHIPS

Deadline: This form must be returned to NALC Headquarters no later than December 31, 2025.

Eligibility

- Applicant must be the son, daughter or legally adopted child of a letter carrier NALC member in good standing—active, retired or deceased. Stepchildren and grandchildren are eligible if they live with the letter carrier in a regular parent-child relationship.
- Applicant's parent must be a member in good standing of NALC for at least one year prior to making application.
- Applicant must be a high school senior when making application and must submit the form provided at right, signed by the NALC member and an officer of the member's NALC branch. This form must be returned to NALC Headquarters by December 31, 2025.

Requirements

- All applicants must take the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) or the American College Test (ACT) in either their junior or senior year. A copy of the official scores from the administering organization must be received at NALC Headquarters by midnight, March 31, 2026. (Computer-generated print-outs of test scores will not be accepted.)
- All biographical questionnaires and secondary school reports must be received at NALC Headquarters by midnight, March 31, 2026.

Regulations

- Scholarship is to be used toward pursuing undergradu-

ate degree at an accredited college of recipient's choice.

- Winners may accept other college scholarship assistance in addition to the NALC award.
- Any change of schools or course of study must be done only with the permission of the NALC Scholarship Committee.
- A transcript of grades must be forwarded to the committee at the end of each school year.
- If winner suffers certified serious illness, scholarship will be held in abeyance for not more than one year.
- If unusual conditions are going to require an interruption in schooling, recipient must state reason(s) in writing to the Scholarship Committee and request that the scholarship be held in abeyance. Request(s) will be reviewed by the Committee and a decision rendered.
- If the NALC member is suspended by their local NALC branch or enters supervision, scholarship will be canceled.

Terms of awards

- The official scholarship judges will award one William C. Doherty Scholarship in each of the five USPS regions and one John T. Donelon Scholarship. Winners are judged on the basis of secondary school records, personal qualifications and test scores. As in the past, the scholarship judges will consist of experienced persons in the educational field. Decisions of the judges will be final.

- Doherty Scholarship awards will be \$4,000 per year and the Donelon Scholarship award will be \$1,000 per year. Each scholarship is renewable for three consecutive years thereafter, provided the winner maintains satisfactory grades. Award money will be deposited annually with the college. It will be credited to the winner's account to be drawn upon under the rules and regulations that the college has established for handling scholarship funds. Award money is to be used for required college fees, including room and board and transportation fees.
- Children of NALC national officers are not eligible.

In honor of NALC's president from 1941 to 1962, the William C. Doherty Scholarship Fund will again award five \$4,000 scholarships to children of members in good standing. The John T. Donelon Scholarship Fund will award one scholarship in honor of Donelon, longtime NALC assistant to the president. Applicants must be high school seniors and must meet all of the following eligibility criteria to be considered.

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

Date _____ (PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY)

Please send instructions as to how I can compete for a scholarship award. I am a senior in the 2025-26 school year.

I am the _____ of _____
• daughter • son • active
• stepdaughter* • stepson* • retired
• granddaughter* • grandson* • deceased

letter carrier _____

of Branch No. _____ City _____ State _____

My name is _____

My address is _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone No. _____

Signature of branch officer

Signature of NALC parent member
(or spouse if deceased)

Printed name of branch officer

Last 4 digits of Social Security No. _____

Title _____ Date _____

This form must be returned no later than Dec. 31, 2025, to the NALC Scholarship Committee, in care of the National Association of Letter Carriers, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144.

* Stepchildren and grandchildren are eligible if they live with the letter carrier in a regular parent-child relationship.

National rap session



**Brian L.
Renfroe**

As NALC president, I am fortunate to travel across throughout the year to be with our members at regional rap sessions, state conventions and branch events. Our members coming together to learn how they can best represent each other on and off the workroom floor is what NALC is all about. Last month, we did that on a national scale in Cleveland, OH, at the national rap session.

I appreciate Branch 40 and the Ohio State Association of Letter Carriers for welcoming more than a thousand

branch and state leaders from across the country to their home city and state. I'm also grateful to all the attendees for their time, attention, and invaluable questions and feedback throughout the weekend.

I've attended thousands of NALC events over the years, and the attendees in Cleveland were as engaged as any I've ever seen. Participants took notes, asked questions, engaged in valuable conversations between workshops, learned more about NALC's programs in the exhibit area, and remained fully focused on gathering as much information as possible to bring back to their members. Representation and activism are what NALC does best, and that was on full display in Cleveland. I was encouraged by what I saw, and I hope the attendees left just as energized and hopeful for the year ahead as I did.

This month's cover story (page 4) details topics covered at the national rap session. You can also visit nalc.org/2025rap to watch my full remarks from the Sunday rap, podcasts with branch presidents recapping the weekend, and wrap-up videos. I encourage you to check out this content to see what the weekend was all about.

While the schedule of this year's national rap session mirrored years past, the content of the weekend was different than it had been in most rap sessions in our history. Collective bargaining was the primary topic. Saturday was devoted to all-day workshops presented by each of the collective-bargaining subcommit-

tees, made up of Executive Council members and letter carrier staff.

The subcommittees explained what articles they are working on, the materials they are reviewing, and the proposals they've come up with so far. Then, a large portion of their presentations were devoted to feedback and questions. Any attendee could come to the mic and offer suggestions or ask a question. Subcommittee members answered all questions and took detailed notes that will be taken back to their subcommittees as they work to finalize their proposals before negotiations with the Postal Service open in February 2026.

Questions and feedback from the workshops and the rap session are only one way we're incorporating member feedback into our collective-bargaining preparations for the upcoming round of negotiations. Next month, our second Rank-and-File Bargaining Committee will convene outside of Washington, DC. The first group of 30 letter carriers met in September and came up with excellent ideas that the subcommittees already are incorporating into their preparations. This is the first time we've utilized committees like this in our bargaining preparations. Broken down into groups of branch leaders, contract enforcers and newer members, their input has been invaluable so far, and I look forward to what ideas next month's group will present.

NALC will soon distribute an all-active member survey focused on collective bargaining. This will be an opportunity for every active member to share their top priorities and express what they hope to see in their next contract. This is another new initiative and an opportunity for every active member to make their voices heard in the collective-bargaining process.

When NALC negotiates a contract, it's not two people sitting across a table making demands. It's months and years of preparation and countless proposals passed back and forth. The more member ideas and feedback we have access to going into this round of negotiations, the stronger we'll be. The 2025 national rap session was a big part of the process. I welcome and encourage every member's suggestions as we continue to work together to achieve the best possible outcome for letter carriers at the bargaining table in 2026.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brian L. Renfroe'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light-colored background.



National Association of Letter Carriers, AFL-CIO

Since 1889, representing city letter carriers employed by the United States Postal Service.

100 Indiana Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20001-2144
202-393-4695 | nalc.org

RESIDENT OFFICERS

BRIAN L. RENFROE
President

PAUL BARNER
Executive Vice President

JAMES D. HENRY
Vice President

NICOLE RHINE
Secretary-Treasurer

MACK I. JULION
Assistant Secretary-Treasurer

CHRISTOPHER JACKSON
Director of City Delivery

MANUEL L. PERALTA JR.
Director of Safety and Health

DAN TOTH
Director of Retired Members

JAMES W. "JIM" YATES
Director of Life Insurance
Mutual Benefit Association
202-638-4318

STEPHANIE M. STEWART
Director, Health Benefit Plan
Health Benefit Plan
888-636-6252

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

LAWRENCE D. BROWN JR.
774 Valencia St.
Los Angeles, CA 90017

SANDRA D. LAEMMEL
1400 Trumbull
Detroit, MI 48216-1945

CHARLES P. HEEGE
347 W. 41st St., 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10036

NATIONAL BUSINESS AGENTS

Region 1
(California, Hawaii, Nevada, Guam)
3296 E. Guasti Road, Suite 100
Ontario, CA 91761
909-443-7450

Region 2: NICK VAFIADES
(Alaska, Utah, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington)
7710 NE Greenwood Drive, Suite 200
Vancouver, WA 98662
360-892-6545

Region 3: MICHAEL B. CAREF
(Illinois)
4979 Indiana Ave., Suite 203
Lisle, IL 60532-3848
630-743-5320

Region 4: DAN VERSLUIS
(Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Oklahoma, Wyoming)
12015 E. 46th Ave., Suite 550
Denver, CO 80239
720-828-6840

Region 5: DAVE TEEGARDEN
(Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas)
1828 Craig Road
St. Louis, MO 63146
314-985-8040

Region 6: DAVID MUDD
(Kentucky, Indiana, Michigan)
43456 Mound Road, Suite 501
Sterling Heights, MI 48314
586-997-9917

Region 7: PATRICK JOHNSON
(Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin)
Broadway Place West
1300 Godward St. NE, Suite 2600
Minneapolis, MN 55413
612-378-3035

Region 8: STEVE LASSAN
(Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee)
160 Commissioner Drive
Meridianville, AL 35759-2038
256-828-8205

Region 9: EDDIE DAVIDSON
(Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina)
1101 Northchase Parkway SE, Suite 3
Marietta, GA 30067
678-942-5295

Region 10: SHAWN BOYD
(New Mexico, Texas)
2001 Lakeside Pkwy.
Flower Mound, TX 75028
281-540-5627

Region 11: MARK CAMILLI
(Upstate New York, Ohio)
2500 W. Erie Ave.
Lorain, OH 44053-1056
440-282-4340

Region 12: BRIAN THOMPSON
(Pennsylvania, South and Central New Jersey)
4 Neshaminy Interplex Drive, Suite 111
Trevose, PA 19053
215-824-4826

Region 13: VADA E. PRESTON
(Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, Washington, DC)
P.O. Box 2660
Ashburn, VA 20146
703-840-2010

Region 14: RICHARD J. DICECCA
(Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont)
33 Boston Post Road W., Suite 360
Marlborough, MA 01752-1813
617-363-9299

Region 15: BRUCE DIDRIKSEN
(Northern New Jersey, New York, SW Connecticut, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands)
347 W. 41st St., Suite 102
New York, NY 10036-6941
212-868-0284

Contents

Volume 138/Number 12 December 2025

The Postal Record

The monthly journal of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS



Departments

- 1 **President's Message**
- 3 **Letter from the Editor**
- 4 **News**
- 28 **Proud to Serve**
- 40 **Veterans Group**
- 42 **Executive Vice President**
- 43 **Vice President**
- 44 **Secretary-Treasurer**
- 45 **Assistant Secretary-Treasurer**
- 46 **Director of City Delivery**
- 47 **Director of Safety and Health**
- 48 **Director of Retired Members**
- 49 **Director of Life Insurance**
- 50 **Director, Health Benefit Plan**
- 52 **Contract Talk**
- 53 **Staff Reports**
- 55 **MDA Report**
- 56 **State Summaries**
- 57 **Nalcrest Update/In Memoriam**
- 58 **Branch Items**
- 61 **Cost-of-living adjustment**
- 63 **Honor Roll/Retiree Reports**
- 64 **Mutual Exchange ads**
- 65 **Election Notices**

Features

- 4 **National rap session**
NALC leaders attend the National Conference in Cleveland, OH, to discuss upcoming contract negotiations and other challenges facing NALC
- 10 **Disaster Relief Foundation**
NALC has come to the aid of letter carriers affected by tornadoes, floods and fires
- 16 **Operation Santa**
A look at the history of letters to Santa and how it led the Postal Service to create the annual Operation Santa program
- 20 **News from Washington**
The longest federal government shutdown comes to an end; Senate introduces bill to help injured federal employees
- 22 **Comic book guy**
A Connecticut carrier writes, draws and publishes comic books in his spare time and also teaches kids to make their own comics

An honor



**Philip
Dine**

“That’s a poppy field down there,” the Army pilot says, as the helicopter hovers over a patch of terrain in desolate southern Afghanistan. “Would you like to land and take some photos?”

I’m reporting on the illicit drug trade that’s turning poppies into opium into heroin and funding the Taliban’s insurgency. This is what I’ve waited for.

“That would be great.”

“All right. You have two minutes on the ground.”

“Why two minutes?”

“Because al-Qaeda’s watching these fields.”

“Two minutes will be fine, sir.”

My quarter-century as a journalist exceeded any expectations I had, as two factors fortuitously meshed. My

editors allowed me to choose the topics I’d cover (labor, the military and Congress, plus civil rights and immigration). Having specialized fields helps you build knowledge and contacts and delve deeper into the issues, so my editors let me pursue stories on my own, rather than join the media mob.

Those twin dynamics produced unique reporting opportunities: traversing Eastern Europe from fifth grade classrooms to emptying labor camps to gauge the human impact of communism’s fall, the rough-and-tumble days as the feds pried the Teamsters from Mafia control, the largest strike by Black workers in Mississippi history before other journalists joined in, a year focused on the refugee stream quietly altering the Midwest, Jesse Jackson’s pioneering presidential bid (with one probing interview prompting the reverend to exclaim, “You know more about *me* than I know about me!”), sheltering on a Navy warship in the Persian Gulf and in Army tents in Kuwait’s desert as U.S. troops prepared to invade Iraq, the decades-long ascent of a coal miner reformer named Rich Trumka, entering a smoldering Pentagon on 9/11 hours after encountering David McCullough on a Washington sidewalk and querying the greatest living U.S. historian about what this day augured for the future.

In 2008, I deployed such adventures in a book about the state of labor, including its ineffective communications. I then bid farewell to journalism, certain that no other job would prove as gratifying.

NALC has proved me wrong.

It’s been an honor to edit *The Postal Record* and lead NALC’s media engagement for 15 years. (Note: I’m not leaving NALC, rather moving to a new role writing longform about its history, accomplishments and challenges, to provide current/future members with shared information.)

My tenure as director of communications and media rela-

tions has been just as fulfilling as my time wandering hither and yon with a notebook and pen. How so?

First and foremost, the chance to work with America’s letter carriers. A day hasn’t gone by without offering new reasons to be awed by your grit and knowledge and dedication. Any success we’ve achieved in reshaping the public conversation about postal matters rests squarely on the shoulders of NALC members and your willingness to help deliver our message.

Second, the foresight and trust of our national leadership. Upon my arrival in 2010, this magazine and more (internal communications) and NALC’s media efforts (external) were merged into one department, creating a complementary process whereby letter carriers armed with up-to-date info get out the message. Our leaders also let us make this a unionwide effort—rare in a U.S. labor movement whose top-down approach spawns poor messaging. Our foes couldn’t match the coast-to-coast energy of rank-and-file carriers as NALC fought, for example, to end pre-funding. On a personal level, I treasured the one-on-ones with so many of you as you prepped for an interview with a reporter, then watched with pride as you aced it.

Something that surprised me was the nexus between working in the media and dealing from outside with journalists. Having walked in their shoes and speaking their language made it easier to influence their reporting. When I’d weigh in on what they should cover and how, rather than show resentment they engaged like newsroom colleagues. If, for example, I drew a red line—“You write about the black-market value of Arrow Keys, you’ll put a target on letter carriers and we’re not working with you”—they’d reassess their approach, even request help persuading their editor.

Third, our superb communications co-workers. Their skills are evident in the magazine’s quality, reflected in national awards regularly outpacing unions with far-larger staffs. Jenessa is a remarkable copyeditor, and her feature stories are works of art. Rick, a gifted storyteller, produces page-turning stories. Mike’s impressive ability to efficiently manage all aspects of this magazine and beyond is vital. Our stability is a source of pride; for 15 years the four of us have worked together. We’ve also had a succession of talented editorial assistants. I couldn’t have worked with a better group of folks.

Two minutes, 15 years, all a privilege.

EDITORIAL STAFF:
Director of Communications and Media Relations Philip Dine
Managing Editor Mike Shea
Writer/Editor Rick Hodges
Writer/Editor Jenessa Wagner
Editorial Assistant Sarah Eccleston

The Postal Record (ISSN 0032-5376) is published monthly by the National Association of Letter Carriers. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Membership Department, NALC, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144.

Subscription included in membership dues. First-class subscription available for \$20 per year (contact Membership Department).

© 2025 by the National Association of Letter Carriers.

Circulation: 287,000. Union-printed using soy-based inks.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS? Contact the Membership Department.

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube by going to NALC.org.



National rap session

Collective bargaining is a collective effort

More than a thousand NALC branch and state leaders representing letter carriers from across the country gathered in Cleveland, OH, Nov. 21-23 for NALC's 2025 National Conference, commonly called a "rap session." The *NALC Constitution* requires the national president to convene a national conference in non-convention years, attended by state and branch presidents or their designees.

In between registration and workshops, attendees had the opportunity to learn more about the programs NALC offers and to meet the letter carrier and professional staff that operate them in the exhibit hall, which featured the Disaster Relief Foundation, Emergency Response Team, Health Benefit Plan, Letter Carrier Political Fund, Mutual Benefit Association, Nalcrest and the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs.

Roundtable discussions with collective-bargaining subcommittees

Saturday's schedule was devoted to workshops presented by NALC's six collective-bargaining subcommittees,

composed of Executive Council members and letter carrier staff. Throughout the day, attendees heard from each group and learned about the articles of the National Agreement they are working on, as well as the ideas and proposals the subcommittees have discussed so far. Committees explained how they consider proposals from all angles to assess how each idea could positively or negatively affect members in different areas of the country, at different sized offices, and at all steps of the pay scale.

A significant portion of each presentation was devoted to attendee questions and feedback. Any attendee could ask the subcommittee questions, and most importantly, offer suggestions for the subcommittee to consider as it continues to meet leading up to the opening of contract negotiations with USPS in February 2026. Subcommittee members heard the feedback, took notes, and will take these suggestions back as they continue working on their bargaining proposals.

Workshops featured:

- Director of Health Benefits Stephanie Stewart, Region 4 National Busi-



NALC President Brian L. Renfroe welcomes branch leaders from around the country to Cleveland, OH, for the rap session.

ness Agent (NBA) Dan Versluis, Region 9 NBA Eddie Davidson and Assistant to the President for Contract Administration Danielle Fake-Moorman covering Article 10—Leave, Article 11—Holidays, Article 16—Discipline Procedure and Appendix B—Section 1 of the 2013 Das Award.

- Director of Safety and Health Manuel L. Peralta Jr. and Region 10 NBA Shawn Boyd covering Article 13—Assignment of Ill or Injured Regular Workforce Employees, Article 14—Safety and Health and Article 35—Employee Assistance Program.

On Saturday, roundtable discussions were held by each of the bargaining subcommittees for members to ask questions and offer suggestions.



Attendees were given either a red or black wristband to know which discussion to attend on Saturday, so that they could be part of the discussion about all of the National Agreement articles.

- Director of Retired Members Dan Toth, Region 2 NBA Nick Vafiades, Region 5 NBA David Teegarden, Region 14 NBA Rick DiCecca, National Trustee Charlie Heege and Assistant to the President for Contract Administration Greg Dixon covering Article 5—Prohibition of Unilateral Action, Article 15—Grievance-Arbitration Procedure, Article 17—Representation and Article 31—Union-Management Cooperation.
- Vice President James Henry, Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Mack Julion, Region 6 NBA David Mudd, Region 15 NBA Bruce Didriksen and Assistant to the President for Administrative Affairs Ron Osborne covering Article 4—Technological and Mechanization Changes, Article 8—Hours of Work and Article 41—Letter Carrier Craft.
- Director of Life Insurance Jim Yates, Region 3 NBA Mike Caref, Region 11 NBA Mark Camilli, Region 12 NBA Brian Thompson and Assistant to the President for City Delivery Stephen Stewart covering Article 7—Employee Classifications, Article 12—Principles of Seniority, Posting and Reassignments and Article 26—Uniforms and Work Clothes.
- Secretary-Treasurer Nicole Rhine, Region 13 NBA Vada Preston, National Trustee Sandy Laemmel and Assistant to the President for Contract Administration Jazzy Correa covering Article 1—Union Recognition, Article 2—Non-Discrimination and Civil Rights, Article 20—Parking, Article 22—Bulletin Boards, Article 23—Rights of Union Officials to Enter Postal Installations, Article 24—Employees on Leave with Regard to Union

Business, Article 25—Higher Level Assignments, Article 27—Employee Claims, Article 28—Employer Claims, Article 29—Limitation on Revocation of Driving Privileges, Article 30—Local Implementation, Article 33—Promotions, Article 36—Credit Unions and Travel and Article 42—Energy Shortages.

National rap session

Following a full day of roundtable discussions with the collective-bargaining subcommittees, NALC President Brian L. Renfroe called the rap session to order at 8 a.m. on Sunday, Nov. 23. Renfroe invited Andre Laney, executive vice president of Cleveland, OH Branch 40, to lead the Pledge of Allegiance; Johnny Taylor of Branch 40 to sing the national anthem; and the Rev. Dr. Monica Dawkins-Smith, interim pastor of the East View United Church of Christ in Shaker Heights, OH, to deliver the invocation.

Renfroe then introduced members of the NALC Executive Council, followed by the recognizing of regional administrative assistants (RAAs), Headquarters letter carrier and professional staff, legislative and political organizers (LPOs), regional grievance assistants (RGAs) and regional workers' compensation assistants (RWCAs).

Next, the president laid out the three primary challenges NALC faces in the immediate and long-term future: col-

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

SUPERIOR D

8 a.m. - 9:45 a.m.

(Black Wristband)

1:15 a.m. - 3 p.m.

(Red Wristband)

Article 10 - Leave

Article 11 - Holidays

Article 13 - Assignment of Ill or Injured Regular Workforce Employees

Article 14 - Safety and Health

Article 16 - Discipline Procedure

Article 35 - Employee Assistance Program

Appendix B - Section I of the 2013 Das Award (CCA Provisions)

10 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.

(Black Wristband)

3:15 a.m. - 5 p.m.

(Red Wristband)

Article 5 - Prohibition of Unilateral Action

Article 15 - Grievance-Arbitration Procedure

Article 17 - Representation

Article 31 - Union-Management Cooperation

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

SUPERIOR C

8 a.m. - 9:45 a.m.

(Red Wristband)

1:15 p.m. - 3 p.m.

(Black Wristband)

Article 4 - Technological and Mechanization Changes

Article 8 - Hours of Work

Article 41 - Letter Carrier Craft

10 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.

(Red Wristband)

3:15 p.m. - 5: p.m.

(Black Wristband)

Article 1 - Union Recognition

Article 2 - Non-Discrimination and Civil Rights

Article 7 - Employee Classifications

Article 12 - Principles of Seniority, Posting, and Reassignments

Article 20 - Parking

Article 22 - Bulletin Boards

Article 23 - Rights of Union Officials to Enter Postal Installations

Article 24 - Employees on Leave with Regard to Union Business

Article 25 - Higher-Level Assignments

Article 26 - Uniforms and Work Clothes

Article 27 - Employee Claims

Article 28 - Employer Claims

Article 29 - Limitation on Revocation of Driving Privileges

Article 30 - Local Implementation

Article 33 - Promotions

Article 36 - Credit Unions and Travel

Article 42 - Energy Shortages

lective bargaining, what has unfolded in 2025 and the fights ahead, and the state of the Postal Service.

Collective bargaining

Renfroe began by detailing NALC's extensive ongoing collective-bargaining preparations. He explained that the bargaining subcommittees have met weekly since early September to go

Rap session (continued)

through their assigned articles, review national convention resolutions, consider other union contracts and form proposals. “But we wanted to provide them with more information,” he said. Renfroe then explained that providing them with member suggestions was a top priority, and he detailed the various ways NALC is soliciting feedback from members to use in collective-bargaining preparations.

The first are ideas submitted from the Rank-and-File Bargaining Committees. Rank and file committees were established by President Renfroe in September to provide comprehensive feedback and suggestions from letter carriers on the workroom floor. The first group convened in September, and the second group is scheduled to meet in January 2026. The committees are comprised of branch leaders, contract enforcers, and newer members selected by President Renfroe at the recommendations of national business agents.

“They came up with some of their own concepts,” Renfroe said. “On the

economic front, we had an excellent discussion with them about priorities.”

Since then, the subcommittees have used the first Rank-and-File Bargaining Committee’s ideas and suggestions as they continue to form bargaining proposals related to their articles. The president said that the second Rank-and-File Bargaining Committee’s suggestions will be incorporated into the subcommittee’s ongoing work.

Renfroe then explained that in the coming weeks, a survey will be distributed to all active NALC members, allowing them to share their thoughts and priorities on both the economic and workroom floor elements of collective bargaining. Finally, the president emphasized that the national rap session is another key opportunity to get feedback on collective-bargaining preparations. “What we’ve done here this weekend, and we’ll do the rest of this morning, is a very important piece of our preparation,” he said. “All of this information will be used by the end of January as our subcommittees finalize the drafts of their proposals for bargaining.”

Renfroe next turned to discussing the economic side of bargaining, explaining that all members of the Executive Council share the same economic goals, including higher pay across the entire pay scale, higher general wage increases, equal cost-of-living increases for every step, a shorter time to reach top step, and an all-career workforce. The council must consider how to achieve them through what all recog-

nize will be a difficult set of negotiations with the Postal Service.

Crucial to the economic preparation is information about which goals members would like the Executive Council to prioritize. To this end, Renfroe shared that NALC solicited a poll of members in September to understand their economic priorities in the upcoming negotiations. The Rank-and-File Bargaining Committees and upcoming member survey will also help with this exercise. The president encouraged members in attendance to share their opinions on these priorities during the “rap” portion of the day’s program.

Fighting like hell in 2025

Renfroe then pivoted to all that had unfolded in 2025, starting in February with the union’s first “Fight Like Hell!” event in Washington, DC, teeing up the many battles in the year ahead.

Renfroe reminded attendees that only a few weeks after launching the union’s “Fight Like Hell!” campaign, the administration threatened to issue an executive order restructuring the Postal Service, ultimately threatening letter carriers’ jobs and retirements, as well as the institution’s future.

He detailed the many ways the union had fought back in Washington and with our activists nationwide, culminating on March 23 when NALC held more than 250 rallies to raise public awareness of the imminent threats to the Postal Service. He credited “the most active membership of any union in this country” for successfully fighting against these attacks. “Nobody else has the influence; nobody else has the resources; certainly nobody else has the activism and the numbers of members that we do,” he said.

More than 1,000 NALC members attended the rap session.





The president then pivoted to Postal Service leadership, referencing the administration's pushing of former Postmaster General Louis DeJoy out of his position earlier this year. Following DeJoy's departure, at the urging of private shippers, the USPS Board of Governors selected David Steiner as the next postmaster general. Although he has been in the position only a few months, and it is unclear what, if any, significant changes Steiner will make, this selection "illustrates the power of the influence of corporate America, and in our case, corporate America in the shipping industry," Renfroe said.

The president then turned to another battle: the budget reconciliation fight that unfolded this summer. He referred to it as a "fight that was more intense than any fight in the 15 years I've been at NALC Headquarters."

Renfroe reminded attendees that in this one-party-controlled process, letter carriers' retirement benefits were under attack. Various proposals that would have reduced letter carriers' retirement benefits or increased what they pay for them were considered throughout the process. Working together, and answering NALC's calls to action, letter carriers successfully defeated all these proposals, thereby saving their retirement benefits and those of millions of other federal employees.

Renfroe emphasized that more fights remain. The threats of stopping dues collection through payroll deduction and the elimination of official time, or

"steward time," are still lingering. While there is no current appetite or clear path forward for these ideas in the current Congress, Renfroe emphasized that "it's a clear intention."

"We've been successful on all fronts, but have prepared for any outcome," President Renfroe said. He assured attendees that legally, financially and representation-wise, NALC is prepared for any attacks that come our way.

"The influence of our union in the legislative and political arena is larger than it's ever been before," he said, "but we have to push to continue to grow our influence long term." He then explained recent departmental changes and additions that will help achieve that, including two new LPOs, with more to be added soon; a new director of legislative and political affairs, Paul Swartz; and the appointment of John Beaumont from San Francisco, CA Branch 214 to serve in a new position, special assistant to the president for legislative and political affairs.

State of USPS

Prompted by the release of the Postal Service's Fiscal Year 2025 financial results only the week before, Renfroe then turned to another fight coming NALC's way, concerning the future of the Postal Service. "The path forward is not clear," he warned, due to years of decreasing volume, lack of invest-



Attendees show off "Fight Like Hell!" T-shirts (above), which they were encouraged to wear to the rap session held on Sunday (top).

ment in the network, and a deteriorating balance sheet.

He gave an overview of the financial results, noting that the 2025 loss of \$9 billion brought the Postal Service's three-year total losses to \$25 billion. He contextualized the losses within technological and market changes in the postal sector, emphasizing that the changes have fundamentally altered the Postal Service's financial outlook. Total mail volume has declined by 49 percent since its peak in 2006, while the network has grown by 24 million delivery points (more than 16 percent). Today, Renfroe explained, "we have more delivery points to deliver less mail, and therefore less revenue."

Another issue exposed in the Postal Service's financial results is the agency's lack of cash to invest in modernizing its infrastructure to be able to handle today's e-commerce business, which is particularly important given the stiff competition the Postal Service

Rap session (continued)

faces in parcel delivery. The financial results also revealed that the Postal Service's parcel volume declined by almost 6 percent in 2025, likely due to increased competition from Amazon, which continues to invest in expanding its own delivery network. The Postal Service must modernize, Renfroe said: "Our infrastructure is outdated. Our current processing and delivery networks cannot meet the service needs of our customers."

Renfroe also described how the long-term decline in volume and revenue has forced the Postal Service to make decisions about how to preserve cash to fund operations, pay salaries, and invest in modernizing its network. Since 2014, the agency has defaulted on more than \$32 billion in amortization payments to its Civil Service Retirement System and Federal Employee Retirement System accounts, including defaulting on \$3.9 billion in 2025. Renfroe emphasized that no one's retirement benefits are in danger. However, the Postal Service will eventually need to fund these accounts, and the cost to do so will continue to increase each year. By 2032, the Postal Service's annual retirement payments are projected to increase to \$18 billion, absent legislative reform.

Unfortunately, the Postal Service's failure to make these payments has also affected the benefit that legislative impacts can have on postal finances. Even so, Renfroe explained that NALC's legislative goals of investment reform and implementation of the Segal report are still very much worth pursuing, as they will help stabilize the Postal Service in the long term. "Those two things alone will not solve our problems," he explained, but "they must be done, and they will

buy valuable time and money to make investments to modernize our infrastructure."

While there is reason to be concerned about the long-term sustainability of the Postal Service, Renfroe underscored the political dangers of the Postal Service's precarious financial position. "The more immediate danger," he said, "is the opportunities that this current financial situation and the things that we can project in the near future create for those that push for action like privatization and slashing benefits legislatively."

Renfroe pointed to international examples of recent changes to postal services in response to financial crises. Many governments are making changes to their universal service obligations, like reducing delivery frequency or slowing the speed of delivery. For example, the Danish government announced the end of letter mail delivery altogether at the beginning of this year and the Canadian government announced the end of door delivery in September. No matter what the change, Renfroe explained that in nearly every case service worsens and jobs are cut.

How do we avoid these changes and protect letter carrier jobs? Renfroe

presented a three-prong approach: We continue to advocate for the policy changes we need, we keep pushing the Postal Service on service improvements and smart investment in modernization, and, most importantly, the Postal Service's business model must change. "We have to be part of developing what the Postal Service's business looks like in the future," Renfroe said, adding that he will be convening a group of members to explore what this new business model should be.

"Of course, for us," he continued, "a business model that values letter carriers and protects our jobs is of utmost importance and at the top of the list."

Renfroe ended his remarks by returning to collective bargaining, announcing that NALC will launch a comprehensive campaign related to bargaining early next year. It will include a national day of action, similar to the one organized in March of this year. "The public supports us in virtually everything we do. We have to be strategic about what's going on and how they can help us," he said.

Renfroe then moved to the "rap" portion, answering attendees' questions. To see videos from the two-day conference, go to nalc.org/2025rap or scan the QR code below. **PR**



Branch leaders take the opportunity to ask President Renfroe questions after his prepared remarks.





