



News 56



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M. T. FINNAN
EDITOR

A MONTHLY JOURNAL
OF THE
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF LETTER CARRIERS

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Branch President

Darrell Helsley

Greetings Brothers and Sisters.

Burning question, did we even have a Spring? Summer came in blazing hot then reverted back to Winter and now back to Summer....You've gotta love Michigan weather

A lot has happened since the last Newsletter and a lot more things are coming.

After a 12-year fight - Postal Reform passed! (See page 18)

Federal Retirement Fairness Act (See page 21) This is HUGE for anyone with TE, Casual, CCA time. You would be able to buy back the time you worked as a non-career employee to have it count towards your retirement. This would fall in-line with Military buy back. It takes a lot of work to pass any Bipartisan Legislation through the House, and this is one of the driving forces behind why it's so important to contribute to the Letter Carrier Political Fund. Is \$5.00 a paycheck that much of a burden when it's your future and stability moving into retirement. Just over 7% of Branch 56 members are contributing to YOUR future.

The NALC and Postal Service have agreed to a new route adjustment process. (See page 16) The Region 6 NBA office has selected yours truly to represent the Michigan 2 District as the District Lead. I attended training the week of June 6th thru 10th at the Fort Lauderdale P&DC in Florida to learn about the new process with my counterpart. This new agreement will allow the adjustment teams to utilize data collected from your MDD scanner devices 1 second breadcrumbs. PS-3999's can be manually generated utilizing this technology. Technology is the wave of the future so you might as well get used to it and accept that it's going to be utilized. I can hear the grumbings already. How can the breadcrumbs be trusted when the stupid scanner tells me I'm 500 ft away from the delivery point when I scan a package and I'm literally standing in front of the mailbox? Great question. The simple answer is, it is a completely different program and not the geofence used around the address for parcel delivery. Your breadcrumbs are updated every 1 second and is accurate according to the NALC representative who has been working over 14 months with the USPS to work out the bugs in this system.

NALC Vice President Lew Drass steps down – retires (See page 20)

TSP has developed a new App to help carriers monitor and make transactions to their accounts (See page 16). Many new carriers do not realize that the TSP 401K is part of a 3-prong approach to their retirement pension. This 3-prong approach encompasses your actual Postal Pension, Social Security when eligible to draw, and your TSP. Together, these 3 items make up your retirement pension. I am not a financial advisor by no stretch of the imagination, but all carriers should be contributing the minimum of 5% to TSP since the USPS will match – you are literally throwing free money away if you don't contribute. Ultimately it is your decision and retirement. Have you ever wondered how some carriers can retire after just 20 years? They have planned for this. We can complain about how bad the PO treats us carriers and don't get me wrong, they can be downright vial. Saying that, it is a CAREER, not just a JOB! There's not a lot of jobs out there that truly offer pensions anymore.

I spoke of technology and how it's the wave of the future and how we need to embrace it. There's also a time and a place for technology and I can tell you that Facebook, TikTok, and Twitter while on the clock and in

uniform are not the time or place to be using it. After all the warnings that I have given about doing these things, carriers continue to post and comment on these platforms. The USPS has people watching and monitoring these platforms and trust me when I tell you, they are hauling carriers in for investigations and discipline. My pockets that used to be full of magic dust for getting carriers out of trouble is running low. The NALC has recently lost 2 Arbitrations where carriers were charged for violating the social media policy and the Arbitrators ruled with management and upheld the removals. I don't care what other carriers are posting and getting away with. I, along with the stewards of Branch 56 must represent you, not those others. STOP taking pictures of mail, vehicles, and yourself in uniform! The Branch has now had 4 carriers investigated in 2022. The Branch does have a CLOSED – PRIVATE group on Facebook that you may join that contains branch updates and I can answer questions. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/355452734420>

This year's Food Drive started off as a disaster when Feeding America announced they were backing out due to logistical problems with 3 weeks to go. I went into scramble mode and attempted to set-up drop points for each zip code to local food pantries. Ultimately, I think we achieved our goal and helped a lot of our residents. Every can stayed LOCAL. The food pantries that received our food was over the top excited with getting so much food donated to them. The totals for the branch were down but it was still a success in my book. Not all food was weighed due to local churches not having scales, but we estimated approximately 50,000 pounds total was collected and donated from branch 56. Hopefully next year will be even bigger with the food pantries we helped already jumping on board for 2023.

13 out of 26 elected delegates will be attending the 72nd biennial Convention in Chicago, IL August 8th thru 12th.

The Branch is putting on a Picnic this year on August 21st, the Annual Golf Outing is scheduled the following Sunday on August 28th, 2022, and Retiree Luncheon on September 18th.

KIM Training Oct 8th thru 10th Covington, KY (Columbus Weekend) 16 have signed up so far.

REPRINTED since many carriers have mentioned it - 3 hot topics from carriers lately that really irritate me.

1. No name = No Mail.... WRONG! There is absolutely nothing that says a resident must list all names on the mailbox to receive mail. This includes completing the VACANT cards you put in the box. If the customer pulls out the card and throws it away, then that is their choice. It is a courtesy to us and that is it. If the mail is addressed properly, then as a carrier, you are to attempt delivery unless there is a valid undeliverable reason.

2. Refusing to go back out and deliver mail.... WRONG! We as carriers are employed by the Postal Service. Unless it is a safety issue involving life or limb, we follow the instruction and grieve it later, if warranted. It is hard defending carriers that refuse orders and then follow it up with, "I don't care, write me up!" We have had no less than 3 carriers disciplined in 2022 over this exact thing. Carriers are their own worst enemies sometimes.

