

# MOUND CITY CARRIER

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"Diversity is our Strength and Unity is our Power"

April 2021

## PRESIDENT McLAUGHLIN TAKES ONE FOR THE TEAM



*Thanks to the outreach from James Clark, president of the Urban League of St. Louis, the State of Missouri and the National Guard, letter carriers deemed essential workers were administered the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine at the Letter Carriers Hall on March 24 and 25.*

# PRESIDENT'S ARTICLE ... By JOHN McLAUGHLIN

## BRANCH 343 GETS A BIG SHOT IN THE ARM



**THE BIG JOB:** The Urban League of St. Louis, the National Guard and the State of Missouri were generous enough to offer the big job to city letter carriers in the St. Louis area on March 24-25. Out of the blue, James Clark of the Urban League of St. Louis called and asked if letter carriers would be interested in receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. I did not hesitate. VP Marvin Booker and I called him back and selected the earliest possible dates. As of the writing of this article, the shots have not yet been administered, but the letter carriers appreciate the Urban League of St. Louis acknowledging our commitment to serving the public as essential workers.

As a result of the passage of the **American Rescue Plan Act**, carriers will no longer be required to use their own sick leave to obtain the shot. The *Act* funds an *emergency federal employee leave* (EFEL) which will not be deducted from any of your earned leave. This leave is in addition to our earned leave and only became available on March 12. The timing could not be better. I am certain of one thing. Management will not be happy with EFEL. I would warn carriers now; management will deny, discourage, defy, and outright lie to your face before they grant you this leave. One would think the money is coming out of their own pockets. Unlike the FFCRA, this act is funded by the federal government. I am certain that none of this would have been possible if voters had not turned out in record numbers in November of 2020 to elect the politicians who wrote this legislation.

The new *Act* also restores much of what the FFCRA provided, and then some, before it expired on December 31, 2020. A full-time employee can receive up to 600 hours (75 days) of paid EFEL. Regular carriers as well as CCAs are eligible. It lasts until September 30, 2021, or until funding is exhausted. The code to enter onto your PS Form 3971 is **086-21**. There are eight qualifying reasons under which you can receive this type of leave. For more details about the Act, simply turn to the centerfold of this issue. The strides on the national political front for unions appear better than it has in years.

### UNION STRONG

A trade union president along with other labor leaders met with Biden within the first 30 days of his presidency and he noted, "Never has the word 'union' flowed off a political leader's tongue so easily as it has with President Biden." He added, "We never met with President Obama in the Oval Office in eight years."

In the very red "right-to-work" state of Alabama, Amazon has been actively discouraging the unionization of its employees in Bessemer by placing anti-union flyers in warehouse bathroom stalls and texting employees telling them to vote against forming the union. It is astonishing to me that unionizing in the heart of Dixie is even a possibility. This is encouraging to the union movement in the USA.

The number of workers represented by a union declined during the pandemic in 2020, but the unionization rate rose because union workers saw less job loss than non-union workers. Unions have been able to negotiate for terms of furloughs to save jobs. This power to negotiate played a role in limiting overall job loss among unionized workers. While the private sector lost 544,000 union jobs, the unionization rate ticked up to 7.2%. Unionization rates increased in state and local governments but fell in the federal government. Maybe the people in Alabama took notice of the benefit of job security a union provides its members.

### LMOU TIME

Now that the contract has been ratified, we will commence with negotiations on the local memorandums of understanding. Local negotiations begin on April 29 and go till May 28. The National Contract permits local branches to negotiate a handful of items.

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It includes items like the holiday pecking order, annual leave selection, and hold-down assignments, just to name a few. The last time we negotiated our LMOU was in 2017. We had to open all the locals because of the newly negotiated right that every CCA be afforded the opportunity to select annual leave during choice vacation period. This time around, I do not believe it will be as comprehensive of a project. We were very pleased with what we were able to negotiate into our St. Louis LMOU the last time.

**STEWARDS**

Since becoming president, I have had the opportunity to become more engaged with many of our stewards and alternate stewards. They put many hours towards ensuring that management follows the contract. Many of them toil in relative obscurity from the membership. They are our soldiers on the front lines. They have to juggle two jobs at one time, carry mail and represent the members. Taking one hat off and putting the other one on is very difficult. They must always have a keen eye on contractual violations while at the same time set an example on how to be a model carrier. Like a parent-child relationship, a steward must be constantly aware that multiple sets of carrier eyes beat down upon them and watch what they do and how they carry themselves. It is a demanding job, but it has its rewards as well. I have had some carriers express interest in becoming a steward or alternate steward. To this end, I would welcome any carrier who wishes to become a steward. I, myself, became a steward when I became frustrated with what management was doing to our more vulnerable and less seasoned carriers. In my frustration, I found myself zenning “The Dude” from “The Big Lebowski” and exclaimed, “This will not stand!”

Until next month, do your job safely and accurately. Show up to **your** union meeting. You might learn something. We don’t write the rules; we just have to play the game. Sláinte.



**Mark Your Calendar**  
*Don't sit on the sidelines...Get involved!*

Apr 8	Regular Branch Meeting
Apr 11	Retiree Seminar Virtual (see ad)
May 6	Shop Stewards' Meeting
May 13	Regular Branch Meeting

**BRANCH LEGAL PLAN**  
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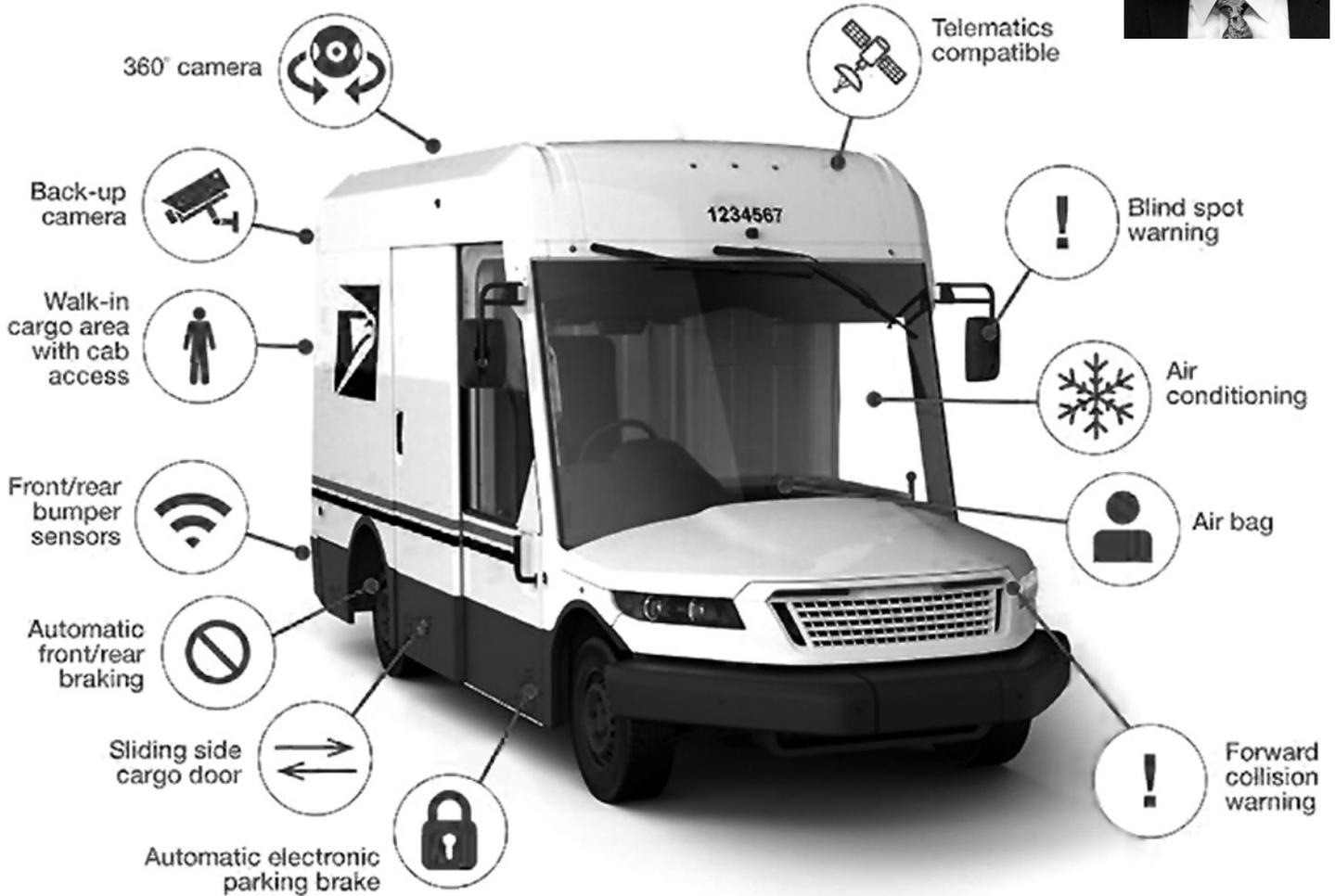
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# EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT ... BY BRIAN LITTEKEN



## NEXT GENERATION POSTAL VEHICLE



The contract for the next generation postal vehicle was awarded to Oshkosh Defense on February 23. The new vehicle will include air conditioning, air bags, a 360-degree camera, a front and rear collision avoidance system, and automated emergency braking. The initial offering will be powered by a gasoline engine from Ford. The first vehicles are expected by 2023.

