

The Letter Carrier Game

I always thought about developing a game,” Frank Kaminski said. But not a game about buying properties or taking over the world; rather, a game that showcases all that letter carriers do.

The Bridgeport, CT Branch 32 member has long thought that the letter carrier experience is interesting, and that it might be nice to “educate and teach people what actually happens in reality,” he said. “They go out and help people that are trapped in ... fires and other accidents such as that. But there are other things that were occurring on a daily basis ... on the route that were quite unusual—sometimes funny.”

Kaminski served as a letter carrier for nearly 20 years before retiring in 2001. But he never could forget the day-to-day of the job. The following year, his family of five set out to develop a board game from all these situations that carriers deal with as they go about their daily rounds. It is named, aptly, The Letter Carrier Game.

“It took a few years of trying out different rules and game play. We came up with a game that involved decision making, chance, route optimization, and the ability for anyone to win up to the last play of the game,” he said.

The game is designed to be easy to play. A player first rolls the dice. If the roll is seven or 11, you draw one of the 128 “chance” cards, and do what it says. The chance cards represent a random circumstance that a carrier might possibly encounter, such as an obstacle or incident, a decision (like whether they should cross a patron’s lawn), a task, and so on. If doubles are rolled, you go again. Players go about making deliveries, and then the first player to return to their home station, with no mail, after earning at least 10 “merits,” wins the game.

Kaminski says they didn’t design the setup of the game to be an “overhead drone experience,” rather it is on the ground, “as you were carrying, walking through a neighborhood.”

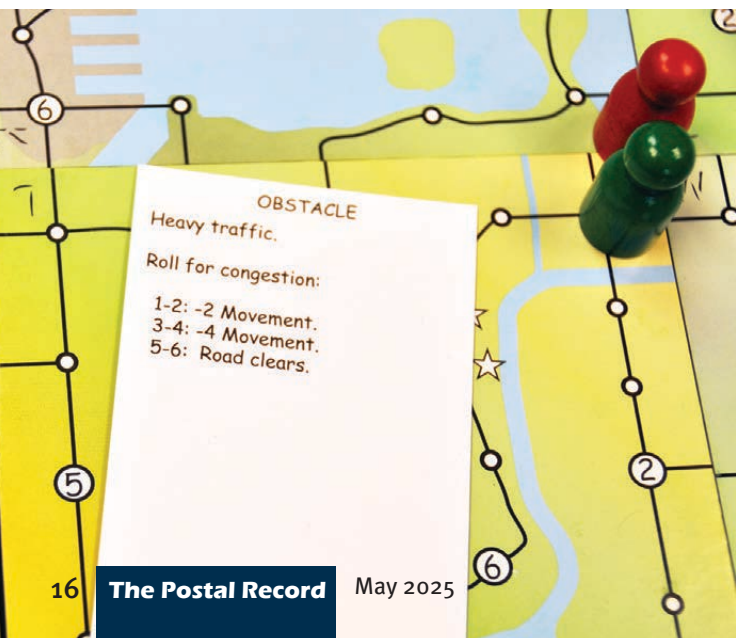
as players pick up mail delivery cards. Players start with three, and can pick up to three when passing through any mail station.”

With some help from friends, the Kaminski family designed the elements of the game themselves. After they settled on a prototype they were satisfied with, in 2008 they produced 1,000 games working with a union print shop in New England. “We had it union printed and domestically sourced,” the carrier said. They colored, in their back yard, many of the wooden pieces used for gameplay. It has 292 pieces, wooden tokens, 32 neighborhoods, 96 delivery cards, and weighs almost 2 1/2 pounds.

Of course, being a letter carrier for so long, a lot of thought went into how the game would be packaged. They decided on a size that could easily fit in a cardboard mailer and it is shipped USPS Ground from Connecticut to anywhere in the United States, with taxes and shipping included in the price of \$60. “We had thoughts and hopes that maybe it could be sold at post offices,” Kaminski said. “People could buy it and immediately send it as a gift to someone.”

Kaminski and his family pride themselves on having a sound product because of its rigid safety testing. “After we developed it, there was an upheaval in the industry,” he explained. “Large game companies were having their products made overseas, and there were toxic paints, etc. Laws to protect consumers followed.” They retooled their packaging to make sure their product complied.

As a delegate, Kaminski attended a number of NALC’s national conven-





tions in the early 2000s, and he and some of his family debuted the board game as a part of branch sales at the Biennial National Convention in Boston in 2008, followed by the next three conventions across the country. The carrier took a break from convention sales for a while after that, but placed cards in the convention center and many hotels in Boston during the 2024 convention last summer to garner sales.

While at conventions, they sold individual games as well as cases of 12. “We had people come to us at conventions letting us know how much they enjoyed it, ordering more,” Kaminski said. “We even sold a couple cases to a branch in North Pole, AK.”

Over the years, they’ve sold hundreds of games. “We never made a profit, after travel expenses and game creation costs, but we had a great deal of fun,” Kaminski said, adding that they also contributed to the Muscular Dystrophy Association and COLCPE (the forerunner to the Letter Carrier Political Fund) each time they were at a convention.

His son Matt concurred. “We resolved at some point that it wasn’t going to be a money-making endeavor,” he said. “But the family all got to do something together, and our friends all had it, so it was good in that way. We always had fun going to the convention.”

They sent a direct-mail effort to branches at one point, and a direct-mail effort to small game stores. “After about 10 years without a web presence, we put up a website this past summer 2024,” Kaminski said, adding that people can check out the game and order one for themselves at lettercarriergame.com.

Where do they hope to go from here with the game? “Oh, the White House!” Kaminski joked, but added that selling through post offices or postal museums is a goal, and they could see it being turned into a video game one day.

But mostly, Kaminski would simply love to get The Letter Carrier Game in people’s hands so that they can enjoy it like his family always has. “We love playing the game,” he said. “We can make other people enjoy this experience, too, if we can get it out there.” **PR**