3. Mailbox blocked = No delivery.... Again, WRONG! Carriers must attempt delivery to a box even if it is blocked. If it is "SAFE" to do so, you dismount and deliver the mail. Ongoing blocked mailboxes need to be brought to your supervisor. The POSTMASTER may withdraw delivery service. Nowhere in any postal manual gives the carrier this power.

Let's get off the power trips and start putting the Service back in Customer and Postal, where it belongs!

Until next time, Darrell Helsley (616) 328-9750

President – NALC – Branch 56

National Association of Letter Carriers – Region 6

National Business Agent

May 2022 Report



Brothers and Sisters,

I hope this letter finds you basking in your winnings from the Kentucky Derby, and those of you who actually bet on the 81-1 long shot, have won enough money to be able to retire early. Well, now that we have that out the way, let me go ahead introduce myself. My name is David Mudd, and I am your newly appointed National Business Agent (NBA). I was appointed by Fred Rolando back in December of 2021. I am a letter carrier from Branch 14 Louisville, Kentucky, and home of the fastest two minutes in sports, the Kentucky Derby. I am a very proud father of three, as well as a happily married husband to the infamous Legislative Political Organizer for the NALC, Mrs. Anna Mudd. I am a decorated military veteran serving both home and abroad for 12 years as a scout. I have served as your Regional Administrative Assistant (RAA) for the last seven years, serving alongside many great mentions such as prior NBAs Patrick Carroll and Troy Clark. I have the great fortune of working alongside two of the best RAAs, Kyle Inosencio and Ronnie Roush, and everyone's favorite field secretary, the glue that holds the office together, India Lockett. She is the chipper one that answers the phone when you call. This is my first newsletter article as NBA, and I would like to discuss what has gone on in my first four months and where I think we are headed. The direction in which I would like to steer the region towards is "Training". Our primary goal is to develop future leaders for the branches, Region 6, and the NALC. The best way I can think to develop future leaders is to train, train some more, and then more training. Hopefully, the training we have provided and will provide motivates stewards in their branches to step up and carry on the great tradition of union representation. I am biased about our School of Stewards (SOS) training because I helped develop the curriculum with Troy Clark and Robbie Gardiner. I wish I had been given the opportunity to attend this type of training when I started out. Hands down, this training is the best of all the NALC regions. Our SOS I is a four-day training that places emphasis on the basic knowledge required from our stewards. Next, we offer SOS II, which is also four days, but the gloves are off, and the students are given three separate case files to develop and meet with management at both the informal and formal A. By the way, management is Kyle, Ronnie, Robbie, and our Regional Grievance Assistant (RGA) Mike Brim. This does make for a long and stressful week;

however, the students are well prepared for their next meeting with actual supervisors and managers.

Moving forward I will try my best to ensure every Region 6 member has access to leaders with an abundance of knowledge of Office of Workers Compensation Programs (OWCP), Local Memorandums of Understanding (LMOU), the Joint Contract Administration Manual (JCAM), and the National Agreement (NA). Together we are only as strong as our weakest link, so let us work together to ensure our strength. This year, just as an honorable mention, we have offered and completed five SOS I classes, two SOS II classes, a very informative retirement training and two detailed 2-day OWCP trainings. There are many of us who could have only imagined having a mentor or some form of training offered when we first started. I would also like to take this time to thank all the individual branches that have supported our regional trainings. Whether it was hosting a training, providing the lunches and snacks, or sending your members, it takes all of us to make the plan work.

A topic just as important as training is the Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF). Currently, Region 6 sits at just under 10 percent of our members contributing to the fund. The LCPF is a fund for carriers to contribute money to support political candidates of both political parties that support letter carrier issues. We cannot use dues money to convince politicians about important legislation to letter carriers; therefore, we ask our members to contribute to a separate fund voluntarily. This fund is our way of educating our members of Congress on our issues so they have the knowledge to make decisions that will positively impact our jobs. We ask all members of region 6 to learn about the fund and to consider contributing what you can to help make a difference. There are five ways to make your contribution. You can contact your branch president or reach out to your Legislative and Political Organizer (LPO) for our region, Anna Mudd, and she will answer any questions you have or help sign you up. Her contact information is 270-317-2960 by phone or amudd@nalc.org by email. No contribution is too small, and the money will be used to help pass important legislation such as HR 3076, which passed recently and repealed the unfair postal reform passed by Congress in 2006.

In closing, I would like to thank you for your support in the past and into the future. Together we can continue the great successes of Region 6 and I look forward to seeing you at the National Convention in Chicago or at the KIM training in October. KIM training this year will be in Covington, KY, at the Northern Kentucky Convention Center.

David L Mudd
National Business Agent – Region 6
Kentucky – Indiana – Michigan (KIM)

What's the why?

As a letter carrier I sometimes struggle to find the positive. We punch in, and often we are bombarded with issues. My 30-year-old LLV will not start, a manager you have never seen before is waiting with a clipboard at your case with a 1838c (I didn't know we were adjusting routes), your supervisor comes and asks, "what happened yesterday?" You count your mail because it's your right to verify. The manager calls everyone to gather around a white board to ask questions "What did we do well yesterday and What can we do better?" You deliver your route to the best of your ability, fielding many patron complaints about why their letter or post has not arrived to or from it was sent. You return to the office to field more questions about parcels or sprs that you never had at your case or in your truck. Rinse and repeat for 30 years.

Why subject yourself to this for 30 or more years? The answer is simple but different for every one of us. For me, this job is something I like to do. If you don't have a calling to be a doctor, teacher, minister etc., this is one of the best jobs (after you make it through the cca experience). I clock in. If my truck doesn't start, I complete a vehicle repair tag. My supervisor per M-39 is responsible for having enough vehicles. If a manager meets me for a count. Fantastic, that's 10 to 20 minutes of overtime for just verifying the count. You want me to gather around a white board, great, it is the post offices time and money. Mr. or Ms. supervisor don't want me to cross a red line with a business closed package or discuss something I never had, Awesome, again my family thanks you for more overtime.