The 10-year contract is \$6 billion. The contract includes an initial \$482 million investment from the USPS to finalize the design. It is an indefinite quantity (IDIQ) contract, meaning that the USPS will be able to order more of the vehicles throughout the 10-year contract. USPS will order anywhere between 50,000 and 165,000 of the vehicles.

President Biden issued an executive order directing federal officials to devise a plan for converting all federal vehicle fleets to clean and zero emission vehicles on January 25.

Of the three finalists in the bidding process of the NGPV, Workhorse was the only manufacturer to offer an EV vehicle. Workhorse's stock fell nearly 50% after the announcement that Oshkosh was awarded the contract. Workhorse met with the USPS on March 3 to find out why they were not awarded the contract.

USPS said the internal combustion vehicles produced by Oshkosh could be retrofitted to become electric. Postmaster DeJoy told the House Oversight and Reform Committee in February

that the USPS plans for one in 10 vehicles to feature an electric powertrain. The 10% figure was the minimum required upfront commitment to electric vehicles for Oshkosh to start up production capabilities for both electric and gas-powered vehicles.

Three members of the House of Representatives want to freeze the USPS contract to investigate possible political influence and determine whether the award is “consistent with the federal obligations” in Biden’s executive order.

- Rep Marcy Kaptur, chair of the House Appropriations Committee
- Rep Tim Ryan
- Rep Jared Huffman, member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

Also, Rep Ryan has asked the Securities & Exchange Commission (SEC) to investigate a \$54 million trade involving shares of Oshkosh that were made just hours before the USPS contract was announced.

Postmaster DeJoy stated to the Oversight Committee that, “If we were able to get the funding, we would be able to maybe, of the first buy, go 50% electric.” DeJoy told lawmakers the USPS did not plan on buying more than 10% electric vehicles because of the cost, and said the agency would need \$3 billion to \$4 billion to order more. USPS spokesman Dave Partenheimer said, “With the right level of support, the majority of the Postal Service’s fleet can be electric by the end of the decade.”

The Postal Vehicle Modernization Act was

introduced again by 17 House Democrats. The bill includes \$6 billion for the purchase of electric or zero-emission vehicles. Previously, H.R. 7969 was sponsored by Rep. Huffman on August 7, 2020, but the bill did not receive a vote. H.R. 7969 authorized \$25 billion to the USPS for the modernization of postal infrastructure and operations. Recently, Huffman stated, “By investing in modern, efficient vehicles, we can transform the USPS into a global leader in efficiency and innovation, helping revitalize the beleaguered Postal Service and saving taxpayers billions of dollars each year. With this funding, there is no valid reason not to move forward with completely electrifying the USPS vehicle fleet.” H.R. 7969 requires the following:

- At least 75% of the vehicles purchased shall be electric or zero emission,
- By December 31, 2029, not less than 50% of new medium- or heavy-duty vehicles purchased shall be electric or zero-emission vehicles,
- Beginning on January 1, 2040, any new medium- or heavy- duty vehicle purchased must be an electric or zero-emission vehicle,
- Not later than January 1, 2026, at least one electric vehicle charging station must be provided at each postal facility accessible to the public for use by the public or officers and employees of the Postal Service, and
- The Postal Service shall ensure that adequate charging stations are available at Postal Service facilities to keep the Postal Service fleet operational.

 **ATTENTION VIRTUAL RETIREMENT TRAINING SEMINAR**

**Sunday April 11 from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.,** former NBA Mike Weir will conduct a virtual retirement seminar.

For union members considering retirement within the next year, this seminar is a must.

Mike will navigate you through the intricacies of planning for your retirement.

To attend, you will need to receive an email invitation (normally sent out a week in advance).

To take part in this seminar, you will need to contact Branch 343 at 314-241-4297.

The Union Hall will need your name, station and email address.

You may also contact the Region 5 NBA’s office at 314-985-8040.

Please make arrangements as soon as possible.

# VICE PRESIDENT FINANCIAL SECRETARY

... BY MARVIN BOOKER



## PASS IT ON ... MENTORING NEW CARRIERS.

**M**entor” or “mentoring” are powerful words. The words encompass so many different attributes: teaching, counseling, guiding, tutoring, supporting, advising, and just plain old caring. We all have memories of our first few days or weeks as a brand-new letter carrier. We quickly learned that carrying mail is not as easy as it looks. After a few days of being humbled by the job, most of us turned to senior carriers for advice. In most offices, senior carriers are willing to go the extra mile to teach the ropes of being a letter carrier. This is mentoring.

Mentoring is simply a personal relationship in which a more experienced or more knowledgeable person helps guide someone less experienced or less knowledgeable. Mentoring is a process to transmit knowledge and support relevant to work, career, or professional development to the recipient.

Here are some commonly used mentoring techniques:

1. **Being there:** Make a commitment in a caring way, which involves taking part in the learning process side-by-side with new letter carriers. Let them know that you intend to help them through their probationary period and until they reach an acceptable comfort level with their new job.
2. **Showing:** Make something understandable or use your own example to demonstrate a skill or activity. Show what you are talking about by your own behavior. A mentor can help the new letter carrier over the usual bumps and cut through any unnecessary work. You can explain the ins and outs of day-to-day tasks and help eliminate needless things that may be currently going on in the workday. A mentor helps get the new carrier’s work done more quickly and efficiently.
3. **Sowing:** Sow the seeds of future understanding. Sometimes what you say may not be immediately understood by a new letter carrier but will make sense and have value a little later. Mentors are much like parents, in that they

look for teachable moments to capitalize on the experience while it is fresh on everyone’s mind.

4. **Harvesting:** “Pick the ripe fruit,” or create awareness of what new letter carriers have learned from their experiences. Help them draw conclusions about their work and the union. If the new letter carrier is not yet a member, encourage him/her to sign up.
5. As the mentor, you know the trends, important changes and new practices that everyone should know to stay at the top of their career. You also know the NALC and how it benefits new letter carriers. These are items that all new carriers long to learn more about. Step up and give them what they want and need.

All new letter carriers need to be mentored by an experienced NALC activist. If we as union activists don’t step up to mentor new letter carriers, we are leaving the door open for negative influences exerted by people who do not support or promote the values of the NALC. We must not let this happen.

But mentoring should not be limited to the workplace and the letter carrier’s job. A good mentor should also invite the new letter carrier to the branch union meeting. At the meeting, introduce the new person to all the branch officers, explain the function of the branch and the opportunities for involvement that it offers. This will have a long-lasting effect on new letter carriers and may help develop the branch activists of tomorrow.

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# RECORDING SECRETARY ... BY TINA HUNT



**H**ello from the recording secretary's desk. Were you able to get a COVID-19 shot? With the help of the Urban League, Branch 343 was able to secure the Johnson & Johnson (one shot) COVID-19 vaccine and make it available to the members. For two days in March, active carriers were able to come to the Union Hall and receive a shot administered by a health care professional. Thank you to our full-time officers of Branch 343 for making this happen!