NALC
August 3-7, 2026

★ Los Angeles Convention Center
1201 South Figueroa Street

- 1 AC Hotel Downtown Los Angeles*
1260 S Figueroa Street
- 2 JW Marriott Los Angeles L.A. LIVE*
900 West Olympic Boulevard
- 3 E-Central*
1020 S Figueroa Street
- 4 Residence Inn Los Angeles L.A. LIVE*
901 West Olympic Boulevard
- 5 Courtyard Los Angeles L.A. LIVE*
901 West Olympic Boulevard
- 6 Hotel Figueroa*
939 S Figueroa Street
- 7 Sheraton Grand Los Angeles*
711 S Hope Street
- 8 InterContinental Los Angeles Downtown*
900 Wilshire Boulevard
- 9 Hotel Per La
649 S Olive Street
- 10 Hilton Checkers Los Angeles*
535 S Grand Avenue
- 11 The Biltmore Los Angeles*
506 S Grand Avenue
- 12 The Westin Bonaventure Hotel & Suites
404 S Figueroa Street
- 13 Omni Los Angeles Hotel*
251 S Olive Street
- 14 DoubleTree by Hilton LA Downtown*
120 S Los Angeles Street

*Union Hotels

DASH www.ladotransit.com

Metro www.metro.net

- DASH A
- DASH B
- DASH D
- DASH E
- DASH F
- Multiple Route Stops
- A Line
- B Line
- D Line
- E Line

Los Angeles
discoverlosangeles.com



Hotels for 2026 Los Angeles convention

NALC has made special arrangements with 15 hotels to accommodate letter carrier delegates attending the 2026 convention in Los Angeles Aug. 3-7. All NALC block hotels are within approximately 2.1 miles of the convention center. The room rates have been set so that branches can begin budgeting for the convention. **Please do not contact the hotels.** All room reservations will be made through NALC's official housing company. **PR**

Hotel	Address	Room Rate	Total Block Peak Night	Distance to Center (miles)
AC Hotel Downtown Los Angeles*	1260 South Figueroa Street	\$299.00 Single/Double \$319.00 Triple	195	Adjacent
The Biltmore Los Angeles*	506 South Grand Avenue	\$249.00 Single/Double \$279.00 Triple	400	8 Blocks
Courtyard Los Angeles L.A. Live*	901 West Olympic Blvd	\$289.00 Single/Double \$309.00 Triple	125	1 Block
DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Los Angeles Downtown*	120 South Los Angeles Street	\$249.00 Single/Double/Triple	150	2.1 Miles
E-Central Downtown Los Angeles Hotel*	1020 S. Figueroa Street	\$235.00 Single/Double	125	.5 Block
Hilton Checkers Los Angeles*	535 South Grand Avenue	\$269.00 Single \$279.00 Double/Double \$299.00 Triple	120	8 Blocks
Hotel Figueroa*	939 South Figueroa Street	\$289.00 Single/Double \$309.00 Triple	100	1 Block
Hotel Indigo Los Angeles Downtown*	899 Francisco Street	\$289.00 Single/Double \$309.00 Triple	175	2 Blocks
Hotel Per La, Autograph Collection	649 South Olive Street	\$279.00 Single King Study \$299.00 Queen/Queen Studio Suites \$299.00 Triple	100	1.3 Miles
InterContinental Los Angeles Downtown*	900 Wilshire Blvd	\$299.00 Classic Kings/Doubles \$319.00 Premium King/Doubles \$319.00 Superior King/Doubles	608	3 Blocks
JW Marriott Los Angeles L.A. Live* (HQ)	900 West Olympic Blvd	\$309 Single/Double	800	Adjacent
Omni Los Angeles Hotel	251 South Olive Street	\$249.00 Single/Double \$269.00 Triple	300	10 Blocks
Residence Inn Los Angeles L.A. Live*	901 West Olympic Blvd	\$299.00 Single/Double \$319.00 Triple	141	1 Block
Sheraton Grand Los Angeles*	711 South Hope Street	\$289.00 Single/Double \$309.00 Triple	325	4 Blocks
Westin Bonaventure Hotel & Suites*	404 South Figueroa Street	\$279.00 Single/Double	100	6 Blocks
*Union Hotels				

Disaster Relief Foundation, donors aiding carriers harmed by fires, floods



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

In 2025, the West Coast suffered from devastating wildfires, and Middle America was hit by tornadoes and floods. For letter carriers affected by these disasters, the NALC Disaster Relief Foundation (DRF) followed to provide them with rapid assistance.

The DRF responded to wildfires in California; tornadoes in Arkansas, Illinois and Missouri; and floods in West Virginia, Texas and Wisconsin. Some of these disasters sadly took the lives of local residents, though no letter carriers were among them.

Dozens of carriers, however, experienced destruction or damage to their homes, vehicles or personal property. Getting them back on their feet quickly is DRF's goal.

NALC created the DRF in 2018 after many branches asked for help getting donations or other assistance to their fellow carriers facing disasters. DRF acts as a central unit to provide immediate help to carriers in need.

Led by DRF President Christina Vela Davidson, the foundation quickly identifies carriers who are affected by disasters and disseminates aid as soon as possible. The aid might 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 affected members can 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 the damage.

The foundation maintains a trained volunteer network to respond quickly to disasters. Grants are provided for property damage sustained to a prima-

ry residence, automobile or personal property from causes such as hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, wildfires, earthquakes or severe storms, and are provided only to NALC members.

The foundation relies on donations from letter carriers. "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."

L.A. wildfire aftermath

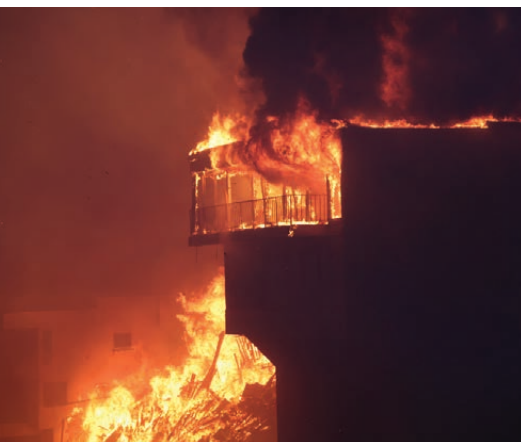
Wildfires in remote forests are one thing. In a densely populated city, they can bring widespread destruction. The fires that ravaged Los Angeles in January killed 31 people, burned down thousands of homes and businesses, and left many people homeless. A scientific study later estimated that as many as 440 deaths might be linked to the fires due to factors such as smoke and disruption of health care.

No reports of deaths or injuries among postal employees were reported, but many carriers had to flee. In Altadena, the center of the Eaton Fire, the post office burned down, and USPS transferred operations to the nearby Pasadena facility. A total of eight carriers in the L.A. area lost their homes. The Disaster Relief Foundation was there to help them get back on their feet.

The Postal Record brought you full coverage of the L.A. fires and how they affected carriers, in the March issue.

In a recent update on the aftermath, Pasadena Branch 2200 President **Serop Karchikyan** said that every displaced carrier has found a temporary or permanent home in the area, and all carriers who had worked from the Altadena Post Office have been assigned to Pasadena.

The Palisades Fire in Los Angeles





Some of the destruction from the St. Louis tornado



Because of the devastation, several postal routes burned to the ground.

“We recently had a route adjustment where they abolished 10 routes out of 25,” Karchikyan said. “So, 10 carriers became unassigned regulars, the 10 junior ones. But luckily, they’re all still working in the installation of Pasadena, where they’re at right now rather than being excessed out to other cities.”

The status of the Altadena Post Office is still up in the air, he said. “The post office that did burn down, it was a leased property. So, the property owner still wants to rebuild the post office there, but I guess they just have to work out the logistics and all that stuff. And it could be a few years until all that’s said and done.”

Twisters blow through Tornado Alley

This year was an active tornado season. A monster EF-5 twister, the first in the United States since 2014, killed three people in North Dakota, and outbreaks in several other states were part of a death toll of 68 for the year.

The Disaster Relief Foundation assisted 24 carriers affected by tornadoes in Arkansas, Illinois and Missouri, where a tornado ripped through downtown St. Louis in May.

Richard Thurman, a retired member of St. Louis Branch 343 who works for DRF as a director, is one of the carriers

who visit those affected by disasters to provide help. He got a firsthand look at the tornado that hit his town, damaging or destroying more than 5,000 homes and businesses north of the center of St. Louis. The tornado and the storm that spawned it killed five people and injured 38.

As with the Los Angeles fires, the urban location led to more destruction.

“There was a lot of damage,” Thurman said. “A lot of people were displaced.” While many of the homes had been built with layers of sturdy brick 100 or more years ago, some still succumbed to the winds, and the rain that followed the storm soaked many structures that suffered damaged roofs, he said.

Thurman, who has a degree in occupational safety and a background in disaster relief, understands that some people lose everything all at once and require immediate help.

“They’re trying to find lodging, get clothing, food,” he said. And sometimes sustained power outages further complicate their efforts.

Though his job as a DRF director can take him to faraway places, Thurman didn’t have to travel far to help letter

carriers affected by this storm. “I hand carry all documents directly to the people affected” as part of this DRF director job, he said. “We also validated what they lost.”

In the wake of the tornado, “a lot of people, our members, they were still working, and they had families affected, and a lot of them had their transportation destroyed also,” he added. “So, we were able to get funds to them to assist them to getting a temporary

Fires, floods, DRF donors (continued)



Damage in Kendall Myers's RV park in Tulsa, OK

place to stay. And when you talk about 5,400 people in one corridor, that's a lot of your hotel stock, so a lot of them were staying with family, and so on. But we were able to get them services and funds."

As with many disasters, such as the fires in Los Angeles, the tornado affected entire neighborhoods and their postal customers, so the impact on letter carriers went beyond their own homes to their jobs.

While postal facilities weren't damaged in St. Louis, Thurman said, "their delivery areas were. That's how they were affected. Their delivery areas were actually ripped up."

Looting can be another problem that follows a disaster, he added. "People are trying to get your property.

They're trying to get the metal that's in the house, or copper, before you demolish it. So, these people sat out, guarding their structures."

Tragic floods

This year, the Disaster Relief Foundation helped 10 carriers affected by floods in West Virginia, Wisconsin and Texas. Perhaps the most shocking floods happened in Texas in July.

Rain from a dying tropical storm showered the Hill Country in south-central Texas with up to 10 inches of rain in a matter of hours. With many sloping hills and a dense layer of limestone under shallow soil, the area is prone to flooding. The Guadalupe River rose 26 feet in 45 minutes. With water surging over the banks of the river and other waterways, the July floods killed 135 people, including many at an all-girls summer camp along the river. The camp's director, two counselors, and 25 girls were swept away in the middle of the night.

The night the floods came, San Antonio, TX Branch 181 member **Kendall Myers** was at his parents' home in Tulsa, OK, to help his mother get to chemotherapy appointments. He lived in an RV in a long-term RV park in Marble Falls, TX, sited on the Colorado River (not the more famous Colorado River in the west of Texas). He heard about the floods in news reports, but it wasn't until he received a text from a neighbor early in the morning that he knew his RV park was flooding.

Calling the elderly resident who had texted him, he asked, "What is it like?"

"She said that she was standing in her RV knee-deep in water," he said. "She lived just a few lots down from me, so I told her to get off the phone and get help."



The neighbor got to safety, but Myers had to wait another day to come home because the water reached as high as 9 feet in the RV park. When he finally drove back and saw the damage, he was stunned.

“It was just complete devastation. I mean, RVs, cars, everything, were just like a kid dumped them out of a box into a field,” he said. “It was weird.”

One resident of the RV park died in the flood. Another was swept away in his home, but survived.

Struggling to drive and then walk in the mud that covered everything, Myers made it to the former RV site. The water had carried his home 50 feet and dropped it.

“It was up against some trees. One end was sitting on top of a metal picnic table,” he said. “You could see the water lines on the side of it went about 4 feet up the RV when it started floating. When it sat down, it sat down on top of my motorcycle.”

The water had ruined the RV and most of the contents. The loss of his Harley-Davidson motorcycle hurt even more because a hailstorm had ruined his truck, Jeep and motorcycle a year earlier, and he was in the process of restoring the bike.

Myers, an Army veteran of the Gulf War, rolled up his sleeves and got to work.

“It felt devastating, but there was so much to do. You didn’t have time to ponder it,” he said. “I got a hotel room, and a couple of days later, the community resource center here in town started paying for everybody’s lodging. It was just daily trips out there into the mud and muck to see what you could save.”

Myers managed to recover some important documents and photos.

Among the treasures he salvaged was a painting of his three children he had commissioned before he went to war. He had carried a wallet-size version with him while in the combat zone.

He also recovered his uniforms, though they were wet and required thorough cleaning before he could go back to work on his route.

“They stunk,” Myers said. “My first laundry bill ... was \$160. Wow. Just to clean all that nasty-smelling stuff.”

It wasn’t long before DRF came to his aid.

“I heard about it through the union,” he said. Austin Branch 181 President **William Moody** contacted Myers and sent him the DRF paperwork.

“I started filling it out and I got it sent off to him,” Myers said. “I’ll be honest with you—I was utterly amazed. I was contacted within just a couple of days.” After verifying the damage, he received a grant from DRF by direct deposit in only a few hours.

“Even with the local places, the relief efforts that they had going on down here—Red Cross, Samaritan’s Purse, so many places came in to help people. But the NALC was one of the first,” Myers said. “It definitely took a lot of the sting away. ... It just helped so much.”

How to help

NALC President Brian L. Renfroe called on letter carriers to pitch in to help the Disaster Relief Foundation continue to serve carriers in need as the year comes to a close.

“We know there will be more disasters next year, and more of our brothers and sisters losing everything at once,” he said. “To continue to help them, DRF relies on donations from NALC members.”

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

The foundation provides aid in the form of supplies or grants, and it maintains a trained volunteer network to respond quickly to disasters. Grants are provided for property damage sustained to a primary residence, automobile or personal property from causes such as hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, wildfires, earthquakes or severe storms, and, as stated above, 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.

“Everything that goes to these carriers in need comes from you, our donors,” Davidson said. “They are eternally grateful for your continuing support.”

“The next victim of a disaster could be you or someone you work with,” she added. “Any amount helps. We are here for you, and we thank you for your support.”

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. The foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization; contributions to DRF may be tax-deductible. It is recommended that you consult your tax advisor.

On the following pages are this year’s donors to DRF. Please donate now to be recognized in the December 2026 issue. **PR**

NALC Disaster Relief Foundation donors

Roxanne Autrey, Br. 1
Cecelia A. Cason, Br. 1
Donald Walton, Br. 1
Kenneth Carstens, Br. 2
Gregg Dati, Br. 2
John Schmidt, Br. 2
Scott Van Derven, Br. 2
Joseph Deneshar Jr., Br. 3
Paul Meyer, Br. 3
John Nusbaum, Br. 3
Steven Olender, Br. 3
Steve Lassan, Br. 4
John Mickeliunas, Br. 5
Larry Blesi, Br. 9
Allan Gulden, Br. 9
Alice Nopola, Br. 9
Linda Olson, Br. 9
Steven Petersen, Br. 9
Robert Schmitz, Br. 9
Claire Steinberg, Br. 9
William Manion, Br. 10
Brina Archie-Sams, Br. 11
William Bean Jr., Br. 11
Michael F. Burke, Br. 11
Cheryl McFarlin, Br. 11
Anthony Waksmundzki, Br. 11
Reginald Young, Br. 11
Paul Bialoncik, Br. 12
Edward Conrad, Br. 12
Robert McNamara, Br. 12
James Rutelonis, Br. 12
Harry Simonian, Br. 12
Majorie Zbojnicz, Br. 13
David Gravatte, Br. 14
Ronald Osborne II, Br. 14
Thomas Webb, Br. 14
Terance McAvoy, Br. 15
Richard Silva, Br. 15
Joseph Desrosiers, Br. 18
Albert Joseph Jr., Br. 18
Edward Jackowicz, Br. 19
Gerald I. Binnington Jr., Br. 20
Kimberly Doucette, Br. 20
Theresa Stamates, Br. 20
Richard Becker, Br. 22
Gerald Kosar, Br. 22
Karl Fretton, Br. 24
Anita Guzik, Br. 24
Alan Tran, Br. 24
Richard Benjamin, Br. 25
Nancy Chrisos, Br. 25
Bradford Freeman Jr., Br. 25
Gary Glenny, Br. 25
Daniel Raske, Br. 25
Deborah Cavalier, Br. 28
Jeffrey Malean, Br. 28
Robert Priebe, Br. 28
Anita Franklin, Br. 30
John A. Mitchell, Br. 30
Harry Ford, Br. 31
Robert Rumbold, Br. 31
John Rogers, Br. 32
John Rogers Jr., Br. 32
Harman Badwal, Br. 34
John Baginsky, Br. 34
John & Donna Larkin, Br. 34
Samie Smith, Br. 34
Anita Lewallen, Br. 35
Miguel Algarin, Br. 36
Richard Burke, Br. 36
James Chiusano, Br. 36
Irving Goldenberg, Br. 36
Kenneth Lytle, Br. 36
Edward Mahoney, Br. 36
Paul Michel, Br. 36
Michael O'Farrell, Br. 36
Pietro Tassielli, Br. 36
Vito Tenore, Br. 36
Paul Cioffi, Br. 37
Wayne Bosze, Br. 38
Margaret Byrne, Br. 38
Jefferson Chisolm, Br. 38
Lawrence Cirelli, Br. 38

Alfonse Feigarelli, Br. 38
Leonard Gehlhaus, Br. 38
Russell Gentile, Br. 38
David Gray, Br. 38
John Holley, Br. 38
Nicholas Kovalycsik, Br. 38
Gregory Loughlin, Br. 38
Michael O'Neill, Br. 38
Michael Silva, Br. 38
Anthony Stella, Br. 38
Jaime Zapata, Br. 38
Joyce Weaver, Br. 39
Michael Bordonaro, Br. 40
Charles Granat, Br. 40
Kenneth Westfall, Br. 40
John & Kathleen Zizka, Br. 40
Steven Mahoney, Br. 41
Ethan Groves, Br. 43
David Kennedy, Br. 43
Daniel Mugavin, Br. 43
Valerie Taylor, Br. 43
Arthur Ball, Br. 44
Peter Golabiewski, Br. 44
Donald Bendure, Br. 45
Leo Shepard, Br. 45
Stephen Arabik, Br. 46
Lupe Barile, Br. 46
John Scholtz, Br. 46
Rachel Wessell, Br. 46
Charles Huey, Br. 47
Merle Lydick, Br. 47
Diana Suslak-Spriggs, Br. 47
Jesse Sanchez Jr., Br. 52
J.M. Turney, Br. 52
Jason Grimm, Br. 53
Donna Kuna, Br. 53
Michael J. Eilers, Br. 56
Ronald Augustus, Br. 57
Stephen Simmons, Br. 57
Robert Cain, Br. 66
Arthur Mariani, Br. 67
Wayne Anderson, Br. 70
Ashley Applegate, Br. 70
Barbara Bream, Br. 70
Charles Scallorn, Br. 70
Aisha Finley, Br. 73
Raymond King, Br. 73
Charles Winham Jr., Br. 73
Daniel McInerney, Br. 74
Ronald Slone, Br. 74
Joan Johnson, Br. 78
Douglas A. Lawver, Br. 78
John Hayes, Br. 79
Susan Mulholland, Br. 79
Terrance Schou, Br. 80
Becky J. Abel, Br. 84
George Arlet Jr., Br. 84
Richard Bonazza, Br. 84
James Burgess, Br. 84
Louis T. Caracciolo, Br. 84
Jeffrey Conroy, Br. 84
Edward Davis, Br. 84
Eugene P. Girman Jr., Br. 84
William Haddad, Br. 84
Joseph Kutcher, Br. 84
Ronald Kydd, Br. 84
Timothy Miller, Br. 84
Anthony Pavlik, Br. 84
John Quattro, Br. 84
Timothy Rowe, Br. 84
Donald Chepurna, Br. 86
Robert Garavel, Br. 86
Miriam Lesnick, Br. 86
John Murphy, Br. 86
Norman Davidson, Br. 92
Daniel Lunt, Br. 92
Robert Mander, Br. 94
Kyle Maxwell, Br. 105
Steven Franz, Br. 111
Cynthia Gilson, Br. 111
Joseph Liskosky, Br. 115
Michael Manley, Br. 115
Andrew Sabol, Br. 115

Matthew Slivinski, Br. 115
Keli-Jo Temarantz, Br. 122
Lizbeth Hollopter, Br. 122
Matthew Tanner, Br. 122
Marvella Witt, Br. 122
Alvin Coco, Br. 124
Grant Geiger, Br. 124
Larry Jaeger, Br. 125
Ronald Blatchley, Br. 126
Patrick Baker, Br. 127
Shawn Boyd, Br. 132
Ronald Czoka, Br. 133
David Ramsay, Br. 132
Linda Hunter, Br. 133
David McGill, Br. 133
Tim Mosbarger, Br. 133
Robert Rojas, Br. 133
Wayne Tubbs, Br. 133
Mario Zoida, Br. 133
Daniel Grosso, Br. 134
James Baird Jr., Br. 137
Isaac Harper, Br. 137
Paul Miano, Br. 137
John W. Travis, Br. 137
Paul Simmons Jr., Br. 142
Ted Babiy, Br. 148
Michael Mullen, Br. 148
Reginald Bennett, Br. 157
Daniel Koterba, Br. 157
James McFadden, Br. 157
Rafean Mercado, Br. 157
Timothy O'Malley, Br. 157
James Pancoast, Br. 157
James Reilly, Br. 157
Isagani Ronsayro, Br. 157
Edward Schneider, Br. 157
Sidney Shore, Br. 157
Frederick Schell, Br. 176
Leslie Doss, Br. 181
Kenneth Moore, Br. 181
Marilyn Smith, Br. 181
Donald Myra, Br. 182
Steven Roesser, Br. 182
Richard Steiner, Br. 182
Lewis Wagner, Br. 191
George Alberts, Br. 196
William Rolfe, Br. 196
Perry Sprachmann, Br. 196
Marcus Zajdel, Br. 196
David Krewson, Br. 203
Earl Blyeth, Br. 204
Thomas Garrison, Br. 204
Billy Greer, Br. 204
Cory Carter, Br. 205
Gerard Agostinelli, Br. 210
Daniel Brigham, Br. 210
Donna Carter, Br. 210
Thomas Munger, Br. 210
Paul Trapani, Br. 210
Jefferson Crowl, Br. 214
Marilyn Green, Br. 214
David Sutter, Br. 214
Bruce Stelter, Br. 215
Elizabeth Henle, Br. 219
Conor Kulig, Br. 219
Bonnie Usher, Br. 219
Dennis Guilbert, Br. 230
Kathleen Thomas, Br. 238
Frank Licari, Br. 245
Donald Atkinson, Br. 257
Christopher Cinelli, Br. 258
Scott Reichard, Br. 258
Gerald Speicher, Br. 258
Donald Weller, Br. 258
Henry Egan, Br. 262
Frank Binns, Br. 263
Jennifer Paradiso, Br. 263
David Szerencsits, Br. 274
Kimberly Arnhold, Br. 283
Joe Macias, Br. 290
Lawrence Figalora, Br. 294
Robert Godfrey, Br. 294
Richard Nucatola, Br. 294

S. L. Scherer, Br. 294
Norm Haidet, Br. 297
John Malnar, Br. 305
Michael Robinson, Br. 313
Mary Kurrle, Br. 318
Randy Rogers, Br. 318
Elizabeth Bays, Br. 320
David Miller, Br. 321
Leon Irvin, Br. 324
Derrick Adkins, Br. 330
C. David Guzicki, Br. 330
Donald Redding, Br. 330
Nixon Boston, Br. 347
Daniel Brauchle, Br. 343
John Haake, Br. 343
William Lynch, Br. 334
Nathaniel Markovich, Br. 343
Joseph Politte, Br. 343
Shonna Randle, Br. 343
Frederick Putkowski, Br. 358
Paul Riggs, Br. 359
Robert McNulty, Br. 361
Ann Rude, Br. 373
Anne Sever, Br. 373
Chris Williams, Br. 374
Vincent Brown, Br. 380
Rose Matakovich, Br. 380
Dennis Brillowski, Br. 381
Christina & Eddie Davidson, Br. 382
Joseph Latham, Br. 382
Donald Revis, Br. 385
George Rohrbaugh, Br. 385
Kevin Burns, Br. 387
James Clemmons, Br. 397
Everett Wyllie, Br. 404
Casey Burnett, Br. 421
Philip & Louise Jordan, Br. 421
Bonifacio Lopez, Br. 421
John Sernotti, Br. 425
Cindy Kennedy, Br. 439
Paul Carroll, Br. 442
Julie Mitchell, Br. 443
Spencer Vidich, Br. 444
Nathaniel Davis, Br. 448
Joseph G. Antal, Br. 451
Frank J. Cains, Br. 455
Walter Long, Br. 458
Kenneth Mayfield, Br. 458
Gerald Lewis, Br. 459
Richie Speight, Br. 459
Katherine Drass, Br. 462
Neely Clinton, Br. 469
Bruce O. Gerhart, Br. 485
Dunny Gore, Br. 489
Eli Broughton, Br. 491
William R. Gordon, Br. 500
Jesus Fernandez Jr., Br. 505
Michael Kolstad, Br. 505
Glenn McNabb, Br. 505
Wesley Tank, Br. 506
Andrew Khitsun, Br. 507
Gary Strebel, Br. 507
William Enterline, Br. 509
Susan Ferguson, Br. 509
Gail Schwartz, Br. 509
Roger Henlickson, Br. 517
David Sutton, Br. 524
James Heim, Br. 531
R. A. Walz, Br. 531
Corey Cooper, Br. 536
Stacey Adams, Br. 540
Richard Rahmel, Br. 540
James Shingler, Br. 542
Robert S. Morrison, Br. 545
Francis Pjojda, Br. 545
James B. Cadien, Br. 546
Peter Guidone, Br. 562
Thomas Boughton, Br. 567
David Wellin, Br. 572
Bruce Calhoun, Br. 576
Nestor Chavez, Br. 576
Andrew Ezarraga, Br. 576
Alan Linde, Br. 576

NALC Disaster Relief Foundation donors

Daniela Ramos, Br. 576
Bernad Lamar, Br. 578
Ronald Benjamin, Br. 580
Carl Matury, Br. 580
Mark Sadowski, Br. 580
Geary Watkins, Br. 590
Clement Cheung, Br. 599
Michael Dennis, Br. 599
Jim Good, Br. 599
Jesus Iligan, Br. 599
Milagros Minsal, Br. 599
Taft Bruce Jr., Br. 609
Melvin Gaskin, Br. 609
David James, Br. 627
Robert Lutz, Br. 628
Terry Wagner, Br. 642
Travis Klemp, Br. 645
R. Rabinowitz, Br. 651
Warren Rabinowitz, Br. 651
Katherine Baurhenn, Br. 654
Bernard Rhoades, Br. 693
Raymond Samoyedny, Br. 693
Gary Wiesendanger, Br. 693
Ramon Vega, Br. 704
Dan Versluis, Br. 704
Robert Bullock, Br. 709
Clarence McCarthy, Br. 709
Gerard Gallagher, Br. 725
Michael Gehman, Br. 725
Edward Kelly, Br. 725
Mary Beth Lloyd, Br. 725
William Marsh Jr., Br. 725
Robin Lane, Br. 737
Arthur Lisanti, Br. 754
Robert Muller, Br. 754
Mary Kinney, Br. 763
Robert Curry, Br. 769
Carl J. Knopp, Br. 769
Roger Detert, Br. 778
Jason Cobbs, Br. 780
Steven Friedle, Br. 782
Eugene Roberts, Br. 783
Robert James, Br. 791
James Hamilton, Br. 822
Roy T. Rogers, Br. 822
Colette Ansley-Treonis, Br. 825
Karen Bryk, Br. 825
David Collins, Br. 825
John Cullen, Br. 825
Robert Mullin, Br. 825
John Peavler, Br. 825
James Peterson, Br. 825
Dennis Szymaniak, Br. 825
Joshua Peterson, Br. 828
Robert Rosenberger, Br. 828
Frank Ellender, Br. 842
Karen Ulvang, Br. 849
Daryl Burt, Br. 860
Julie Ishibashi, Br. 860
Kenneth Koroki, Br. 860
Richard Tsuruda, Br. 860
Rafael Ortiz, Br. 869
Ronnie Roush, Br. 888
Jessica Tindal, Br. 904
Raymond Barbier, Br. 906
Frederick Richter, Br. 906
David Entwistle, Br. 908
Charles Gravener, Br. 908
Oswald Lecky, Br. 908
Denise Burns, Br. 916
Gerald Hagan, Br. 916
Alexander Marchetti, Br. 920
Douglas King Sr, Br. 924
Kimberly Lane, Br. 934
Paul Dunnermann, Br. 984
Laura Klingelsmith, Br. 1025
Brian Rivera, Br. 1025
Benjamin Allen, Br. 1071
Willam Coppage, Br. 1071
Sharon Cuthbertson, Br. 1071
Michael Gill, Br. 1071
Kyle Goodhue, Br. 1071
Robert Harkins, Br. 1071

Edward Larsen, Br. 1071
Howard Minter, Br. 1071
George Pratt Jr., Br. 1071
Matty Rose, Br. 1071
Raul Ruiz Sr., Br. 1071
Wyleen Trody, Br. 1071
Curtis Williams, Br. 1071
Gregg Lovin, Br. 1081
John Hendrickson, Br. 1091
Jennifer Kimmell, Br. 1091
Jacqueline Dick, Br. 1091
Maureen Valadie, Br. 1091
Ginger Austin, Br. 1100
Wayne Devries, Br. 1100
Roxann Gonzalez, Br. 1100
Stephen Hadnagy, Br. 1100
Shari Hall, Br. 1100
Christopher Jackson, Br. 1100
Jeffrey Lee, Br. 1100
Tyronne Lee, Br. 1100
Alexander Maroda, Br. 1100
Charles Miller, Br. 1100
Roma Montiel, Br. 1100
Raymond Peterson, Br. 1100
Maung Si, Br. 1100
Estevan Velasquez, Br. 1100
David Washington, Br. 1100
John Wellen, Br. 1100
C. Swanson, Br. 1104
Fred Jahn, Br. 1105
Steven Chen, Br. 1111
James Riker, Br. 1111
Eric Schwartz, Br. 1111
Travis Dixon, Br. 1119
Jacqueline Gowan, Br. 1119
Laquan Holloway, Br. 1119
Charles Cryoskie, Br. 1131
Robert Harper, Br. 1227
Larry Snyder, Br. 1227
Joshua Flowers, Br. 1250
Matthew Harrell, Br. 1250
Patty Cramer, Br. 1310
Andre Weston, Br. 1321
Tommie Martinez, Br. 1358
Juliana Finney, Br. 1427
Harold Ho, Br. 1439
Harold Kelso, Br. 1439
Mark Lesch, Br. 1439
Joseph Brickman, Br. 1477
Kenneth Grasso, Br. 1477
Jack Hopkins, Br. 1477
Anthony Roger, Br. 1477
Patrick Trudeau, Br. 1477
Justin Richmond, Br. 1512
David Valdez, Br. 1518
Gregg A. Kotz, Br. 1902
Michael Kenjorski, Br. 1977
Gerard Lonergan, Br. 2008
Dena Ponticello, Br. 2008
Ted Doan, Br. 2038
Rick Klingenberg, Br. 2072
Jacqueline Stevens, Br. 2072
B. B. Slovak Jr., Br. 2128
Richard Farlery, Br. 2128
Lou Grohowski, Br. 2128
Edward Sedillo, Br. 2128
Joseph Golonka, Br. 2184
Gary Macioce, Br. 2184
Jeanie Youtsey, Br. 2184
Richard Genova, Br. 2200
Thomas Huffman, Br. 2200
Thomas Kindhart, Br. 2200
William Sharp, Br. 2200
Catherine Dubose Sherman, Br. 2207
Jerry Phillips, Br. 2207
Kay Johnson, Br. 2262
Sonya Garry, Br. 2293
Rudy Painter, Br. 2420
Taron Dovlatyan, Br. 2462
Irwin Schnyder, Br. 2462
Tia Wilson, Br. 2462
Lori Raskin, Br. 2502
Ira Rosenberg, Br. 2550