For me that is the Why. I have decided to trade my time for the USPS money. As you proceed in your career to the top of the pay scale, the money becomes nicer. After you make career, you get to decide what list you are going to be on each and every quarter. For some, it's the overtime list all year long, for others it just eight and skate. Each is fantastic for your personal choice not really to be held against one another. Personally, I have been on the odl list my entire career. My kids have been blessed to participate in many extracurricular activities, my wife was able to work part-time so we could be heavily involved in the raising of our children. This job afforded us that possibility of choice.

I guess what I am trying to get across is that this job is a tool that can be used by you for whatever you choose in Life. A person hires in as a cca at 22 years old. Even if conversion to career takes the full 2 year, that person is 24 years old. If he or she invested \$5000 a year until they were 30, that investment earning 12% (the average of the stock market is just over 11% since 1929) would turn into \$1,920,000 at the age of 60. Now that's not set in stone, but it could be less, it could be more. This person never invested another dime. Consider the Usps automatically invests 1% and match another 4% over your career. Also, consider you will receive a pension. In this example, this person has 36 career years. A 36-year pension is worth \$2031 a month plus a supplement to offset social security until you are 62. Maybe, this is your why but find the why and hold on to it. On those days you can't find the positive, pull out your why.

I would like to congratulate Mike Stevens on 45 years of service and a well-earned retirement. Mike, I enjoyed our conversations and your reminders to use the would we. Also, the example you set for the meaning of civil servant. You will be missed my brother.

Dennis Ryder
Branch 56 Vice President

NALC 56 Annual Golf Outing August 28th, 2022 Boulder Creek Golf Course



**NAAC Branch
56**

Letter Carriers

Family Picnic



50/50 MDA RAFFLE

Cash cornhole tournament

Dunk your Union President

Board games

Kids fun!!!!

Adult fun!!

**Sunday, August 21, 2022
12:00 PM to 8:00 PM**

**Manhattan Park
331 Cascade Rd SE, East Grand
Rapids, MI 49506**

**Hamburgers
Hot dogs and more!!**

**Bounce house
Cornhole tournament**

**Music, Games & More
Bring the family!!!**

Must be a union member

To Get involved or Questions call ~ Rob McCoy (616)723-6685

DUNK YOUR PRESIDENT?

BRANCH 56 GOLF RAFFLE

CLIP & MAIL TICKETS WITH PAYMENT TO 1680 VIEWPOND DR KENTWOOD, MI 49508
OR HAND TO YOUR SHOP STEWARD



NAME	PHONE	BRANCH 56 ANNUAL GOLF OUTING PRIZES / VALUE 1) 36" BlackStone Grill \$600 2) Spa Pkg \$500 3) Meta Quest 2 -128 GB \$300	NAME	PHONE	BRANCH 56 ANNUAL GOLF OUTING PRIZES 1) 36" BlackStone Grill \$600 2) Spa Pkg value \$500 3) Meta Quest 2 -128 GB \$300
		DRAWING DATE: SUNDAY, AUGUST 28 th , 2022 at BOULDER CREEK GOLF COURSE. \$2 PER TICKET OR \$5 FOR 3 (DO NOT NEED TO BE PRESENT TO WIN) WINNER RESPONSIBLE FOR PICK UP			DRAWING DATE: SUNDAY, AUGUST 28 th , 2022 at BOULDER CREEK GOLF COURSE. \$2 PER TICKET OR \$5 FOR 3 (DO NOT NEED TO BE PRESENT TO WIN) WINNER RESPONSIBLE FOR PICK UP

PLEASE WRITE LEGIBLE

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Nacho Fountains

The other day while doing my route, as I meandered through the medical waste and garbage that litters the grounds in that section of town. I thought to myself "Wouldn't a Nacho Fountain be a great suggestion for the Huddle?". Sure, we might have to change our uniform color to cheddar yellow, but that is a small price to pay to have a constant stream of Nachos. It might even create Jobs.

You know what though, I am not here to talk about my genius idea, I am here to talk about Union Meeting attendance. I want to thank all of you for letting me make the decisions for you.

During the last few meetings, I looked around and realized that I was one of the youngest people attending. I am 46 years old. At least half of the people that attend are retired, some for more than 15 years. Yet me and the Geezers vote and make all the decisions for you. Why? Because a union is a Democracy, one that Every single member has a voice and a vote in if they choose to participate. It is the first Thursday of every month (excluding July and August). That is ten times a year to make your voice heard, eat pizza, and even drink a beer (before and after the meeting not during) if you choose. The Younger carriers will have to get involved soon, many of our officers are reaching retirement age and it is your turn to step up.

There is also a Contract Training on the last Tuesday of every month. It is a great time to learn, ask questions and yes, also eat pizza.

So Perhaps I'll start seeing you at the monthly meetings, and maybe just maybe we CAN make a Nacho Fountain a reality through democracy.

49507 Steward
Adam Umlor

Line "J" of the 3996, a carrier's best friend.

Did You know that if you are in the opinion that your route is going to take you more than 8 hours in a shift, that you are required to fill out PS form 3996? Even when the Supervisor says, "It shouldn't take you that long".

You see, long ago it was established that the carrier, not Management, is the Professional of the route. The Carrier is obligated to giving an "honest" time estimate for his daily workload. Anytime a Carrier honestly feels that they have more than 8 hours' worth of work assigned to their route, they should "Ask" for a PS form 3996. Management is required VIA M-39 to provide you a copy. There is no need to argue with Management if they do not provide you one, just ask to see your steward.