## TRAINING

Speaking of our full-time officers, the three officers of Branch 343 have been taking time on their Sundays to attend virtual full time officer training. This training, offered by our national union, was held Sundays in March. Sessions covered topics such as Department of Labor reporting, dues, membership reports and daily tasks required to run a branch and serve the membership.

Also taking time on their Sundays were your shop stewards. A four-hour virtual training was hosted by the Region 5 national business agent's office. Topics covered were filing grievances timely, what information is needed to file a successful grievance, and appealing grievances to the next step. Twenty-seven of Branch 343's stewards attended.

On another Sunday in March, a virtual training was held on how to file workers compensation grievances. Region 5's work comp specialist Larissa Pardee taught our stewards how to identify mistakes made by management concerning the filing of work comp claims. Our own specialist, Barry Linan, wrapped up the training by explaining what Department of Labor forms to use.

Your local stewards have been well trained and are ready to assist you with any issues you may have. Remember, if an action of management does not seem right, it probably isn't. Ask to see a steward!

## UNION PROUD

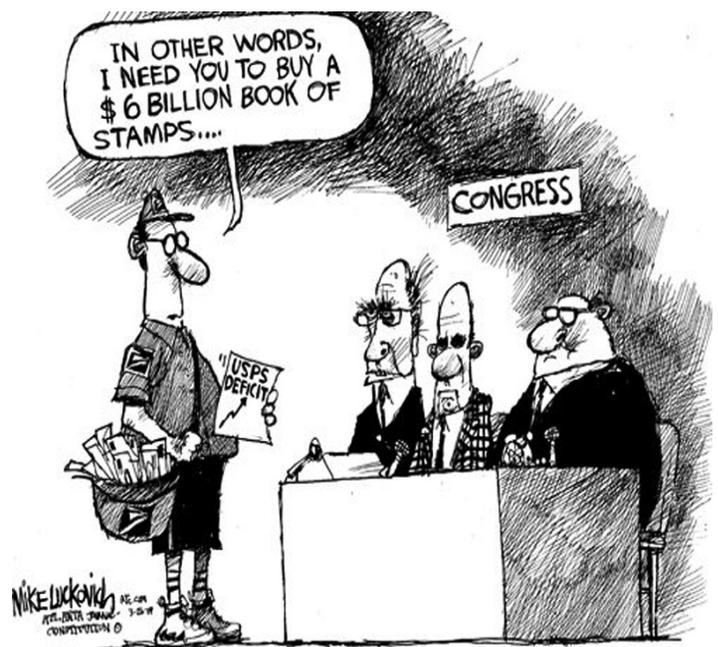
I recently had the chance to speak with one of our branch retirees. This gentleman called the hall to let us know he would be receiving his Gold Card this year (a Gold Union Card is awarded for 50 years of membership in the NALC). He said he read in the MCC that Ole Timers' Day was possibly going to be held in September. He went on to tell me he was calling to let us know that he would definitely be at the celebration. He asked if he could bring his family.

Now Ole Timers' Day may or may not be held in September, it all depends on the pandemic. If it is held, the date is still six months away. That didn't matter to this nice man, he was eager to RSVP now. He was proud of his achievement. I could hear it in his voice. I took his name, thanked him for paving the way for letter carriers behind him and told him I would see him in September. It was a very touching conversation.

I hope we can all be as "Union Proud" as this retiree.

See you on Thursday at the general meeting conducted by our well-trained full-time officers!

Don't forget your mask, it's the new norm.



# HEALTH BENEFITS PLAN/OWCP ... BARRY LINAN



**A**pril 2021 greetings to all of the brothers and sisters of NALC Branch 343. Thank you Democratic Party, as not one Republican voted for it, for passing the **American Rescue Plan Act of 2021**. Effective March 12 and continuing through September 30 the act provides federal employees with up to 600 hours of paid emergency federal employee leave (EFEL). Employees are entitled to take EFEL related to COVID-19 if they are unable to work due to eight qualifying reasons. Employees requesting EFEL leave should submit PS Form 3971 and indicate the qualifying reason. Timekeeping should be inputted under Code 086-21 as Administrative Leave. The NALC website [www.nalc.org](http://www.nalc.org) has more information on the act and we expect further guidance from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) soon.

**HBP:** Beginning January 1 you and your eligible family members age 18 and older can earn health savings rewards by participating in the **Wellness Incentive Program**. Each eligible member of NALC HBP should receive a **TASC debit card** in the mail. After completion of the various wellness programs, the corresponding monetary reward will be loaded onto your debit card. The reward amount varies depending on whether you are in the High Option or CDHP/Value Option plan. The reward can then be used to pay for eligible medical expenses not covered by the plan. Eligible expenses are defined by Section 213(d) of the Internal Revenue Code. Examples would be dental treatment, eyeglasses, and over-counter medications. Please consider participating in the Wellness Incentive Program and earn yourself some rewards.

**OWCP CORNER:** Unfortunately, we are having lots of issues with management improperly processing OWCP claims in the Saint Louis Installation. Claim forms are not being sent in a timely manner and injured carriers are not being paid continuation of pay (COP) properly either. See your steward if you are having either issue so a grievance can be filed.

When you are injured on duty and file Form CA-1 with management, per **ELM 544**, "the immediate supervisor is responsible for ... prompt

completion and forwarding of Form CA-1 to the control office (now called HRM) ... **on the same day** it is received from the employee." So, the supervisor must send in your CA-1 to HRM "on the same day" that you file it with them. Many times this is not happening and carriers' OWCP claims are being unnecessarily delayed because of it. Always ask your supervisor for a **copy of the front and back of your Form CA-1** if they don't provide it. Supervisors are required to complete the CA-1 (supervisor portion – page 2) and send it in to HRM downtown. If your CA-1 is delayed, request to see your steward and file a grievance. Remember, an injustice to one is an injustice to all!

I strongly recommend you **check box 15a on Form CA-1 to request continuation of pay (COP)**. Per the **ELM 545.7**, "The employer must continue regular pay during periods of disability up to a maximum of 45 calendar days." COP is a form of paid leave provided by the USPS if you "begin losing time from work within 45 days of the injury." You can lose time from work because you are unable to perform your duties due to your injury, you need time off for medical treatment, or if management fails to provide limited duty work and sends you home. For the first three calendar days of disability after the date of injury, you must use your own AL, SL, or take LWOP at your option. Beginning day four you are entitled to begin receiving COP. Note, I said "three calendar days" and Sundays, holidays, and non-scheduled days all count towards it. Your supervisor should be asking what type of leave you want to use during the "three calendar day" period and then inputting you on day four for COP, timekeeping code 071. Fill out PS Form 3971 for any/all days you request leave or COP, write the reason in the box, get it signed/dated by your supervisor, and keep a copy. If your request is disapproved, ask to see your steward immediately, a grievance may need to be filed so you do not suffer a loss of pay. **Remember, always keep copies of all your injury forms and medical documentation!**

# NOTES FROM THE MANAGING EDITOR

... BY TOM SCHULTE



## PROTECTING THE RIGHT TO ORGANIZE (PRO-ACT) ADVANCES

**O**n March 9 the United States House of Representatives passed the Protecting the Right to Organize PRO-Act H.R.842, by a bipartisan majority of 225-206. The Pro-Act seeks to restore protections that give workers the right to organize and bargain for better wages, benefits, and working conditions.

President Biden, a strong supporter of organized labor, strongly encouraged the measure to advance to the Senate for ratification, where he vowed to sign the bill. The president called it an opportunity to summon a new wave of worker power to create an economy that works for everyone. "We owe it not only to those who have put in a lifetime of work, but to the next generation of workers who have only known an America of rising inequality and shrinking opportunity."

Unions have always given workers a stronger voice to secure better wages, benefits and worker protections. The middle class built this country and the unions helped build the middle class. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that 60 million Americans would join a union if given the opportunity, but for too long many employers and state legislatures have prevented unions the opportunity to organize.

The PRO-Act seeks to give equal footing to workers and management. The PRO-Act supports workers' right to strike for basic workplace improvements, including higher wages and better working conditions; create a mediation and arbitration process to ensure corporations and newly formed unions reach a first contract; authorize unions and employers to negotiate agreements that allow unions to collect fair-share fees that cover the costs of representation and protect the integrity of union elections.