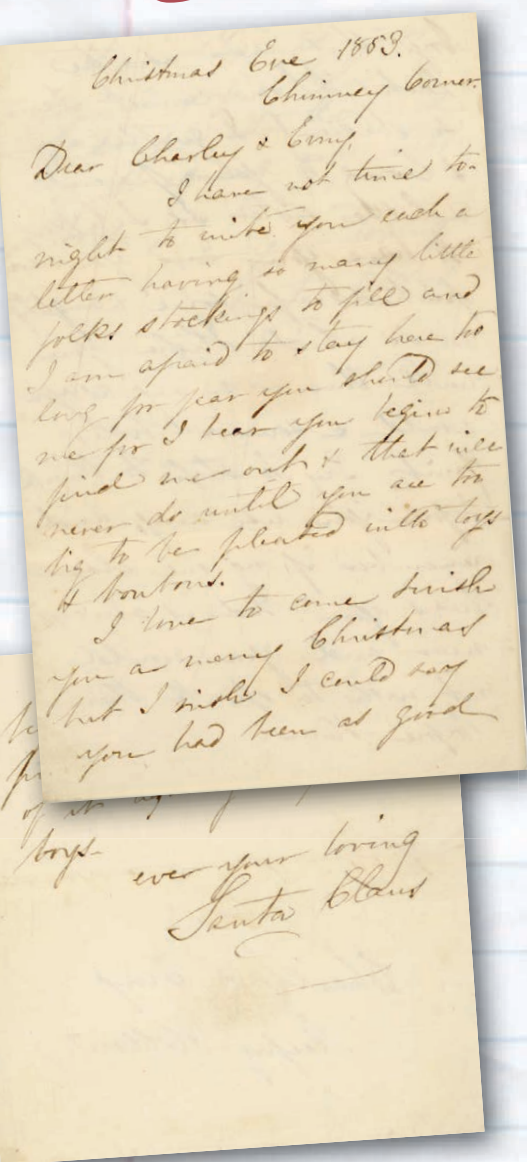
Andrew Virruso, Br. 2550
Franz Powell, Br. 2572
Darren Connors, Br. 2689
Reuben Gardella, Br. 2778
Colon Bolden, Br. 2819
George Galeota, Br. 2819
Stephen Fetchko, Br. 2901
Frank Jackson, Br. 2905
Tom Nickerson, Br. 2942
Norman Zimney, Br. 2942
Jacqueline Dick, Br. 3126
Robert Dunn, Br. 3126
Paul Roznowski, Br. 3126
Charles Leggett, Br. 3514
Charles L. Sonner, Br. 3520
Franklyn Void, Br. 3520
Shawn Gruben, Br. 3631
Alton Branson, Br. 3825
Michael Walker, Br. 3825
Thomas Given, Br. 3902
Jackie Oree, Br. 3902
Tyrell Bishop, Br. 3984
Dillon Cole, Br. 3984
Paul Butler, Br. 4007
Philip Stewart, Br. 4007
Lawrence Barker, Br. 4016
Patricia Train, Br. 4016
Terry Curtis, Br. 4043
Terry Barnett, Br. 4195
R. H. Michael, Br. 4364
Dennis McQueen, Br. 4491
Stephanie Vega, Br. 4568
Richard Burnett, Br. 4616
Nelson Potter, Br. 4645
Katherine Seaver, Br. 4645
Michael Winkler, Br. 4837
John Wilsdorf, Br. 4839
David Johnson, Br. 4862
Alfred Erdossy, Br. 4973
Lee Sciarra, Br. 4973
Peter M. Duffy, Br. 5229
Edward Hunt, Br. 5229
Bruce Lang, Br. 5267
Samuel Crease, Br. 5420
L. L. Rhonehouse, Br. 5955
Jeffrey Hartman, Br. 5996
Barbara Larson, Br. 5996
Kent D. Ross, Br. 5996
Carlos Villa, Br. 5996
Rami Baghdadi, Br. 6000
Bruce Bier, Br. 6000
Richard Hubert, Br. 6000
Lee Kinsey, Br. 6000
Richard Merkel, Br. 6000
Ronald Ryan, Br. 6000
Thomas Staab, Br. 6000
Adrienne Brumfield, Br. 6377

Branches, state associations, regions and others

Detroit, MI Branch 1
Buffalo-Western New York Branch 3
Minneapolis, MN Branch 9
Southeast MA Merged Branch 18
Los Angeles, CA Branch 24
Little Rock, AR Branch 35
New Jersey Merged Branch 38
Cleveland, OH Branch 40
Western Massachusetts Branch 46
Grand Rapids, MI Branch 56
Ogden, UT Branch 68
Springfield, IL Branch 80
Pittsburgh, PA Branch 84
Toledo, OH Branch 100
Wilkes-Barre, PA Branch 115
Sacramento, CA Branch 133
Baltimore, MD Branch 176
Elyria, OH Branch 196
Stockton, CA Branch 213
Asheville, NC Branch 248
Bethlehem, PA Branch 254
Alpena, MI Branch 259
Rock Island, IL Branch 292

Decatur, IL Branch 317
Logansport, IN Branch 323
St. Louis, MO Branch 343
Atlantic City, NJ Branch 370
San Antonio, TX Branch 421
Hamilton, OH Branch 426
Greenville, SC Branch 439
Oklahoma City, OK Branch 458
Raleigh, NC Branch 459
Huntsville, AL Branch 462
Wilmington, NC Branch 464
Mobile, AL Branch 469
Natchez, MS Branch 476
Manitowoc, WI Branch 490
Albuquerque, NM Branch 504
Camden, NJ Merged Branch 540
Charlotte, NC Branch 545
Kenosha, WI Branch 574
Savannah, GA Branch 578
Adrian, MI Branch 579
Tampa, FL Branch 599
Santa Ana, CA Branch 737
Columbia, MO Branch 763
Fort Collins, CO Branch 849
South Florida Branch 1071
Central Florida Branch 1091
Grand Grove, CA Branch 1100
Ocala, FL Branch 1103
Longmont, CO Branch 1105
Wichita Falls, TX Branch 1227
Monterey, CA Branch 1310
Porterville, CA Branch 1469
Arizona Merged Branch 1902
Lansdowne, PA Branch 1929
Clearwater, FL Branch 2008
Pasadena, CA Branch 2200
Houma-Thibodaux-Lockport, LA Branch 2464
Escondido, CA Branch 2525
Chapel Hill, NC Branch 2613
Royal Oak, MI Branch 3126
Panama City, FL Branch 3367
North Texas Branch 4065
South Macomb, MI Branch 4374
Arvada, CO Branch 4405
Forest Park, GA Branch 4568
Naples, FL Branch 4716
Roswell, GA Branch 4862
Havelock, NC Branch 4970
Centennial, CO Branch 5996
Sun City, AZ Branch 6156
NALC Region 8
NALC Region 9
NALC Region 15
Alabama State Association
Arkansas State Association
California State Association
Florida State Association
Georgia State Association
Indiana State Association
Maryland/Washington, DC State Association
Michigan State Association
New Mexico State Association
North Carolina State Association
South Carolina State Association
Texas State Association
NALC Auxiliary 111
TSALC Auxiliary
Michael & Anne Digoia
Tanya Dwyer
Clifford Hanna
Andrew Hillyer
Alexandra Jeffcoat
Jason Madruga
Mitchell Mappes
Gloria Shiao
Michael Vazquez
Alan Williams
Nathan Williams
American Online Giving Foundation
Galls, LLC
Priority One Credit Union

Dear Santa



A letter from Santa to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's children

Writing and sending a letter to Santa Claus is a deeply rooted American tradition that has thrived for more than a century. Every year, the Postal Service runs Operation Santa, allowing people to adopt and answer some of the many heartfelt letters sent to St. Nick through the mail. But where did this very American tradition come from?

The idea of a Christian saint who magically delivered treats to coincide with Christmas existed in Europe well before the American Revolutionary War began in 1776. But the name “Santa Claus” wouldn’t come until after the establishment of the United States, with Dutch settlers, primarily in New York, who told legends of St. Nicholas or “Sinterklaas.”

Despite the widely held belief that the first American image of Santa Claus was created and distributed by Coca-Cola, in fact, the New York Historical Society is believed to have distributed the first on Dec. 6, 1810, when it hosted its first St. Nicholas dinner. The organization commissioned artist Alexander Anderson to draw an image of the saint, but it wasn’t quite the tubby jovial man we know now. Instead, it showed him in the clothes of a clergyman and holding a switch, which he “Directs a Parent’s hand to use / When virtue’s path his sons refuse.”

The earliest letters weren’t to Santa, but from him. The letters were reminders about being nice rather than naughty. The minister Theodore Ledyard Cuyler grew up in western New York in the 1820s and recalled receiving “an autograph letter from Santa Claus, full of good counsels.”

Poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s wife, Fanny, wrote letters from Santa

for her children in the 1850s that told them explicitly how they could be better. “[Y]ou have picked up some naughty words which I hope you will throw away as you would sour or bitter fruit,” Santa wrote in one of Longfellow’s letters in 1853. “Try to stop to think before you use any, and remember if no one else hears you God is always near.”

Before the Post Office started free city delivery in 1863, Santa letters often appeared near the chimney and any letters to Santa were returned to the same spot. Many children and parents would burn the letters, believing that the ashes would rise and reach Santa.

When city delivery began, the *Chicago Tribune* described the letter carrier in 1864 as “a genuine Santa Claus [visiting] households on his beat.” So, it’s not a surprise that families soon started using their letter carriers to deliver Santa letters.

The idea gained traction when, in 1871, *Harper’s Weekly*—the most widely read journal in this era before radio and television—published an illustration by cartoonist Thomas Nast of Santa sorting letters he had received from “Good Children’s Parents” and “Naughty Children’s Parents.” In 1879, Nast drew an illustration of a child posting a letter to Santa.

But where were families supposed to send these letters? At first, many sent them to newspapers, which would print selections and some would offer prizes for the best. A correspondent for the *Stark County Democrat*, in Canton, OH, wrote in 1874, “Two bright little children entered the *Democrat* office and wanted us to print letters to Santa Claus, from them.”

Historians have examined these early Santa letters to see how gift



**Above: Santa by cartoonist Thomas Nast
Below: The New York Historical Society's flyer for its first St. Nicholas dinner**

giving has evolved. In *Dear Santa: Children's Christmas Letters and Wish Lists, 1870-1920*, children in the 1870s requested gifts such as writing desks, prayer books, and in one memorable letter, "a stick of pomade" for "papa." As time went on, the children whose letters were reprinted in the book started to ask for toys and other fun items, such as candy, dolls and roller skates.

For the Post Office, these letters presented a problem—most letters to Santa didn't have a deliverable address. Nast's illustrations showed Santa living in the North Pole, but didn't include a street address. Until the 1900s, most Santa letters would go to the Dead Letter Office with other mail that couldn't be delivered and were destroyed.

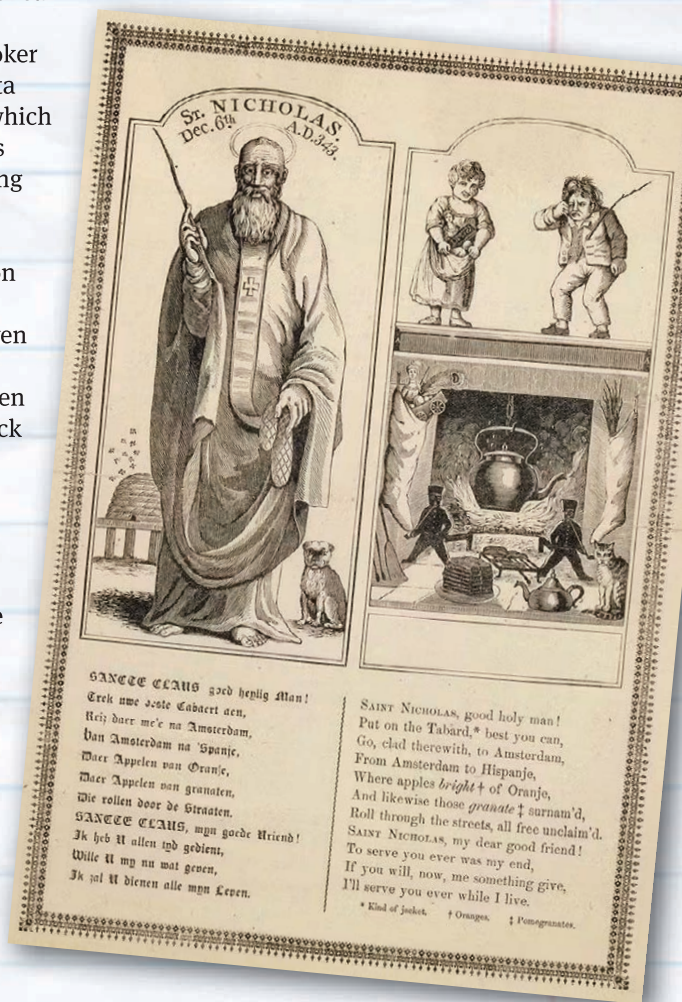
Charitable organizations asked if they could respond to these letters and after some stops and starts, Operation Santa began. In 1913, the Post Office instituted a policy allowing local postmasters to grant permission to give the letters to charity groups to answer the letters.

In Winchester, KY, one organization delivered the odd combination of sweets and fireworks to letter writers. In Santa Claus, IN, Postmaster James Martin wrote letters responding to the city's large pile of Santa letters him-

self. He soon brought in volunteers, as children around the country thought the city was the home of the real Santa.

In New York, customs broker John Gluck created the Santa Claus Association in 1913, which answered tens of thousands of letters each year by pairing letters with citywide volunteers who delivered gifts to the children. The association requested donations to pay for postage and gifts and even \$300,000 for a Santa Claus Building in Manhattan. When it came out in 1928 that Gluck had embezzled hundreds of thousands of dollars, the Post Office revoked the association's Santa mail and changed its policy.

Soon after, the Post Office Department changed the program to allow individuals to answer a Santa letter through the mail, as well as to buy the requested gift and bring it to the post office to send to the child. Postal workers then delivered the gifts to children. The program grew over the years when it was spotlighted in the



USPS
OPERATION
Santa®

I helped Santa today!

Adopt letters at USPSOperationSanta.com



An ad for USPS's Operation Santa

The Santa Claus Association responded to Santa letters in New York City in the 1910s and '20s (bottom). They solicited donations to construct a Santa Claus Building.



movie “Miracle on 34th Street” in 1947, and by Johnny Carson on “The Tonight Show” decades later.

In 2006, the Postal Service created a new set of guidelines for the program requiring donors to present a photo ID when they pick up Santa letters and redacting the children’s full names and addresses. But what the donors choose to do is still up to them.

“The range is incredible, from the very basic where they can’t afford to buy anything but a token, to the opposite end where they will invest in a school and redo a playground,” Pete Fontana, the then-chief elf officer in New York City, told *Smithsonian* magazine in 2015.

Many letter carriers and NALC branches volunteer each year to be part of the Operation Santa program, such as Lafayette, IN Branch 466. At the December branch meeting, members will open up the letters, draft a short response,

and mail them back to the children as though they came from Santa.

“It’s a fun way to read the letters, to kind of break up some of the long days and get a little bit of joy,” Branch 466 Vice President **Jeremy Swift** told *The Postal Record* in a December 2024 article.

“We’ve had letters from newborns that a parent wrote in, just talking about how the child’s been a good boy or girl, just kind of letting us know how they’ve been,” he said.

“Sometimes we’ll get a big envelope from a teacher from one of the schools. We’ve encouraged the schools to participate. And then we just send a big envelope back.

“We’ve received letters from kids that are pretty heartbreaking that just talk about their current situation and how they just want their parents to get a new job or to not have to struggle or not be sad.

“We’ve received letters from parents who are struggling and asking for help. They don’t know how they’re going to provide a Christmas for their children.

“So, yeah, I mean, it is a big mix of emotions as you’re reading through those letters, for sure,” Swift said. He said they receive all kinds of letters and individual members will sometimes answer a letter with a gift or other donations.

In 2017, USPS introduced online tools for kids to write to Santa through their electronic devices. Despite the advent of new technology, one thing is constant: The magic of Santa letters never seems to diminish. **PR**



Letter carrier donates kidney to stranger

It was July 2024 when Mid-Michigan Branch 256 letter carrier **Tara Marsh** saw the Facebook post shared by a friend of a friend about a man named Jared who needed a kidney. He was 29 when the Facebook post was made and had been struggling with kidney disease since he was only 15 years old. He had zero function in either of his kidneys, so his only option was to undergo dialysis for eight hours every night for years.

“It definitely really affected his life,” Marsh said. “He wasn’t really able to live like a young man. He had to live like an old man. He couldn’t drink. He couldn’t go do anything fun. He couldn’t stay out late because he had to be hooked up to this machine by a certain time.”

Marsh’s heart went out to him, so after work the same day she saw the post, she went to get tested to see if she matched.

“There was literally zero thought process,” the five-year letter carrier said. “This dude needs a kidney.”

Marsh, a mother of four, had given of her body for charity before—she had donated her eggs to a cancer survivor who was unable to conceive due to the side effects of her treatment, after Marsh heard her story on TV.

In the case involving the kidney transplant, a week after getting tested, she found out that she was a potential match. At that point, the hospital sent her paperwork with information on what exactly the process would entail. She reached out to Jared through Facebook Messenger, finding his account through a tag in the post she saw. They talked almost daily throughout the testing process, though never in person.

Although there are months of testing that potential kidney donors must go through before being eligible to do-

nate, Marsh had a feeling that it would work out.

“When [a nurse] was taking [my blood], I was like, I know I’m gonna be it,” Marsh said. “So, when they told me I was a match, I already knew it.”

She underwent extensive testing from July to October of 2024. In those four months, more than 100 vials of her blood were taken, and she spent multiple two-day testing sessions at University of Michigan hospital, which is located two hours from her home.

Despite Marsh’s optimism, Jared didn’t feel the same way. After years of potential matches not working out, “he did not have any positivity about any of this actually happening, because he had had kidney disease for so long and nothing ... good ever happened,” the carrier said. “So, until we pretty much had a surgery date, he wasn’t really believing anything that I was saying. He was just trying to be realistic so he didn’t get his hopes up ... because [he thought] at any point I could drop out.”

On Jan. 29, the day Marsh’s kidney would be removed and transplanted inside Jared, Marsh had arrived at the hospital earlier and saw Jared in line to check in, but she didn’t have time to talk to him with everything that was going on. Marsh wasn’t anxious or nervous, she said: “The best thing I can compare it to is if you see somebody drowning and you just help them, there’s no thought process.”

Marsh said that after the surgery, her recovery took about three months, but 10 months later she still feels effects from having her kidney removed. She still gets dehydrated easily, which is something she has to watch out for, being a letter carrier.

“It was a lot harder than they told me it was going to be,” she said. “It



was bad. It wasn’t an easy recovery. It hurt a lot. They wouldn’t give me anything for pain. ... I couldn’t drive and I couldn’t really walk. I couldn’t do anything. I couldn’t take care of my kids. It was rough.”

Despite her state after the surgery, she says she was still “100 percent” satisfied with her decision to help.

“They said that the kidney started working immediately for him,” Marsh said. “When we went in, he was very gray—very, very gray—and his body was very acidic. ... By the time he woke up, he had his color back.”

Marsh and Jared remain friends to this day—often communicating over the phone and have met three times in person. **PR**



News from Washington

Longest government shutdown in history ends

On Nov. 12, after 43 days, the longest government shutdown in U.S. history ended. The stalemate finally was broken when enough Democratic senators sided with Republicans after weeks of failed votes to reopen the government.

On Nov. 10, in a 60-40 vote, the Senate passed a continuing resolution to fund the government through Jan. 30, 2026. Eight Democrats or independents who caucus with the party supported the measure: Sens. Catherine Cortez Masto (NV), Dick Durbin (IL), John Fetterman (PA), Maggie Hassan (NH), Tim Kaine (VA), Angus King (ME), Jacky Rosen (NV) and Jeanne Shaheen (NH). All Senate Republicans, except Sen. Rand Paul (KY), voted in favor of the bill.

This minority of Democrats agreed to vote to reopen the government when Senate Majority Leader John Thune (R-SD) committed to holding a vote in December on extending Affordable Care Act subsidies that are set to expire at the end of 2025.

Two days later, the bill passed the House with a 222-209 vote, and President Trump signed it into law the same day.

Senate introduces bill expanding provider access for federal employees injured on the job

On Dec. 2, Sens. Collins (R-ME) and Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) introduced the Improving Access to Workers' Compensation for Injured Federal Workers Act (the bill had not received a number as this magazine was going to press).

The bill would expand access to providers by amending the Federal Employees' Compensation Act to allow federal workers injured on the job to receive treatment from physician associates/physician assistants (PAs) and nurse

practitioners (NPs). Current law prohibits PAs and NPs from treating federal workers in workers' compensation cases.

Increasingly, PAs and NPs provide critical care to patients, especially in rural and underserved communities. This bill would increase the number of eligible providers, making it easier for injured federal workers, including letter carriers, to access the care they need.

In May, Reps. Tim Walberg (R-MI) and Joe Courtney (D-CT) introduced H.R. 3170, the House version of the bill. The same month, NALC President Brian L. Renfroe testified before the House Subcommittee on Workforce Protections, highlighting the urgent need to pass this bill. In June, the Committee on Education and Workforce unanimously advanced the bill, but the legislation has yet to receive a vote on the House floor.

"Postal employees account for nearly half of the claims made to the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs each year, and letter carriers file most of these claims," Renfroe said. "If we're injured on the job, finding convenient care with the provider of our choice is the top priority. NALC supports this bill and calls on Congress to pass it."

Bills affecting unions, working people introduced and moving through Congress

This Congress, a plethora of bills that would affect unions and working people have been introduced. While some aim to support workers, strengthen unions and protect collective-bargaining rights, others are blatantly anti-worker and set a dangerous precedent for federal workers, their unions and the entire labor movement.

On Dec. 2, the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform (OGR) held a markup on several bills that would have an impact on unionized federal employees. While none of these directly affect postal employees, it is important for letter carriers to stay updated on proposals affecting federal employees that are circulating on Capitol Hill. The committee voted to advance the following bills:

- The Official Time Reporting Act (H.R. 5749), introduced by Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC), would require the Office of Personnel Management to submit an annual report to Congress detailing federal employees' use of official time, or steward time.
- The Ensuring a Qualified Civil Service (EQUALS) Act of 2025 (H.R. 5750), introduced by Rep. Brandon Gill (R-TX), would establish one-year probationary periods for "preference eligible" (e.g., veterans, widows, etc.) competitive and excepted service positions and two-year probationary periods for other federal employees. The bill would also require federal managers and supervisors to affirmatively certify the continued employment of employees following successful completion of probationary periods.
- The Federal Relocation Payment Improvement Act (H.R. 6330), introduced by Rep. Brian Jack (R-GA), would authorize federal agencies to pay federal employee relocation expenses using a lump-sum payment method.

NALC is also tracking a variety of other federal employee-related bills. While only one of the bills listed below (H.R. 2174) would affect letter carriers

and the Postal Service, it is important to track this activity to understand the landscape on Capitol Hill.

- The Protecting America's Workforce Act (H.R. 2550), introduced by Reps. Jared Golden (D-ME) and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), would nullify an executive order that stripped collective-bargaining rights for federal employees at several government agencies. Last month, the bill reached a critical milestone when a discharge petition on the legislation reached the 218-signature threshold. Following House procedure, this bill now must go to the full House for a vote.
- The Shutdown Fairness Act (S. 3168), introduced by Sen. Ron Johnson (R-WI), would guarantee that federal employees are protected from the financial harm of government shutdowns by ensuring they are paid on time during any future government shutdown.
- The Protecting the Right to Organize Act (H.R. 20/S. 852), introduced by Rep. Bobby Scott (D-VA) and Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT), would strengthen protections under the National Labor Relations Act, ensuring workers the right to organize and collectively bargain for better wages, benefits and working conditions.
- The Ask the Union Members Act (H.R. 6142), introduced by Rep. Mark Harris (R-NC), would require union contract votes to be carried out through a secret ballot election and prohibit unions from authorizing strikes unless a majority of the union's members vote to authorize a strike.
- The Fair Access to Justice for Union Members Act (H.R. 6141), introduced by Rep. Harris, would amend the Labor-Management Reporting

and Disclosure Act (LMRDA) to remove the requirement that members of a union exhaust internal reasonable hearing procedures prior to bringing certain legal or administrative proceedings.

- The Protecting Union Representation and Elections Act (H.R. 6136), introduced by Rep. Harris, would amend the LMRDA to require secret ballot elections of members for certain union officers.
- Paycheck Protection Act (H.R. 2174), introduced by Rep. Eric Bulison (R-MO), would stop the automatic deduction of union dues from federal employees' paychecks. This bill advanced the House OGR committee on March 25.
- Preserving Presidential Management Authority Act (H.R. 2249), introduced by Michael Cloud (R-TX) would grant a president the power to override parts of collective-bargaining agreements and terminate existing ones. This bill advanced the House OGR committee on March 25.
- Protecting Taxpayer's Wallets Act (H.R. 1210), introduced by Rep. Scott Perry (R-PA), would require federal unions to cover the costs of using government resources, including office space and time spent on union representation. This bill advanced the House OGR committee on March 25.
- National Right to Work Act (H.R. 1232), introduced by Rep. Joe Wilson (R-SC), would propose to establish nationwide "right to work" rules that would prevent agreements requiring workers to join or pay fees to a union.
- Union Members Right to Know Act (S. 3114), introduced by Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-LA), would require labor unions to provide members with more information and obtain their explicit consent for certain activi-

ties. The bill would mandate annual disclosure of documents such as collective bargaining agreements and constitutions, require annual written consent for using member dues for activities beyond contract administration, and allow members to opt out of non-bargaining-related spending. The bill also proposes changes to union elections, grievance processes, and the ability of members to go directly to court.

- The Fairness in Filing Act (S. 3116), introduced by Sen. Cassidy, would restrict unfair labor practice (ULP) charges that are not filed in good faith or are frivolous. The bill would require parties filing ULP charges to include supporting evidence up front, such as an affidavit, email or photo, or to formally provide an explanation if documentation is missing. Penalties, such as a fine of up to \$5,000, could be imposed on those who file in bad faith or engage in a pattern of frivolous filings.
- The Worker RESULTS Act (S. 3117), introduced by Sen. Cassidy, would amend the National Labor Relations Act to require secret ballot union elections and increase the window for decertification votes. It would also require unions to provide members with more information about their dues and obtain annual written consent before spending funds on non-bargaining activities.

While these bills could have a variety of effects on federal unions—some positive and some negative—it is necessary to understand the varying ideas lawmakers propose. While some are standing with federal employee unions, others are clearly targeting them. Whether it's on offense or defense, NALC is prepared to protect our union and our collective-bargaining rights while standing alongside federal unions in doing the same. **PR**



Comic book guy

I remember seeing comic books for the first time in probably, like 1975, 1976, as a young little boy,” Brett Swanson said, “and I was just so awestruck.”

Spider-Man and the Hulk had been on TV at the time, so Swanson had been into comic book characters since he was 5 or 6 years old. “My grandfather was a fine artist, and I was always drawing. But I had never seen a comic book before,” he said. “So, when I went into a store, they had those old spinny racks. And I just remember seeing the comic books, and ... to a young little boy, it was magic. And I knew that’s what I wanted to do.”

Within a year or two, he began creating his own comics and still has boxes of them. And when he got older, in the late 1980s, he went to art school at the Joe Kubert School of Cartoon and Graphic Art in New Jersey, an iconic institution within the comics industry.

“Joe Kubert was one of the Golden Age artists [who] was drawing comics in the ‘40s and the ‘50s, and he was

doing all the old war comics and ‘The Flash’ and all that stuff,” Swanson said. “He started a school, and it was like a trade school [where] you learn various things about the business, from art to how to publish your own stuff, anatomy, everything else. So, it was every aspect of the comic business.”

Upon graduation in 1991, “it was so hard to get an art job back then,” Swanson said. “And that’s when I fell into the Postal Service. Because I was literally a starving artist.”

Swanson said he had been visiting his post office box to check his mail when “I saw they had a sign on the thing that said, ‘We’re looking for help.’ And I’m like, ‘I’m looking for a job.’ And that’s how that all started,” he said.

Swanson began as a postal clerk in 1992 in Groton, CT, before switching to the letter carrier craft in 1994 and transferring to the nearby Mystic office,



where the Connecticut Merged Branch 20 member has been ever since. “Most artists, we have a day job,” he said, adding that his postal career “allows me to do what I want to do, and it allows me to pursue my passion.”

He’s kept up with making comic books throughout his three-decade postal career. “When I first started working for the Postal Service, I came up with a character called US Male,” he said. “It’s basically this character and his little friend [Little Max]. They fly in space, and they go to various



planets, and they fight aliens, and all that stuff.”

The carrier created his brand, Sick Puppy Studios, in 2005, and the following year he fell into children’s comics and began producing them professionally. “There’s a huge market for kid comics,” he said. “All of a sudden, it’s exploded.”

Swanson’s series is called “Power Kid” comics, and he’s published one book a year. “It’s about the main character, Power Kid, but he has his little friends with him, and they all have powers, and they fight crime when they’re not in school,” he said. “So, I came up with this idea, and it took off, and I have 14 books in the series.”

He’s currently working on Book 15. “I have what the kids call a graphic novel, but we call them collected editions,” Swanson said. “So, I have a bunch of collected editions that have basically five books in each volume. ... Every five books that I get done goes into a volume. So, with Book 15, I’ll have Volume 3 out.”

He tries to connect with people through his websites and on Instagram, X and Facebook. “And I’m just

so thankful and honored that people love my story so much that they come back and keep buying my books. Because there’s a lot out there,” he said.

While most of his commercial success has been with “Power Kid,” the carrier offers individual titles as well with other characters, like “The Sentinel,” America’s military man of might. And once in a while, he’ll still draw a strip on his character, US Male. “That was the precursor to the ‘Power Kid’ series,” he said.

Swanson sells all of his works, including some fine art and abstract paintings he creates, at various art shows and festivals or comic conventions, and on his website. He typically debuts his comic books in August at an annual art show in Mystic.

He’s been on the same route in downtown Mystic for 17 years, so the carrier has come to consider his customers as friends. “A lot of them buy my books for their kids, and their grandkids, their nieces, their nephews, and they keep coming back every single year,” he said. “So, I have a huge support from a lot of my customers that I deliver to.”

In the Mystic area, he adds, “people just know me as the cartoon guy, the comic guy. They know what I do, and I’m the only one that does what I do.

So not only does my postal job allow me to do that, but the contacts and the friendships that I’ve made through this job over the years works that way, too.”

Around five years ago, he began teaching children how to make comic books. “Every once in a while, some people would ask me if [I] can come over to the school and [I] can show some kids how to draw. And I’m like, ‘Absolutely,’” he said. Then the COVID-19 pandemic started. “And then once that hit, everything stopped for a little while. But then it started up again, and it’s been super crazy, because I’m getting asked to go everywhere. I go to schools, libraries. I have a quarterly regular five-week class at the Mystic Museum of Art.”

Swanson enjoys passing that knowledge on as he teaches about a dozen kids at a time how to make comic books, and he practices his art as often as he can. “As I tell the kids, it’s always important to try to find at least an hour a day, and working for the post office, it’s difficult,” he says. “But I do draw very often. Basically, my days off, nights, weekends. I’m always at my art desk working.”

Comics are really big now, Swanson says. “Everything you see on TV, the films, is based on a comic book now. So, everything is so comic-oriented that the kids are really into it. And



Swanson on his route in Mystic, CT

when I go to the schools, their libraries are full of comic books and everything else,” he said. “Some of them already know how to draw. ... My goal for the five-week class is that by the end, I want the kids to create their own mini comic book from start to finish, say, a cover and maybe four, five pages that they wrote, drew, inked and colored.”

He continued: “And I do it the old-school way. No computers. Everything is done by hand. ... Most comics are done in groups or teams, but I teach them step by step how to do everything themselves, from writing, to drawing, to inking, to coloring. Basically, the way that I was taught by the artists that I admired.”

That means he uses pencils, Bristol board paper—the traditional comic

paper—and various tools like rulers and pens. An artist typically draws the comic pages in pencils first before an inker—often someone separate from the penciller—goes over the pencil lines in ink. “Most people don’t realize this, but a traditional comic book is inked with a brush and a little bottle of ink ... so you have the different line works that we use,” he explained. “When I teach kids, obviously, they’re too young, so they use markers. Markers are OK in a pinch, but you generally want to use a brush and ink. And then when I color my books, I do [it] the traditional way with watercolors.”