When filling out your 3996 you are going to want to be thorough. Many times, Carriers fill them out incompletely and vaguely leading to misinterpretations by our overlords. Fill out sections "A" through "I" and you'll be at Line "J". Line J "Reasons for Auxiliary Assistance" is your best friend. Here is your chance to write down all the reasons that you will be over 8 hours for the day. Be specific, subjects like "Heavy Mail" are not specific enough. Try something like;

1. Route is out of adjustment (as documented by count and inspection)
2. Late leaving.
3. Change of address cards.
4. Stand-up talk.
5. Safety talk.
6. Window service (spoke with patron)
7. Phone calls (from patron)
8. Excessive parcels.
9. Full coverage(s)
10. Review mail from CFS.
11. Hot case mail.
12. Excessive accountables.
13. Inclement weather (extreme hot/cold, rain, wind, etc.)
14. Feeling ill – under medication.

15. Medical restrictions.
16. Waiting for mail (careful here, could get later start time)
17. Late dispatch (same as #16)
18. Unfamiliar with route.
19. New case labels.
20. Carrying mail cased by others.
21. Cased PM mail from previous day.
22. Thin mail.
23. Thick mail.
24. Sloppy mail (ADVO inserts, etc.)
25. Samples.
26. Traffic/construction delays.
27. Odd-shaped mail.
28. Medical appointments (work related)
29. Mark-up parcels.
30. Carrier endorsements.
31. Utility bills.
32. Checks, food stamps, etc.
33. Deviate for Express Mail.
34. Revised Form 1621 (route information)
35. Work on case labels.
36. DPS mail problems (not enough paper to itemize)
37. Going through bad DPS mail in PM.
38. Check of Form 3982's (pink cards)
39. Power outage, fire drill, etc.
40. New deliveries.
41. The morning Huddle
42. Filling out PS FORM 3996 (My Favorite)

These are only a few of the reasons that can be put on Line J. When you are thorough as in this example it is much more un-likely for your supervisor to have a rational reason to dis-believe your estimate since you are being so specific.

After filling out how much time assistance or overtime you will need, bring form 3996 to your Supervisor and He/She will either approve it or not. Either way make a copy and keep it. If your supervisor after all that does not approve your overtime and refuses to provide you assistance and tells you "To be done in 8 Hours", Just smile and say, "Yes Boss, I will do my absolute best".

Make sure that no less than two hours from when you are supposed to return that you notify them that you can not finish your assignment in 8 hours. Use your Scanner. Text this phrase "I cannot finish my route in 8 hours, what are my orders?" You've just put the ball back in their court. Make note of the amount of time you spent trying to get in contact with them. If they do not respond, make sure you return to the office in 8 hours. Many Carriers will just continue to deliver the mail, after all, that seems like the intelligent thing to do right? No carrier is allowed to perform overtime without pre-approval from Management. Carriers are not paid to make decisions; they are paid to deliver mail. Our Overlords are paid well to make those decisions. When you return DO NOT LEAVE WITHOUT NOTIFYING MANAGEMENT of your undelivered mail. Find out what they want you to do with it. In most cases they will send you back out to deliver it. At that point your Overtime will be approved. You win.

If Management tries to discipline you for the above scenario, you will have all the tools you need to defend yourself. Your Steward can reference all the reasons you listed on line J as your defense.

Jointly written by,
GRCA Stewards
Adam Umlor and Chris Jacobs

What is the Union Doing for Me????

As I attended the most recent union meeting of Branch 56 Grand Rapids, Michigan, I looked around at the attendees and wondered where are the members?? I hear almost every day at work, what is the union doing about this and that. I hear why isn't the union fixing this and that?? What am I paying dues for when nothing gets done about these questions they have?? Why do they have to do and follow the rules and management just ignores the contracts??

I hear comments like this every day and many more. I think back through the past years, attendances at the union meetings and try to remember how many and who might have attended some of them. Branch 56 has nearly 360 active members; adding the retirees and CCA's, that brings the count to nearly 600. The last meeting had 27 attending: 6 Branch Officers, 3 Trustees, and 5 Stewards. 14 of the attendees were dedicated union representatives, so the remaining THIRTEEN were concerned members wanting to be a voice, hear how matters were being dealt with and current information from the Branch's contacts to the National Offices. THIRTEEN members concerned about how the branch and union are working. We had several votes of a variety of subjects: the National Convention and the upcoming NALC Food Drive. We heard discussions about the current financial and treasury situation of the branch. All those issues and discussions are conditional for all the members and were voted on by those members in attendance. Those 27 members, 6 Branch Officers, 3 Trustees, 5 Stewards, and 13 members of the nearly 600 members of the branch made the choices for all the others. Those decisions are BINDING on all the other members. The BODY at the meetings had voted. The BODY of the Union is those that attend the meetings, discuss the motions, and make the votes, for or against, the motions presented at the meetings! This is HOW THE UNION WORKS!!!

I understand on occasions, work gets carried over for some, and personal issues and vacations are always rising to nip our time for all in the butt. The meetings determining the directions and policies of Branch 56 are not so difficult to attend, ONCE A MONTH, maybe a few hours. The dates are always known. When I get ASKED why things are this and that and what the union is doing about issues, I show respect and say I will look into those concerns. I want to say in NO UNCERTAIN TERMS, WHEN was the last time you asked those questions to the BODY, at a Union Meeting. The Union is not a representative democracy when some is voted to represent the ideals and opinions of the body. The UNION is a DIRECT fully Democracy, direct votes on all matters by the body in attendance at the time and place of the motions and votes. Maybe, in attendance, you can find out why and how the policies and directions are made and more maybe answer the questions they have concerns about the union. The answer is simple!!!