In addition, the PRO-Act would streamline the National Labor Relations Board's (NLRB) procedures to secure worker freedoms and effectively prevent violations by establishing penalties on corporations that violate workers' rights and by combatting misclassification of workers as supervisors and independent contractors.

The NALC has thrown its support behind the PRO-Act in a letter to Congress. NALC President Fredric

Rolando stated, "While NALC is an open shop with over 93% voluntary membership, we do not take our success in organizing for granted. To protect our rights, we all know that all workers must enjoy a real right to organize, not just a theoretical right to do so. We stand in solidarity with the millions of workers and their families who this legislation will benefit."

Baring the end of the filibuster, the Pro-Act legislation will require 60 votes in the United States Senate and with a slim Democratic majority, much work needs to be done. With the challenges all Americans face because of the pandemic and an economy in crisis, this is a golden opportunity to help the American worker reestablish long overdue economic security.

President Biden said in a statement, "I urge Congress to send the PRO-Act to my desk so we can seize the opportunity to build a future that reflects working people's courage and ambition, and offers not only good jobs with a real choice to join a union, but the dignity, equity, shared prosperity and common purpose the hardworking people who built this country and make it run deserve."

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Retired letter carriers of Br. 343 and Br. 5050

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# REGION 5 NBA REPORT ... BY MIKE BIRKETT



**National Agreement Ratified** — The active members of the NALC have voted to ratify the tentative 2019-2023 National Agreement with the USPS. Ninety-four percent of participating eligible members voted to approve the agreement, with 60,111 voting to accept and 3,341 to reject. The NALC has notified the USPS. **Information on back pay and implementation of the new contract will be posted on the NALC website as soon as possible.** The new contract will expire on May 20, 2023.

**Next Generation Delivery Vehicle** — The service has announced it has awarded a 10-year contract to Oshkosh Defense to manufacture the NGDV. The first of these new vehicles are tentatively scheduled to be delivered in the summer of 2023. The service is planning on Oshkosh to produce between 50,000 and 165,000 NGDVs under the contract with the ability to order additional vehicles. They will be right hand drive, fuel efficient gas or gas-electric hybrid powertrains and air conditioning. They are also to have 360-degree cameras, advanced braking and traction control, air bags, front- and rear-collision avoidance systems and increased cargo capacity. As I write this article, there are lawmakers who are raising issues about the contract that was awarded as well as the percentage of electric versus gasoline powered engines. A bill has already been introduced which would award the service \$6 billion for going completely electric ... stay tuned! By the way, the front of the NGDV was inspired by a platypus.

**Virtual Managed Service Points** — While the new agreement will end the practice of letter carriers having to scan MSPs, that doesn't mean the service has given up on them. The USPS has notified the NALC of implementation of VMSP which will provide near real-time data of identified locations and the ability to observe when the locations have been serviced and will include documented time stamps. Scanners will automatically record the information when a carrier gets within 30 feet of the mapped geofence. Unfortunately, the service is hell-bent on watching carriers' every move. While the service has been tracking carriers with their scanners for a long time, this is just further documentation that they don't want humans; they want robots. Perhaps all management personnel should carry scanners and we can see where all the wasted time really is.

**COVID-19 Relief Package** — The NALC successfully lobbied for two key provisions in the American Rescue

Plan that are of critical importance to letter carriers.

1. It establishes an Emergency Federal Employee Leave Fund. It provides up to 600 hours of paid leave for full time (proportionally for part time) carriers and carries forward the same COVID-19 related reasons for using leave that were included in the FFCRA which expired on December 31, 2020, but adds additional reasons such as getting vaccinated. It also contains no two-thirds reduction in pay that the FFCRA had for certain reasons for leave.
2. It contains workers compensation language that presumes a positive COVID-19 diagnosis for postal and federal employees as work related. The presumption authorizes benefits for medical, disability and survivor benefits.

**LMOU** — Local negotiations will begin on April 29 and will last for 30 days. The Region 5 office will be conducting LMOU virtual training on March 28 for all branch presidents and their selected negotiators. If you are a branch president and have not received notification by email, please call the office.

**Region 5 New Steward Training** — Over 150 new stewards and grizzled veterans attended the remote training session on March 7. While the first part of the training was geared toward new stewards, the second part was on ensuring that those carriers being disciplined for absenteeism are well represented and that stewards are preparing the best grievance files they can should the grievance leave the office.

**Retirement Seminar** — Repeating an item from last month's article, retired NBA Mike Weir has agreed to conduct a virtual seminar on April 11. In order to attend, you will need to receive an email invitation (normally sent out the week before). Please contact your branch president who will submit your name and email address to me. You may also call the Region 5 office and leave your name, branch and email address.

**Food Drive** — The NALC annual food drive is delayed this year. The NALC is committed to holding the event as soon as it is safe to do so and is coordinating with the Postal Service on the possibility of conducting the food drive this fall.

# RETIREEE REPORT

... BY TOM SCHULTE



**G**reetings fellow retirees. I hope everyone is keeping well and maintaining social distancing as the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine distribution progresses. I've heard from several retirees that have already received their first shot and a few that have received both injections.

I hope most of you have made appointments already or have a family member who can sign you up to receive the vaccine. As each week passes there appears to be more accessible locations and shots available. Both Walgreens and CVS pharmacies are accepting appointments. Call your nearest location and inquire if the vaccines are available and when you can make your appointment.

I remain optimistic that by late spring/early summer we can consider holding our monthly retiree meetings again. For safety sake we might consider an outside picnic like setting in the park next to the Union Hall for our meetings; and with confidence being made in baby steps, we can look forward to celebrating Ole Timers' Day on a Saturday in September or October. Look for updates in this monthly article. In other news ...

## WHITE HOUSE ANNOUNCES POSTAL BOARD OF GOVERNORS NOMINATIONS

In hopes of righting the postal ship of state, the White House announced three nominees to the U.S. Postal Service board of governors. Currently, there are three vacancies on the board with terms that expire in 2021, 2023 and 2026.

Ron Stroman recently served as the former deputy postmaster general and chief government relations officer for the USPS. Prior to joining USPS, Stroman worked on Capital Hill, serving on the Committee of

Oversight and Government Reform. Stroman also recently served as the head of the Postal Service agency review team with NALC Chief of Staff Jim Sauber.

Amber McReynolds is one of the country's leading experts on election administration and policy. She is the CEO of the National Vote at Home Institute and Coalition and is the former director of elections for Denver, Colorado, where she developed the nation's most sophisticated vote-by-mail system. She has proven that designed pro-voter policies and voter-centric processes, as well as implementing technical innovations, will improve representation for all voters.

Anton Hajjaar is the former general counsel of the American Postal Workers Union. His experience includes pro bono employment discrimination cases and serves as an advisor on the American Law Institute's governing board. He received his bachelor's degree from Fordham University and his Juris Doctor from Tulane University Law School.

NALC President Fredric Rolando issued a statement urging the White House and Senate to also re-nominate Ron Bloom, who was recently named chairman of the board of governors and whose term expired in December. Bloom continues to serve during a one-year holdover year permitted under law.

"NALC appreciates the White House prioritizing these vacancies and looks forward to working with the Senate to move their nominations as soon as possible," said NALC President Rolando.

As retirees we can only hope that the above appointees can put a stop to the disastrous policies and proposals being implemented by current Postmaster General Louis DeJoy.

Stay safe and get your shots. See you next month.