He starts by teaching basic shapes. “With all the basic shapes, you can draw anything. It’s basically the building blocks,” he said. “So, once you

learn that ... you build upon it, and then you go to design and layout, and you start creating your own characters, and you start creating a story.”

He explains that comic books are sequential storytelling. “It goes way back to prehistoric days, when people were drawing on cave walls,” Swanson said.

“They were telling you a story through pictures, and that’s one of the oldest art forms that’s ever been. So, you fast-forward to our time now, we still have this. ... Not only is it

one of the oldest mediums that’s been around, and will always be, because people will always draw, people will always write, people will always tell stories. And that’s basically what this is, right? We’re storytellers.”

With comic books, “we’re telling you what it is, it’s basically a movie, but we’re telling you in drawings, we’re telling you in artwork, and then we’re adding words onto it. We’re adding dialog, because obviously now we can talk,” Swanson said. “And that’s what has become comic books, and it’s become the basis for all kinds of stuff now. So, I always find that fascinating, because it’s something we’ve been doing for millennia, only now it’s more up to speed.”

He’s inspired by comic book artists like Jack Kirby (a main artist of Marvel Comics from the 1960s through the 1980s who drew the “Fantastic Four” and “Thor”), as well as Kurt Swann, Sal and John Buscema, Frank Miller and John Byrne. He also credits Bill Watterson, the artist of the “Calvin and Hobbes” strip as a heavy influence on him as a young teenager.

The comic medium is a phenomenal medium, Swanson says, because you can always bend the rules. “As I tell the kids, here’s a page, here’s a couple panels, right? So, you’ve got three or four panels. OK, this is the grid, but you can tell I’m trying to bend that a little bit, and you could have your artwork coming off the panel or going into the panel. There’s always these little tricks that you can do. You’re only limited by your own imagination,” he said. “You’re your own creator. You’re the master of your own special effects.”

Above all, though, comics need to be fun. “Basically, that old line: ‘If it’s not fun, why bother?’ ” applies, Swanson said.

Swanson teaches kids how to make their own comics.





He's proud of his pupils and loves to see what ideas they come up with. "A lot of the students that I teach, they're just so creative, and it always just makes me think of myself at that young age," he said. "It's just really cool, because when guys like me pass on, we want this to continue. We want to just inspire the next generation of artists. Some of the artists I grew up reading, and some that I actually got to meet and know, inspired me. So, I just want to give that back a little bit to that little kid that's drawing. I was like, 'You can do this. You can make your own books. And if you put in the work, you can become successful.'"

The carrier gets a lot of feedback, too. "The parents come back to me and said, 'My kid loves drawing, and they're so excited. They want to take your next class.'"

Swanson even dedicates a fan art page in some of his own comic books.

"I have various kids that like to draw my characters, and if they do that, they give it to me. And ... I will dedicate a page to showcasing some of the young artwork. ... I give the kid a copy of the book and [am] like, 'Hey, your artwork is published,'" he said. "I have a huge file of stuff that kids draw me because I think it's really cool."

Swanson's currently preparing for retirement from his career as a letter carrier, and he plans to keep himself busy. "I have so much on my plate that I really want to do—stuff that I've had in mind for years," he said. "I average about a book a year because I'm always working at my job. But when I retire in January, I'm going to have a lot more free time."

In retirement, he plans to teach more kids' classes, and will start teaching classes for adults as well, and perhaps for military veterans, which he says might be a good way

to get their stories and any angst out. And not just on Sundays when he's off work, but hopefully a few days a week.

After 33 years with the Postal Service, Swanson is ready to move on. "Not to use the artist's phrase, but I'm ready to turn the page. I'm ready to start a new chapter, and just, actually, for all these years, I finally want to pursue what I want to do. And that's just to create more comics, tell more stories. And if I can inspire, that's even better."

He added: "I'm getting to the point now where, if I can pass that knowledge on, even if I could just inspire one kid that says, 'You know what? I want to be a comic artist.' ... It's worth it. It is totally, totally worth it." **PR**

Swanson made this art for this December issue of *The Postal Record*, recognizing letter carriers as the true Santas.

The importance of the *NALC Constitution*

The *NALC Constitution* is the governing document for the National Association of Letter Carriers, establishing the rules and regulations for the national organization, its local branches and state associations. It serves as the foundational document that defines the rights and responsibilities of both the members and leadership, ensuring that the organization functions in a fair and transparent manner.

The *NALC Constitution* outlines procedures for elections, defines the duties of officers, and details the responsibilities of the National Convention, which is the union's supreme governing body. The *Constitution* provides the framework for the union's structure, governance and member rights, and it is amended only through the National Convention. Here are a few key reasons why the *NALC Constitution* is important:

- **Defines the union's structure and purpose:** The *Constitution* outlines the mission and goals of the NALC, establishing its commitment to representing and advocating for city letter carriers. The *Constitution* establishes a three-tiered structure (national, local branches and state associations) and the powers and duties of various officers at each level. It helps to solidify the union's identity as an organization that seeks to improve working conditions, protect the rights of postal workers, and ensure that workers have a voice in the workplace.
- **Union operations:** The *Constitution* covers various operational aspects, including the establishment and maintenance of the NALC Health Benefit Plan, the U.S. Letter Carriers Mutual Benefit Association,

and other union-related activities.

- **Establishes governance and leadership roles:** The *NALC Constitution* defines the structure of the union's leadership, including the roles of national officers, regional officers and local branches. It outlines how elections for leadership positions are to be conducted, ensuring that the union is governed democratically and that officers are accountable to the membership. This helps maintain transparency and prevents the concentration of power in the hands of a few individuals.
- **Officer duties:** It specifies the roles and responsibilities of national officers, such as the president, who enforces union rules, oversees collective bargaining and presides over conventions. It also dictates the required officers for local branches, though bylaws can allow for consolidated or additional positions.
- **Biennial national conventions:** The *Constitution* mandates that delegates from every branch meet in a national convention every two years. At these conventions, delegates can amend the *Constitution*, set national policy and nominate national officers.
- **Guides membership rights and responsibilities:** The *Constitution* provides a clear understanding of the rights and responsibilities of NALC members. This includes the right to participate in union activities, the ability to vote on key issues such as contracts and leadership, and the expectation that members will uphold the union's rules and regulations. It is a tool that ensures fairness and equality among members and protects individuals from unjust actions. It includes provisions that protect members, such as ensuring that the right to a fair election is upheld, and that membership is open to all without regard to race, creed, color, sex or national origin.
- **Establishes processes for conflicts and disputes:** The *Constitution* sets guidelines for resolving conflicts or disputes within the union. It details the procedures for raising disputes and provides a clear framework for addressing issues that arise.
- **Protects collective-bargaining rights:** One of the main objectives of the NALC is to secure fair wages, benefits and working conditions for city letter carriers. The *Constitution* sets rules for collective bargaining, ensuring that the union can effectively negotiate on behalf of its members with the USPS. By providing a structured and unified approach to bargaining, the *Constitution* helps prevent disorganization and fragmentation of the union's efforts.
- **Ensures financial transparency and accountability:** The *Constitution* provides mechanisms for managing the union's finances, including the collection and allocation of dues. It requires that financial records be kept in a transparent manner and outlines the duties of the union's treasurers and financial officers. This helps prevent corruption and ensures that the funds are being used in the best interests of the membership.

Constitution

As amended through the
73rd Biennial Convention
Boston, Massachusetts
August 5-9, 2024



the document to evolve to meet the changing needs of the union's members.

In essence, the *NALC Constitution* is a critical document that upholds the union's integrity, protects its members' rights, and ensures that the organization operates in a fair and effective manner. It reflects the collective values and aspirations of the membership, while providing a clear framework for how the union functions. **PR**

- **Sets ethical and conduct standards:** The *Constitution* also includes provisions for ethical behavior and standards of conduct for both union members and leadership. This helps ensure that everyone involved in the NALC adheres to a code of conduct that fosters mutual respect, cooperation and integrity. It reinforces the union's commitment to fairness, justice and solidarity.
- **Adaptability and flexibility:** The *NALC Constitution* is designed to be flexible and adaptable to changing circumstances. While it provides the core framework for how the union operates, it also allows for amendments to be made to address new challenges or reflect changes in labor law, U.S. Postal Service

policies, or the needs of the NALC membership. This ensures that the union remains relevant and effective over time.

- **Unity and solidarity:** By outlining common goals, responsibilities and protocols, the *NALC Constitution* helps foster a sense of unity and solidarity among city letter carriers. It reinforces the idea that workers are stronger when they stand together, and it ensures that the union speaks with one voice when negotiating with employers, influencing policy or supporting labor rights.
- **Amendment process:** Amendments to the *Constitution*, which can be made only by delegates at the national convention, allow

Last chance to contribute through CFC

The open enrollment period for the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) ends on Dec. 31, so now is the time to make your contribution. CFC is the world's largest and most successful annual workplace charity campaign, raising more than \$100 million a year on average. Since its inception in 1961, the CFC has raised nearly \$8.7 billion for charities and people in need. Federal and postal employees participate in the CFC by choosing from a list of charities to support through automatic deductions from their paychecks.

"For letter carriers, there's no busier period than the holidays, but it's also the time when we focus most on the needs of others," NALC President Brian L. Renfroe said. "Please try to find a moment to pledge to give a little, each pay period, to the charities you support."

All active letter carriers can participate in the CFC through payroll deduction. Participants can use payroll deduction, credit or debit cards, or bank accounts to make recurring donations. They also can make a one-time donation using any of these methods except payroll deduction. Participants can even volunteer for the charity and count the value of the hours as money raised.

The easiest way to sign up is through the CFC Donor Pledging System at cfcgiving.opm.gov or through the CFC Giving smartphone app, available on the App Store and Google Play. Retired letter carriers may donate through a deduction from their annuity or by making a one-time or recurring donation using a credit or debit card. They also can do so through an automatic deduction from their bank account using the CFC Donor Pledging System.

To donate online, register an account at givecfc.org.

Letter carriers can choose to support any of the 2,000-plus nonprofit charitable organizations through CFC. By looking at the list and choosing a charity's CFC number, you can donate directly to one or more charities. You can search for charities at cfcgiving.opm.gov/offerings.

NALC's official charity since 1952 is the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA). MDA is the world's leading nonprofit health organization sponsoring research into the causes of, and effective treatments for, neuromuscular diseases. MDA research grants support research projects worldwide, as well as camps and activities for children who have any of these diseases. MDA's CFC number is 10561.

For more information, go to nalc.org/cfc. **PR**

Proud to Serve

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. We'll follow up with you to obtain news clippings, photos or other information.



Christopher Perez

Firefighters inspect the damage caused by the fire at a house on Perez's route.



Honoring heroic carriers

Heroism, 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 concerned 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.

Letter carrier rescues customer from fire

Christopher Perez, a four-year letter carrier, had just finished one section of his route in Yorktown Heights, NY, on March 28 when he saw a white plume of smoke coming from an area he had just delivered to. At first, the Westchester Merged Branch 693 letter

carrier thought that maybe someone was putting leaves in a fire pit, but when the smoke turned black, he realized that burning leaves is not allowed in this development.

He got in his truck and drove back to the area, where he saw several neighbors gathered. This was a 55-plus senior community, so they had canes and walkers and were unable to do much when it came to the fire.

Perez first ran around the four-unit building, knocking on everyone's doors to make sure that they knew about the fire and were getting out. No one came out of one of the units, but he knew, or thought he knew, that the customer who owned the unit normally went to Florida in the winter. But the neighbors informed him that they had seen a man in the unit. Perez walked to the back of the building and saw the man come out onto the second-floor balcony in the back of the house.

"I'm telling the gentleman, 'Hey, I don't know if you know, but the house is on fire. You need to get out of the house,'" Perez recounted. "He looked at me and goes, 'Oh, I gotta get my keys and my phone.' And I'm like, 'OK, you better hurry up. You better hurry up. Come on, get out of the house.'"

Within minutes, the house was starting to go up in flames. "So, now I'm getting pretty antsy," Perez said. "I'm like, 'Dude, you really gotta get out of there, sir.' He kept saying that he can't find his keys. He kept continuing to go in and out of the house. I'm thinking, 'You know what? I'm going to go to the front door, kick in the door and bring him out, and that'll be the end of the story.'"

Little did Perez know that he wouldn't be able to get within 20 feet



Richard Berowski (l) receives a commendation for his heroic action.

of the front door because it was covered in flames. “At the time, I had a big beard that went down to, like, the middle of my chest,” he said, “and when I ran to the front where the fire was at, it literally curled my beard on my face. Now that plan is completely out, because there’s no way I’m running through a door that’s completely engulfed in flames.”

The carrier kept his cool and figured out his next steps.

“The flames at this time were at least 20 feet high,” Perez recalled. “I’m like, ‘My God, this guy’s not going to be able to get out, and the only way he’s going to be able to get out is if he jumps.’”

He continued: “So, I run to the back, and I’m like, ‘Sir, listen, there’s no way you can get out this front door. Can you please jump? If you jump, I’ll catch you somehow. We’re both going to get hurt, but I can guarantee you that’s probably going to be the best-case scenario, because you will die if you stay in this house.’ He was like, ‘No, I’m not jumping.’”

The man was in his 50s, and Perez remembered him saying that he couldn’t “afford” to jump due to the possible effects it could have on his body. Despite the man’s refusal to comply, Perez knew he had to do something.

“It was like a fight-or-flight situation, and I chose to fight,” Perez said.

He decided to move his truck underneath the balcony. He climbed up on the hood, then on the roof, then climbed over the banister. He made his way into the house and found the man in the kitchen, still looking for his keys and phone.

“I was like, ‘Forget about your keys and your phone. That’s replaceable, but you are not,’” Perez said. “Then,

I dragged him and pulled him out the door. He did not want to put his leg over the banister. I don’t blame him when you’re at a certain age—you’re not trying to go over no banister—but at that point, I’m like, ‘Dude, it’s do or die now. We’ve got to go.’”

To urge him to jump, Perez said, “I have a family, and I’ve got to make it home to them, and there’s no way that I can go home to my family and say that I left you behind. So, we both have to go,” and he just looked me in my eye and said, ‘Fine.’”

Finally agreeing to leave the building, the man let Perez help him over the banister and onto the truck.

Although the building was severely damaged, none of the residents sustained any serious injuries. After being demolished, the building is now in the process of being rebuilt.

Perez often helps out elderly customers in need on his route. On one occasion he performed CPR, bringing back his customer. Even as Perez was being interviewed by *The Postal Record* about the fire story, a customer with dementia suddenly collapsed in the street.

“I put him on my back, and I piggy-backed him up the little flight of stairs in the front of his house then brought him into his wife,” Perez said.

The carrier has received some media attention for his actions, but he’s brushed off any praise. “I feel like it’s something that anyone would do, you know?” he told News 12 New York.

Carrier saves child running into traffic

On June 2 around 11 a.m., **Richard Berowski** was delivering his route in Mohawk, NY. The Utica Branch 375 letter carrier was at the bottom

of a hill where he said people tend to drive “pretty fast” when he saw a young child alone, who he thought was about 4 or 5 years old, running in the road.

“I just went and grabbed his hand, because he was, like, right in the middle of the road,” the six-year letter carrier said. “I put my hand up, and it stopped the cars and stopped him.”

Berowski said he held the child’s hand tightly for what “felt like an eternity,” although it was only about two minutes. The letter carrier tried to talk to him and ask him questions, but the child did not respond. He apparently had slipped away from his mother on the busy street. Then his mother caught up with them, thanked the carrier and informed him that the child is nonverbal and autistic.

“How he got away that far from them [his family] without noticing, that’s beyond me,” Berowski said.

After the incident, the letter carrier went on with the rest of his route.

Reflecting later, Berowski said, “I was so glad I was there and I’m just really glad that people in the cars were observant, not on their phones or anything.”

Letter carrier helps unconscious man

While looking for another letter carrier whom he was going to help with deliveries on Aug. 8, Atlantic City, NJ Branch 370 member **Robert Dade** had driven all the way to The Point, at the end of a narrow strip of Longport—a borough of the Jersey Shore on Absecon Island. As the first-year letter carrier was driving, he noticed a man lying unconscious in the middle of the street.



Robert Dade

Dade parked and ran to the man. As soon as he did, four or five bystanders came to help. The man was pale, his lips were purple, he wasn't breathing and he had no pulse. Dade had been a lifeguard, so he immediately directed others to call 911 and began administering CPR. As he did, the bystanders continued to check the man's pulse. After about two minutes of CPR, "he started to get a little faint pulse," Dade said.

Another bystander took over compressions while Dade ran back to his truck to get a water bottle. He splashed some water on the man's feet—a technique he knew could stimulate the nervous system—and as soon as he did, the man began gasping for air.

Within about five minutes, the beach patrol arrived, followed by EMTs and police officers. Once they

Heroic carriers (continued)

used a defibrillator on the man and a suction machine to remove foam coming from his mouth, he was breathing on his own.

Dade was grateful for the help the man received from the other good Samaritans. "It was awesome to see the community at work," the carrier said.

After the incident, Dade continued with his route.

Dade found out from the beach patrol that once the man had reached the hospital, he had died. "It was crushing to hear," Dade said, but he added that he was glad he did what he could to "give him his chance."

"I'm still emotional over this," he said of the experience. "You just don't know what to do at the moment, but you try your best."

Letter carrier performs CPR on customer

On Aug. 6, **Jason Danliers** parked his truck outside a house on his route in Albany, NY, and completed his park-and-loop. As he returned to his truck, he was stopped by a girl who was about 12 or 13 years old. She asked Danliers if he knew CPR and if he could help her because her dad wasn't breathing.

"I didn't even think twice about it," Danliers said. "I just said, 'Sure, let's go.'"

The Branch 29 member followed the girl into the house right next to where he had parked. She led him to the bathroom, where her father was lying on his side.

"I checked his pulse and he wasn't breathing," the carrier said. "I was thinking to myself, 'We've got to get him on his back, because it's the only way to help him breathe and perform CPR.' It was a struggle to get the fa-

ther on his back because he was very heavy, and I was holding his head because I didn't want him to hit his head. The speakerphone was on, and the 911 dispatcher was instructing me to perform CPR and start compressions. So, that's when I started pushing really hard. I did like 30 compressions before EMS arrived."

The experience was definitely out of the ordinary for Danliers. "I never thought I would actually do that on my route," he said.

The paramedics had moved the man to the kitchen, where there was more space, but the whole time, the kitchen stove had been on, and smoke had started pouring from the kitchen. A firefighter yelled out, "Someone turn off the stove!"

Danliers did, and that's when he noticed that the kids were crying, "so I started to console the daughter and son," he said. "The kids called out, 'Not my dad, not my dad!'"

Despite all the life-saving measures, the man died.

"That's really hurtful to see that, you know, your dad's passing away in front of your eyes," Danliers said. "They're so young. That hurt, and I think about it, I still do."

Afterward, the six-year carrier returned to deliver his route, and later that day he made sure to give his own mother a hug. He later spoke with the family, which he said gave him "some closure."

Reflecting on the event, Danliers said, "I would do it for anybody. ... That's just the right thing to do."

Carrier responds to overturned truck

On March 11, Branch 421 carrier **Ernest Fuentes Jr.** was delivering

Ernest Fuentes Jr.



mail in a neighborhood in San Antonio, TX, when he saw a Ford F-150 truck that was going about 100 mph lose control on a curved access road and flip over. Shocked, the four-year letter carrier immediately ran toward the crash.

Another bystander who had been riding his bike in the area also came to assist. When the carrier got to the truck, he called 911 and he heard the driver yelling inside.

“He was just kind of like freaking out that he was in there,” Fuentes said. “He couldn’t open the door.”

Fuentes tried to open the door, but the top of the truck was damaged. He instructed the driver to rock the door from the inside as Fuentes pulled it from the outside. Eventually they got the door open wide enough so the driver could crawl out.

When the driver emerged, Fuentes could see that he was dazed and bleeding from his face and arms due to the broken glass, but he was conscious and didn’t seem to have sustained any major injuries.

Fuentes put his arm around the driver and tried to help him onto a large toolbox that had fallen from his truck. Fuentes thought the man seemed to be OK, he said, “so I was like, ‘Oh, maybe he can walk to this toolbox, so I can assess him.’ I should have known better. I let him go, then he fell over. I’m like, ‘Oh, he can’t walk over there on his own.’ ”

The bystander and Fuentes each took one of the man’s arms and helped him to the toolbox. Then,



Fuentes saw the truck lose control and then rushed to help the driver.

Fuentes retrieved a bottle of water from his postal truck to rinse the glass off the driver. At that time, the bystander turned off the truck to ensure that it wouldn’t start a fire.

Emergency services arrived soon after to take over the situation and, confident that the driver was in good hands, Fuentes returned to his route.

Despite praise for his good deeds, the carrier insists he was simply happy to make a difference. Fuentes served in the Army from 2004 to 2017 and related this experience to his military service. “I guess when I did all this, I was kind of already used to it,” he said. “I didn’t hesitate to help somebody.”

Carrier stops boy from running into traffic

On Aug. 2 around 3:30 p.m., **Kimberly Hulett**, a 35-year letter carrier, was walking her route when she saw a young boy who was around 6 years old



Kimberly Hulett

running down the street. “He crossed over to the next lane and he was just smiling as he was running, like he was having so much fun,” she said.

Although there were no cars near them, she knew one could approach at any time. So, the Buffalo-Western New York Branch 3 letter carrier acted fast, grabbing his arm and taking him out of the road.

“I constantly kept asking him, ‘Where do you live?’ ” Hulett said.

She asked him several more questions, but the boy didn’t respond to any of them. She realized that he was nonverbal and possibly autistic, so she walked back to her truck to get her phone. “I called for the police to come, and so I’m telling the dispatcher what’s going on. I don’t see anybody coming after him,” Hulett said.

In the meantime, because it was so hot that day, she invited the child to stand under the shade of a tree near her postal vehicle. Several times the child tried to get away from her, but Hulett said that, for his safety, “I wasn’t gonna let him go.”

She waited with him for about 15 to 20 minutes until someone pulled up, and Hulett asked if he knew the child. “Yes, that’s my brother. My mother is in the house,” he said. “I just happened to come home, and my mother was in the house crying and screaming ‘cause she didn’t know where he was. ... He is autistic.”

After Hulett explained what had happened, the brother thanked her and the carrier left to finish her route.

“I’m driving, and next thing I’m just crying and truly, I’m thanking God that I was allowed to be there at that time to rescue him,” Hulett said.

Heroic carriers (continued)

Letter carrier assists at scene of car crash

Richard Riggs, a San Mateo, CA Branch 1280 letter carrier, was walking his route in Pacifica on March 31 when he saw a woman in an SUV pull over, looking like she was about to park. Just seconds later, a man driving a large SUV came up from behind Riggs's truck, and the 36-year letter carrier noticed that he looked distracted. Instead of stopping or turning when he reached the woman's car, he struck her vehicle from the back, at about 25 mph.

Riggs immediately rushed to the accident scene to help. In the seconds it took for him to reach the woman, her two back-seat passengers were already out of the vehicle. However, the driver remained inside coughing from the airbag dust.

"I didn't realize there was that much smoke from an airbag deployment," Riggs said. "The whole car was full of smoke, and I thought, 'Where there's smoke, there's fire.'"

Riggs urged her to get out of the vehicle, but when she didn't respond or get out, he reached into the car, wrapped his arms around her and pulled her out. He then walked her to nearby residents, who gave her a chair to sit in.

Next, he went to help the male driver of the larger SUV. His door was jammed shut, so Riggs, filled with adrenaline, "just ripped that door open," he said.

After giving a statement to police, Riggs let his supervisor know what had happened and continued on his route.

"I felt good about it," he said. "I was there at the right time."

Later he ran into the female driver's son on his route, who expressed his gratitude for the carrier's actions.



Carrier saves customer from dog attack

On Aug. 11 around 4 p.m. in Port Arthur, TX, **Genese Robertson**, who was only four months into her letter carrier career, had just realized she missed a package, so she turned her postal vehicle around to deliver it.

The Houston Branch 283 letter carrier saw a woman in the street who appeared from far away to be playing with a dog, but when she got closer, she realized the woman was being attacked by a large pit bull. The dog had the woman's arm in its jaws and was violently yanking it "like how they tug a rope," Robertson described.

Robertson got close and rolled down the window of her postal vehicle. She used her dog-repellent spray on the dog and called 911.

"I was shaking real bad," Robertson said.

Other drivers and pedestrians were nearby, but no one else assisted.

Despite Robertson's efforts, the dog continued to attack, dragging the woman and biting her arm and leg. Robertson told the woman to come closer so that she could spray the dog more directly. She continued

spraying, using up two entire bottles and switching to bug spray when she ran out. Finally, the dog let up, and the woman was able to run into her house.

After the woman got to her house, the dog stayed outside her house, pacing and attempting to wipe the spray off its face onto the grass. When emergency responders arrived, the dog ran and hid under a neighbor's house. Robertson stayed until emergency responders got the scene under control, then was on her way for the rest of her route.

When Port Arthur Police Officer Shelby Harper arrived on scene, she noticed the mail truck had a "tremendous amount of blood on the side of the vehicle, [there was] a huge puddle of blood in the street, and [there were] bloody footprints all the way to the victim's residence," according to the police department. "There is no doubt that Mrs. Robertson helped to save the victim's life when she stepped up to assist a stranger in desperate need. Genese Robertson went above and beyond on this day."

About a week and a half later, Robertson ran into the woman, who had been hospitalized and had undergone surgery.

"She came and gave me a hug and told me 'Thank you'—that I actually saved her life," Robertson said.

The dog had chewed through the woman's arm to her tendons and bones, and she had lost feeling in her fingers. When Robertson ran into her again recently, the woman said she was slowly regaining feeling in her fingers.

"I felt good about being able to help her," Robertson said. "I mean, I just felt like I did what anybody would have done."

Port Arthur Police Chief Tim Duriso later presented Robertson with a certificate of appreciation “as a symbol of our respect and admiration for her courageous assistance to a citizen in need on Aug. 11.”

Letter carrier rescues elderly woman from fire

Heavy smoke coming from a customer’s trailer windows and loud smoke alarms alerted **Jairo Lopez** of a possible fire as he was working his Midwest City, OK, route on March 13. The Oklahoma City Branch 458 member had worked on his current route for about two years and knew that an elderly woman who was deaf lived there and that she wouldn’t have been able to hear the alarms.

The eight-year letter carrier knocked on the door and tried to open it along with the windows, but it was to no avail. So, he searched for help.

“I drove around to the other street where I had seen some maintenance

workers,” Lopez said. “I notified a maintenance worker, and he drove with me back to the lady’s house.”

The maintenance worker had a spare key to the woman’s home, so they went into the trailer together. They found the woman toward the back of the trailer. She was unaware of the fire, because she didn’t hear the alarms or see a sign of the fire and when Lopez reached her she was “unconscious or asleep.” Lopez said, “We took her out,” explaining that they lifted her “shoulder to shoulder” and carried her outside.

The fire was minor and resulted from a faulty wire in the oven. It was contained in time, leaving only smoke damage. The woman was fine afterward and hadn’t sustained any injuries. Lopez has seen the customer on several occasions since, and she often greets him when he is delivering mail.

Lopez never told anyone about the incident. His actions became known only after the property manager informed the post office about the carrier’s good deeds. “If I can help out, I’ll help out,” he said. “I’m not really a person that likes attention.”

Carrier helps repair technician after fall

July 14 began as just a gloomy and cold day in Stamford, CT, but suddenly a severe thunderstorm started with fast winds and pouring rain. At around 5:15 p.m., Branch 60 member **Derek Decou** was nearing the end of his route.

As he was driving, he said he noticed a wire falling across his side mirror, “and I’m like, ‘What’s going on?’ ” The 32-year letter carrier looked up and saw a cable repair worker at the top of an about 20-foot ladder. Suddenly, the

Derek Decou



ladder slid and fell into the road with the cable repair man on it.

“Someone could have easily ran over him, because people speed through there,” Decou said.

Decou got out of the vehicle and saw the repair man trying to crawl to his truck. When Decou reached him, the man was in intense pain, unable to even dial 911. Decou helped the man out of the road and into his truck—which was about 50 feet from where he had fallen—called 911 and waited with him until EMS arrived.

Once EMTs got there, Decou told the firefighters what had happened before going on his way to finish the rest of his route.

“I felt good about helping him and that I was there to help him, because it was a dangerous area,” Decou said. “That was a bad spot for him to fall.”

Letter carrier uses Narcan to save life

Over the summer, Buffalo-Western New York Branch 3 member **Alexander Skomra** had visited Philadelphia, PA, and happened upon a fire station that was giving away free Narcan, a medicine that reverses an opioid overdose. Thinking that he would never know when it might come in handy, the carrier picked up some. On Oct. 15, only





his third day carrying mail alone, his decision ended up saving a customer's life.

Skomra had missed a delivery and went back to put it in the mailbox when a man came up to him asking if he happened to have Narcan. Remembering the Narcan he had in his bag, Skomra retrieved it from his truck.

They went to the living room of the apartment where a woman appeared to be overdosing. When Skomra arrived, the woman was making "this awful breathing noise," he said. Skomra administered the Narcan to the woman by nose.

"Within a couple minutes, she was fine," Skomra said. "She, like, came around and could answer questions and stuff. Before that, you could just see her eyes moving.

"I was glad I was there," Skomra said. "I should have already had left that area. It was kind of weird that it happened in a way for me to be able to be there to help."

Carrier hides woman running from assailant

Tiffany McCarty, a two-year letter carrier in Wichita, KS, was deliver-

Heroic carriers (continued)

ing mail on Feb. 26 at 10 a.m. when a young woman suddenly ran across the street toward her. She yelled to the Branch 201 letter carrier, "He's going to kill me!" and asked her to call 911.

"She was so scared and crying," McCarty said. "She was hysterical. ... She was only 21. ... I felt like I had to do something right then."

To hide her, McCarty had her sit on her LLV steps, which were facing away from the house she had run out of. As McCarty was calling 911, she saw the man whom the young woman was running from emerge from a nearby house. He had a gun raised just enough for McCarty to see it. After spotting the gun, McCarty crouched down on the floor of the LLV between a tray and her seat. The man looked around, seeing the mail truck, but did not notice her, so he went back inside the home.

"I was scared for her. I'm a mom, so I can only imagine [her] being one of my daughters," McCarty said. She added that she didn't feel scared for herself and felt as if she was "a bullet-proof vest for [the young woman]."

An emergency response team arrived in about 10 to 15 minutes. After McCarty spoke with them, she returned to her route.

Following the incident, she was still delivering mail to the assailant's house, which made her worry something would happen to her on her route.

"I was nervous for the simple fact that I was still on that route, and I wasn't sure if he would find out that the postal worker said something, you know?" McCarty said.

A few days after the incident, McCarty found out from a police report that the man had been arrested for aggravated robbery. He had stolen

toiletries, a charger, a debit card and a few other items from the young woman. McCarty is unsure of what has become of the assailant, but she is now working at a different station.

Letter carrier spots child walking down middle of road

Theodore May was walking his route on Oct. 21 when the Buffalo-Western New York Branch 3 member came across a child walking down the middle of a side street near the busy Main Street in Buffalo. The carrier had just gotten out of his truck when the boy's cries coming from the street alerted him that something was amiss.

"I was shocked," the three-year letter carrier recalled. "You see a 3-year-old, you're not thinking he's unsupervised. ... It was just him in the road ... so I was kind of in shock for a minute."

May knew there was a day care facility about half a mile away because it is part of his delivery route. May stayed with the child while a nearby resident called the business. The day care was unaware of the boy being missing, although May estimated that he had been gone for at least 10 minutes.

Concerned about the day care's loss of the boy, May reported the day care to the Office of Children and Family Services, the agency responsible for child care in New York state. "I just want to make sure this doesn't happen again to a kid," May said.

Reflecting on the incident, May remembered that there wasn't anyone around, saying, "If it weren't for me, he probably would have been gone." **PR**

Lilly Ledbetter gives remarks at the Department of Labor's Worker Voice Summit in 2016.