Bob Pearson

Northwest Station

LOI Re: Opting Duration

Prior to the 2016-2019 National Agreement, and absent a locally negotiated practice, letter carriers on a hold-down who were converted to full-time regular status on a different assignment did not have the option of voluntarily ending their hold-down. With ratification of the 2016-2019 National Agreement, the Letter of Intent (LOI) *Re: Opting Duration* (found on page 222) has been amended to give letter carriers the right to voluntarily end their hold-down in order to assume their full-time duty assignment.

#1 Seniority in the City Retires after 45 Years!



Retirement Luncheon September 18th, 2022

1115 Taylor Ave N Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Individual mailings will be sent out soon with details and mortuary fees for members who participate.

Congratulations to our recent Retirees; Frank Hamilton, Keven Plite, Chris Smith, Mike Stevens, and Richard Teitsma



Retirement counseling

Letter carriers approaching retirement eligibility have a contractual right to individual pre-retirement counseling from the Postal Service, upon request. The purpose of the counseling is to promote fully informed retirement decisions by employees.

The Postal Service individual counseling is provided telephonically by a retirement specialist at the USPS Human Resources Shared Services Center (HRSSC). Letter carriers initiate and schedule the counseling session by calling HRSSC at 877-477-3273 option 5, or online at the Liteblue eRetire application.

Letter carriers have a right to this individual counseling on the clock, if desired. When a letter carrier wishes to receive the counseling on the clock, local management must arrange reasonably private space. The letter carrier has the right to have his or her spouse and/or an advisor present during the counseling. The counseling will include (but not be limited to) assistance with completing forms (e.g., StandSF2801 and any other forms related to FEGLI, FEHB, and TSP) and military and civilian service deposit issues.

If a letter carrier is unable to begin or complete a scheduled individual retirement counseling session, that issue will be addressed at the local level jointly by the union and management.

The Postal Service is required to provide individual and group retirement counseling. That obligation flows from law (the Civil Service Retirement Act and Federal Employees Retirement Act), Office of Personnel Management guidance (OPM is the federal agency that has authority to administer the CSRS and FERS), USPS Employee and Labor Relations Manual provisions, and national level settlements with the NALC. Should you encounter any difficulties obtaining individual retirement counseling, contact the NALC Retirement Department for assistance.

Annuity Estimates

HRSSC mails individualized computer-generated report called the annuity estimate is mailed twice each year to the home address of those employees currently eligible for retirement. Employees who are within three years of retirement eligibility may request and receive individualized annuity estimates by calling HRSSC. HRSSC. Employees within 5 years of retirement eligibility may view and print individualized annuity estimates on-line at LiteBlue using the eRetire application.

The NALC Retirement Department provides generalized monthly charts showing annuity estimates under both CSRS and FERS.

Blue Book Help

Completing your Blue Book for retirement can be overwhelming and hard to understand. If you are interested in getting help other than your on the clock counseling with HR, there is an option. The branch can provide you with contact information of knowledgeable retired letter carriers that can guide you through the process. I can tell you that they do charge a minimal fee but from every member that has used them, all have said it was the best money they've ever spent.

NALC and the Postal Service have agreed to an alternate route evaluation and adjustment process

NALC and the Postal Service have agreed to several memorandums of understanding (MOUs) to establish an alternate route evaluation and adjustment process for the remainder of 2022 and all of 2023.

MOU Re: *Technology Integrated Alternate Route Evaluation and Adjustment Process 2022 – 2023* (TIAREAP) establishes a process that utilizes information made available using Digital Street Review (DSR) technology as the primary means to evaluate and adjust city delivery routes. As in previous alternate route evaluation and adjustment processes, TIAREAP will involve multiple teams established throughout the country, comprised of one NALC representative and one USPS representative, who will jointly evaluate and adjust routes in select zones. Once the joint teams have been selected, training and zone selection will take place shortly afterward, with evaluations beginning in September. This MOU ([M-01982](#)) can be found in NALC's Materials Reference System.

A jointly developed supplemental document ([M-01983](#)) provides the mutual understanding of the national parties on issues related to the MOU Re: *Technology Integrated Alternate Route Evaluation and Adjustment Process 2022-2023*. It is intended for use by the parties at all levels in properly applying the terms of TIAREAP.

Also, as in the previous alternate route adjustment process, an MOU was agreed upon that allows local parties to jointly submit for consideration a locally developed alternate route evaluation and adjustment process to the NALC National President and the Postal Service Vice President, Labor Relations. This MOU, Re: *Alternate Evaluation and Adjustment Processes* ([M-01984](#)) requires a proposal for such alternate process to be submitted by the NALC Branch President and the Postal Service Installation Head and must provide a detailed explanation of the process. If the proposal is jointly agreed to by the national parties, the local parties will be notified regarding implementation.

The City Delivery and Workplace Improvement Task Force in the 2019-2023 National Agreement tasked the national parties with jointly exploring the use of technology, data, advanced analytics and machine learning to improve operations, route evaluation, adjustment and optimization. Agreement to implement the Technology Integrated Alternate Route Evaluation and Adjustment process comes after more than 14 months of joint exploration and testing of the utilization of DSR technology to evaluate and adjust routes.

Thrift Savings Plan creates app and mutual fund offerings

Big changes are coming to how letter carriers interact with the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) online. Beginning in June, TSP will have a new interface to make transactions on letter carriers' mobile devices easier — including the introduction of a smartphone app — as well as new ways to invest.

