

MOUND CITY CARRIER

Official Publication of Branch 343

2020 General Excellence
Award Winning Publication



St. Louis, Missouri
Chartered 1892



Volume 73, No. 5

"Diversity is our Strength and Unity is our Power"

May 2022

PRESIDENT BIDEN SIGNS POSTAL REFORM ACT OF 2022



SAFETY: KANSAS CITY ... WE HAVE A PROBLEM

PRESIDENT'S ARTICLE ... By JOHN McLAUGHLIN



It may not be Mariupol, Ukraine, just yet, but some of our stations have become ripe battlegrounds for harassment, bullying, and intimidation. The enemy has been lobbing verbal barrages of derogatory insults at our carriers in the field as we simply try and go about our work. For the short amount of time carriers actually spend in the office these days, management has become quite proficient with their targeted abuse, especially effective with the most vulnerable, CCAs.

The abuse is particularly pervasive and long lasting where we now see carriers becoming shellshocked and have developed a bit of battle fatigue. Harassment is the pink elephant in the room. Management never acknowledges it occurs, and when confronted with it, they deflect and blame the carrier for the abuse. The only explanation I can think of why upper management denies it exists is because they dish out verbal abuse to managers and supervisors on their daily telecoms. We all know what rolls downhill. So why are we surprised when these same managers and supervisors abuse carriers. After all, carriers are the reason they are getting yelled at. Right? Who is held accountable?

Letter carriers are the most accountable entity in the Postal Service. They track our every step. Management, on the other hand, can say whatever comes into their head. They take pride in not signing anything. They have plausible deniability. With nothing in writing, they can deny knowledge of, or responsibility for, any damnable actions committed by them. It usually comes down to your word against their word, where do you think that will go? Nowhere. We need to make them accountable.

It is critical that every carrier knows their rights when confronted with abuse or harassment in the workplace. According to the contract, Article 14.1, it is the responsibility of management to provide safe working conditions in all installations. You must first notify your manager of the unsafe condition (i.e., verbal abuse, intimidation ... etc....). This includes behavior inside the post office as well as outside on the street. The best way to notify management is to fill out a PS Form 1767 *Report of Hazard, Unsafe Condition or Practice*. According to the ELM 824.62, supervisors must maintain a supply of these forms in the workplace that provides the employees with both easy and anonymous access.

This is a simple form to fill out. All you must do is describe with some degree of specificity what the hazard is and write what recommendations you have to correct the issue.

Once you turn this into your supervisor, they **must** promptly (within the tour of duty) which means that same day:

1. Investigate.
2. Begin immediate corrective action.
3. Record actions taken.
4. Forward a copy to the next level.

If it is a hazard in the station or a loose dog on your route turning in this form is simple enough. But what if the problem is your supervisor/manager?

If a carrier wishes to remain anonymous, they can file the PS Form 1767 directly to the installation safety personnel. You can mail and email a copy of it to Senior Safety Specialist Brian Kohl. His contact information is **below**. In addition, safety personnel

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

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Branch 343, NALC
1600 South Broadway
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or mail us your new address at:
Letter Carrier's Hall
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St. Louis, MO 63104

must not disclose the name of the individual making the report. This is key because, believe it or not, management may retaliate against the injured party. Discrimination against an employee for reporting a safety and health hazard is unlawful.

Mail to: Brian Kohl, HQ Safety
 Senior Safety Specialist
 Kansas City Post Office
 300 W. Pershing Rd.
 Kansas City, MO 64108
 Mobile: (402) 306-5163
 Office: (402) 930-4456
 Email: Brian.C.Kohl@usps.gov

LSS Green Belt



If you cannot obtain a PS Form 1767 anonymously, or management does not respond to your PS Form 1767 within that same day, or they retaliate against you as a result of your reporting the incident, each of these are grievable offenses. Immediately ask to speak to you steward to file a grievance.

The key, anytime you are a victim of harassment is to not make their issue your issue. By that I mean, stay calm and do not lower yourself to their level. Write a detailed statement as soon as possible following the incident. Identify anyone nearby who may be a witness to the incident. If you witness harassment, you should write a statement. The other key is that carriers must band together. We must support each other. There is zero tolerance for violence in the workplace. A wrong done to one brother/sister, is a wrong done to all brothers/sisters.

Now, management, let's talk about absenteeism and low retention levels of CCAs. The only problem management runs into when trying to correct these two problems in the Postal Service is when they realize "the call is coming from inside the house" and the problem is staring right back at them in the mirror. Accountability, we're held accountable, so let's make them accountable for a change.