Lilly Ledbetter

Equal pay for equal work

She wasn't interested in activism until someone at work slipped her an anonymous note. Lilly Ledbetter could have ignored it and continued her quiet life as a manager at Goodyear Rubber and Tire Co. in Alabama, where she was nearing retirement. The note informed her that she had been paid about 40 percent less than the male managers in her office.

Instead of accepting this, she stood up for her rights.

It was 1998, nearly 20 years since she had been hired as one of the first female supervisors at her Goodyear facility. Her performance reviews were almost all positive, so she believed she deserved at least the same pay as her male counterparts, and until she received that note, she believed that she was earning it. She quickly calculated that she might have been underpaid by hundreds of thousands of dollars during her tenure at Goodyear.

"When I saw how much less I had been compensated, I was devastated," Ledbetter said. "I thought about all those overtime hours, all that money, and all the things my family had done without—not to mention the impact on my 401(k) and future Social Security. I was two years from retirement."

The problem wasn't pay equity laws—federal law already required equal pay for the same job. But employees at Goodyear, as with many other companies, were forbidden from disclosing their pay to others. How could Ledbetter have known she wasn't paid enough all those years?

"I wasn't in a position to quit," she added. "I still had a mortgage, college tuition and bills. But I couldn't let it go."

Ledbetter filed a charge with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, which referred her case to a lawyer who took it on a contingency ba-

sis, meaning the attorney would receive a fee only if Ledbetter won the case.

Five years later, she won in federal court and was awarded \$3.8 million. But bitter disappointment followed. Goodyear appealed, and the case went to the U.S. Supreme Court. In a 5-4 decision, the court ruled in 2007 against Ledbetter—not because the court thought she didn't deserve the judgment, but rather because the law said that employers couldn't be sued for violating anti-discrimination law for a decision the employer had made 180 days or more before the lawsuit.

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg dissented, and in a signal of how strongly she felt, read her dissent out loud, from the bench, when the decision was announced. Among Ginsberg's objections was the simple fact that the time limit made Ledbetter's salary impossible to challenge since her current salary was determined by decisions made long ago, and it can be very difficult to learn what colleagues are earning.

"Her point was that people don't stand around the water cooler at work discussing their pay," Ledbetter said. "And even if someone were to find out they were earning a little less, it's difficult to know whether that's due to discrimination."

Inspired by Ginsburg and supported by advocates for equal pay, including the labor movement, Ledbetter put aside the sting of the loss in court and decided to work to change the law.

Barack Obama, the Democratic nominee for president at the time, embraced the idea. Ledbetter even spoke at the 2008 Democratic National Convention in Denver in support of the legislation,



SUMMIT ON WORKER VOICE



which Congress passed in January 2009 as the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. On Jan. 29, it became the first bill that President Obama signed into law. The new law declared that the clock begins to run down on pay discrimination claims beginning with the last paycheck received, not when the pay level was set.

"Pay equity affects you for the rest of your life," Ledbetter said after the law was enacted, noting that most married women outlive their husbands. "And many can't remain independent simply because they did not get their rightful retirement and pay. This is a hardship in this country. It's devastating to the American family, the community, the states and the nation. The gender pay gap is everybody's issue."

Of course, for the most part, union contracts solve the pay equality issue because the pay scales are public and based on objective qualifications like seniority. Male and female letter carriers, for instance, are paid the same because they have the same contract.

While the law Ledbetter championed was retroactive to the day before the Supreme Court had ruled against her, it applied only to cases that were still pending. Since Ledbetter's case already had been decided, the ruling did not reverse the original judgment against her. Ledbetter died Oct. 12, 2024, without getting what she was due, but she left a legacy through the law named for her so that others would not face the same discrimination. **PR**

Prepare now for a successful food drive

Each year, NALC branches are encouraged to register for the Stamp Out Hunger® Food Drive held on the second Saturday in May. Stamp Out Hunger is the largest single-day food drive in the nation. The food drive's success is due to the dedication of letter carriers and volunteers and support from partners and local food agencies.

Following are tips for branches on organizing a successful food drive.

Registration

Work on the food drive must start in advance and must be a priority. The process begins with the branch selecting a food drive coordinator.

Once the food drive coordinator has been identified, the branch president should log in to their Members Only portal via the NALC website. Registration is simple and requires only a few minutes to complete. For a step-by-step guide on how to register your branch, watch the video posted at nalc.org/toolkit.

Groundwork

Once the branch is registered, the food drive coordinator should explore NALC's Stamp Out Hunger webpage at nalc.org/food to find information, such as deadlines (to receive postcards, bags and posters), the coordinator's manual, a sample press release, and a list of state and regional coordinators with up-to-date contact information.

The food drive coordinator should first review the coordinator's manual and then enlist help, as the branch will need volunteers. Start by asking the branch members to sign up by placing a sign-up sheet at your monthly branch meeting and on your branch web page and/or social media pages. Be mindful that the coordinator can solicit help

from other crafts and from food drive co-sponsors, such as United Way.

Review the coordinator's manual and then create a timeline of duties and the branch's available budget to share with your volunteers so that they'll know what is expected of them. Schedule a meeting with the volunteers to identify skills or useful contacts. Make sure to set realistic expectations, assist with training if needed, provide reassurance, and follow up regularly with the volunteers.

Building partnerships

Take advantage of local opportunities to solicit donations from businesses. Letter carriers have an advantage, because they interact with businesses daily and have a relationship with the point of contact. Find tips and talking points on how to secure local support here: nalc.org/community-service/food-drive/food-drive-toolkit/getting-partners-and-sponsors.

Prior to meeting with a potential partner, the food drive coordinator should create a folder and include materials that can be left with the prospective partner, including a letter explaining the cause, what type of donations are requested, and how those donations will be used. The food drive coordinator should create a list of the possible partners and include the date the meeting with those potential partners took place, or the date the packet of information was mailed if no meeting was held, so the coordinator can follow up.

The local United Way might be able to assist with finding local pantries, coordinating distribution of food, and attempting to get sponsors for bags. More information is available at unitedway.org/find-your-united-way.

Other partners who may be able to assist include the AFL-CIO and the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW), which can be found by visiting ufcw.org/members/find-your-local. The most common sponsors for bags are local grocery stores. Bag information and deadlines can be found at nalc.org/toolkit under the heading "Important information for coordinators."

Advertising

There are numerous ways a branch can get the word out. One way is by establishing media contacts and asking them to help publicize the drive. Also, contact elected officials and ask them to declare the second Saturday in May Food Drive Day. A sample press release for news and radio stations, along with a sample proclamation for elected officials, are in the coordinator's manual.

Other ways include wearing food drive T-shirts; putting out lawn signs; hanging posters and flyers inside apartment complexes, banks, places of worship and grocery stores; providing stand-up talks with carriers to get them excited about the food drive; working with apartment complexes to send community emails and to set up a common area drop-off location for food; and sharing information on social media. This will help boost community support and improve the outcome of the food drive.

NALC's social media team and the Department of Communications and Media Relations, both at Headquarters, along with NALC's national partners, will continue spreading the word and raising awareness for the Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive. Remember to follow NALC's social media accounts on Facebook at facebook.com/StampOutHunger and at

@StampOutHunger on X for more ideas. To find or send messages about the food drive on either platform, use #StampOutHunger.

Next steps

After the food drive, what's next? The food drive coordinator should visit the food drive database via their Members Only portal. The coordinator will select the "Sponsors/Food Banks" tab, click "Add Local Sponsor or Food Bank" and a dialog box will appear, input money collected and/or pounds of food collected, and click "Submit." The money collected will be automatically converted to pounds of food. To verify that the information is accurate, click the "Donated" tab. The total pounds of food with the converted dollars to pounds will be populated under

this tab.

Once the final results have been submitted, the coordinator should compile the information that has been collected and provide it to the branch president. The information should include lists of volunteers, vendor and partner contacts; food banks in the area along with their contact information; and a timeline of events leading up to the food drive, together with notes on what worked and areas to improve.

Finally, the food drive coordinator needs to determine whether this is something they are interested in doing again. If not, help find a replacement. For a branch to succeed, leaders must train the next

generation.

"Thank you for helping continue the fight to end hunger within our communities with our annual Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive," Presi-



Postal Record wins three ILCA awards

The International Labor Communications Association (ILCA) has announced the results of its 2025 annual labor media contest. Once again, NALC was recognized for excellence, with three *Postal Record* stories receiving awards.

NALC rejoined ILCA in 2019, and *The Postal Record* has won multiple awards each year since in North America's largest and longest-standing competition for labor journalists.

The contest was for work done and published in 2024. NALC's three awards for written articles were surpassed in that bracket by only two unions nationwide.

Editorial Assistant Sarah Eccleston won second place in the Best Feature Story of an Issue, Campaign or Topic category for her article on efforts by

our members to raise awareness about autism, and third place in the Best Profile of a Person or Group category for her story of a letter carrier/singer. Managing Editor Mike Shea took third place in the Best Labor History Story category for an article on the history of absentee voting.

The ILCA Labor Media Contest recognizes excellence among publications, websites, film, video and electronic media. Dozens of international unions and many more individual locals enter



the annual contest, including some of the nation's biggest unions. It draws thousands of entries, which are judged by experts in the fields of labor and communications. **PR**

NALC makes HQ, regional appointments

NALC President Brian L. Renfroe appointed several members to union positions in November.



Anthony Bossi of Massachusetts Northeast Merged Branch 25 as a regional administrative assistant (RAA) for Region 14 (central and eastern Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont).

Bossi began his postal career in 2006 as a part-time flexible (PTF) in Cambridge, MA, and transferred to Lowell, MA, in 2014. He has served as a steward, assistant secretary, secretary and vice president for Branch 25. He completed Step B training in 2017 and graduated from Formal A and Beyond training in 2018. After completing arbitration advocate training in 2019, Bossi became a national assigned assistant (NAA) for Region 14. In 2024, he was named a regional grievance assistant (RGA) for Region 14 and Region 15 (western Connecticut, northern New Jersey, New York, and the territories of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands), a position he held until he became RAA.

Bossi graduated from the NALC Leadership Academy in 2023.



Yvette Kinard

The president named **Anthony Bossi** of Massachusetts Northeast Merged Branch 25 as a regional administrative assistant (RAA) for Region

Yvette Kinard, a member of New York, NY Branch 36, was appointed by Renfroe as a new RAA for Region 15.

Kinard began carrying mail

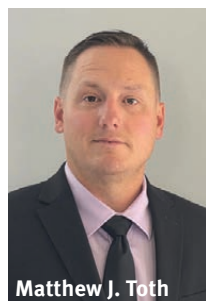
in 2001. She has served her branch in several capacities, including as Formal A officer, direct of education, newsletter editor, Employee Assistance Program liaison, Customer Connect coordinator and food drive coordinator. She received dispute resolution team (DRT) training in 2022 and was a DRT member.

Kinard graduated from the NALC Leadership Academy in 2023.



Jim Langlois of Pawtucket, RI Branch 55 as a legislative and political organizer (LPO) as part of NALC Headquarters staff. Langlois was hired as a casual in 1990 and worked his way up to full-time regular in 1996. He served his branch as a steward, chief steward and MDA coordinator. He served as branch vice president from 2001 to 2007 and then president until June 1. While branch president, he also served as Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF) coordinator.

Langlois also was active in the Rhode Island State Association, including serving as letter carrier congressional liaison (LCCL) and vice president.



Matthew J. Toth

President Renfroe named **Matthew J. Toth** of Elyria, OH Branch 196 to Headquarters staff as an LPO.

A third-generation letter carrier, Toth first

carried the mail in 2016. He served his branch as steward and then was elected assistant secretary-treasurer in 2017. He became vice president in 2020, executive vice president in 2021 and president in 2023, a position he held until his appointment as LPO. Toth also served as the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP) representative for his branch, as well as a LCCL.

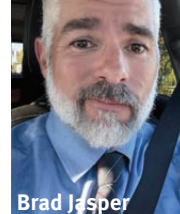
Toth graduated from the NALC Leadership Academy in 2023.



Dustin DeCastro of Akron, OH Branch 148 as an RGA for Region 11 (upstate New York and Ohio). DeCastro joined USPS in 2000. He served Branch 148 as a steward and then was elected sergeant-at-arms in 2015, vice president in 2018 and president in 2021. He served another term as vice president beginning in 2024 until his appointment as RGA.

He received Formal A and Beyond training in 2017. He has served as an arbitration advocate and as a regional steward training instructor. He worked as an NAA and outside steward for Region 11 since 2023.

DeCastro graduated from the NALC Leadership Academy in 2024.



Brad Jasper

President Renfroe named **Brad Jasper** of Yonkers, NY Branch 387 a new RGA for Region 15.

Jasper joined USPS in 2010 as a

transitional employee (TE) and became a city carrier assistant (CCA) in 2013, converting to career carrier the following year. His branch activities included service as a steward, chief steward and food drive coordinator. He was elected branch vice president in 2018, and he became an NAA for Region 15 the same year, positions he held until his appointment as RGA.

He also worked on the Next Generation Delivery Vehicle (NGDV) task force and received Formal A and Beyond and arbitration advocate training.

Jasper graduated from the NALC Leadership Academy in 2017.



Kollin Luman

The president chose **Kollin Luman** of Portland, OR Branch 82 to be a full-time advocate (FTA) as part of NALC Headquarters staff. FTAs provide additional resources for arbitrations.

Luman began his postal career as a TE in 2011 and became a CCA before converting to career status. He served his branch as a steward and Formal A steward, and as an outside steward for Region 2 (Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Utah and Washington). From 2017 to 2019, he served as assistant secretary-treasurer for the Oregon State Association.

His other roles have included regional training facilitator and arbitration advocate since 2020, and in 2023 he attended Step B training.

Luman graduated from the NALC Leadership Academy in 2023.

President Renfro appointed **Zacharias Finley** of Midland, TX



Zacharias Finley

Branch 3792 as a regional office assistant for Region 10 (New Mexico and Texas).

Finley began carrying the mail as a CCA in Midland in 2019.

He became a steward for his branch the day he completed his probationary period and became a career carrier the following year. Finley served on a route evaluation and adjustment team as part of the TIAREAP route adjustment process.

He taught classes at the last two regional training schools, including one class he created, and served as an outside steward for the Region 10 office. He took arbitration advocacy training in 2024. He attended Advanced Formal A and Beyond training in 2025.

Finley graduated from the NALC Leadership Academy in 2024.

In addition, President Renfro appointed two Headquarters-based letter carrier staff members to the field.



Tamara Twinn

The president appointed **Tamara Twinn** of Albuquerque, NM Branch 504 as RAA for Region 10. Twinn began carrying mail in Albuquerque in 2006. She served

as steward, Formal A representative, legislative coordinator and LCPF coordinator for her branch. She also was vice president of the New Mexico State Association.

Twinn transferred to Englewood, CO, in 2020 and joined Centennial

Branch 5996, where she served as recording secretary, shop steward, Formal A representative and LCPF coordinator.

She was a member of the Colorado State Association executive board and a LCCL. She also served on the executive board for the Colorado AFL-CIO. She was an arbitration advocate and was named Activist of the Year at the Region 10 Spring Training School in 2020. Twinn became an assistant to the president in October 2021. She transferred back to New Mexico in 2022 and rejoined Branch 504.

Twinn graduated from the NALC Leadership Academy in 2017.



Mandy Hankins

President Renfro appointed **Mandy Hankins** as RGA for Region 6 (Kentucky, Indiana and Michigan).

Hankins began carrying the mail as a casual in West Bloomfield, MI, in 2003, becoming a part-time flexible the following year. She joined North Oakland County, MI Branch 320 and served the branch in a variety of ways, including as steward, newsletter editor, trustee, Muscular Dystrophy Association coordinator and vice president. In 2018, Hankins transferred to Mid-Michigan Branch 256 and became president of that branch the following year. She was appointed an assistant to the president at NALC Headquarters in 2023.

Hankins also has served NALC as a local business agent and arbitration advocate.

She graduated from the NALC Leadership Academy in 2014. **PR**

Veterans Group

For more information, go to nalc.org/veterans.



Additional NALC Veterans Group members

Below are the new Veterans Group members who joined after the November issue of *The Postal Record*, with the full list of Veterans Group members, went to press. Unfortunately,

some of the applications did not arrive in time for that issue and their names are being run here.

To join, go to nalc.org/veterans, fill out and print the membership

form, and then mail the completed application to: NALC Veterans Group, National Association of Letter Carriers, 1101 Northchase Parkway SE, Suite 3, Marietta, GA 30067.

Eric Cirrito of Buffalo-Western NY Br. 3
Bryan Lam of Lincoln, NE Br. 8
Corey Duncans of Chicago, IL Br. 11
Terry Nugent of Louisville, KY Br. 14
Robert Heron of Southeast MA Mgd. Br. 18
Thomas Jones of Southeast MA Mgd. Br. 18
David Pishkin of Southeast MA Mgd. Br. 18
William Soares of Southeast MA Mgd. Br. 18
Jared Floodman of Saint Paul, MN Br. 28
Michael Riley of Boston, MA Br. 34
Jermas McNeal Jr. of Indianapolis, IN Br. 39
John Bailey Jr. of Cincinnati, OH Br. 43
Adam Scully of Cincinnati, OH Br. 43
Anthony Casey of Grand Rapids, MI Br. 56
Michael Feisel of Sioux City, IA Br. 69
Alva Emanuel III of Seattle, WA Br. 79
Todd Budden of Seattle, WA Br. 79
Timothy Goralski of Pittsburgh, PA Br. 84
Jordan Miles of New Orleans, LA Br. 124
Daren Helms of Sacramento, CA Br. 133
Jeremiah Flerchinger of Belleville, IL Br. 155

Garick Ambrose of Austin, TX Br. 181
Steven Radun of Wausau, WI Br. 215
Ian Alvarado of Houston, TX Br. 283
Henry Brutus III of Houston, TX Br. 283
Harry Ervin of Houston, TX Br. 283
Michael Jones Jr. of Houston, TX Br. 283
Raymond Lumpkin of Houston, TX Br. 283
Rene Mbusa of Houston, TX Br. 283
Melaina Moore of Houston, TX Br. 283
James Perry of Houston, TX Br. 283
Chase Studt of Houston, TX Br. 283
Terence Watkins of Houston, TX Br. 283
Clemente Juarez of El Paso, TX Br. 505
Ace Rheume of Madison, WI Br. 507
Victorio Martinez of Kokomo, IN Br. 533
Ashley Soverall of Jamaica, NY Br. 562
Gilbert Saldana of Kenosha, WI Br. 574
Justin Mckinney of Tampa, FL Br. 599
Daniel Buonanno of Southeast PA Mgd. Br. 725
Robert Montgomery of Barberton, OH Br. 897
Lucas Kirkland of Kalispell, MT Br. 948

Laura Ramirez of Rock Hill, SC Br. 1003
Hope Wiborn of Rock Hill, SC Br. 1003
Branden Banegas of Garden Grove, CA Br. 1100
Timothy Goodson of Florence, SC Br. 1416
Michael Morcillo of West Coast FL Br. 1477
Eddie Anderson Jr. of Greenville, NC Br. 1729
Forris Fulford III of Greenville, NC Br. 1729
Charles Lindsay of Greenville, NC Br. 1729
Karen Morris of Greenville, NC Br. 1729
John Mussavage of Greenville, NC Br. 1729
Michael Johnson of Lakeland, FL Br. 1779
Waldo Pirok of Melrose Park, IL Br. 2183
Donald Buonamici of Sparks, NV Br. 2778
Noah Hutchison of Los Alamos, NM Br. 4112
Henry Jerome of Anchorage, AK Br. 4319
Conchetta Diaz of Emerald Coast, FL Br. 4559
Keith Donald of Wheeling, IL Br. 4739
Paul Power of Centennial, CO Br. 5996
Nnamdi Iwuh of Tucker, GA Br. 6070
George Schamberger of Metairie, LA Br. 6119

Veteran profile: Tony Rodriguez

With 21 years in the Army and an additional 20 years as a Knoxville, TN Branch 419 letter carrier, **Tony Rodriguez** served the American people for 41 years.

After graduating from high school, Rodriguez was unsure of what to do next, so he enrolled in community college. But this was 1972, and there was a draft during the Vietnam War. When his birthday was selected at the end of his first semester, he decided to enlist before he could be drafted.

As he explained, "Two years versus three years. And as a draftee, they'll send you wherever they want. As a regular enlistee, they still send you wherever they want," but they would take into consideration the enlistee's preferences. This didn't end up mattering, as he enjoyed the military so

much that he ended up spending 21 years in the service.

Although he had no choice in joining, he saw the military as a way to help him find his goal in life at a time when he lacked direction.

"I was out there standing on the street corner, playing some football and baseball. You can't do that forever," Rodriguez said.

To this day, Rodriguez is happy with the decision he made all those years ago, saying, "You don't know what you want to do? Join the military!" He still has friends whom he served with a half-century ago.

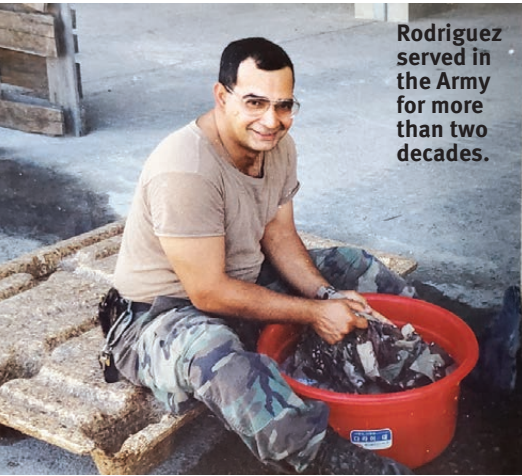
He started out in administration, then was reclassified to acquisition radar operations, serving as an acquisition radar section chief, managing radar coverage for West and East

Germany during the Cold War. His unit used radar to track enemy aircraft and missiles, particularly from East German and Soviet forces.

His schedule was intense; he "had to work 24 on, 24 off, eight on. No sleeping."

During his time on active duty from 1972 to 1979, he was given the opportunity to see many places around the world. He had two tours in West Germany and two tours in Puerto Rico. On the U.S. mainland, he worked in North Carolina, Indiana, Texas, Colorado and Louisiana.

Following his active-duty service, he transitioned to the reserves and became one of the first soldiers in the new Active Guard Reserve (AGR) program, which placed full-time mili-



Rodriguez served in the Army for more than two decades.

mission assisting engineers in Ecuador, providing logistics for building bridges and schools after an earthquake.

Additionally, he took part in the preparation for Operation Desert Shield by working as a senior supply sergeant, helping establish logistical bases in Saudi Arabia.

“We provided the soldiers with beans, bullets, ammo, water—whatever they needed to perform their mission,” Rodriguez said.

He likened being a soldier to being a friend, saying, “Friends take care of each other. Soldiers take care of each other.”

He takes pride in the fact that none of the soldiers he oversaw died on his watch.

“I used to call my troops my children and if you lose one, God, it’s terrible,” Rodriguez said. “I never did lose one.”

At the age of 41, Rodriguez retired from the Army, but his service still has a big impact on his life.

“I love the military,” Rodriguez said. “I’d do it again if there is another life.”

He went on to work in a prison as a corrections officer for about two years, then continued his service by becoming a letter carrier in 1996 in Knoxville, calling it the “best job in the country—carrying mail.”

“You meet your people, you meet your customers,” he said. “You are part of society on the streets that you deliver mail to.”

He also began his union involvement, serving 19 of his 20 years as a shop steward. He held several other union positions including branch secretary, arbitration advocate, food drive coordinator and legislative liaison, as well as several positions for the Tennessee State Association, including director of education and vice president. He’s worked as state secretary since June 2024.

Even though he retired in 2016, he remains an active part of Branch 419.

A fierce advocate for letter carriers, Rodriguez brought the same level of loyalty for his carriers that he held for his troops. He said, “Don’t mess with the carriers. If you mess with the carriers, I’ll mess with you.”

tary personnel in reserve units to strengthen deployment readiness. For 14 years he worked in the reserves, reaching master sergeant in the E-8 category. His responsibilities included ensuring deployment readiness, maintaining accountability and ordering equipment and uniforms. He was stationed in Knoxville, TN, for most of his time in the program.

While in the AGR program, Rodriguez worked in an overseas support

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.



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

The Letter Carrier Political Fund— Ensuring your future



**Paul
Barner**

The adage that elections have consequences rings true across this country every day. The attacks of late against the labor community as a whole as well as our employer, the Postal Service, appear insurmountable at times. One of the most important resources at NALC's disposal to influence politicians and assist those candidates whose ideals align with ours is its political action committee (PAC). A PAC is an organization that raises money for the primary purpose of assisting favored candidates in elections and influencing legislation, particularly at the national level. Many organizations and corporations in

the United States realize the importance of having their voices and concerns taken seriously by elected officials and therefore establish PACs to further their agendas on issues pertinent to their business ideology. The National Association of Letter Carriers is no different in this regard.

NALC's PAC was created in 1975. At that time, it was known as the Committee on Letter Carrier Political Education (COLCPE). As a startup in 1975, the PAC was small but quickly began to grow and proved to be a crucial component of NALC's war chest in fighting off attacks against benefits for both active and retired letter carriers. NALC's ability through its PAC to affect legislation proved instrumental, as exemplified by the passage of Hatch Act reform. Prior to the reform, active letter carriers were prohibited from participating in nearly all aspects of politics. This reform in 1993 in essence "un-Hatched" active letter carriers, opening the door for our members to become active in the political process. Since the reform of the Hatch Act, our members have repeatedly proven that no union is more active and engaged in that process than NALC.

There is no question about the positive impacts that

grassroots efforts, hard work and activism of NALC officers, staff and our members have made on Capitol Hill in stabilizing the Postal Service and gaining well-deserved benefits for letter carriers. There are many examples of these achievements. One such example can be found in the passage of the Family and Medical Leave Act, which affords protections for letter carriers in the event of absences from work related to qualifying conditions.

In 2015, COLCPE was changed to the Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF) to better reflect its purpose and mission. Contributions made to LCPF are used to support candidates who support letter carrier initiatives, regardless of political affiliation. Almost all issues that affect letter carriers are non-partisan in nature, as shown by the bipartisan support received on our legislative initiatives. Regardless of party affiliation, Republicans, Democrats and independents alike receive our support if they support letter carriers.

Beginning in the mid- to late 2000s, there was an onslaught of attacks on the Postal Service and our jobs, fueled primarily by three economic factors that drastically affected the Postal Service's financial stability—the economic recession, the decrease in First-Class Mail volume and the mandate to pre-fund future retiree health benefits. The LCPF was a crucial resource in our success with the long-fought battle to achieve postal reform—a monumental step forward in ensuring the financial stability of the Postal Service for the future that included a rollback of the pre-funding mandate; a pure example of our dollars at work.

NALC is a powerful union with more than 90 percent of all letter carriers voluntarily being members. Conversely, less than 10 percent of our members contribute to the LCPF. You, our members, have a long tradition of refusing to stand on the sidelines and accept fate, but rather of taking the fight to those empowered to make change demanding what is rightfully yours. To that end, NALC must win favor with politicians and provoke interest to achieve positive legislative outcomes. In simple terms, it comes down to this—the stronger the PAC, the stronger the influence.

(continued on page 51)

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.

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

“ '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.”

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!



Minimum dues increase/convention registration and housing process



**Nicole
Rhine**

There will be a biweekly dues increase for 2026 due to the general wage increases and cost-of-living adjustments achieved with the National Agreement. The dues change will take place in Pay Period 1 of 2026 (Dec. 13-26, 2025) and will be reflected beginning with the Jan. 2, 2026, paycheck.

The minimum dues structure set forth in Article 7, Section 2 (a) of the NALC Constitution is the equivalent of two hours base pay for an NALC Step D letter carrier in the consolidated career city carrier grade level (Table One) per month. Since dues are deducted biweekly, this amount will be \$33.84 for 2026. National retains

one-third of this amount, \$11.27, and remits the other two-thirds to the local branches (with some withheld for state associations and remitted by NALC Headquarters to the state associations monthly).

Some branches may have dues that are higher than the minimum dues structure. Also, branches may increase local dues during the year.

National convention

The official Convention Call to the 74th Biennial Convention of the National Association of Letter Carriers to be held in Los Angeles Aug. 3-7, 2026, has been mailed to each NALC branch and state association. The branch Convention Call included a branch delegate allotment card advising each branch of the maximum number of delegates it can send to the convention per the provision of Article 4, Section 1 of the NALC Constitution, which provides for one delegate for each 20 members, or fraction thereof. The number of delegates a branch is entitled to is based on the branch's active and retired membership as of Oct. 1 of the year preceding the national convention, the "benchmark" date adopted by the delegates to the 2004 national convention. Branch officers should read the Convention Call thoroughly, since Articles 4 and 5 of the NALC Constitution—provisions concerning the election of delegates, voting strength and related issues—are explained.

Information regarding the room rates of the NALC block hotels was provided on the NALC website, and additional information is provided in this issue of *The Postal Record*. Please note that the reservation process does not start until February—and not until the branch's delegate eligibil-

ity list (DEL) is received, delegates are registered, and the credentials are sent to the branch secretary. NALC Headquarters will be advising its official housing company of all confirmed registered delegates. Anyone booking a room who is not a confirmed registered delegate at the time of the booking will be subject to cancellation and will receive a notice of such. *Any individuals who call NALC Headquarters to inquire about making reservations are advised that they must go through their branch to make reservations, and this cannot be done until the DEL has been received and processed and credentials have been mailed to the branch secretary. Do not contact the host branch officers about housing—they will not be able to assist you.*

The DEL will be mailed to each branch on or about Feb. 1 and must be returned to my office no later than June 3. The DEL lists the branch's regular members in good standing as of Dec. 31, 2025. *No housing information is included in the mailing of delegate eligibility lists.* Branch secretaries should read the enclosed instructions thoroughly, complete the DEL fully and accurately, sign it, keep a copy for the branch, and return the original to my office.

Reminder: All branches have the option to register their delegates electronically rather than checking off the delegates on the DEL paper list. The letter and sign-up form for the option to register electronically was mailed to all branches in November. The sign-up form must be returned to my office no later than Dec. 31.

After my office has received the DEL and registered the delegates, the credentials will be mailed to the branch secretary. Included with the credentials is information on the housing process. This information includes a web address and a code specific to your branch so that you may reserve rooms for your delegates. Branch secretaries may prefer to copy the instructions and give them to each delegate to make their own reservations.

For branch secretaries or delegates who do not have internet access, NALC will include with the credential mailing a room reservation form with a fax number, along with the phone number of the housing company. *Branch secretaries with no internet access may make reservations for all their delegates in this manner, or they may wish to copy the forms and give them to the delegates.*

Again, branch secretaries are reminded that no housing information will be included in the mailing of the delegate eligibility lists around the first of February. That information will be provided when NALC Headquarters mails you the credentials. Branches and individuals are not to contact hotels directly and must wait until credentials and NALC housing instructions are received.

Worth repeating



**Mack I.
Julion**

First, my congratulations to all who have been elected or reelected this year to serve our membership. Whether your branch is big or small, it should always be an honor to serve our brothers and sisters as their representatives in the letter carrier craft. And I especially applaud the willingness and sacrifice of those who step up to represent their fellow co-workers. Ours is a thankless job, but there is satisfaction in knowing that we are upholding the dignity and respect of the hardest-working people in this country. Our members deserve representation reflective of their heavy labor, and

they know it. Because of that, they hold us accountable, and that is not a bad thing!

This month I will refer to a column I wrote two years ago about bylaw submissions that still holds true today, making it worth repeating. Hopefully someone will read this prior to the submission of any bylaw changes and make the necessary corrections. The following items are still the most common errors we come across as your Committee of Laws. So, whether your branch is considering bylaw changes or not, if any of these apply to your current bylaws, they should be amended.

The officers of the branch

This is found in Article 4, Section 1 of the *Constitution for the Government of Subordinate and Federal Branches (CGSFB)*. There is a common error here—not surprising, considering that there was a change at the Chicago convention in 2022. Every branch must have a Mutual Benefit Association (MBA) representative along with the other required officers. For smaller branches, this may require some of these positions to be combined, but the duties need to be accounted for in the bylaw. And if any of these positions are combined, this must be explicitly stated in the bylaws. The required officers are president, vice president, recording secretary, financial secretary, treasurer, sergeant at-arms, MBA representative, health benefits representative (aka an HBR) and trustees (three or five). If any of those listed positions are not among the elected officers of your branch, then your bylaws need to be amended.