# NEW LEAVE FOR POSTAL EMPLOYEES UNDER THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN

## Emergency Federal Employee Leave

QUALIFYING REASONS	LEAVE ELIGIBILITY
<p>An employee is entitled to take EFEL related to COVID-19 if the employee is unable to work because the employee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Is subject to a federal, state, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19. <b>Postal employees are essential workers and not subject to this provision (except as per item #3).</b></li> <li>2. Has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19.</li> <li>3. Is caring for an individual who is subject to such an order as in (1) or has been advised as in (2).</li> <li>4. Is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and seeking a medical diagnosis.</li> <li>5. Is caring for <b>the employee’s son or daughter</b> if the school or place of care of the son or daughter has been closed, requires or makes optional a virtual learning instruction model, requires or makes optional a hybrid of in-person and virtual learning instruction models, or if the child care provider of the son or daughter is unavailable, due to COVID-19 precautions.</li> <li>6. Is experiencing any other substantially similar condition. <b>There is not currently any similar condition that has been identified. Postal employees not subject to this provision.</b></li> <li>7. Is caring for a family member with a mental or physical disability or who is 55 years of age or older and incapable of self-care, without regard to whether another individual other than the employee is available to care for such family member. If the place of care for such family member is closed or the direct care provider is unavailable due to COVID-19.</li> <li>8. Is obtaining immunization (vaccination) related to COVID-19 or is recovering from any injury, disability, illness, or condition related to such immunization.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>All career and non-career employees</b>, regardless of tenure, are immediately eligible for EFEL.</li> <li>• <b>Full-time employees</b> can receive up to 600 hours of paid EFEL, capped at \$2,800 per pay period.</li> <li>• <b>Part-time employees</b> can receive up to the proportional equivalent of 600 hours, capped at a proportional equivalent of \$2,800 per pay period.</li> </ul> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>OTHER CONSIDERATIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u><b>EFEL does not count as creditable service toward an employee’s retirement benefit.</b></u></li> <li>• <u><b>Employees cannot contribute to Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) while on EFEL.</b></u></li> </ul> <p><b>Employees seeking to use EFEL should:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Submit a PS Form 3971.</li> <li>2. Indicate which of the eight qualifying reasons they must take leave.</li> <li>3. They must affirmatively state that they are unable to work because of the qualifying reason.</li> </ol> <p>For now, this leave should be managed and tracked within the Enterprise Resource Management System (eRMS).</p> <p>Timekeepers will be instructed to enter the interim hours code 086-21 in eRMS for all employees, and then verify the Administrative Leave is entered in the appropriate timekeeping system using other hours code 086-21 for city and O for rurals.</p> <p>The eligibility period for this leave is from <b>March 12, 2021, through September 30, 2021</b> or until funding for the reimbursement is exhausted.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Courtesy of South West Florida APWU</i></p>

## MOUND CITY CARRIER

As a reminder, the Postal Service provides an essential federal government service as part of the nation's critical infrastructure. Therefore, postal employees are generally not subject to federal, state, or local quarantine or isolation orders related to COVID-19, so employees will generally not be eligible to use EFEL for qualifying reason (1) above. Additionally, no substantially similar condition has been identified that would qualify an employee to use leave for qualifying reason (6) above.

We are continuing to work the issues associated with implementation of these new leave requirements, and we anticipate receiving additional guidance from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), which will administer the fund, in the coming weeks. In the interim, employees seeking to use EFEL should submit a PS Form 3971 indicating for which of the eight qualifying reasons they must take leave, and employees must affirmatively state that they are unable to work because of the qualifying reason.

For now, this leave should be managed and tracked within the Enterprise Resource Management System (eRMS). Timekeepers will be instructed to enter the interim hours code 086-21 in eRMS for all employees, and then verify the Administrative Leave is entered in the appropriate timekeeping system using either hours code 086-21 for city or DACA Code O for rurals. For immediate reference, attached is the timekeeping quick reference table.

We will update you with additional instructions and guidance as our processes for managing this new leave are developed and implemented. We ask that you share this information with your teams as soon as possible, given that this leave will become available on March 12.

Emergency Federal Employee Leave (EFEL)				
Employee Type	eRMS Leave Code/Reason Code	Timekeeping System (RMSS/TACS)	Description	Comments
Rural Carrier	086-21	DACA O - for 1314A use OL block	Pandemic Relief 2021	Used when requested for scenarios 1-8 of EFEL, up to \$2,800.00 per Pay Period
All Other	086-21	086-21	Pandemic Relief 2021	Used when requested for scenarios 1-8 of EFEL, up to \$2,800.00 per Pay Period

### Request for or Notification of Absence

Employee's Name (Print last, first, MI.) <b>DeJoy, Louis</b>		Employee ID <b>12345678</b>	Date Submitted (MM/DD/YYYY) <b>03/12/2021</b>	No. of Hours Requested <b>2</b>	<b>SCHEDULED</b> <b>UNSCCHEDULED</b>	<b>PP</b>	<b>Year</b>
Installation (For postmaster's leave, show city, state, and ZIP Code) <b>Gateway, St Louis, MO, 63125</b>		N/S Day <b>B</b>	Pay Loc. No.   D/A Code <b>28-7181</b>	From: Date   Hour <b>03/12/2021   1:00 pm</b>			
Time of Call or Request	Scheduled Reporting Time	If Needed, Employee Can Be Reached At: <input type="checkbox"/> Do not call		Thru: Date   Hour <b>03/12/2021   3:00 pm</b>	<b>Day</b>	<b>Init.</b>	<b>Hours</b>
Type of Absence <input type="checkbox"/> Annual <input type="checkbox"/> Holiday/AL Lv Exch <input type="checkbox"/> Carrier 701 Route <input type="checkbox"/> LWOP (See reverse) <input type="checkbox"/> Sick (See reverse) <input type="checkbox"/> Late <input type="checkbox"/> COP (See reverse) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <b>EFEL 086-21</b>		Documentation (For official use only) <input type="checkbox"/> FMLA Requested (Certification review - HRSSC) <input type="checkbox"/> For COP Leave (CA1 on file) <input type="checkbox"/> For Advanced Sick Leave (PS 1221 on file) <input type="checkbox"/> For Military Leave (Orders reviewed) <input type="checkbox"/> For Court Leave (Summons reviewed) <input type="checkbox"/> For Higher Level (PS 1723 on file) <input type="checkbox"/> Scheme Training Testing Qualifying (Memo on file)		Revised Schedule for (Date) Begin Work Lunch Out   Lunch In End Work Total Hours			
Remarks (Do not enter medical information. See Privacy Act Statement on reverse of this form.) <b>Vaccine Shot, American Rescue Plan reason number 8</b>							
<b>I understand that the annual leave authorized in excess of the amount available to me during the leave year will be charged to LWOP.</b>							
Employee's Signature and Date		Signature of Person Recording Absence and Date		Signature of Supervisor and Date Notified		<b>Sun 09</b>	
<b>Official Action on Application (Return copy of signed request to employee.)</b>							
<input type="checkbox"/> Approved		Do not check an FMLA box until you verify the FMLA designation. <input type="checkbox"/> FMLA Designation is PENDING <input type="checkbox"/> FMLA Protected <input type="checkbox"/> Not FMLA Protected		Signature of Supervisor, and Date  <input type="checkbox"/> Continued on reverse		<b>Mon 10</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Disapproved (Give reason below)						<b>Tue 11</b>	
<b>Warning:</b> The furnishing of false information on this form may result in a fine of not more than \$10,000 or imprisonment of not more than 5 years, or both (18 U.S.C. 1001).							

## WEST COUNTY ... BY PAM STEPNEY

**G**reetings sisters and brothers of Branch 343. How's everyone doing? Fine, I hope. The contract was ratified and all thanks go to our union for fighting the good fight to keep us comfortable in our middle-class lifestyle. Special thanks go out to the union members who took the time to vote. There were only 60,311 members who voted to accept the contract and 3,341 who decided to reject it, out of 290,000 members give or take a few. The Postal Service had on the tool bar that there are only 206,000 members. The Postal Service always tries to make the union accomplishments less than what they are. Nevertheless the union settled the contract without going to an arbitrator. I'm a bit disappointed that more carriers didn't vote. I know the mail service played a part in getting the ballots out, but our business agent Mike Birkett sent out an email telling us, if you did not receive your ballot call and request another one. President Johnny also told us this information at the regular meeting. As a union member/shop steward, I texted and called every letter carrier I know and told them to check the mail for their ballot and vote. All of the CCAs in West County brought their ballots in with them, voted and put them in the mail the same day. Doug Delao called DC for another ballot, and the next day his original ballot came in the mail. There is **no** excuse for you as a letter carrier not to vote on any and all things pertaining to the union. They've got your back and you must have theirs. I know sometimes we don't get along or we're not all on the same page for one reason or another, but we need to stand strong united against the establishment.

During an interview with Oprah on CBS, the Duchess of Sussex, Megan Markle, said there was no one to turn to in the palace. In comparison, during her career as an actress, she had union support. We have the union and we need to support them at all times. United we stand, divided we fall. So, the next time you are called upon to vote, call your congressmen or woman to support an issue that is brought forth by the union. Stop the foolishness and do your part. Stop depending on others to get the job done. Do it for yourself and all your sisters and brothers.