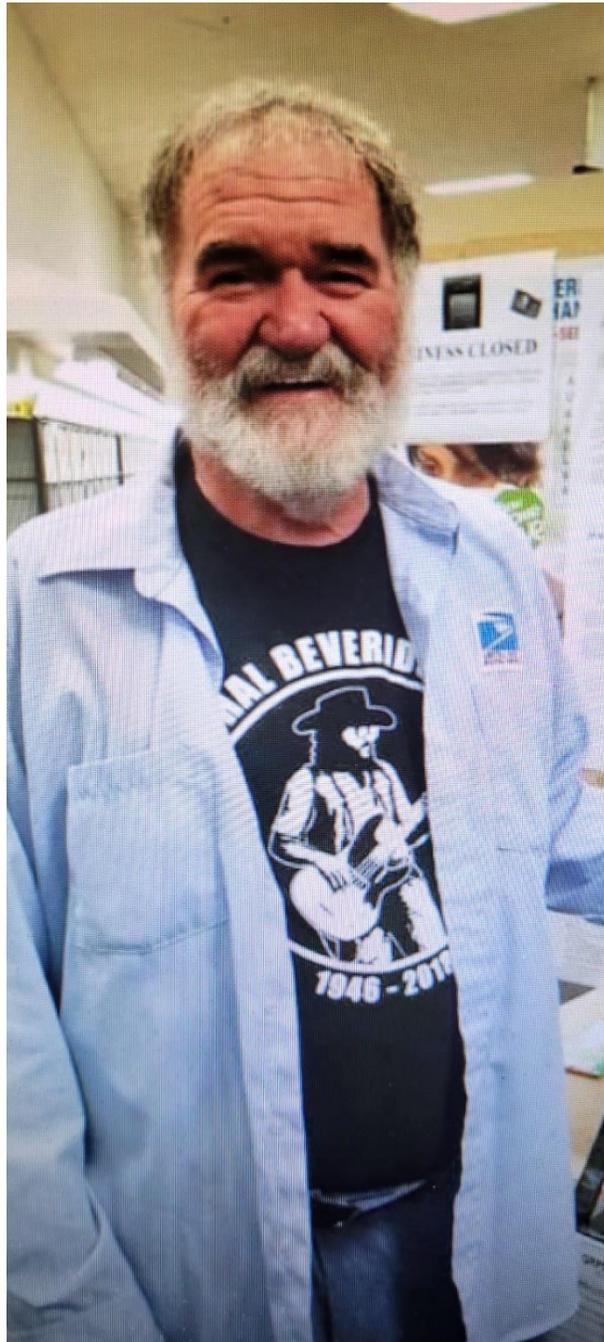
The TSP Mobile App will allow letter carriers to monitor their TSP accounts and complete transactions from anywhere. Users can check their account balance, track fund performance, make transaction requests, submit documents, manage payment information, scan checks and more.

There will also be an upgraded record-keeping system available from the TSP website. Letter carriers' account summaries will display their investments clearly, and the navigation menu will make it easy for them to find and use account management tools. It will have all the tools users are used to and several new ones.

In addition to investing in TSP funds, letter carriers who meet certain eligibility requirements will have the option to invest some of their TSP savings in a mutual fund window. The mutual fund window is designed for TSP participants who are interested in greater investment flexibility. However, there will be fees for these transactions.

Richard Davidson (1946 – 2022)

AKA “Harley” “Bigfoot”
Past Branch 56 President and NALC Advocate



President Biden signs Postal Service Reform Act into law

Today, President Biden signed the Postal Service Reform Act of 2022 (H.R. 3076) into law. The president's signature comes after the bill passed with massive bipartisan majorities in the House in February and in the Senate in March.

Annette Taylor, and NALC member who delivered mail for 32 years, introduced President Biden at the signing ceremony. Taylor, who served in the Air Force for eight years before beginning her career as a letter carrier, previously served as the president, vice president and recording secretary of Annapolis, MD Branch 651. She is the current vice president of the Maryland State Association of Letter Carriers.

"NALC is proud to have contributed to the efforts over the last 12 years that resulted in this bipartisan legislation that brings us together today," Taylor said. "This legislation will help position the USPS to provide the service that the American people deserve. Mr. President, the Postal Service is an essential facilitator of our democracy and our economy. We know there is more to do to secure its long-term viability, but today is a huge step forward. My union stands ready to assist you."

"With this bill, we're repealing the pre-funding mandate and setting the Postal Service on a more sustainable and stable financial footing," President Biden said. "We're guaranteeing that the mail will continue to be delivered six days a week. And the bill increases transparency by requiring the Postal Service to develop an online public dashboard updated weekly with local and national service performance data. Today, we enshrine in law our recognition that the Postal Service is fundamental to our economy, to our democracy, to our health, and the very sense of who we are as a nation."

"After 12 years of fighting for meaningful postal reform, NALC is gratified to see President Biden sign this bill into law," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "I would like to thank every NALC member who helped us get here. Your solidarity and activism were instrumental in this bill's path to becoming law."



“I would also like to commend the bipartisan work on this bill that was led by Chairwoman Carolyn Maloney (D-NY), Ranking Member James Comer (R-KY), Chairman Gary Peters (D-MI) and Ranking Member Rob Portman (R-OH). This legislation will put the Postal Service in a better position to grow and adapt to the evolving needs of America’s households and businesses.

“Today, we celebrate this historic victory for letter carriers, the Postal Service and all Americans who depend on our universal service. We look forward to continuing working with members of Congress and the Biden Administration on reforms that will further strengthen the Postal Service and improve the work and lives of our members.”



Vice President Lew Drass steps down; James Henry appointed

NALC Vice President Lew Drass stepped down from the office of vice president on April 30.

A member of Huntsville, AL Branch 462, Drass first came to NALC Headquarters in December 2010 to serve as director of city delivery. He has served as vice president since March 2014.

Drass has agreed to remain with NALC as a staff assistant for a few months to ensure a smooth transition.

President Rolando appointed James Henry of Garden Grove, CA Branch 1100 as NALC vice president to fill the vacancy created when Drass stepped down.