Branch funds/Spending the branch money

You will find this in Article 12, Section 3 of the *CGSFB*. We consistently receive proposals that would allow the president, executive board, or another officer the power to authorize the spending of branch funds. This is a no-no! That section states: “[N]o appropriation shall be made except when ordered by a majority vote of the members present and voting at a regular meeting.” Officers may be allowed to spend the money between meetings, but this is limited to emergencies, and to an amount specified in the bylaws. Of course, this is outside the allocation for recurring bills, reimbursement or compensation. But that, too, needs to be specifically stipulated in the bylaws.

Sick relief and funeral benefits

This would fall under the “It has been in our bylaws forever!” category. Article 8 of the *CGSFB* states that branches may “make provisions in their bylaws for the payment of sick relief or funeral benefits,” yet it cannot make it mandatory for members to pay for it. Using the general fund to pay for such a program is essentially making it mandatory for all the members to finance it. This was a clarification or ruling initially provided by NALC President Vince Sombrotto and upheld by subsequent presidents. So, when we receive bylaws with any reference to automatically providing flowers or payment out of the general fund for sick relief or funeral benefits, it is flagged for being in conflict. Branches can still send flowers or donate funds upon the illness or death of a member or their family member, but it must be the will of the membership in attendance and voting at a regular meeting for each occurrence (remember Article 12.3?).

Approved with exception

When you receive a response from our committee informing you that a proposal or current bylaw provision is in conflict, the process of amending bylaws per Article 15 of the *NALC Constitution* must be followed. You cannot make changes based on our letter without following the amendment process. Whether it’s a matter of removing a provision by deletion or correcting some conflictual language, the process must be followed and resubmitted for approval. If you have any questions, you can just give me a call or email me at julion@nalc.org.

In closing, I wish all a happy Hanukkah, a joyous Kwanzaa and a prosperous new year. From my family to yours, *feliz Navidad!*

Morgan Olson vehicle pilot



**Christopher
Jackson**

As I have stated in previous articles, the Postal Service must continue the work of replacing older model vehicles used by letter carriers. One step in the process of replacing older vehicle models is acquiring newer commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) vehicles and determining if they are viable options by testing them on delivery assignments. For this month's column, I will share details on the latest COTS vehicle being pilot tested by the Postal Service.

Morgan Olson C175

In October, NALC was notified that the Postal Service planned to pilot five Morgan Olson right hand drive (RHD) internal combustion vehicles at four offices across the country. USPS says that the purpose of the test is to determine how the gas-powered vehicle performs on mounted and curblines routes that are traditionally completed using similar sized RHD vehicles such as the Long Life Vehicle, the Flex Fuel Vehicle and the Mercedes Metris. Models from the Morgan Olson manufacturer are currently in use by Canada Post, and USPS has tested two other Morgan Olson models over the past few years.

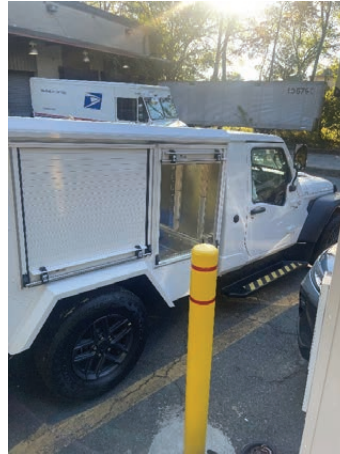
My staff visited an office conducting the pilot test in Vienna, VA, to review the vehicle. During the visit, representatives from the manufacturer introduced the four-wheel drive adjustable C175 model and discussed its features. The C175 is composed of a two-door cabin chassis conversion of a Jeep Gladiator and a Morgan Olson custom-built box body with 175 cubic feet of storage space.

The cabin area is accessed using a standard key fob and contains many features that are found in most passenger vehicles on the road today, such as a forward collision warning system, power locks and windows, air conditioning and heating, as well as heated driver's seats, steering wheels and side mirrors. A step is located outside of the curbside cabin door to assist in entering the vehicle. The curbside cabin door is lowered 6 inches, and the curbside mirror is raised to accommodate curblines delivery. The cabin is also equipped with a two-tier adjustable mail tray to the right of the driver that can fit up to three letter trays or two tubs on the top tier, and two trays or one tub on the lower tier. A touchscreen monitor in the middle of



the dashboard contains controls for many of the vehicle's features and displays a rearview camera when in reverse.

The cargo area is equipped with two curbside rollup doors and one rear rollup door accessible using a radio-frequency identification (RFID) key tag. The RFID key tag must be held near RFID tag readers located on the curbside and rear of the vehicle to unlock the doors. The cargo doors unlock for six seconds, allowing the carrier to roll the doors upward to access mail, then the door locks re-engage automatically. Also, the cargo doors do not need to be closed within six seconds for the locks to engage, since



the doors can be closed with or without locks engaged. Each side of the cargo area has an outer light located in its center along the top of the vehicle to enhance vision while loading and unloading. The lights activate when the cargo doors are unlocked and open.

Two motion sensor lights are installed along the ceiling of the cargo area. The lights remain on for five minutes unless motion is detected. The cargo area is not designed for walking, so carriers may need extendable poles to help with loading mail volumes. There are two short foldable trays on each side of the rear door. Each tray can hold up to two mail trays and one mail tub.

Driver safety instructor training was conducted during my staff's observation visit; however, driver training for carriers was moved to a later date, so there was no opportunity to get feedback at this unit. The pilot will also be conducted at the Kettle River Post Office in Kettle River, MN; the Lafayette Post Office in Lafayette, TN; and the Crestview Post Office in Crestview, FL, for a period of four months, ending in late February 2026.

I want to send my thanks in advance to each carrier who will be involved in this pilot. Their input and cooperation will have an impact on deciding the future of the postal fleet. My staff and I will continue to monitor this pilot and provide updates to the membership.

Be sure to read my column each month and visit nalc.org for the latest information.

The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act



Manuel L. Peralta Jr.

By letter dated July 7, 2025 (USPS5248), the USPS notified the NALC that it had “developed additional forms that can be utilized to submit requests for reasonable accommodation in accordance with the PWFA. ... The PWFA forms will be accessible to employees through the Disabilities and Reasonable Accommodation page in MyHR”

Upon my receipt of this correspondence, I did some research to acquire and review relevant information and form a work group to assist. I thank Debbie Dixon, Danielle Fake-Moorman and Mandy Hankins for their work on this project.

Congress.gov summarizes the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA) as follows:

This law prohibits employment practices that discriminate against making reasonable accommodations for qualified employees affected by pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions. A qualified employee is an employee or applicant who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of the position, with specified exceptions.

Specifically, the bill declares that it is an unlawful employment practice to:

- fail to make reasonable accommodations to known limitations of such employees, unless the accommodation would impose an undue hardship on an entity’s business operation;
- accommodation other than any reasonable accommodation arrived at through an interactive process;
- deny employment opportunities based on the need of the entity to make such reasonable accommodations to a qualified employee;
- require such employees to take paid or unpaid leave if another reasonable accommodation can be provided; or
- take adverse action in terms, conditions, or privileges of employment against a qualified employee requesting or using such reasonable accommodations.

The bill sets forth enforcement procedures and remedies that cover different types of employees in relation to such unlawful employment practices.

When the law was enacted on June 27, 2023, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) was directed to create the governing regulations. They issued their notice of proposed rulemaking inviting public comments until Oct. 10, 2023.

On April 19, 2024, the EEOC published its final rule and interpretive guidance through the *Federal Register*/Vol. 89, No. 77 (consisting of 125 pages of comments, decisions and the final regulation). These governing rules took effect on June 18, 2024. This document makes clear that the PWFA cross references obligations established through a number of other laws, such as Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended by the Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978, as well as the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, the Occupational Safety and Health Act, and the Providing Urgent Maternal Protections for Nursing Mothers Act, and states that some issues covered under PWFA may be actionable under the other laws referenced herein.

Separate from the regulations referenced above, the EEOC published three additional items to address some of the many concerns and questions that surface as relates to the application of the PWFA.

The EEOC issued a *Summary of Key Provisions of EEOC’s Final Rule to Implement the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act*. This document contains the following admonition:

This document provides a summary of key portions of the final rule. This document is provided for informational purposes only. It is not a substitute for the full text of the final rule. It does not discuss all of the provisions in the final rule and does not contain details, examples, or explanations that are provided in the final rule. This document indicates the notable differences between the proposed and final rule. In addition to the differences noted in this document, the final rule has numerous minor language changes and several additional examples.

The EEOC also issued the text of the new law as well as a series of questions and answers. These four items will be located on the NALC website under “Workplace Issues”>“Pregnancy-related Protections.”

After all the reading, our workgroup posed questions to management and held an initial meeting.

For starters, the NALC expressed great concern over the fact that the USPS had elected to create a form for use, where our opinion strongly opposes such a form, especially when one reads the *Federal Register* on the subject of using forms. On page 29120 of the *Federal Register*, the EEOC published the following final opinion on the use of a form:

Several comments also addressed whether the employer could require the process to start by the employee filling in a form and whether, if the employer had a process, the employee was required to follow it so that a request would be considered only when made to the entity identified in the employer’s policy.

(continued on page 51)

Disability retirement



Dan Toth

In response to a wave of disability separations taking place across the country, I am reprinting my May 2021 column. A related Contract Talk article, “Administrative separations,” found in the August 2025 *Postal Record*, also should be reviewed.

In this article, I will discuss disability retirement for Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) employees. While Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) employees also have the option of disability retirement, they likely are eligible for greater benefits with an immediate annuity.

There are several requirements for FERS disability retirement. You must be in a position covered by FERS with at least 18 months of creditable service, and become disabled. The following criteria must be documented:

- A deficiency in service with respect to performance, attendance or conduct, or, in the absence of any actual service deficiency, a showing that the medical condition is incompatible with either useful service or retention in the position;
- A medical condition that is defined as a health impairment resulting from disease or injury, including psychiatric conditions;
- A relationship between the service deficiency and the medical condition such that the medical condition has caused the service deficiency;
- The duration of the medical condition, both past and expected, and a showing that the condition will in all probability continue for at least one year from the date the application for disability retirement has been filed;
- The inability of the employing agency to reasonably accommodate the employee’s medical condition;
- The agency’s consideration of the employee for reassignment to any vacant position within the employing agency and commuting area, at the same grade or pay level, for which the employee is qualified.

FERS disability retirement can be applied for within one year of separation, and generally commences immediately following your last time in a pay status. One component of FERS disability is that you must also ap-

ply for Social Security disability. There is no obligation to be approved for Social Security disability in order to be accepted for FERS disability. In fact, it is not uncommon to be accepted for FERS disability and denied Social Security disability. This is because Social Security disability requirements are more restrictive.

To establish your claim, the Office of Professional Management (OPM) will consider the documentary evidence from you, the Postal Service and your physician. This includes Standard Form 3112, Documentation in Support of Disability Retirement and SF 3107, Application for Immediate Retirement. To request a disability retirement application, call the Human Resources Shared Service Center at 877-477-3273 (TTY 866-260-7507). In accordance with CSRS FERS Handbook Chapter 1, Subpart 1C3.1, the Postal Service must ensure that all records and supporting documentation will be received by OPM no later than 30 days after the date on which the employee files the application with the Postal Service.

OPM’s review process can take months and sometimes takes longer than a year. For most applicants, this also means many months of no pay or annuity. So be sure to submit an application as soon as you determine that it is appropriate for you to do so. If you decide to withdraw your application, you must notify OPM in writing of the withdrawal request. The request to withdraw can be accepted if it is received by OPM before your application is approved or before you have been separated from the Postal Service, whichever comes later.

The computation of a FERS disability annuity is complicated. If you are age 62 or older at retirement or meet the age and service requirements for immediate voluntary retirement, you receive your earned annuity based on the general FERS annuity computation. Otherwise, for the first 12 months, the disability annuitant receives 60 percent of the high-3 average salary, minus 100 percent of their Social Security benefit. After the first 12 months, the annuitant receives 40 percent of the high-3 average salary, minus 60 percent of their Social Security benefit.

At age 62, the annuity is recomputed to an amount that essentially represents the annuity the individual would have received if they had continued working until the day before their 62nd birthday and then retired under FERS non-disability provisions. The high-3 average salary will be increased by all FERS cost-of-living increases paid during the time you received a disability annuity.

(continued on page 54)

Life insurance in retirement



**James W.
“Jim” Yates**

It is never too early to start planning for your retirement. Everyone’s life insurance needs change over their lifetime. One thing we all have in common is that the later in life we make decisions about our life insurance, the more expensive it can become.

Most of us do not consider, or understand, the increasing cost of life insurance as we age, and then we get blindsided when we reach retirement over the decisions we have to make.

All career postal employees are enrolled in the Federal Employees’ Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) basic insurance, unless they opt out.

The full premium for FEGLI basic coverage is paid by the Postal Service and therefore is free to active city carriers. Basic coverage covers your life for the amount of your salary rounded up to the next \$1,000 plus \$2,000.

Many letter carriers also take advantage of FEGLI Options A, B and C while they are active carriers. Option A is \$10,000 in coverage, Option B provides coverage in an amount from one to five times your annual rate of basic pay after rounding your salary up to the next \$1,000, and Option C is coverage for your spouse in multiples of \$5,000 up to \$25,000 and for eligible dependent children in multiples of \$2,500 up to \$12,500.

FEGLI is term life insurance that does not build any cash value and remains in effect as long as premium payments are being made (may continue for up to 12 months in a non-pay status while still a postal employee). FEGLI’s premiums are based on the letter carrier’s or annuitant’s age. Premium rates increase in five-year intervals beginning on the insured 35th birthday.

Upon retirement, USPS no longer pays the full premium for basic coverage. A portion of the premium will be paid by the retiree. Additionally, if you want to continue your optional FEGLI coverage into retirement, you must choose between no reduction in coverage, 50 percent reduction, or 75 percent reduction. Each has a different financial impact to the retiree up to \$2.25 per month, per \$1,000 in coverage for basic; \$6.24 per month, per \$1,000 in coverage for option B; and \$16.90 per month for each multiple of Option C if no reduction is elected. Option A will cost as much as \$13 per month from age

60 to 64 but becomes free at age 65. These rates may change in the future.

The Mutual Benefit Association (MBA) offers several options that you can take advantage of either in place of, or to supplement, FEGLI. Two of these options are MBA Whole Life—Paid up in 20 Years, and MBA Whole Life—Paid up at Age 65.

Both policies are available to NALC members and their spouses, children, stepchildren, grandchildren, step-grandchildren, great-grandchildren and step-great-grandchildren, as well as members’ parents. MBA will insure any one life up to the maximum coverage amount of \$150,000. The difference between these two plans is the age at which the policies may be issued: For a Paid Up in 20 Years policy, it is age 0 to 80; for Paid Up at Age 65, age 0 to 55.

With these plans, the premiums remain the same for the entire premium payment period. At the plans’ designated time, the policy is paid in full. The Paid Up in 20 Years policy is fully paid off 20 years after the issue date of the policy. The Paid Up at Age 65 policy is fully paid off on the policy anniversary date after the insured individual turns age 65. At that time, no further premiums are ever due on either of these policies, and the coverage remains in force for the insured’s entire lifetime. The premium is determined by the insured’s age at the time the policy is purchased and the amount of life insurance requested. The earlier in life you make this purchase, the less expensive it will be.

Premiums on either plan can be paid to the MBA through biweekly payroll deduction, through electronic funds transfer or directly to the MBA office on an annual or monthly basis.

These whole life policies build a cash value. The longer the policy remains in force, the larger the cash value. If your insurance needs change and you determine that you no longer need coverage, you will receive the value that has accrued. As stated above, because FEGLI is term insurance, it builds no cash value.

There is no open season to purchase an MBA policy; you may join at any time.

For more information regarding 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.

Happy holidays!

Member rights



Stephanie Stewart

As we close out another Open Season, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all new members. I recognize that there are other Postal Service Health Benefits options, but you chose us. Please know that this is not something we take for granted, as we value the trust you have placed in our health benefit plan.

Please make sure to become familiar with our excellent benefit package. From preventive care, mental health support and health and wellness programs to health incentives (putting money back into your pocket) and more, we want to support your well-being.

Additionally, for all current and new members, I would like to bring attention to the NALC Health Benefit Plan's (the Plan) Member Rights and Responsibilities. I encourage you to take some time to review these statements, as we want to ensure awareness and commitment.

Member rights:

- You have the right to receive up-to-date information about your health plan, the benefits available, the health care professionals, hospitals and other providers that participate in this Plan's PPO Network, and your rights and responsibilities.
- You have the right to receive a copy of the Notice of the NALC Health Benefit Plan's Privacy Practices that outlines your rights and how to designate a personal representative, which allows the Plan to discuss your protected health information.
- You have the right to privacy and to the confidentiality of your protected health information, in accordance with applicable laws.
- You have the right to be treated with courtesy, dignity and respect.
- You have the right to access quality care, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.
- You have the right to participate fully with your network providers in decision-making.
- You have the right to receive an explanation of benefits describing the benefits we pay, as well as to be informed of the reason for any adverse determination on a claim for benefits, including the specific utilization review criteria, guidelines or benefit provisions used in the determination.

- You have the right to appeal our decision in accordance with the Disputed Claims Process in Sections 3, 7 and 8 of the Plan brochure.
- You have the right to request further information concerning anything you do not understand.
- You have the right to know that utilization management decisions are based only on the appropriateness of care and your current coverage. The NALC Health Benefit Plan does not reward network providers or others for denying coverage.
- You have the right to make suggestions and recommendations regarding the NALC Health Benefit Plan's Member Rights and Responsibilities statement.
- You have the right to receive a prompt reply when you ask us questions or request information.
- You have the right to know that neither you nor your health care provider can be punished for disputing a claim.
- You have the right to refuse to participate in research.
- You have the right to receive complete information about your diagnosis, evaluation, treatment and prognosis from your health care professional.
- You have the right to participate with your health care professional in health care decisions.
- You have the right to be heard. Our complaint-handling process is designed to hear and act on your complaint, concern, suggestion or grievance, and to provide a courteous, prompt response.

Member responsibilities:

- Read the information the Plan provides to you and ask us questions when you need to know more.
- Make sure you understand your benefits under the NALC Health Benefit Plan, including your costs for services as outlined in Section 4 of our brochure.
- Accept personal responsibility for any charges not covered by this plan, if applicable.
- Provide information the Plan needs to process your claims (to the extent possible) including other health insurance coverage your family may have.
- Keep your provider informed about your medical history and your current health status, including the medications you take, so that your providers can effectively treat you and manage your care.
- Inform your provider about any living will, medical power of attorney, or other directive that could affect your care.
- Participate with your provider to understand your health condition and develop mutually agreed-upon treatment goals to the degree possible.
- Follow your provider's instructions and treatment

- plan; ask questions if you don't understand them.
- Treat your health care provider, their staff and others respectfully and honestly.
- Voice your complaints, concerns, suggestions or grievances to our Customer Service department and/or your health care provider.

- Make sure that you obtain authorization required under the Plan for certain services.

In closing, I would like to wish you and your family a joyous holiday season and happy new year. We look forward to supporting your health journey in 2026.

Executive Vice President

The Letter Carrier Political Fund (continued)

(continued from page 42)

The importance of the LCPF cannot be overstated. NALC has been instrumental in advancing and securing legislation of significant impact to letter carriers. However, we must not rest on our laurels but rather reinforce our commitment to strengthening our PAC to maintain a strong force in the legislative and political arena, as we continue in our pursuit to advance legislation for the benefit of letter carriers.

So, it really comes down to this: The stronger our PAC, the louder our voice on Capitol Hill and the more we can get done to benefit letter carriers. So, please make your voice loud by contributing to the Letter Carrier Political Fund. For more information or to sign on to become a contributor, please go to the Letter Carrier Political Fund web page at nalc.org/pac or contact the Department of Legislative and Political Affairs at NALC Headquarters at 202-662-2833.

Director of Safety and Health

The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (continued)

(continued from page 47)

The Commission did not adopt either of these views. First, requiring an employee to create a written request or to follow a specific provision to begin the reasonable accommodation process is contrary to the idea that this should not be a difficult or burdensome task for employees. Second, as one comment pointed out, some employees, such as those facing intimate partner violence, may be cautious or afraid of putting into writing their need for an accommodation. Third, many of the limitations and accommodations under the PWFA will be small or minor; the Commission expects that most accommodations will be provided following nothing more than a conversation or email between the employee and their supervisor, and there will not be any other forms or processes. If an employer does have a process to confirm what was stated in the initial request and that process uses a form, the form should be a simple one that does not deter the employee from making the request and does not delay the provision of an accommodation.

The original form as provided to the NALC on July 7, 2025, contained the following comment in its Privacy Act Statement: "Providing the information is voluntary, but if not provided, we may not process your request."

That statement alone seemingly deviates from the mandates of the PWFA.

The PWFA is a relatively new law. More information will be provided in future issues of *The Postal Record*.

We seek your help in keeping an eye on your co-workers to make sure that they are not denied the protections identified in the law. Please bring any problems to the attention of your branch leaders and, if necessary, to your national business agents.

Mutual exchanges

The National Agreement between NALC and the Postal Service gives career city letter carriers the right to exchange positions with other career employees anywhere in the country. This swapping of positions is called a mutual exchange. This Contract Talk article will explain the rules and rights of carriers who wish to take advantage of a mutual exchange.

Postal Service policy governing this swap is found in Section 351.61 of the *Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM)*. The policy requires that the mutual exchange be approved by the installation heads of both post offices. In addition, it places restrictions on exchanges between categories of employees. Section 351.61 states:

Career employees may exchange positions (subject to the provisions of the appropriate collective bargaining agreement) if the officials in charge at the installations involved approve the exchange of positions. Mutual exchanges must be made between employees in positions at the same grade levels. The following employees are not permitted to exchange positions:

- a. Part-time flexible employees with full-time employees.
- b. Bargaining employees with non-bargaining employees.
- c. Nonsupervisory employees with supervisory employees.

For city letter carriers, the 2007 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Re: Mutual Exchanges clarifies that Grade 1 and Grade 2 letter carriers are considered to be in the same grade for the purpose of mutual exchange eligibility. This MOU, M-01646 in NALC's Materials Reference System (MRS), states:

The parties agree that in applying the relevant provisions of Section 351.6 of the *Employee and Labor Relations Manual*, city letter carriers in grades CC-01 and CC-02 are considered as being in the same grade. This agreement applies solely to determining whether employees are eligible for mutual exchanges.

The National Agreement and the *Joint Contract Administration Manual (JCAM)* clarify what happens with the exchanging employees' seniority, duty assignments and grade. They also explain the evaluation and approval processes.

The contractual language governing the issue of seniority for letter carriers who exchange positions is outlined in Article 41.2.E. of the National Agreement, which states:

E. Change in Which Seniority is Modified.

When mutual exchanges are made between letter carriers

from one installation to another, the carriers will retain their seniority or shall take the seniority of the other exchangee, whichever is the lesser.

This is different than the seniority rule in Article 41.2.G.3 of the National Agreement, which applies to other transfers and requires transferring employees to begin a new period of seniority. This is further explained on page 12-53 of the 2022 *JCAM*, which states:

Mutual Exchanges—Seniority. Article 41.2.E provides that when mutual exchanges are made between letter carriers, the carriers will retain their seniority or shall take the seniority of the other exchangee, whichever is the lesser. This is different than the seniority rule in Article 41.2.G.3, which applies to other transfers, and which requires that the transferring employee begin a new period of seniority.

The approval process for a mutual exchange is the same as any other transfer request covered by the MOU Re: Transfers. This MOU can be found beginning on page 187 of the 2023-2026 National Agreement and a full explanation can be found beginning on page 12-47 of the *JCAM*. In accordance with the MOU, installation heads must give full consideration to each mutual exchange request as they would for any transfer request. Further, the Postal Service may not unreasonably deny a request. The following language is found on page 12-53 of the 2022 *JCAM*:

Mutual Exchanges—Full Consideration. The provisions of the Transfer Memorandum requiring that installation heads afford "full consideration" to all reassignment requests apply to mutual exchanges just as to any other transfers. Such requests "will not be unreasonably denied." In evaluating and responding to mutual exchange requests, installation heads should follow the criteria provided for in the Transfer Memorandum.

Finally, once letter carriers have agreed to exchange positions, they should each write a letter to the installation head in the location where the other letter carrier is employed requesting the mutual exchange. They also should write a letter to their own installation head notifying them of their request and include a copy of the mutual request letter.

NALC members may find and publish ads for mutual exchanges in *The Postal Record* each month. For detailed information about how to publish an ad, see page 64 of this magazine.

Consequential and intervening injuries



Regional Workers' Compensation Assistant Coby Jones

When an employment injury contributes to a later injury, the subsequent injury is called a “consequential injury.” This kind of injury occurs because of weakness or impairment caused by a work-related injury. And it can affect the same part of the body as the original injury, or a different area altogether.

The Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP) develops and adjudicates consequential injury claims based on longstanding Em-

ployees' Compensation Appeals Board (ECAB) precedent. For example, in Schaffer, 39 ECAB p. 1222, the Board describes consequential injuries as follows (quoting Larson, Workmen's Compensation Law, §§ 13.00, 13.11):

The basic rule respecting consequential injuries, as expressed by Larson, is that ‘when the primary injury is shown to have arisen out of and in the course of employment, every natural consequence that flows from the injury likewise arises out of the employment, unless it is the result of an independent intervening cause attributed to claimant’s own intentional conduct.’ The subsequent injury ‘is compensable if it is the direct and natural result of a compensable primary injury.’

A consequential injury might be a completely new injury or an aggravation of an existing injury. In addition, the primary injury, and not some intervening factor, must have directly caused the new injury or aggravation of the existing injury. Consequential injuries can result from either a traumatic event or arise over time from repetitive activities.

FECA PM (Procedure Manual) 2-0805.7a gives this example of a traumatic consequential injury:

A claimant with an accepted knee injury may fall at home because the weakened knee buckled. This incident will constitute a consequential injury whether the affected part of the body is the knee or some other area, such as the back or arm.

It also gives this example of a consequential injury arising over time:

A claimant with an injured eye may compensate for loss of functioning by overuse of the other eye, which may result in a consequential injury.

Other consequential injuries that arise as a direct and natural consequence of a primary injury include injuries that result from medical treatment such as surgery or physical therapy for conditions accepted by OWCP in the primary claim or injuries that result from directed vocational rehabilitation services.

ECAB also has recognized post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as a compensable consequential injury under

circumstances where a certain triggering event has been medically demonstrated to have caused a reawakening or exacerbation of PTSD symptoms.

The injured worker bears the burden of proof to establish a claim for a consequential injury. As part of this burden, they must present rationalized medical opinion evidence, based on a complete factual and medical background, showing causal relationship. The injured worker should provide OWCP with copies of all medical records for the work-related condition from the date of discharge or date of last medical care through the present, including office visit notes, treatment notes, diagnostic test results, etc.

In addition, *FECA PM 2-0805.7a(2)* contains the following list of items for the attending physician to address in their rationalized opinion:

- (1) A description of the original mechanism of injury/work exposure and summary of the medical care received.
- (2) A description of the current symptoms.
- (3) Current objective findings upon examination.
- (4) Results of all current diagnostic studies.
- (5) Current diagnosis.
- (6) The physician’s opinion supported by a medical explanation as to the relationship between the accepted work-related condition(s) and the claimed consequential condition, if any.
- (7) If disability is claimed as result of the consequential condition, a description of the work duties that the claimant cannot perform and the objective medical findings that form the basis of renewed disability for work.
- (8) The recommended course of treatment.

OWCP makes a distinction between “consequential injuries” and what it calls “intervening injuries.” Intervening injuries occur outside the performance of duty to the same part of the body as the original injury. For an intervening injury to be accepted by OWCP, the claims examiner must determine that the effects of the original accepted injury contributed to intervening injury and resulting disability. According to *FECA PM 2-0805.7b*:

Unless the second injury breaks the chain of causation between the original injury and the disability claimed, the disability will be considered related to the original incident.

The *Procedure Manual* gives this example of an intervening injury:

If the claimant is recovering from rotator cuff surgery and slips on ice leaving the house and lands on the same shoulder and reinjures it, this would be considered an intervening injury. But since the claimant had not fully recovered from the approved shoulder surgery, the effects of the original shoulder injury and subsequent surgery would still be contributing to the disability,

(continued on next page)

Injuries (continued)

(continued from previous page)

therefore the chain of causation was not completely broken.

Letter carriers claiming consequential injuries do so by filing a CA-2a form. While the NALC generally advises injured workers not to file CA-2a forms, consequential injuries are an exception to this advice. It also should be noted that CA-2a forms currently cannot be filed in ECOMP; hard-

copy forms must be submitted.

Finally, in cases where the injured worker has returned to work and new exposure to the work environment has contributed to either a new injury or a worsening of an existing injury, the injured worker should file either a CA-1 or CA-2 claiming a new injury even if there is a consequential component linking the new injury to an existing injury accepted by OWCP.

Director of Retired Members

Disability retirement (continued)

(continued from page 48)

FERS disability annuitants under age 60 are deemed restored to earning capacity if earnings for any calendar year equal or exceed 80 percent of the current salary rate of the position they retired from. After age 60, there is no limit on earnings.

Cost-of-living adjustments are not payable for the first 12 months if under age 62 and the annuity was computed using 60 percent of the high-3 average salary. After the first 12 months, or after age 62, cost-of-living adjustments are payable.

Receipt of disability benefits from OPM and total or partial disability benefits from the Office of Workers' Compens-

sation Programs (OWCP) at the same time is considered a dual benefit and is prohibited. The annuitant can elect to receive whatever benefit is more advantageous. However, receiving an OWCP schedule award and OPM benefits at the same time is not prohibited.

Disability retirement can be complicated and can exacerbate a stressful time in life. Please reach out to the NALC Retirement Department if you have any questions. We can be reached by calling 800-424-5186 (toll free) Monday, Wednesday or Thursday, 10 a.m. to noon or 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Eastern Time, or by calling the NALC Headquarters switchboard at 202-393-4695 Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Eastern Time and asking for the Retirement Department.

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.

Summer camp recap and college scholarships

Thanks goes to all of you who have contributed to MDA. Each dollar you raised gave many children and young adults hope and weeks of fun at an MDA Summer Camp.

“Thanks to your fundraising efforts, brothers and sisters, MDA provides a safe, inclusive summer camp experience at no cost to families,” Assistant to the President for Community Services Christina Vela Davidson said.

MDA Summer Camp is the highlight of the year for many kids, who often say it is the best week of the year.

“I have looked into similar options, and nothing compares to MDA camp,” one camper’s parent explained. “I can clearly see the expertise, the high standards, and the concern for the kids. MDA camp is the standard by which I judge other camps.”

Another said: “I would want every family that has an opportunity to participate to experience this.”

MDA recently released its stats for the 2025 camp season, so it’s a good opportunity to see how the money NALC branches raise for MDA affects campers across the country.

In 2025, there were 23 weeklong, overnight sessions and one weeklong virtual session, adding up to 146 days. There were a total of 836 campers, with 749 of those being in person. The campers came from 48 states and Puerto Rico.

While 175 were first-time campers, 61 percent attended for more than their third time, while 34 percent attended for more than their fifth time.

To assist those campers, there were 804 volunteers and 80 health professionals. Those helpers were needed because 273 of the campers used some kind of respiratory equipment, such as a CPAP device, a nebulizer or a trach vent. More than half of the campers (488) used durable medical equipment, such as mobility equipment, a Hoyer lift, or a shower chair. There were 1,804 medications checked in on arrival day!

Here is what a day at camp looks like:

- 7 a.m.—Rise and shine
- 8 a.m.—Breakfast
- 9 a.m.—Morning programs, such as boating, archery, fishing, and arts and crafts
- 12 p.m.—Lunch
- 1 p.m.—Rest period
- 3 p.m.—Afternoon programs
- 6 p.m.—Dinner
- 7 p.m.—Evening programs, such as talent shows, pool parties and dances
- 11 p.m.—Winding down with bedtime stories, jokes and daily recaps before lights out

“It was truly incredible on every level,” another parent said. “I’m honestly at a loss for the right words to de-



scribe it. It supported [my son] in such a holistic way and, most importantly, brought him so much joy.”