Why are people sending advertisements to letter carriers on the workroom floor, and actually walking into the Postal Service to sell you insurance that the NALC offers? I visited one station, and a woman walked in with donuts, went in the break room, set up her computer. She then walked around on the workroom floor handing out an excel spreadsheet containing dollar amounts and age breakdowns to letter carriers. She gave me a copy and I asked who she was and what she was doing here? She replied that her father was a retired letter carrier from Kansas City and she was selling insurance. A couple of letter carriers gave her their information, including social security number and employee identification number. Hello ma'am/sir why are you giving a complete stranger your personal information? Why is she on the workroom floor? Who invited her, and why do they have our personal information when they send us advertisements on the workroom floor? These are the questions we should ask when these outsiders solicit you. Stop giving away your information and download



the NALC app to purchase insurance and take advantage of everything else that is offered. Keep in mind there should never be anybody on the workroom floor or in the building soliciting postal employees, and especially letter carriers, because the union takes care of their own. If you have any questions call Saronda Sutherland, our Mutual Benefits Association (MBA) representative at 314-535-2850.

Please take the time to take care of yourselves. My husband and I were vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus and I want to highly encourage you to do your due diligence and learn about what the vaccine does and if it is appropriate for you. My husband and I feel great, post-vaccination. The only "side effect" after receiving it was we were a little tired afterwards, which is normal. I encourage you to consider it in the context of your own safety along with the potential affects it may have on your ability to travel. There is a possibility that you may be required, in the future, to provide proof of vaccination to travel domestically and internationally. Mike and Jeanette Weir, as well as Tom and Linda Schulte were also vaccinated. Marvin Booker made an announcement at the meeting that the VA hospital was also providing vaccines to active and retired service members.

We have received 17 applications for the John Haake Scholarship and 10 complete packages so we should have three winners soon.

Do your best, leave the rest, don't stress, GOD bless and thank you for coming.

**THE "U"** ... BY FRANK ENLOW



**W**e all should be held accountable. So let's start at the top. When he officially took office, Postmaster General Louis DeJoker dismantled machines that were needed to process mail and packages. The effects of that decision are still being felt today because some of our brothers and sisters are still second guessing the results of the presidential election, even with all the recounts.

Because of that same decision, customers from all over the area have complained that some of their friends and family did not receive the Christmas cards or presents that were mailed out until well after Christmas.

The customers didn't want to hear excuses, but they did hold us accountable for Postmaster Louis DeJoker's tampering with the processing equipment and some vowed never to send anything of importance through the post office again.

He is restructuring districts, offering higher level executives an early out and now you can add awarding contracts to invisible friends. The night before the Postal Service was to announce Oshkosh as the winner of the competition to build the next generation of postal vehicles, an unknown party purchased over \$54 million in Oshkosh stock. Coincidence?

The next generation of vehicles were required to incorporate electric powertrain engines which would make at least 75% of the new USPS fleet emit zero

emissions, or be fully electric. Since only 10% of Oshkosh vehicles would be zero emissions, DeJoy was ordered to cancel the contract with Oshkosh.

Let's hope that President Biden's three nominees are confirmed to the USPS board of governors and that they hold DeJoker accountable for all his wrongdoing. DeJoker stated he is not going anywhere, but, hopefully, they can get his assets out of there before he causes any more damage.

We cannot forget about our local managers and supervisors who are being micro-managed over the phone, and do not have the balls to make a decision without permission. You don't get a pass because you chose to be that supervisor or that manager. If the pressure from the position is too much, maybe you should think about going back to sweeping floors, selling stamps, or miss delivering mail.

We are held accountable when we don't do our jobs and management should be held accountable for pretending to do theirs. Aside from all of management's telecoms and unnecessary reports, the clerks and carriers have shown during this pandemic that the station can be ran without you.

All right brothers and sisters, a lot of you may not have walked in the manager's office while he or she was on a telecom. They talk about everything that is happening in our district which includes vehicles that are spotted outside of their district.

Those big numbers on the

trucks, along with the scanner pinging whenever you are out of your district, makes it easy for them to track you. But because of the pandemic, their focus was on getting the mail out by any means necessary and now that the restrictions have been moderately lifted. Their focus is back on us.

Along with the new scanners, you will also be seeing new MSP scans out on your route, or whatever they call them now.

Brothers and sisters, we have to hold ourselves accountable while we are out on the streets. You cannot deviate or leave your district without authorization. Please stay within your district and do your job the right way

We all received more money with this new contract and CCAs will make regular within two years. There shouldn't be any more excuses for not coming to work or delivering the mail or parcels accurately and professionally. As a letter carrier, you should always take pride in your appearance and the work that you do.

Until next time.



# SOUTH COUNTY ... BY MATT GLEIFORST

**H**ello from South County. Finally we have some good news. As of the time of me writing this we have two people fully vaccinated here and several others have received their first COVID-19 vaccination shots. Hopefully this past year can soon feel like a distant, yet traumatic, memory. Until that time we are still taking all of the necessary precautions and doing what we can to keep the case count going downward.

On a less positive note, we are still seeing the same delays here with mail, as I am sure everyone is seeing. Just this past week I delivered two pieces of mail from the same place on the same day. One was dated as should be expected for March 10 while the other one was dated, embarrassingly, for January 7. I'm not sure how this happens, but supposedly the plant downtown has new distribution management. Hopefully, they will soon get this mess straightened out and we can continue being prideful in our work. Until that time, remember to understand if a customer is upset. We just need to reassure them that we, as carriers,

are doing everything that we can to provide the best service possible on our end and that they are rightfully upset with these delays just as we are as carriers.

## CARRIER SPOTLIGHT

This month I would like to shine the light on our fellow carrier Tracy Denton. She was the first carrier at our station to be fully vaccinated. She is not only a terrific carrier who cares about her customers, but is also my case partner. I love getting to work next to her and talk to her each morning. She has been carrying mail since October of 2000 and started here at South County in May of 2018. She truly sees this job as being a service. Her favorite part of the job is getting to interact with the people on her route, who are all lucky to have such a friendly mail carrier. Her favorite memory as a carrier was talking to a man on her route who said that she was

the only woman he actually liked talking to besides his own mom. She really is just that nice. Outside of work she enjoys crafting and getting to spend time with her four grandkids at Camp Nana, as her home is known. She is very easy to talk to, so if you get the opportunity, take it. You can discuss her favorite show, "Yellowstone," her favorite musical artist, Bob Seger, or her favorite movie, "Pretty Woman." This month's advice for new carriers also comes from Tracy. Simply put she says, "Don't overthink the job. Just keep at it and it will all come to you." It is important to remember this. We have all been new at one point and seen veteran carriers doing the job with such ease. At a certain point we will all get there. Until that time, hold your head up high and keep smiling.



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NALC Branch 343 is partnering with the  
St. Louis Area Food Bank  
to accept donations to this year's  
"STAMP OUT HUNGER"  
annual food drive campaign

Please donate what you can to the St. Louis Area Food Bank at:

<https://stlfoodbank.org/nalc/>

It's that easy. All collections stay in the St. Louis area.

# COME TO NALCREST. STAY FOR THE WEATHER.

... BY ED PERRY, RETIRED LETTER CARRIER

**G**reetings from NALCREST, Florida, where letter carriers come to live after retirement or snowbird during the winter months. In February, the temperatures are in the 60s at night and in the 80s during the day. NALCREST is for retired letter carriers in good standing only.

In my opinion it is cheaper to lease an apartment at NALCREST by the year than it is to rent an apartment for four months during the winter. By leasing, you will have your own furniture to be used anytime of the year.

NALCREST is located about 1 hour south of Disney World, 1½ hours from the Atlantic Ocean at Vero Beach, about 2 hours from the Gulf of Mexico at Clearwater Beach and 2 hours to Jupiter (Cardinals Spring Training facility). Of course, the travel times all depend on the traffic. It takes between 15 and 17 hours to drive to NALCREST from St. Louis. All depends on which way you go and how many stops you make.

There are 500 garden style one bedroom and efficiency apartments surrounding two good size lagoons that connect to Lake Weohykapka (aka: Lake Walk in the Water). Lake Kissimmee is nearby. Plenty of other fishing areas also.