A Los Angeles native, Henry began his postal career as a letter carrier in Pomona, CA, in 1988. His path to becoming an NALC activist began the same year when he was unjustly disciplined and his branch came to his aid, resolving the case in his favor.

“Thereafter, I knew I couldn’t stand by and see letter carriers treated unfairly,” Henry said. “I became a shop steward, and my calling of representing letter carriers began.” His appointment as a steward came only six months after he joined the Postal Service.

In 1991, he was appointed as an area steward, and after completing advocate training in 1995, he became an arbitration advocate for Region 1. In 1998, Henry was appointed to serve as one of NALC’s first Step B representatives for the Step B pilot program and again when the program was made permanent. He was elected vice president of Branch 1100 in 1999 and senior vice president in 2008.

President Rolando appointed Henry as a regional administrative assistant (RAA) for Region 1 in 2011. As an RAA, he oversaw six Dispute Resolution Teams, conducted dozens of interventions, represented carriers during multiple unemployment hearings, negotiated thousands of pre-arbitration settlements and presented more than 150 cases in arbitration. He also negotiated hundreds of local contracts. In 2015, Drass selected him as a facilitator/instructor for the Advanced Formal A and Beyond and arbitration advocate trainings.

Henry is a 22-year Marine Corps veteran. He and his wife, Janice, have three children.

“My guiding philosophy is ‘the best ability is dependability,’” Henry said. “Sometimes we must have the courage to do the right thing, even if it is unpopular or difficult. I strive to live up to that in my work for letter carriers.”



GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

Legislative Updates

Federal Retirement Fairness Act fact sheet available

May 18, 2022

Reps. Derek Kilmer (D-WA) and Tom Cole (R-OK) introduced the Federal Retirement Fairness Act ([H.R. 4268](#)) in June 2021. This bill would allow certain federal employees to make catch-up retirement contributions for time spent as non-career employees after [Dec. 31, 1988](#), thus making such time creditable service under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS).

This legislation would cover letter carriers who were employed as casuals, transitional employees (TEs) or city carrier assistants (CCAs), providing them with greater retirement security.

Read [NALC's fact sheet](#) to learn more about this legislation.

[Click here](#) to find out if your representative is cosponsoring H.R. 4268.

Letter Carrier Political Fund

The Hatch Act (Pertaining to LCPF)

We, as federal employees, are governed by the Hatch Act and are not allowed to sign up or solicit employees to sign up for LCPF while on the clock, at our workplace, in uniform or in a postal vehicle. Which is why I am writing this article to reach out to everyone in hopes of getting more participation.

You can attend a union meeting and receive assistance in signing up and I will also have information on how to sign up at home on the next page.



What is LCPF?

The Letter carrier political fund is a non-partisan political action committee (PAC) established by the NALC in 1976 for the purpose of electing qualified candidates who support letter carriers and who are committed to maintaining a strong and innovative U.S. Postal Service. Since 1976, LCPF has contributed over \$15 million to candidates in the house of representatives and senate. LCPF is the largest federal employee action committee and our voice in Washington. Each year NALC fights to fend off attacks in Congress that threaten letter carriers' collective-bargaining rights, retirement benefits and livelihood. LCPF continues helping to elect candidates (both republican and democrat) who will protect us, promote our issues and deliver our message to Washington.

Help protect your rights and the future of the U.S. Postal Service.

Why should I join LCPF?

- The Letter Carrier Political Fund identifies and contributes to candidates (Bipartisan) who support issues important to us carriers. Right now, H.R.4268 - Federal Retirement Fairness Act is on Deck and is huge. Your time worked as a PTF or CCA? If this is passed, it will allow that time to count toward your retirement.
- By contributing to LCPF, it provides us with the opportunity to build the electoral power required to ensure decisions that impact our lives and made with letter carriers best interests in mind.
- Union dues cannot be used to support candidates for political office, which is why NALC relies 100 percent on member contributions to LCPF.
- LCPF contributions are voluntary and can be stopped at any time. You can sign up to donate for just \$5 per check.
- Essentially we are in a "pay to play" world. Fed Ex and UPS also pay into political funds to lobby congress in order to help protect their rights and their future.



To Summarize

“Through the Letter Carrier Political Fund, letter carriers have a strong voice on Capitol Hill,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “But how strong it can be depends on how many of our members contribute—that is, the size of our PAC. Simply put, the more LCPF resources we have, the more we can do to protect the nation’s postal networks and to fend off the never-ending threats to our collective-bargaining rights and to our well-earned pay and benefits.”

-Frederic Rolando, *Postal Record*, February 2017.

So how do I sign up?

1. Go to Liteblue.usps.gov
2. Enter your employee ID and password to logon
3. Click my HR
4. Click employee apps
5. Click postal ease
6. Under payroll click allotments-payroll net to bank
7. Click continue
8. Click allotments
9. Enter the 9 digit financial institutions routing number: 0 6 4 0 0 0 1 7
10. Enter your 17-digit Account Number:
(insert the seven digits of your Postal Record Number to the spaces:
_____ 0 0 3 4 9 5 2 5 3 5
- *Your Postal Record Number (Located on the back cover of your Postal Record magazine, above your name. Or call 202.393.4695 to get your Postal Record Number).
11. Enter account type as checking
12. Enter amount of your Allotment: \$ _____ The maximum yearly amount is \$5,000
13. Click validate
14. Click submit
15. Write down your confirmation number for your records.