This is what you make possible with every dollar you raise.

College scholarships

In 2025, MDA administered the second year of the MDA College Scholarship Program to make higher education more accessible for young adults living with neuromuscular disease. MDA awarded 16 merit-based scholarships: 10 to new scholars and renewing support for six recipients from last year.

“As a person with neuromuscular disease, living away at college comes with many additional expenses,” a 2024 recipient said. “The MDA Scholarship helps make it possible for me to experience living independently on campus.”

The scholarship is essay-based and asks about the applicant’s leadership and engagement within the neuromuscular community. An external, blinded review committee scored the applicants.

MDA received 162 applications, a 14.9 percent increase from 2024, received from residents of 39 states plus Puerto Rico.

The recipients had an average 3.71 grade point average (GPA), with 26.1 percent surpassing a 4.0 GPA. They were 52 percent male and 67 percent between the ages of 18 and 22 years old.

Turn in your funds

Remember, NALC’s commitment to MDA is here until a cure is delivered (#DelivertheCure), no matter how long it may take. If your branch has not participated in years, please contact Vela Davidson at 202-662-2489 or mda@nalc.org so that a plan can be made for your branch to begin participating.

Please mail copies of any receipts or checks, along with copies of the NALC/MDA allocation, so your branch can be properly recognized. Also, remember that NALC/MDA allocations must be turned in the same calendar year of the event (postmarked no later than Dec. 31) to qualify for that year’s NALC Honor Roll.

Locally raised funds must be sent to the national MDA office in Chicago: Muscular Dystrophy Association Inc., Attn: NALC; P.O. Box 7410354; Chicago, IL 60674-0354.

State Summaries

California

Nancy Pelosi just announced that she will not run for reelection, thus ending a 40-year career in the House. And what a career it was, serving as speaker of the House and House minority leader. During her time in office, she has been a great friend of letter carriers.

How is it with you, brothers and sisters? Do you support politicians who support your right to collective bargaining? Do you support those who favor maintaining a public United States Postal Service with a universal service mandate to deliver mail six days a week? Do you support those who sign on to legislation such as H.R. 1065, the Protect Our Letter Carriers Act, and H.R. 1522, the Federal Retirement Fairness Act?

For those who constantly complain about the lack of progress on letter carrier issues in Washington, do you write your congressperson and senators and let them know how we feel about issues affecting you? Are you contributing to the Letter Carrier Political Fund, so that we can fund campaigns for those who defend our jobs and benefits?

During this Thanksgiving season, when we consider how grateful we are for what we have, it is easy to forget how good we have it in so many ways. During the government shutdown, how many federal employees went without a paycheck for three or four weeks? During my almost 34 years working for the USPS, you know how many paychecks I've missed due to government shutdowns? Zero! Why? Because we're off-budget, taxes don't pay our salaries.

Remember, folks, that while we survived a round of proposed cuts to our retirement benefits, our political enemies are planning to attack again. Please be ready to contact your elected representatives.

Let's make 2026 the year we make the House and Senate labor friendly.

Eric Ellis

Indiana

Congratulations to all Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF) contributors in Indiana. For several years now, Indiana has maintained the lead in the amount of contributors within our Region 6. Thanks to Branch 828 in Bloomington for leading the entire region in LCPF contributors. These contributors are not only getting the message, but they understand it.

Congratulations to John Triplett, recipient of the Ron Brown Award. This award is given to a lifetime union leader. As a former president of the ISALC, and current local and state president of NARFE, John certainly deserves this award given to those for their union excellence. He just does not stop working for us. After the K-I-M training, he and I were personally invited to the annual Eugene V. Debs Foundation awards banquet. We were surrounded by Indiana union leaders, advocates of labor, as well as past and present state legislators.

Eugene V. Debs resided in Terre Haute. His 135-year-old home can be toured today. He was a railroad union member and activist, later to become a state representative of Indiana

and then a U.S. presidential candidate. Of his five campaigns for POTUS, the last campaign he ran while being incarcerated for opposing World War I. This is when he received over a million votes but lost for the last time. His annual award this year was given to a well-known U.S. senator that also stood up to political giants and unfair employers.

We all must stand against any continuance of federal government shutdowns and unfair redistricting. It reminds me of unfair route count and inspections. The joint statement of violence and behavior reminds us that "this is a time for a candid appraisal of our flaws and not a time for scapegoating, finger-pointing, or procrastinating." We are our brother's and sister's keeper.

Kieaunta Roberson

Michigan

As we find ourselves in the middle of the holiday season, it's important to remember that before all else, our most critical task is to return home to our families each day in the same condition that we showed up to work. Work safely. Take the time it takes to do the job correctly. It doesn't matter how fast you are if you can't work due to an injury.

With the holidays comes a lull in political activity. Congress doesn't want to get anything done in December of odd years. They'll be home. That means that it might be a good time to visit with a staffer or attend a town hall. If you'd like to work with your representative's office but aren't sure how, just contact us and we'll give you all the help you need. We can even have someone from the state board attend your meeting with you.

I know that we represent carriers from many different faiths. Regardless of what you call this time of year, please accept the best wishes of the entire MISALC board for this holiday season and for a happy, prosperous, and safe new year!

Ronald Zalewski

Tennessee

Hello, brothers and sisters!

We are the largest organization with 640,000 postal employees, which is larger than the U.S. Army. We both share a rich history in defending our constitution and on our part, defending our brothers and sisters of the satchel when management breaks the contract and imposes unwarranted discipline.

Like infantry men, stewards are the first line of defense. How can you support them? By contributing to the Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF)! That's how we fight this battle for a fairer contract. But first, we must win the privatization battle. If we are unable to receive additional donations, there may not be a battle to fight for a better contract. We're only asking for \$5 a pay period to add more lobbyists.

Our rivals (UPS, FedEx) are out contributing us by 3 to 1. They have contributed \$21 million to our \$7 million. Money talks and people walk. Like a last-place team, we must do better if we are to defend this attack against the USPS. Lat-

est figures are that Tennessee only contributed 7.8 percent to the LCPF. Are you satisfied with these numbers? Let's fix this!

It starts at your office. CCAs—you are the future of the Post Office. You need to step up as potential stewards and as contributors to the LCPF. Let's deliver a message to Washington, DC, and to the rest of this great nation!

Tony Rodriguez

Texas

On Nov. 4, statewide elections took place in Texas. Voters considered 17 proposed constitutional amendments and participated in important local contests, including the election for District 18, following the vacancy created by the passing of Sylvester Turner.

District 18 is a very blue county that covers a large area in Houston. Christian Menefee and Amanda Edwards are headed to a runoff in District 18 after neither secured 50 percent of the vote. Christian Menefee is a county attorney for Harris County and is running under his belief on family values and holding up the strong arm of Texas justice. Amanda Edwards is an American attorney running under her belief of putting people before politics. The winner will serve out the remainder of Turner's term, which runs until January 2027. Good luck to both candidates. The TSALC is looking forward to working with the winning candidate to address legislation that is of interest to the letter carriers.

More than ever, we need members of the TSALC to please sign up for the LCPF. Your involvement is crucial in ensuring that our voices are heard on issues that impact our profession and communities. By supporting the LCPF, we strengthen our collective ability to advocate for fair policies and protect the interests of letter carriers across Texas and beyond. Let's stay engaged, informed and proactive in shaping the future together.

Happy Veterans Day! Have a safe and healthy holiday!

Everett Wyllie

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.

From the Trustees

On behalf of all the Nalcrest Trustees, Tony, Fred and I wish the happiest of holidays to our Nalcrest residents and to our entire NALC family.

We are all proud of our Central Florida retirement community for retired letter carrier members. We have 483 yearly leased apartments, with a waiting list of another 386 members who will move to Nalcrest when they are retired as apartments become available. If you want to visit and see what Nalcrest is all about, we also have 17 guest apartments available to rent for a day, week, month or longer. NALC members are given priority for renting the guest apartments.

Since becoming a member of the Nalcrest Committee, I have had the privilege of meeting many residents. I recently had a great conversation with the current retired letter carrier resident who has been living here the longest. John Jewell has been living here for over 33 years. He and his wife started residing at Nalcrest on Aug. 1, 1992, after retiring from the Postal Service. He spent his 30 years of service working both in Philadelphia, PA, and in New Jersey. He and his wife decided to get out of

the cold weather and move to Florida. Mr. Jewell loves Nalcrest. He says the people are wonderful, and he loves all the available activities. During his many years at Nalcrest, he has run the weekly Bingo games, driven the Nalcrest shuttle, and played on the Nalcrest softball team, just to name a few of his activities.

I was also surprised to see a resident named Kim VanCourt, whom I actually delivered mail with several years ago. She is now retired and living with her husband at Nalcrest. She stressed how much she loved it here with all the clubs, people and activities. She stays involved with the entertainment activities and Bingo, and says there is always something to do or help with at Nalcrest.

I love being a trustee at Nalcrest, and working with Tony and Fred. All of us have a passion and are committed to former President William Dougherty's vision of a safe, well maintained, enjoyable, and inexpensive retirement community for retired letter carriers. The staff at Nalcrest is equally committed to the vision, and does a great job of maintaining the property and making Nalcrest a great place to live.

Come visit us at Nalcrest, and submit an application and get on the waiting list if you're thinking about making Nalcrest your home in

the future. Nalcrest is a first-class community! Be blessed and be a blessing.

Starr Hunter

Apply to live at Nalcrest

For an application to live at Nalcrest, visit 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 President Tony Diaz

Nalcrest Trustees Vice President Fred Rolando

Nalcrest Trustees Vice President Starr Hunter

In Memoriam

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

Cecilia Carbajal Br. 704 Tucson, AZ
 Linda C. Williams Br. 2293 Beverly Hills, CA
 Titus U. Cattage Br. 2086 Burbank, CA
 Robert E. Armstrong Br. 2200 Pasadena, CA
 Walter R. Beard Br. 2200 Pasadena, CA
 Raymond G. Lopez Br. 2168 Upland, CA
 Shawna L. Steiger Br. 5996 Centennial, CO
 Brian Chronowski Br. 204 Colorado Springs, CO
 Timothy J. Leddy Br. 47 Denver, CO
 Binh Pham Br. 47 Denver, CO
 Leslie K. Ellsworth Br. 324 Greeley, CO
 William C. Accola Br. 2550 Fort Lauderdale, FL
 Michael C. Lombardo Br. 2148 Sarasota, FL
 William E. Patino-Martinez Br. 1071 South Florida
 Leo H. Fieser Jr. Br. 5480 Venice, FL
 James C. Holleran Br. 5480 Venice, FL
 Denise A. Duffy Br. 1477 West Coast Florida
 Terry L. Clayborn Br. 73 Atlanta, GA
 Rodney E. Underwood Br. 73 Atlanta, GA
 Julian P. Rachels Jr. Br. 263 Augusta, GA
 Shaundrea K. Edwards Br. 546 Columbus, GA
 George T. Elieff Br. 11 Chicago, IL
 James T. Fleming Br. 11 Chicago, IL
 Reginald A. Richardson Br. 11 Chicago, IL
 Roscoe Seay Jr. Br. 11 Chicago, IL
 Alvin J. Doubet Br. 1870 Downers Grove, IL
 Ciana R. Talmadge Br. 4099 Mount Prospect, IL
 Christopher G. Jackson Br. 825 Oak Brook, IL
 Dianna L. Rundle Br. 245 Rockford, IL
 Joseph Maiberger Jr. Br. 4016 S. Suburban Mgd., IL
 Alan W. Wollenzien Br. 4016 S. Suburban Mgd., IL
 Anthony P. Lissy Br. 580 Hammond, IN
 Orville E. Van Dyke Br. 580 Hammond, IN
 Ronald L. Marsh Br. 39 Indianapolis, IN
 Richard L. Pape Br. 719 Cedar Falls, IA
 Ronald E. Blatchley Br. 126 Clinton, IA
 Glen W. Sheirbon Br. 851 Shenandoah, IA
 Luke Porter Br. 512 Waterloo, IA
 Cutnisha M. Matthews Br. 2730 Gretna, LA
 Donald Bankston Br. 124 New Orleans, LA
 Dwight J. Bazile Br. 124 New Orleans, LA
 Clinton J. Fleury Br. 124 New Orleans, LA

Earl M. Hackett Jr. Br. 124 New Orleans, LA
 Malcolm Thompson Br. 124 New Orleans, LA
 Winston Tuckerson Br. 124 New Orleans, LA
 John J. Williams Jr. Br. 124 New Orleans, LA
 Brenda G. Coleman Br. 197 Shreveport, LA
 Callaghan Skillings I Br. 92 Maine Merged
 Allen C. Heyman Br. 176 Baltimore, MD
 Leroy A. Hosgood Jr. Br. 176 Baltimore, MD
 Robert O. Jones Br. 176 Baltimore, MD
 Raymond Kirkwood Br. 176 Baltimore, MD
 Dexter L. Moberly Br. 3825 Rockville, MD
 Robert E. Amero Br. 7 Lynn, MA
 Robert G. Cavicchio Br. 7 Lynn, MA
 Francis B. Healey Jr. Br. 7 Lynn, MA
 Howard R. Jackson Br. 7 Lynn, MA
 William J. Dierickx Br. 1 Detroit, MI
 Mark J. Tondreau Br. 1 Detroit, MI
 Joseph B. Carter III Br. 3126 Royal Oak, MI
 Janet F. Miller Br. 246 Southwestern MI
 Joel A. Menuey Br. 717 Austin, MN
 Keith J. Mehrman Br. 114 Duluth, MN
 John A. Susnik Br. 114 Duluth, MN
 Kevin R. Degrugillier Br. 1058 Hibbing, MN
 Ralph J. Buysted Br. 9 Minneapolis, MN
 Steven Townsend Br. 9 Minneapolis, MN
 Victor J. Bromenschenkel Br. 388 St. Cloud, MN
 Raymond E. Peka Br. 388 St. Cloud, MN
 Mark A. Ross Br. 217 Jackson, MS
 Leroy T. Foster Br. 343 St. Louis, MO
 Barry Bernstein Br. 425 Bergen Co. Mgd., NJ
 Vito P. Zambri Br. 38 New Jersey Merged
 Thomas W. Burns Br. 2128 Toms River, NJ
 Elijah Moses Jr. Br. 380 Trenton, NJ
 Ricky S. Riojas Br. 3727 Hobbs, NM
 Eugene V. Kasproicz Br. 3 Buffalo-Western NY
 Edgar T. Osborn Br. 294 Flushing, NY
 Warren D. McDougall Br. 6000 Long Island Mgd., NY
 Nathaniel Boomer Br. 36 New York, NY
 Frederick S. Rice Br. 358 Northeastern NY
 Richard J. Robles Br. 358 Northeastern NY
 Gordon J. Silsby Br. 134 Syracuse, NY
 Eugene P. Lee Br. 693 Westchester Mgd., NY

David E. Badal Br. 387 Yonkers, NY
 Donald J. Shepard Br. 148 Akron, OH
 Edwin J. Baker Br. 78 Columbus, OH
 Richard B. Hollman Br. 182 Dayton, OH
 David L. Kouns Br. 182 Dayton, OH
 Luther G. Bonnough Br. 100 Toledo, OH
 Robert L. Bruns Br. 100 Toledo, OH
 Sean A. Collins Br. 100 Toledo, OH
 Richard G. Day Br. 100 Toledo, OH
 Thomas A. Kerr Br. 100 Toledo, OH
 Eugene S. Michalski Br. 100 Toledo, OH
 Michael Miskiel Br. 100 Toledo, OH
 Richard E. Myers Br. 100 Toledo, OH
 Leo L. Ogradowski Br. 100 Toledo, OH
 Ronald J. Parkins Br. 100 Toledo, OH
 Burton E. Paulson Br. 100 Toledo, OH
 Ronald S. Petersen Br. 100 Toledo, OH
 Melvin F. Rinker Br. 100 Toledo, OH
 James R. Tibboles Br. 100 Toledo, OH
 Harold A. Throne Br. 100 Toledo, OH
 David E. Venzke Br. 100 Toledo, OH
 Randy N. Warner Br. 100 Toledo, OH
 Candy L. Williams Br. 100 Toledo, OH
 James A. Zirger Br. 100 Toledo, OH
 John L. Hedrick Br. 82 Portland, OR
 Donald J. McGillivray Br. 82 Portland, OR
 Richard L. Mullen Br. 500 Harrisburg, PA
 William F. Shultz Br. 500 Harrisburg, PA
 Michael P. Green Br. 4 Nashville, TN
 George C. Bryant Br. 132 Dallas, TX
 Joyce M. Guenther Br. 132 Dallas, TX
 Dora E. Carrillo Br. 505 El Paso, TX
 Luis A. Estrada Br. 505 El Paso, TX
 Ignacio E. Hernandez Br. 505 El Paso, TX
 Jesus P. Trujillo Br. 505 El Paso, TX
 Rodney E. Latney Br. 567 Alexandria, VA
 William L. McMann Br. 4458 Bridgeport, WV
 Elmer V. Fly Br. 442 Spokane, WA
 Joseph A. Mangano Br. 442 Spokane, WA
 Delmar W. Mosset Br. 442 Spokane, WA

Branch Items

Albany, New York

We had a districtwide Customer Connect telecon the other day and only 11 people attended. I have been a letter carrier for over 20 years, and every day I see a growing tension that threatens the Postal Service, the push for speed over service. Across the district, customer service is being sacrificed in the name of efficiency. Blue boxes disappear, collection routes are cut, and customers are left to figure out what to do with their outgoing mail. We're expected to drop packages on the porch and run, not connect with the people we serve.

If we stop to chat, we're disciplined for stationary time. We're given unrealistic under-time projections and pivots, with no room to build trust or relationships, which is the very foundation of Customer Connect. The program claims carriers are the face of USPS and key to business growth, but we all know better.

Training for Customer Connect is minimal and quickly forgotten once real delivery pressures begin. Supervisors demand "Get done in eight hours!" while discouraging any interaction that isn't measurable by breadcrumbs on the scanner. Carriers internalize this message of efficiency over service. Management treats talking to customers as a liability, not an opportunity. The system punishes the very behaviors Customer Connect depends on.

This is not a failure of carrier engagement; it's a cultural failure. When supervisors emphasize speed and time over trust and service, the program dies. But if leadership empowered carriers to spend even a few minutes daily engaging with businesses, USPS could build relationships, generate revenue, and restore pride in the carrier's role.

Customer Connect is not a technology or marketing problem; it's a culture problem. Until leadership values engagement over efficiency, its promise will remain unfulfilled, and carriers will continue to deliver under the crushing message of "Hurry up."

Norris Beswick, Branch 29

Bridgeport, Connecticut

Greetings from Southern New England. After meeting with upper-level management, I've come to a realization: The days of walking into the office, dropping the contract on the table, and winning grievances with ease are over. The landscape has changed.

While the lower-level managers are still as clueless and shortsighted as ever, there are now guardrails in place to protect them. They even admitted that they have "discipline writers" stationed regionally to back them up. That tells you everything about how management is operating now—not smarter, but more insulated.

We can and will continue to outthink and outmaneuver them at the local level. But as issues advance up the chain, our cases can start to take on water. Eventually, even the strongest grievance can sink if we're not airtight.

The only way to counter this new system is to do the job with precision—safely, thoroughly, deliberately, and by the book. Follow every

instruction to the letter. Let their own system work against them.

Malicious compliance isn't just a tactic anymore—it's the only way to win in the long run.

Keeping in line with our annual tradition, our Christmas party will be held on Jan. 18. It's a great event for all our members, and having it after the holidays allows more people to attend. A good time will be had by all.

Anthony Constantinople, Branch 32

Charlotte, North Carolina

Branch 545 would like to wish everyone very happy holidays and a merry Christmas. We hope all of our members get to enjoy some much-deserved time with family and friends.



Elyria, OH Branch 196 member Sam H. Farley serves as the keynote speaker at Vermilion, OH's Veterans Day celebration.

Thank you for a great year in 2025, and we look forward to an even better year in 2026.

We would like to congratulate our fellow carrier, Jimmy Potts, on his recent retirement. Mr. Potts was assigned to our Idlewild station and retires with 35 years of service. We thank you for your service and wish you the best in the next chapter of your life.

The union leadership would like to let all of our members know that we are continuing with our in-person 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

Hello, Queen City. My name is December; I'm the month where your family for the most part is put on the back burner so that all the packages and holiday cards get to their destination by Dec. 25.

For a lot of carriers, the new contract helped us out with being able to pick if you want to work your off day or just overtime on your scheduled day. Heck, even some of us do work assignment only, which is my choice. This gives me more time with the family, and also makes me a happier person in general. This job, as most of the old timers could tell you, takes a toll on the body and mind every day.

Please, like I say every year, take your time at work and be safe. This time of year—with the weather changing, it getting darker earlier, and most stations starting later and later—when it gets dark, it gets challenging on the street. If the Post Office wants us to work in the dark more, take your time even more. As they preach safety, but want you to pivot every day, make sure you fill out a 3996 correctly, and when it gets denied, make sure you text by a certain time stating that you won't make your scheduled time to return and put the ball and the safety aspect back in their lap.

As always, be safe, so that you can enjoy the holidays with the ones you love. This job has many perks with it, and one is being able to spend these special days with family. Thank you to all the carriers out there, especially Branch 43. Remember, branch meetings every second Thursday of the month in Forest Park.

In solidarity—

Chris Rought, Branch 43

Fargo-West Fargo, North Dakota

I have a lot of personal reflections from this year. Since I had taken on the role of scribe for our union, sometimes I would wonder what to write about, and if I could effectively accomplish my duties. I have come to realize, that it's not difficult to write about ideas. The more challenging part is to keep the article short and concise. I realize there are a multitude of issues we face in the workplace. Some issues we *might* have some influence on, but often we need to accept the direction or lack of direction given to us.

A wise carrier once told me that management has the right to manage and mismanage. If needed, a steward could become involved, and possibly work on a remedy. Everyone's issue is important, but after becoming more involved with the union, I can see as the stewards and officers are fair and consistent, it's in everyone's best interest. In the scheme of life, our issues can really be quite petty. Issues can often involve pay, which they should get correct.

I met two people recently. One, a year ago her father was in the process of purchasing a grave for his daughter. She was gravely ill and on hospice. When I spoke to her the other day, she was doing amazingly well. The other person I spoke to was resettled here as a child. What she endured was something utterly amazing and heartbreaking. I don't know

if most of us would have the fortitude to go on and thrive like her family. I have so much respect for each of them and the support they have received from their family. It makes my tired legs or stiff neck quite insignificant. *Be grateful.*

Just a thought.

David Steichen, Branch 205

Fayetteville, North Carolina

Thanks to all the members who participated in our biennial picnic, which was held on Oct. 12. And thanks for helping the branch raise money in support of MDA.

The leadership of Branch 1128 would like to wish all letter carriers across the nation a happy and safe holiday season. We ask that all members of Branch 1128 come to the retiree dinner to help us celebrate our retirees on Dec. 20. The event will be held at the Springhill Suites, 4750 Lake Valley Drive, Fayetteville. The celebration starts at 6:30 p.m.

We also invite the membership to attend our installation dinner scheduled for Jan. 17, 2026. This event takes place at the same Springhill Suites with the same start time as the retiree celebration. And congratulations to our newly elected branch officers and our elected delegates to the 2026 NALC national convention.

We look forward to seeing you all at our monthly membership meetings, which are held at the union hall on the second Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. We do offer members the chance to attend our meeting via Zoom. To receive the Zoom sign-in information, contact a member of our branch leadership.

And the officers of Branch 1128 wish all a happy and safe holiday season.

Let's enjoy this season safely, and if you celebrate, please do so *responsibly!*

Rodney L. Redding, Branch 1128

Fresno, California

Health care insurance coverage—it is not a crime to pay for and have. Not just for you, but for millions of people in our country, including the elderly, disabled, and your own family members for years to come. We will all need it. It's a no-brainer. One serious injury or illness often depletes your life savings. This over 40 days of government shutdown will come down to health care coverage being provided for us, and not being doubled in price. Our current president and his supporters want to strip millions of people of their much-depended-on health care coverage, or be priced out of it. All in the name of even further tax breaks for the top 1 percent of the wealthy.

What is wrong with these crazed Republicans? Greed? With their wealth, how much money do they want? I personally know of low-income people who have disabilities. Disabilities that prevent them from holding a job. It is not their fault. They really try getting a job, and want one. I feel bad for them. That jerk in the White House has no intention of helping. He could, but flat refuses to. That puts Democrats in the position of agreeing with him to end the shutdown. Or defend the needy, who depend

on health care to survive, and get by. Of course, the shutdown continues. Our president needs to help the needy. His job is to help, not attack millions of needy people.

He has already stated, "I do not care." We get that. We must all be together. Even the NALC has to support the needy. We will all be in that position, if not already.

Jesse Dominguez, Branch 231



Harrisburg, PA Branch 500 carriers (pictured, l to r) Paul Peritz, Jeffrey Dressel and Daniel Hine are recognized for each driving a million miles with a perfect safety record.

Greenville, South Carolina

This is official notice to all active and retired members of Branch 439. The e-board meeting for the branch will be on Jan. 6, 2026, not in December. The branch meeting will be on Jan. 8, not on Jan. 1.

Michelle Harlow, Branch 439

Kansas City, Missouri

Somehow, fall is slowly becoming my favorite season here in America's heartland. The temperatures take a break, the trees transform into a bouquet of beauty. Then comes Columbus Day, Veterans Day (thank you for your service), and Thanksgiving holidays. All worthy in their own right, yet don't hold a candle to either the NALC Branch 30/MDA "Deliver the Cure Bowl-A-Thon" or the executive board's annual retirees dinner.

This year's event at Premier Lanes, with 26 teams, was the largest number of teams to participate, according to Recording Secretary Kenneth Best. The fun-filled atmosphere with tons of raffle prizes was supercharged by seemingly non-stop, friendly inter-station banter and a small dose of competitive juices, and raised around three grand for the MDA. This year's winning team, from the Kansas City Plant: Art Cole, Michelle Bolden Willie Gordon and Daniel McNeal.

The Branch 30 Annual Retirement Dinner, on the other hand, was a time of reflection into the past and gazing toward the next chapter. Chairperson Anita Franklin, Janice Mickles and the Branch 30 executive board held an

outstanding event at the union hall. Soft music played as the 60 retirees and guests dined on a flavorful meal prepared by the Guess Catering Company. In his remarks, Region 5 NBA David Teegarden mentioned that though "retired," many stay involved. He also highlighted the need for mentorship to be a focal point to the NALC's efforts to retain those replacing the group I was honored to be sitting among. Robert Robbins was the "youngest" retiring this year; Bert Robinson retired in 1985!

HBR/Director of Retirees Anita Franklin mentioned the need for NALC members to update both your *mailing address* and *beneficiary information*. This is especially important as carrier discipline is being sent through the mail system.

Happy holidays.

Calvin Davis, Branch 30

Knoxville, Tennessee

Hello, sisters and brothers!

Good news on the home front! We offer congratulations to three part-time flexible carriers. They were recent carrier conversions to unassigned full-time regular status. How did we get so lucky? Well, when a full-time carrier is on LWOP for 13 consecutive pay periods, an on-the-rolls-but-not-available (ORNA) assignment must be created and filled in accordance with MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) Re: Full-Time Regular Opportunities – City Carrier Craft (M-01824, M-01834, M-01856 and M-01876). Basically, only one ORNA assignment will be created for each city letter carrier on extended LWOP, including, but not limited to, military LWOP, official union LWOP, limited or light duty, or injury compensation.

In addition, this MOU also mentions that when a former career employee is reinstated, meaning they leave the Postal Service and are rehired in accordance with Section 233.33 of Handbook EL-312, *Employment and Placement*, in an office with PTFs on the rolls, they are reinstated as a PTF. So, if you know anyone who has left the Service and would like to come back, give them a call. Not a bad deal!

Tony Rodriguez, Branch 419

Lima, Ohio

Hello, Lima. On Nov. 4, Branch 105 held elections of officers. By acclamation and unanimous decision, the following was decided: President Matt Hagar, Secretary Todd Friemoth, Treasurer J.J. Schoonover, and Trustees Ellen Franklin, Teresa Brooks and Brittany Heath. Congratulations!

Contested seats were V.P. (Brian Sharp and Amber Wolf); sergeant-at-arms (Ned DeLong and Andrew Dubuque), and health benefits representative (Fred Brinkman and Kayla Baugh).

By the time most of this read this, the branch will have voted, and I will report on the results.

I read in *The Postal Record* about the Federal Retirement Act (H.R. 1522)! This bill will help carriers who served as TES, CCAs and other titles and convert that time to creditable time toward retirement. So, please contact your

Branch Items

representatives today and tell them to support H.R. 1522. That's for Ellen!

And, as always, union meetings are held every second Tuesday of the month, 7 p.m. at Rigali's Pizza Village! *Free pizza!* Thanks!

Jeffery Steegman, Branch 105

Marrero, Louisiana

After my October article about our retirees, I received a fascinating letter from Mr. Gene Russell sharing the history of how Branch 4323 began.

Back in 1966, a small group of Marrero letter carriers gathered at the home of Aubrey Bellanger with one goal: to create a local branch for the letter carriers in Marrero. Around that kitchen table sat Gus Mire, Jerry Dufour, Leroy Talamo, Aubrey Bellanger, Ray Martin, Sal Monfra and Gene Russell. With guidance from Pete Ellsworth, Alton Ricard and Clarence Acox, who was then president of Branch 124 in New Orleans, their idea became a reality. That's how NALC Branch 4323, Marrero, LA, was born.

Mr. Gene Russell, one of the founding members, shared this story proudly. He retired in 2005 but still remembers those early days like they were yesterday.

The Marrero Post Office in 1966 looked very different from today. Starting pay was \$2.48 an hour, and the post office was located on Baratavia Boulevard across from the old icehouse. Later, it moved to the Westbank Expressway and eventually to its current home at 5351 Lapalco Blvd.

In those days, management had full control over overtime, leave, and even pay docking. Carriers needed a voice, and Branch 4323 gave them one. Soon after the branch was founded, the first local memorandum of understanding was negotiated, marking the beginning of real progress for letter carriers.

Today, Branch 4323 proudly represents the letter carriers of the Marrero, Belle Chasse and Westwego Post Offices.

Congratulations to our sister, Heidi Umbach, on 30 years of outstanding service. Her commitment to her customers and the pride she takes in her route have earned her the respect and appreciation of everyone she serves.

Happy holidays from the Branch 4323 Executive Board.

In solidarity—

Abraham Askar, Branch 4323

Monterey, California

Wow, was I shocked to open the computer and see that a carrier in a town close by apparently entered the facility with a gun. This is not good news. While no one was injured, I'm certain the trauma will continue. If you feel anxiety, harassment, bullying at your job, etc.,

reach out to EAP at 800-EAP-4YOU (800-327-4968) to share your concerns. We don't need something worse to happen.

So, interesting scenario: Supervisor makes their go-around. Carrier states they estimate one and a half hours. Supervisor cuts the request in half, carrier calls at 2 p.m., tells the supervisor they need the additional time. Supervisor states, "Carry the mail and get back with the 45 minutes." Say what? It doesn't take a rocket scientist to know that delivering of mail takes what it takes. Let's have a National Day of switching roles! Let the supervisors go into one office and let the carriers treat them like they are treated. I doubt many would like that.

Our Parcel Post carrier, Jim Collignon, has retired. What a legend in Monterey. Jim is a



North Florida Branch 53 members march in a Veterans Day parade in Jacksonville.

kind and wonderful man with a great family. His son Jordan is doing great things at Merced College teaching others.

Tony Mitchell, the legend on Cannery Row, has hung up his satchel. Tony has carried Route 3 for as long as I can remember. His wonderful daughter Jasmine (aka "Boo Boo") is going to be a doctor in a very short time. Thank you for always supporting the union and us never having to wonder which side you are on. Enjoy Georgia and all those peaches.

May both of you enjoy each retirement day! Toss the alarm clock!

Let's hope 2026 will bring about some great changes—for the better.

United we bargain—divided we beg.