They do have two bedroom apartments, but current residents have the opportunity to move into them first. It is based on seniority at NALCREST.

Come down, spend a couple of days here and get on the waiting list.

Employee Assistance Program


## Know What to Do for Suicide Prevention

In life, there are times when our loved ones, colleagues, or even we ourselves may face struggles. Sometimes, even temporary problems cause despair and large problems may seem overwhelming. There are times when any one of us may need help. Awareness of some facts about suicide and always taking prompt action may make the difference and save a life. Signs that we or someone we care about are in emotional distress may include:

- Withdrawal and isolation from family and friends
- Obtaining a weapon when depressed
- Giving away prized possessions
- Talking about death often
- Making statements such as, "There's nothing left for me to live for"

**KNOW WHO**

Suicidal thoughts do not discriminate. Males or females of any age, ethnicity, educational level, or financial status can experience suicidal thoughts. However, risk factors include those with a family history of suicide, mental disorders, substance abuse, or prior suicide attempts. Pay attention to those who talk of harming themselves. This is often a sign that someone is considering the option of suicide and not typically a cry for attention.

**KNOW HOW**

Do not be afraid to ask directly, "Are you thinking of harming yourself?" Encourage the person in distress to seek immediate help. Talk therapy can be helpful but sometimes a person who is suicidal needs to be assessed for inpatient care and treatment. If in doubt, call 800-327-4968 (TTY: 877-492-7341). There are counselors available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to assist with questions and guide you to resources.

**WHAT TO DO**

If someone you know is considering suicide, DO NOT LEAVE THEM ALONE! Remove any potential tools for self-harm, including medications, and seek immediate help. This may mean taking them to an emergency room or calling 911 for local assistance.

**Make the Call!**

USPS Employee Assistance Program  
**1-800-327-4968**  
 (1-800-EAP-4-YOU) TTY: 1-877-492-7341  
[www.EAP4YOU.com](http://www.EAP4YOU.com)



# NALC Bulletin

Number 21-04 March 11, 2021

## Membership ratifies new NALC-USPS collective-bargaining agreement

The active membership of the National Association of Letter Carriers has overwhelmingly ratified the tentative 2019-2023 National Agreement with the United States Postal Service. NALC has officially notified USPS of the March 8 ratification date. More than 94 percent of participating eligible members voted to accept the tentative agreement that was announced on Nov. 25. The vote to ratify was 60,111 to accept the agreement versus 3,341 to reject it, as reported by NALC Ballot Committee Chairman Delano Wilson of Silver Spring, MD Branch 2611. The 15-member Ballot Committee monitored and observed the dispatch, receipt and tabulation of the ratification ballots conducted by an independent company, MOSAIC of Cheverly, MD.

The breakdown of the vote by NALC's 15 regions is below.

REGION	YES	NO
Region 1	7,681	343
Region 2	2,988	209
Region 3	3,148	206
Region 4	3,026	137
Region 5	2,859	146
Region 6	4,041	232
Region 7	3,003	168
Region 8	2,431	82
Region 9	6,779	243
Region 10	3,754	116
Region 11	4,569	256
Region 12	3,514	342
Region 13	2,418	112
Region 14	4,290	396
Region 15	5,610	353
<b>Total</b>	<b>60,111</b>	<b>3,341</b>

Information on back pay and the implementation of the new contract will be released as soon as possible.

The new contract covers a 44-month term, from Sept. 20, 2019, to May 20, 2023.



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# BRANCH MEETING

BRANCH 343, ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

MARCH 11, 2021

## Summary of Branch Action

- MSC To pay the branch bills.
- 
- MSC That Branch 343 donate \$250 to Project 2000, which is the Political Action Fund for the Greater St. Louis Labor Council.
- 
- MSC That Branch 343 pay the other seven officers and stewards who were in attendance at the steward training which was held February 28.

## Highlights

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 p.m. Chet Drain led the invocation and pledge of allegiance and the minutes were read and accepted.

**NBA's Report.** No report

**Retirees Report, Tom Schulte:** Greetings sent from the retirees who are still not having meetings because of COVID-19. Reported that CVS Pharmacy will soon be giving the COVID-19 vaccine and encouraged everyone to get our older family members signed up at as many places as possible. Tom hopes to be able to schedule Ole' Timers Day in September or October 2021.

**Labor Council Report, Pam Stepney:** Reported that the St. Louis Labor Council has jobs listed on their website.

**MBA Report, Saronda Sutherland:** No Report

**Health Benefit Report, Barry Linan:** Asked members to please encourage newly converted CCA carriers to consider joining the NALC Health Benefit Plan.

**Mound City Carrier Report, Tom Schulte:** The Buddy Bass Tournament for MDA will be held April 10 & 11. Mike Weir will hold a virtual retirement seminar on April 11. The March centerfold of the MCC featured USPS quarterly performance reports for single piece and periodical mail.

**Haake Scholarship Report, Pam Stepney:** Seventeen applications for the John H. Haake Scholarship were received. To date, 10 completed packets have been returned.

**Safety and Health Report, Richard Thurman:** Accidents in the Gateway District were reduced in part because of the hard work of the Safety Task Force. Asked that if there is a safety violation in your office, identify the issue and document. Asked that CCAs please use their clothing allowance. A letter carrier not being in uniform poses a safety hazard.

**OWCP Report, Barry Linan:** The NALC will work with The Department of Labor to secure extra benefits for postal workers that may be available in the American Rescue Plan.

**Trustees Report, Frank Enlow:** The books were audited and found to be in good order.

**Legislative Report, Mike Weir:** H.R. 1319 the American Rescue Plan has been signed into law. This law will provide additional relief to address the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. H.R. 1, the For the People Act, will allow more Americans more access to the voting polls. H.R. 695 and S-145 will repeal the

## New Members

- Demetria Clark..... Veto Reid ..... 1-29-21  
 Quinn Faerder ..... Affton ..... 1-30-21  
 Demuntheo Smith..... Mackenzie Pointe..... 1-29-21  
 Charles Stark..... Park Hills..... 1-30-21  
 De'Anna Sutherlin..... South County ..... 1-30-21  
 Alexandra Stokes..... Weathers ..... 1-29-21  
 Jayne Swinford..... Park Hills..... 3-02-21  
 Sherry Traeger ..... Union ..... 1-30-21  
 Randy Watson ..... Mackenzie Pointe..... 1-28-21

## Recently Retired Members

- Robert Rapisardo..... Clayton ..... 1-31-21  
 Eric Holliday..... Mackenzie Point ..... 1-31-21  
 Leonard Guinn..... Affton ..... 3-31-21  
 Richard Thornton ..... Wheeler ..... 2-28-21

prefunding requirements for the Postal Service. Mike encouraged all to contact their representatives as these are all good bills for the Postal Service.

**Executive Vice President/Treasurer Report, Brian Litteken:** Reported that Tom Schulte was celebrating his birthday with us this evening and asked for a round of applause for Tom. A pre-arbitration settlement was obtained in Jefferson City in which the USPS paid \$94,000 to affected letter carriers. Brian recently met with the branch accountant to ensure that branch accounts complied with Form LM-2. The Next Generation Postal Vehicle contract was awarded to Oshkosh and the first vehicles are expected by 2023. President Biden signed an executive order directing federal officials to devise a plan for converting all federal vehicles fleets to clean and zero emission vehicles. Three members of the House of Representatives want to freeze the USPS contract to investigate possible political influence and determine whether the award is consistent with the federal obligations.

**Vice President/Financial Secretary Report, Marvin Booker:** Read financial report for February. Through the Urban League, and the National Guard, Branch 343 has secured COVID-19 shots for letter carriers. Informed the membership that people selling insurance at postal facilities is not proper and members should not buy from these individuals. Union buttons for 2021 are now available.

**President’s Comments, John McLaughlin:** The NALC national contract has been ratified. Negotiations will soon begin concerning local LMOUs. Reminded letter carriers to continue working efficiently as soon the Postal Service will have the ability to see real time data of service points.