Sarah Lower-Marlatt

Current Branch 56 Letter Carrier Political Fund Donors

ADKINS SR, JOHN J
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OLSZEWSKI, MICHAEL P
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RYDER, DENNIS M
SCHREGARDUS, MICHAEL S
SMITH, CHRISTINE E
STEPHAN, DUSTIN A
STEPHAN, SHEYENNE
UMLOR, ADAM J
VAN OEFFELEN, DANIEL E
VAN OORT, ROBERT W
WAGNER, LOUIS M
WOODWARD, EVELYN D
YONKMAN, DARCIE L

IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE PLAN AND THEN CAME THE ASSUMPTIONS

AND THE ASSUMPTIONS WERE WITHOUT FORM

AND THE PLAN WAS COMPLETELY WITHOUT SUBSTANCE

AND THE DARKNESS WAS UPON THE FACE OF THE WORKERS

AND THEY SPOKE AMONGST THEMSELVES, SAYING

"IT IS A CROCK OF SHIT, AND IT STINKETH."

AND THE WORKERS WENT UNTO THEIR SUPERVISORS AND SAYETH

"IT IS A PAIL OF DUNG AND NONE MAY ABIDE THE ODOR THEREOF!"

AND THE SUPERVISORS WENT UNTO THEIR MANAGERS AND SAYETH UNTO THEM,

"IT IS A CONTAINER OF EXCREMENT AND IT IS VERY STRONG

SUCH THAT NONE MAY ABIDE BY IT."

AND THE MANAGERS WENT UNTO THEIR DIRECTORS AND SAYETH

"IT IS A VESSEL OF FERTILIZER, AND NONE MAY ABIDE ITS STRENGTH."

AND THE DIRECTORS SPOKE AMONGST THEMSELVES, SAYING ONE TO ANOTHER,

"IT CONTAINS THAT WHICH AIDS PLANT GROWTH, AND IT IS VERY STRONG."

AND THE DIRECTORS WENT UNTO THE VICE PRESIDENTS AND SAYETH UNTO THEM,

"IT PROMOTES GROWTH AND IS VERY POWERFUL,"

AND THE VICE PRESIDENTS WENT UNTO THE PRESIDENT AND SAYETH UNTO HIM,

"THIS NEW PLAN WILL ACTIVELY PROMOTE THE GROWTH AND EFFICIENCY

OF THIS COMPANY, AND THESE AREAS IN PARTICULAR."

AND THE PRESIDENT LOOKED UPON THE PLAN,

AND SAW THAT IT WAS GOOD. AND THE PLAN BECAME POLICY.

"THIS IS HOW SHIT HAPPENS."

4. Utility Assignments:

- a. When a regular carrier assigned to a route is called in on a non-scheduled day for a guaranteed eight hours of overtime work, that carrier shall be used on his/her bid assignment and the utility carrier (T-6) shall be reassigned within the T-6's group of routes (swing).

- There must be something VACANT on the T-6 string to bump the T-6 too, or the T-6 can and **WILL** bump a CCA off a hold down if there is no other VACANT route on the T-6's string.
- If nothing is VACANT on the T-6 string or no CCA is available for the T-6 to bump, then the **REGULAR** carrier will choose any VACANT route in the zone to carry, and this will be based on seniority.

- b. When more than one assignment is available within the T-6 carrier's swing, the T-6 shall have the choice of routes on the swing. Under these circumstances the T-6 carrier shall have the right to displace a CCA or PTF who has exercised the right to bid as per Article 41 of the National Agreement, if no other route on that T-6's swing is vacant.

- This applies for bumping purposes **ONLY!**
- The T-6 **WILL** bump a CCA if nothing else is VACANT on the T-6 string.
- The T-6 will not bump a CCA if there is a VACANT route on the string. The T-6 will carry the VACANT route.

- c. When a T-6 is called in on a non-scheduled day for a guaranteed eight hours of overtime work, that T-6 shall be used on the T-6's bid assignment and have the right to displace a CCA or PTF in accordance to 'b' above.

- The T-6 **WILL** carry on their bid assignment and **WILL** displace a CCA if nothing else is VACANT on the string. See d. below.

NOTICE TO ALL CARRIERS!

MANAGEMENT HAS BEEN HAVING PROBLEMS GETTING CCA'S AND
REGULARS
THEIR UNIFORM VOUCHERS AND CITIBANK CREDIT CARDS.

THE VOUCHERS ARE SENT VIA CERTIFIED MAIL AND THE CITIBANK CARDS ARE NOT
FORWARDED.

PLEASE GO ONLINE ON LITEBLUE AND UPDATE YOUR CURRENT ADDRESS WITH
THE POSTAL SERVICE.

SIMPLY DOING A CHANGE OF ADDRESS WILL NOT UPDATE YOUR HOME ADDRESS
THAT IS ON FILE.

WHEN A CCA ORDERS ONLINE – PLEASE CONTACT THE COMPANY TO EMAIL DALE
DIRECTLY. HE NEEDS THE INVOICE FOR PAYMENT.

DALE.W.KIVINEN@USPS.GOV

PLEASE NOTIFY BRANCH 56 WHEN YOU
CHANGE YOUR MAILING ADDRESS.
MAIL CHANGES TO: 1680 VIEWPOND DR SUITE A
KENTWOOD, MI 49508
OR
EMAIL: Nalc56vp@comcast.net
PHONE: (616) 458-8611

LCPF Disclaimer

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. 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 cancelled. 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, occupation and name of employer of individuals whose contributions exceed \$200 per calendar year. Any guideline amount is merely a suggestion, and an individual is free to contribute more or less than the guideline suggests and the Union will not favor or disadvantage anyone by reason of the amount of their contribution or their decision not to contribute.

National Association of Letter
Carriers Brach 56
1680 Viewpond Suite A
Kentwood, MI 49508

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**Branch meetings are the
first Thursday of each month**

**Branch training is the last
Tuesday of each month**

**ALL MEMBERS ARE
WELCOME**

**Food and refreshments are
provided.**

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**The opinions expressed are that of the author and not
necessarily of Branch # 56 or the NALC**