Patty Cramer, Branch 1310

Mount Prospect, Illinois

In loving memory of Ciana Talmadge:

We are deeply saddened by the loss of our dear co-worker and friend, Ciana, who tragically passed away on Sept. 14 at just 25 years old. As a dedicated mail carrier, Ciana brightened every day with her radiant smile and beautiful spirit. She was the life of the party—full of laughter, faith and love for her family, friends and customers. Ciana believed in peace over conflict and lived with a kind and giving heart. Passionate about her health and self-improvement, she was a hard worker and inspired those around her to do the same. Though she had no children of her own, she nurtured everyone she met with the same care

and warmth. Ciana had her entire life ahead of her, and her passing leaves an ache in the hearts of all who knew her. Her light and love will never be forgotten.

Authors: Aaliyah and Koryn

Antonio Valdez, Branch 4099

North Florida

Branch 53 will be participating in the NALC effort to feed those in need. White House and congressional action has adversely affected much of the nation from cutting off SNAP benefits to not paying federal workers with a shutdown. Speaker Johnson's decision to not even discuss health insurance and to just shut down the House of Representatives was damning in itself. Let's not forget that those representatives got paid during this.

I had the opportunity to attend a campaign kickoff for a Democrat running for Congress. The event was attended by an overflow crowd, which included Republicans. That and the recent elections in several states says people are tired of it all. Let's remember that 2026 is the midterm election and that that will determine the future of our country. Be sure you are registered to vote, and vote by mail.

Former Branch 53 President Maceo George has been elected to the position of president of the North Florida Central Labor Council AFL-CIO. He has some very big shoes to fill, but I know he will take a positive approach to this enormous job.

Branch 53 wishes all NALC members and their families a very happy holiday season and a happy new year.

Bob Henning, Branch 53

Northeastern New York

I recently attended the NALC Health Benefit seminar in Orlando, FL. I was impressed with all the programs our members can use to improve their health. Hello Heart, Hinge Health, and Optum for behavioral health care are only a few programs to utilize. For retirees, there is the NALC Athena high option Medicare Advantage plan, and the Silver Script plan. Also new, there will be extended hours to call the HBP (8 a.m. to 6 p.m.). The plan is union-owned, and not for profit. There are so many great benefits, and I hope our members will support the NALC plan.

Recently, one of our retirees, Dave Dedrick, was recognized for exemplary military and community service. Dave received the Rev. Francis A. Kelly Hometown Hero award for Rensselaer County. Dave graduated from the Medical Corpsman school in San Antonio, TX. His unit was assigned to Tay Ninh by the Cambodian border. He was seriously wounded while attempting to assist a fellow wounded soldier. For his efforts, Dave earned a Purple Heart, and Army commendation with "V" service for combat valor while treating wounded soldiers. He also received a good conduct medal among other awards.

After serving his country, Dave was hired as a letter carrier in the Troy, NY, Post Office. He was also a steward for a number of years. Dave volunteered for disabled American Veterans,

Combined Federal Campaign, and served as a coach for youth baseball.

Congratulations on all your efforts!

Frank P. Maresca, Branch 358

Portland, Oregon

2025 was a year of adversity for our branch and our city. While Branch 82 started the year on a positive note with the purchase of a new, larger building, one that will serve our needs well into the future, we are ending the year with Portland in the national news for ICE activity and extra federal enforcement.

It is helpful to understand that we are all in this together. Portlanders are a diverse group, and we receive undue press, but we are just like any other city. Regardless of everyone's opinions, political beliefs or actions, we are all just trying to get by in this changing world. There is some protesting going on, but it's all within the bounds of the laws of this land. I am proud of our city.

Likewise, Branch 82 is a local of diverse opinions. We traverse the spectrum of political and ideological beliefs, but at the end of the day, we should all be on the same page: the betterment of the letter carrier craft.

In such a divisive time, we can all get together in our belief in the advancement of hours, wages and working conditions for letter carriers. This is a job that matters to the American public, and it should be protected. Regardless of personal beliefs, we remain one union with a shared goal, and we should not be divided in our pursuit of it. I am proud of this union, what we have fought for in the past, and the position we are in to fight in the future. That is what everyone should remember as we head into a year that is poised to present more challenges.

Happy holidays to all, and please keep up the good fight.

David Norton, Branch 82

Racine, Wisconsin

Adulting is tough in this chaotic world. So, let's take a break and head back to a much simpler time and place. Here we go, leading off. Who didn't have a Game Boy growing up? Cutting-edge technology in the '80s. No more scrounging for quarters for the arcade.

Summers were endless. Time didn't exist until the streetlights came on. Nobody started buying back-to-school supplies until August. School books were covered. A mastered and lost art.

We all have "junk drawers." It's the lifeline of any household. Need a screwdriver, some twine, a pair of scissors or a flashlight? Go to the junk drawer.

How about a linen closet? The beating heart of any household. The linen closet holds everything from towels, washcloths, first-aid kits, lotions, ointments, soap and shampoo to stuff that just sits there forever, languishing in the back unmoved and untouched.

Long before hot lunches were introduced, our midday lunch came in a metal lunch box. Yes, complete with a snack pack. Thermos included, but not mandatory. We ate ice cream with a wooden spoon. Imagine that. Mighty

Mouse and Underdog ruled Saturday mornings. Michael Jackson was bigger than the planet. We were "Living on a Prayer" as Madonna's "Like a Virgin" sailed past "99 Red Balloons."

Any house worth its weight always had a clothesline outside. Not the newfangled ones; I'm talking about a rope extended from the garage to the house with homemade clothesline poles with a divot carved in them to keep the line up. Freshness unlimited.

Hmmm, lunch box smell or clothesline linen? Take this for what it's worth. To all my Tang, Hi-C, Jolly Good, Bazooka gum-chewing, Kool-Aid (more sugar than Kool), powdered milk drinkers and cookie dough-eating brothers and sisters, happy holidays. You're welcome!

Chris Paige, Branch 436

Rockville, Maryland

We sent a grievance to Step B and to the NBA office as an ADRP case, using the MOU on page 159 of our 2023-2026 National Agreement. This is an amazing MOU, and we are grateful that our union was able to negotiate it. The main part of the MOU is that unassigned full-time regular (incumbent only) positions to cover vacancies created by full-time regular city letter carriers who are on the rolls but are not available (ORNA) will be created. The following will be used to determine when an ORNA assignment needs to be created:

- 1) A full-time city letter carrier holding a bid position who has no paid workhours for a continuous period of 13 pay periods for approved Leave Without Pay (LWOP) including, but not limited to, military LWOP, official union LWOP, limited or light duty, or injury compensation, or
- 2) A full-time city letter carrier who becomes absent for an extended period and it is likely that the employee will not return to duty for an extended period of time.

For some cities, this will result in many CCAs or PTFs being converted to regulars. This is huge! We eagerly await the decision on these grievances.

On Nov. 9, Donald Trump addressed the D.C. crowd during an NFL game between the Washington Commanders and the Detroit Lions. Trump was *booed* without mercy. I encourage everyone to google it. The level of disgust toward Trump was incredible. It made me think of the comments by Mitt Romney, the Republican nominee for president in 2012. Romney said, "Trump has disrespected the American voter, has dishonored the elections system, and has disgraced the office of the presidency."

One final comment on Trump: He promised to drain the swamp, but instead he is building a \$300,000,000 ballroom on top of it!

In the struggle—

Kenneth Lerch, Branch 3825

St. Louis, Missouri

The challenges that lie ahead for the National Association of Letter Carriers with the U.S. Postal Service are already daunting as we prepare for contract negotiations early in 2026. Just trying to get the Postal Service to abide by the contractual obligations outlined in the National Agreement makes any shop steward's head spin.

What we are dealing with is incompetent managers across the board. So woefully lacking in any managerial skills, yet somehow retaining their positions despite abysmal performance reviews.

Case in point, look at what's happened in the St. Louis area over the last several months. Missouri Rep. Sam Graves (R-6) bowing to complaints of poor mail service in the St. Louis area requested an investigation by the inspector general's office of the processing center in St. Louis to get to the bottom of the poor mail service. Their conclusions were stunning.

In just two days in June at the St. Louis distribution facility, almost 2.6 million pieces of mail were delayed. If that weren't enough, they only reported around 1.5 million pieces as being delayed. They weren't even reporting the missed mail correctly. On top of that, over 50 percent of all outbound mail trips from the STL

COLA: Cost-of-living adjustment

The October consumer price index (CPI) was not available at press time.

- *The projected accumulation toward the sixth regular COLA under the 2023-2026 National Agreement was **\$146** in September following the release of the August 2025 CPI. The sixth COLA will be based on the increase in the CPI-W between the base index month and January 2026, less any previously calculated COLAs, and will be payable the second full pay period following the release of the January 2026 index.*
- *The 2026 projected COLAs for the Civil Service Retirement System*

*(CSRS) is **2.8 percent**, and for the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), **2.0 percent**, following the release of the August 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 **2.7 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 for the latest updates.

Branch Items

processing facility from May 2024 to April 2025 were late or canceled. The inspector general reported that this was one of the worst processing centers they have seen.

The conclusion was that management was at fault. They simply weren't doing their jobs and new management needs to be put in place at the St. Louis facility. Has that happened? No, and I'm certain St. Louis isn't an isolated incident; the audit needs to be nationwide.

How can we hope to conduct meaningful, enforceable negotiations with people who have no business holding positions of authority?

Tom Schulte, Branch 343

St. Paul, Minnesota

Peak is here, but you don't need me to tell you that. Much like the last few years, the union has been kept in the dark by local management about not only the plans for peak, but if they even exist or if we're winging it once again. This marks two years in a row where local management has sought zero input or even informed the people who will be doing the actual work what the plans are to make sure we don't run into the same problems as the last few years when it comes to getting everything delivered. And management accuses us of not acting in good faith! It's fine, though; they know that no matter how bad they bungle it, the craft workers will make do and get it done like we always do.

Up at the hall, November saw our annual Thanksgiving turkey giveaway at the general membership meeting. Twenty birds were given away this year to both active and retired branch members. November is always one of the most lively and well-attended meetings each year, both for the turkeys and because next year's budget is presented. Looking forward, we also have the return of the annual kids Christmas party at Chuck E. Cheese again this year. Last year was a smash hit, and we look forward to even more members and their families getting

to enjoy a bit of time away from the rush of peak season.

Finally, there are quite a few more new PTFs than we had last year at this time. It's up to all of us to make sure they're welcomed and well provided for, whether it's helping them find hand warmers or gloves, or donating old winter gear. We all know management isn't going to do it.

Solidarity forever!

Kaylee Veazey, Branch 28

Savannah, Georgia

To all members of Branch 578: Due to the January 2026 regular monthly meeting of Branch 578 falling on New Year's Day, the meeting will be moved to Jan. 6 at 7:30 p.m. at 600 Highway 80 West, Pooler. Please contact any member of the executive board with any questions and/or concerns.

Ruben Reko Santana, Branch 578

Seattle, Washington

Those algorithms, they're like rheostats, don't you think? Change the number, change the equation, change the outcome—don't like the outcome—change the number again. I don't trust algorithms. You change another number, you get another outcome. Whatever you want. Then you can go about your business. The business of harassing people by saying things like, "It says right here. Look, numbers don't lie—it says you should have been done an hour ago. You should be out on the street already—in fact, you should be back by now. And you've got undertime, so here's another hour for you."

Maybe what I'm trying to say is that I wouldn't put my trust in what any supervisor has to say. Who knows where they get their algorithm stat facts from? Alternative facts? It's my sincere belief, as I stated, that these formulas are like a rheostat. They can turn it up. They

can turn it down—but mostly they use them to turn up the heat on the carriers. The workroom floor is awash in alternative facts and inconvenient untruths.

I wouldn't put my trust in what they have to say. DOIS is an algorithm for street times I assume, and PET is another algorithm for office times, and all those idiosyncrasies that make up the reality of the letter carrier craft—the long hours, the wear and tear on your extremities, if you're not careful you can easily blow out a knee. Therefore, your pace should be something that complements the weight you have to carry and the distance you must cover. And you have to include the fact that this is not a one-and-done deal. You're going to be back at it again tomorrow. Factor this in—it's not a sprint; it's a marathon.

Don Nokes, Branch 79



How to submit items

Branches may submit items for publication in *The Postal Record* by standard mail or by e-mail. **But please note the important information below.** Due to production requirements, items that do not comply with the styles specified cannot be published. Call *The Postal Record* office at 202-662-2851 if you have questions.

Who can submit: Branch presidents must send *The Postal Record* a letter designating authorized scribes, especially if the branch scribe has changed. If items will be submitted by email, the president also must list the email address(es) that will be used.

Deadline: The deadline is the 10th of the month preceding the month of publication, or if it falls on a weekend or holiday, 9 a.m. E.T. the first business day after. For the January issue, the deadline is 9 a.m.

Thursday, Dec. 11. Items received after the deadline will be held for the next issue.

Word limit: The *NALC Constitution* (Article 9, Section 1.b) limits items to **300 words**. Submissions that are too long or violate the prohibition on defamatory or unlawful matter (such as electioneering) cannot be printed.

To submit items by mail: Use upper and lower case letters (not all capitals) on one sheet of 8.5 x 11" paper. Use an easy-to-read font (no scripts) and print in black. Mail to *The Postal Record*, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144. Include the following information: type of item (Branch Item, State Summary, Retiree Report, Election Notice, etc.); where it comes from; the person sending it; and how to contact the sender.

To submit items by email: Send to postalrecord@nalc.org with the branch

city and state as the subject. The item can be in the body of the e-mail or as an attachment in Microsoft Word format. Do not type in all-capital letters. 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.

Photos: Branches may submit in-focus, professionally processed photos or e-mail digital image files of at least 300 dpi resolution as attachments. Include caption information **identifying all individuals** and the event. Do not send photos printed on a desktop printer. Due to space limitations, *The Postal Record* does not guarantee publication of photos. Photos may be posted online at nalc.org or in one of NALC's social media accounts.

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:

80-year plaques

Charles T. Belgrove Philadelphia, PA Br. 157

75-year plaques

Angelo C. Calabria Philadelphia, PA Br. 157
 Walter D. Klemm Philadelphia, PA Br. 157
 Leon C. Robinson Philadelphia, PA Br. 157
 Albert J. Salinardi Philadelphia, PA Br. 157

70-year plaques

Stewart R. Sickles Port Huron, MI Br. 529
 George T. Jamerson Adrian, MI Br. 579
 Oliver J. Walker Sr. Saint Charles, MO Br. 984
 Carmen A. Cancelliere Philadelphia, PA Br. 157
 Francis Cervellero Philadelphia, PA Br. 157
 Donald Collins Philadelphia, PA Br. 157
 Fred C. Crenshaw Jr. Philadelphia, PA Br. 157
 Ormond A. Fernandez Philadelphia, PA Br. 157
 Robert P. Foote Philadelphia, PA Br. 157
 Manuel M. Goodman Philadelphia, PA Br. 157
 Ronald L. Heise Philadelphia, PA Br. 157
 William J. Lees Philadelphia, PA Br. 157
 James C. Long Philadelphia, PA Br. 157
 Lawrence C. Mascio Philadelphia, PA Br. 157
 William J. McFadden Philadelphia, PA Br. 157
 Francis J. McGough Philadelphia, PA Br. 157
 Anthony Sabatino Philadelphia, PA Br. 157
 William E. Satchell Philadelphia, PA Br. 157
 Elvy T. Williams Jr. Philadelphia, PA Br. 157

65-year pins

Donald M. Maine Connecticut Mgd. Br. 20
 Martin L. Jarboe Adrian, MI Br. 579
 Conrad O. Tossava Hudson Valley Mgd., NY Br. 137
 Thomas E. Whitmire Greenville, SC Br. 439

60-year pins

Raymond B. Duron San Diego, CA Br. 70
 Michael P. Brawley Connecticut Mgd. Br. 20

Joseph R. Corbett Connecticut Mgd. Br. 20
 Robert F. Landry Connecticut Mgd. Br. 20
 William E. Crump Washington, DC Br. 142
 Ronald G. Conger Central Florida Br. 1091
 Pauline Jordan-Harvey Central Florida Br. 1091
 Marvin P. Grant Wichita, KS Br. 201
 Francis C. McCarthy Western MA Br. 46
 Richard E. Pilon Western MA Br. 46
 William H. Dickinson Port Huron, MI Br. 529
 Martin L. Jarboe Adrian, MI Br. 579
 Harold W. Benne Saint Charles, MO Br. 984
 Paul A. Dunnermann Saint Charles, MO Br. 984
 James L. Pettig Saint Charles, MO Br. 984
 James A. Everett Camden, NJ Mgd. Br. 540
 George A. Gordon Jr. Camden, NJ Mgd. Br. 540
 Richard D. Manning New Jersey Mgd. Br. 38
 Paul G. Marburger Hudson Valley Mgd., NY Br. 137
 Ralph L. Landreth Greenville, SC Br. 439
 Cleo W. Martin Odessa, TX Br. 3964
 Edmond L. Tillman Odessa, TX Br. 3964

55-year pins

James E. Cooper Washington, DC Br. 142
 Walter E. Cromer Washington, DC Br. 142
 James A. Ferguson Washington, DC Br. 142
 William L. Goode Washington, DC Br. 142
 Tina L. Harris Washington, DC Br. 142
 Robert A. Scott Washington, DC Br. 142
 Leonard J. Washington Sr. Washington, DC Br. 142
 Willie L. Freeman Apopka, FL Br. 5192
 Robert E. McQueen Jr. Apopka, FL Br. 5192
 Kermit T. Muse North Florida Br. 53
 Marvin P. Grant Wichita, KS Br. 201
 Thomas A. Juhas Kenner, LA Br. 4342
 Wallace R. Miller Jr. Kenner, LA Br. 4342
 Wallace R. Pecquet Kenner, LA Br. 4342
 Preston Powell Jr. Kenner, LA Br. 4342
 Jon R. Weissman Western MA Br. 46
 Ralph C. Ballard Niles, MI Br. 775
 Steven L. Kiger Niles, MI Br. 775
 Gerald B. Marsh Niles, MI Br. 775

William E. Shaffer Niles, MI Br. 775
 Donald C. Wallsten Niles, MI Br. 775
 Frank C. Wesolowski Niles, MI Br. 775
 Donald E. Dickinson Port Huron, MI Br. 529
 Ernest Calvin Saint Charles, MO Br. 984
 Dennis E. Kresha Columbus, NE Br. 1043
 Harry M. Acker Camden, NJ Mgd. Br. 540
 Richard C. Baker Camden, NJ Mgd. Br. 540
 Haywood C. Brown Jr. Camden, NJ Mgd. Br. 540
 Dale E. Ellis Camden, NJ Mgd. Br. 540
 Wilfredo Flores Camden, NJ Mgd. Br. 540
 Robert A. Sassinsky Camden, NJ Mgd. Br. 540
 Theodore A. Vesaki Camden, NJ Mgd. Br. 540
 Alfred F. Capocci Philadelphia, PA Br. 157
 Barry Cohen Philadelphia, PA Br. 157
 Thomas M. Sanders Greenville, SC Br. 439
 Hal E. Sherrord Jr. Knoxville, TN Br. 419
 Jim B. Henslee Odessa, TX Br. 3964
 Ramon Hinojos Odessa, TX Br. 3964
 Raul Marin Odessa, TX Br. 3964
 Robert J. Vasquez Odessa, TX Br. 3964
 Grady A. Wilkerson Odessa, TX Br. 3964
 Lloyd E. Clark Weatherford, TX Br. 697
 Charles W. Simmons Weatherford, TX Br. 697
 James R. Sosebee Weatherford, TX Br. 697

50-year gold cards and pins

Richard V. Gallegos Centennial, CO Br. 5996
 Dennis R. Tatum Centennial, CO Br. 5996
 Deborah S. Buntz Washington, DC Br. 142
 Willie L. Freeman Apopka, FL Br. 5192
 Robert E. McQueen Jr. Apopka, FL Br. 5192
 Charles A. Hill Western MA Br. 46
 Robert G. Labrecque Western MA Br. 46
 William H. Pattison Western MA Br. 46
 Dennis E. Kresha Columbus, NE Br. 1043
 Lloyd E. Clark Weatherford, TX Br. 697
 Charles W. Simmons Weatherford, TX Br. 697
 James R. Sosebee Weatherford, TX Br. 697

Anchorage, Alaska

This month is the most popular time of the year to retire, so welcome to all of our new retirees. Maybe you will say what many new retirees say: "I should have done this a long time ago!"

Just a reminder that our branch members can now attend branch meetings via Zoom. You should all have received notice from the branch on how to log in to the meetings. And for those

already retired, you can access your 1099s on Services Online after the beginning of the year so you don't have to wait for the paper version to come in the mail to file your taxes.

Have you updated your beneficiaries for life insurance and the TSP? If your named beneficiaries have moved from the address listed on those forms, you'll need to update them. Or have the beneficiaries you named need to be updated? Do you have contingent beneficia-

ries in place? If you need assistance with any of these issues, contact the branch for assistance.

Congratulations to recent branch retiree Dianna Kleven. She said that once her retirement was "out of the bag" I could let the world know. Dianna is a strong union supporter and will tell anyone who listens, "I love my union!" Dianna was unsure if she was ready for retirement, financially and emotionally. If you are like Dianna, contact your branch retirement

Retiree Reports

Retiree Reports

specialist and have a conversation on what to expect in retirement. You may be surprised on the benefits that await you.

So, as I told Dianna, using a famous quote from the movie "The Shawshank Redemption," "Get busy living, or get busy dying." Dianna chose to get busy living. Congratulations to Dianna, our newest branch retiree!

Jim Raymond, Branch 4319

Bergen Co. Mgd., New Jersey

It is important to remember that when you reach the age of 65, you should enroll in Medicare. Those who are working full time with employer benefits or are covered under their spouse's benefits may want to delay enrolling in Part A. If you're eligible at age 65, your initial enrollment period begins three months before your 65th birthday, includes the month you turn age 65, and ends three months after that birthday.

The only way Medicare is automatic for someone turning 65 is when they are already receiving a Social Security check.

Make sure you do not even think about cancelling your primary health insurance until you know for sure that you are enrolled in Medicare.

If you don't sign up for Part B when you are first eligible, you may have to pay a late enrollment penalty for as long as you have Medicare. Your monthly premium for Part B may go up 10 percent for each full 12-month period that you could have had Part B, but didn't sign up for it.

In 2025, an average Medicare beneficiary pays \$185 each month for Part B.

Part B medical coverage includes physician and nursing care, laboratory and diagnostic tests, vaccinations, outpatient hospital procedures and similar services.

Dennis Spoto, Branch 425

Mutual Exchanges

CA: Paso Robles (1/06) to Bakersfield, CA; will consider surrounding areas. Seeking a mutual exchange with regular city carrier. Lots of opportunity for OT. Just 30 minutes to Morro Bay and 40 minutes to Pismo Beach. Phil, 661-379-4291 (call or text).

FL: Tampa (10/22) to Myrtle Beach, SC area. City carrier. Town and country, FL office 33615, 11 district offices, OT+. Tanner, 706-631-1962.

MA: Peabody (4/05) to Raleigh, NC or surrounding area. Regular city carrier with nice route. Lots of overtime possible. Lots of history

and culture. NYC and Montreal a five-hour drive; casinos, ferries, beaches, four seasons. Dennis, 508-527-6727 (call or text).

MI: East Lansing (3/19) to Flint, MI or surrounding area. 810-964-1027 (call or text).

NE: Omaha (7/00) to San Jose, CA or

surrounding area. City carrier. Dan, 402-630-4576 (call or text).

TX: Dallas (3/11) to McKinney, Allen, Frisco, Plano, Anna, Melissa, TX areas. Route is in Dallas off I-75-63S and is all apartments. Richland Station, 9130 Markville, Dallas, TX 75243. Derrick, 817-913-2633.

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., December's deadline is for the January 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. Ads without endorse-

Centennial, Colorado

'Tis the season....

Dark long days, holiday lights and smiling customers—these are some of my fondest recollections from working in December. There is something about this time of year that makes you give pause and appreciate the passing of another year and the memories that were made. It also is a time to reflect on all we are thankful for. As a retired carrier, I can tell you enjoying the fruits of all the hard work and financial sacrifices made were worth the effort. I have been blessed to be able to travel, keep a roof over my head and food on the table. Try to keep your eye on the goal of retiring with good benefits as you face the daily challenges of being a "mailman."

Our final monthly union meeting of the year is always a fun event—lots of door prizes, the semi-annual fellowship meal, and we will be hearing the results of some local elections in our branch. But the January meeting (held on Jan. 8, because of the holiday) will be one everyone should attend. The executive board has been working to put a budget together and it will be presented for your approval. How are your union dues being spent?

Also in January will be the retiree brunch, held on Sunday, Jan. 4. See your steward if you'd like to attend to honor those who have gone before you. Because the last few years have been challenging, this event will be honoring those who have retired in the last four years, as well as some gold card members! This promises to be entertaining as we get to hear stories of how "it used to be."

In unity—

Barb Larson, Branch 5996

Paterson, New Jersey

Our New Jersey State Association of Letter Carriers held its 110th convention Sept. 14-16 at

the Caesars Hotel and Casino in Atlantic City. We would like to thank our Branch 120 state convention delegates Christie Ball, Tasha Barr, Joseph Murone and Salvatore Rodriguez for their time in attendance and participation. We also would like to thank National President Brian L. Renfroe, who stayed the entire day, well into the evening, to explain our legislative process and answer any and all questions that our delegates presented for clarity purposes. We would also like to congratulate our state president, Richard P. O'Connell, and his entire staff for a job well done in preparing our members for a well-informed learning experience in a convention atmosphere.

These events promote union solidarity and build the working class, which also helps grow the American economy and forms a better nation. We look forward to many more events that promote our union and keep and maintain unionism.

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.

Annapolis, Maryland

This is official notice to all Branch 651 members that nominations for delegates to the 2026 national convention will take place at the regular monthly branch meeting scheduled at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 7, 2026. All delegates must be present at the branch meeting when nominated and/or signify in writing. Nominations made in writing must be received by the secretary before nominations.

Elections for delegates to the 2026 national convention will take place at the regular monthly branch meeting scheduled at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 4.

Zach Truss, Pres., Br. 651

Bridgeport, Connecticut

This is official notice to all Branch 32 members in good standing that nominations for delegates to the 2026 national convention will be accepted at the Nov. 19 regular meeting at 7 p.m. at Boothe Memorial Park on North Main Street, Stratford.

The election, if needed, will be held at the regular branch meeting on Dec. 17.

Lynda Mariotti, Sec., Br. 32

Burlington, North Carolina

This is official notice to inform all active and retired members of Branch 2262 that nominations of representatives for the spring seminar (March 26-28, 2026) in Raleigh will be held at the regular stated monthly branch meeting on Jan. 27 at The Cutting Board, 2699 Ramada Road, Burlington.

Elections for representatives for the spring seminar will be by secret ballot, if needed, at the regular stated monthly branch meeting on Feb. 24 at The Cutting Board.

Mark Bare, Pres., Br. 2262

Cumberland, Maryland

This is official notice to all members of Branch 638. Nominations for officers will be held at the regular monthly

meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Feb. 18, 2026. Elections will be conducted at the regular March meeting, and the installation will be performed in April. Regular meetings are held every third Wednesday at the Ridgeley VFW, 5 W. Third Ave.

Nominations are for president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, NALC health benefits representative, sergeant-at-arms and trustees. All members in good standing are eligible to vote and to hold an office within the branch.

Donny Whetzel, Pres., Br. 638

Lanham, Maryland

This is the official notice to all members of Branch 4819 that nominations for the election of branch trustee will be held at the regular branch meeting at 7:30 p.m. on Dec. 2. This vacancy was caused by the passing of Chris Fucella. Candidates must accept nominations at the time made or, if absent, in writing. Written acceptance can be sent by mail to P.O. Box 591, Lanham, MD 20703, or by email to branch4819@outlook.com. Nominations and acceptance letters should be addressed to Branch 4819 and received no later than 6 p.m. on Dec. 2.

Nominations will be taken for the following offices: one trustee. The term of office will be the remainder of a three-year term, which began January 2025, commencing at date of installation.

Cynthia Goodwin, Sec.-Treas., Br. 4819

Naperville, Illinois

This is to notify the members of Branch 1151 that the branch will be conducting a re-run election for the following branch offices: president, vice president, treasurer, secretary and three trustees. The terms of office will be for the remainder of 2026.

The election will be held by secret ballot at the regular monthly meeting between 6 p.m. and 6:45 p.m. on Feb. 3, 2026, at the VFW, 908 W. Jackson Ave. Any member who, for any reason,

will be unable to vote on Feb. 3 may obtain absentee ballots by writing to Election Committee, Branch 1151, P.O. Box 2851, Naperville, IL 60567, or by requesting it in person from the election committee at the Naperville Post Office at 1750 W. Ogden Ave. Requests must be received by Feb. 3.

The president, vice president, secretary and treasurer, by virtue of the office, shall be automatic delegates to national and state conventions.

Lyphus Stevenson, Pres., Br. 1151

San Francisco, California

This is an official notice to all Branch 214 members that nominations for compensatory and non-compensatory delegates to the 2026 national convention in Los Angeles, CA, Aug. 3-7, 2026, will be made at the Feb. 4 regular branch meeting. This meeting will be held at 7 p.m. on Zoom and at the branch office at 2310 Mason St., 3rd Floor, San Francisco.

Nominations are due on an official form, or in writing to the secretary-treasurer, prior to the close of the Feb. 4 branch meeting. Candidates must accept nominations at the time they are nominated or, if absent, they must submit their acceptance in writing to the secretary-treasurer prior to their nomination. You may also self-nominate in person or via Zoom.

Elections will be held at the regular branch meeting at 7 p.m. on March 4. This meeting will also be held at the branch office at 2310 Mason St., 3rd Floor, and on Zoom.

Tauchia Cobbins, Sec., Br. 214

State College, Pennsylvania

In accordance with Article 5 of the NALC Constitution and the branch bylaws of Branch 1495, this serves as the official notice to all members in good standing that nominations for those who wish to serve as branch delegates to the 2026 national convention will be held during the December branch meeting. (This is a correction from a

previously posted notice.) Members wishing to be nominated must accept such nomination in person or must submit their willingness to be nominated in writing to the branch secretary prior to the December nomination meeting.

Following nominations, selections will be made by secret ballot during the December meeting (if necessary).

Kevin Sommers, Pres., Br. 1495

Wilmington, North Carolina

In accordance with Article 5 of the NALC Constitution and of the branch bylaws, this is official notice to all members of Lower Cape Fear Branch 464 that branch elections will be held on March 17, 2026, at Golden Corral, 5130 New Centre Drive, Wilmington. The election shall be conducted by secret ballot at 7 p.m. Any member requiring an absentee ballot may request one, in writing, from the election committee at P.O. Box 3562, Wilmington, NC 28406. Absentee ballots must be requested by March 1 and received back by March 16.

Nominations will take place at 7 p.m. on Feb. 17 at Golden Corral, 5130 New Centre Drive, Wilmington. Candidates must be present or signify their willingness to accept the nomination in writing to the branch secretary prior to the starting time of the meeting on Feb. 17. Voting will be by secret ballot. Candidates who are nominated, by accepting the nomination, are certifying that they are members in good standing and have not filed for, accepted or acted in any management position for the past two years.

Officers to be nominated and elected to a three-year term are president, vice president, recording secretary, financial secretary-treasurer, sergeant-at-arms, health benefits officer and three trustees. The president, by virtue of their office, is a delegate to both national and state conventions.

Gihan Harrell, Rec. Sec., Br. 464

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., November's deadline is for the December 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 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.

Please note:

There will be no Branch Items, State Summaries or Retiree Reports in the February *Postal Record*. That edition will be the special annual tribute issue honoring contributors to the Letter Carrier Political Fund during 2025.



NALC Health Benefit Plan



Your Union Health Plan

Wellness Programs Available to You & Your Family:

- **NEW** Priority Health Coaching (For Chronic Conditions)
- **NEW** CVS Rx Weight Management
- Maven (Digital Women's and Family Healthcare App)
- Musculoskeletal MSK (Virtual Physical Therapy)
- Cardiac Care (Virtual Tool for Managing Heart Problems)