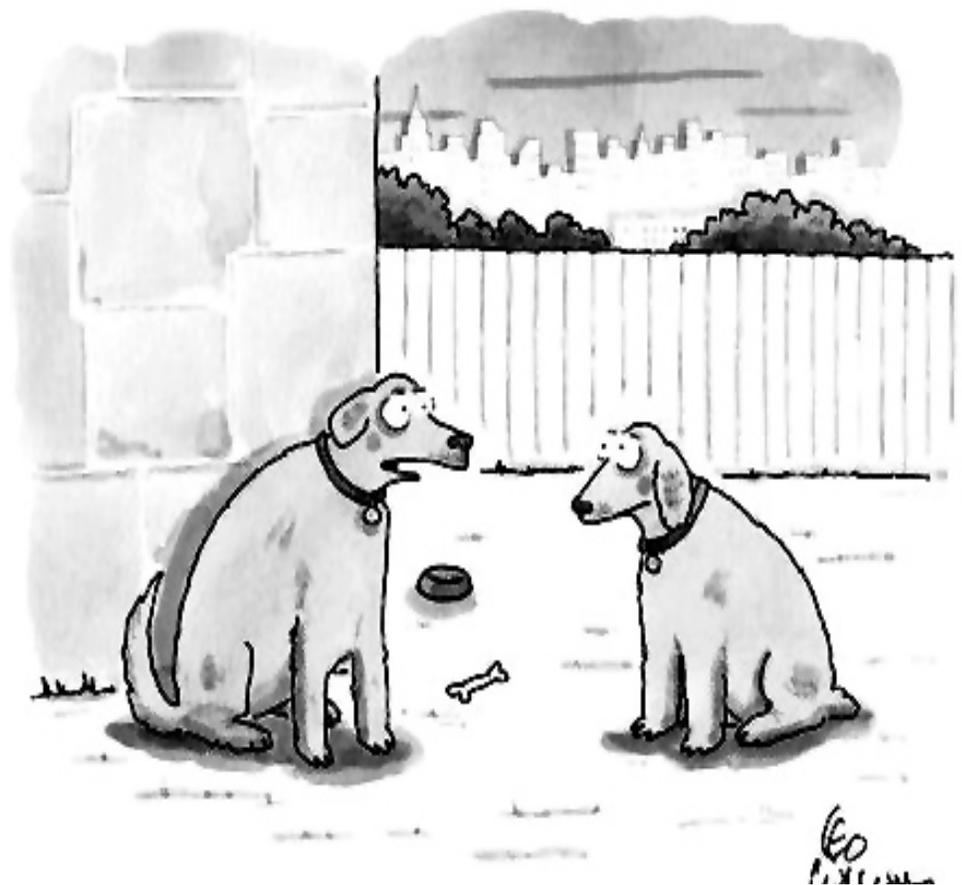
Respectfully Submitted,  
Tina M Hunt, Recording Secretary

**MOVED OR MOVING?  
KEEP US INFORMED**

To all members of Branch 343. Please keep us informed of your current address. Address correction services are expensive and cost the branch money that can be better spent. Failure to have an updated mailing list could also result in delayed communication to you and if you are a shop steward, a delay in getting paid. Don't assume that the Postal Service keeps the Union Hall advised of your address change, they don't.

You can call the Letter Carrier's Union Hall at 314-241-4297 or mail us your new address at:

Letter Carrier's Hall  
1600 S. Broadway  
St. Louis, MO 63104



*“That’s the problem with email — no one to bite.”*

# POLITICAL AND LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

... BY MIKE WEIR



Last month, the American Rescue Act (H.R. 1319) was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Biden. **This law is designed to address two of the major crises that we face: the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on our economy.** The legislation includes a new round of stimulus checks (\$1,400); expands the child tax credit and earned income tax credit; fully funds vaccine manufacturing, distribution and coronavirus testing throughout the country; provides housing and utility assistance to people on the verge of eviction, while extending the eviction ban into the fall; delivers hundreds of billions of dollars to local and state governments; supplies billions of dollars in aid to schools; provides billions of dollars in new grants and loans through the Small Business Administration; and extends unemployment benefits at an additional \$300 per week through September 6. This much needed influx of funds will accelerate our efforts to defeat this pandemic, strengthen the economy for families and businesses, put people back to work, retain essential services for citizens and allow students to return safely to their classrooms.

**Not one Republican supported this legislation.** First of all, they said that it was too expensive. Interestingly enough, their 2017 tax cut legislation cost the same amount (\$1.9 trillion). One of the big differences between these two pieces of legislation is that 65% of the benefits from their tax cuts went to people in the top 20% income bracket while the benefits from the

American Rescue Act go almost exclusively to everyone but the top 20%. Republicans also argued that only 9% of the funds from the Democrats' bill go toward COVID-19 relief. The reality is that only 16% of the funds do not go toward COVID-19 relief. Once again, we are dealing with the Republican disconnect between facts and "alternative facts."

Trump's big lie about election fraud has been totally embraced by a Republican Party, which is becoming more extremist by the day. They are using that lie to justify passing bills at the state level to make it more difficult to vote; in particular, they are trying to disenfranchise people of color from having access to the ballot box. In their quest to find a solution for a non-existent problem, Republicans have proposed approximately 290+ bills, mainly in battleground states. They know they cannot win if all Americans have the opportunity to exercise their right to vote, and they do not care how much they must undermine our democracy in order to preserve their power. This makes it even more imperative that Congress passes the **For the People Act of 2021** (H.R. 1 in the House and S. 6 in the Senate). This legislation would expand American's access to the ballot box, reduce the influence of big money in politics, strengthen ethics rules for public servants and implement other anti-corruption measures for the purpose of fortifying our democracy. Most importantly, it would override Republican efforts at the state level to undermine our democracy's most precious asset: our right

to have our voices heard and our issues addressed through our vote!

There has been a flurry of action in the 117th Congress regarding the Postal Service. House resolutions from the previous Congress that have expired have been reintroduced with new numbers. Maintaining six-day delivery is **H. Res. 114**; the anti-privatization resolution is **H. Res. 47**; preserving door delivery is **H. Res. 109**; and restoring service standards is **H. Res. 119**. Another House resolution, **H. Res. 108**, urges Congress to recognize Postal Service employees as frontline essential workers who should be prioritized to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. The CDC agrees with this assessment. Additionally, the **USPS Fairness Act** has been reintroduced in the House of Representatives as H.R. 695 and in the Senate as S-145. This legislation would repeal the onerous mandate to prefund future retiree health care, a mandate that is responsible for most of the red ink currently on the books for the USPS. Eliminating it would strengthen the Postal Service's financial position and would undercut our enemies' arguments for dismantling the company. Our current PMG Louis DeJoy, a Trump ally, is using those arguments to cut service, which would result in a significant loss of our share of the delivery marketplace. Of course, the operational changes that he has put in place since becoming PMG have been largely responsible for the chaos we are now experiencing in

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# Political Action Honor Roll

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*The above honor roll gives special recognition to those members who give \$50 or more. Each star represents \$100*

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 our delivery standards. Nevertheless, he is primed to use those problems to further his agenda against the Postal Service.

Unfortunately, President Biden lacks the authority to fire the PMG. However, he can and has nominated three new members to fill the vacancies on the board of governors. They are Ron Stroman (retired deputy

PMG), Amber McReynolds (CEO of the National Vote at Home Institute & Coalition) and Anton Hajjar (former general counsel for APWU). Their confirmation to the board would create a Democratic majority which could then terminate DeJoy's employment.

With regard to the resolutions and legislation referenced above, please contact your representative

and senators, where appropriate, to request their support. Also, contribute to the Branch 343 Political Action Fund and the NALC Letter Carrier Political Fund. Let's take this opportunity to have our voices heard to ensure that the Postal Service continues to provide a vital service to the American public, and remains a source of good-paying jobs and benefits for us and future generations.

## BRANCH MEETING ATTENDANCE PRIZES

MARCH 11, 2021

1. Darden Gift Card	\$25	Dallas Mitchell, West County
2. Home Depot Gift Card	\$25	Anthony Axton, Sappington
3. Target Gift Card	\$25	Quinton Jones, Jennings
	\$26	Richard Schallert

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## Deadline for articles for the MAY issue is APRIL 12, 2021

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## REGULAR BRANCH MEETING THURSDAY, APRIL 8, 2021 7:30 pm

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## SHOP STEWARDS MEETING THURSDAY, MAY 6, 2021 The Letter Carriers Building 1600 S Broadway



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