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!

May 12	Regular Branch Meeting
May 30	Memorial Day Holiday Observed
June 1	Retirees Meeting
June 2	Shop Stewards Meeting
June 4	Ole Timers Day (see ad)
June 9	Regular Branch Meeting
June 26	Mike David Memorial, Run, Ride & Roll for MDA (see ad)

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EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT ... BY BRIAN LITTEKEN

2022 NATIONAL CONVENTION DELEGATES

Illinois.

Currently, delegates can be placed into three different categories. The nominations for delegates to the national convention were taken and read at the September 9, 2021, branch meeting. At the October 14, 2021, branch meeting a motion was seconded and carried to have the branch designate that all delegates who have properly accepted nomination and who qualify to be paid delegates to the national convention be taken as paid delegates to the national convention in 2022. The by laws of Branch 343 state that any member elected as a delegate to the national convention must have attended at least 16 meetings in the 24 months prior to the convention in order to be compensated in any way for services as a delegate. The meeting motion and by laws create three different categories of delegates.

1. Delegates who have attended enough meetings to be compensated.

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Marvin Booker | Richard Brown |
| Chetney Drain | Frank Enlow Jr. |
| Tina Hunt | Yolanda Jones |
| Barry Linan | William Lister |
| Brian Litteken | La'Tecse Litteken |
| John McLaughlin | Steve Powers |
| Shonna Randle | Michael Rucker |
| Richard Schallert | Thomas Schulte |
| Pamela Stepney | Darlene Tate |
| Richard Thurman | Michael Weir |

2. Delegates who must attend some of the remaining branch meetings before the national convention in order to qualify as a paid delegate.

- Lucille Snow (1 meeting)
- Saronda Sutherland (1 meeting)
- Kiesha Wiley (3 meetings)

3. Delegates who have not attended enough meetings to be compensated.

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| Germaine Anderson | Craig Burrell |
| Jerry Cantrell | Grant Gordon |

- Rachael Guthrie
- Mieka Lewis
- Calvin Ringo
- Marlon States

- Charles Kell
- Clifton Nelson
- Charles Sexton
- Derrick Williams

The compensation provided to delegates is round-trip coach airfare or mileage, six nights standard lodging at the national convention city, and five day's expense money. Round-trip coach airfare is approximately \$250 on Southwest Airlines. Chicago's government meals and incidental expense rate is \$79/day. Five day's expense money will be \$395.

Delegates who have not attended 16 of the branch meetings from August 2020 through March 2022 will not be compensated but can still attend the national convention. The unpaid delegates would have to arrange and pay their own lodging and transportation. Branch 343 will still need to register the unpaid delegates in order for them to attend the convention.

All branches are required to send the Delegate Eligibility List and Delegate Registration form to NALC Headquarters by June 8. Delegates who attended the April branch meeting were asked to sign an acceptance or declination statement so an accurate list of delegates who will be attending the convention can be sent to NALC headquarters. Those delegates who did not attend the April branch meeting will be mailed the acceptance and declination statement for them to sign and return to the hall.

Hope to see you in Chicago!

BRANCH LEGAL PLAN
Advice and Consultation on
General Practice and Civil Actions.



GOFFSTEIN LAW, L.L.C.

JOHN H. GOFFSTEIN
ATTORNEY

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FACSIMILE: 314-932-5048
JOHN@GOFFSTEINLAW.COM
GOFFSTEINLAW.COM

RECORDING SECRETARY ... BY TINA HUNT



Hello from the recording secretary's desk! A huge shout out and a hearty **congratulations** to all letter carriers, retired and active. We did it! Through our strong unionism and vigorous activism we were able to get the Postal Reform Act signed into law. It took 12 long years of our hard work and dedication but Washington finally listened. The repealing of the prefunding mandate allows us to breathe a little easier knowing the Postal Service will be more financially secure. We no longer have to worry about losing half our work

force if the Postal Service decided to cut a day of delivery. Six day delivery is now a law! Our customers can continue to rely on us for the service they deserve.

A POINT OF PERSONAL PRIVILEGE

I would like to say thank you to everyone for their condolences and kind words after the passing of my mother. My family and I appreciate your kindness. Hug your mom and I will see you on Thursday.

**did
you
know
?**

LMOU INCIDENTAL LEAVE

(LMOU Negotiation Agreement 11/3/17) After the completion of the second phase, any unfilled vacation periods (below 14.5%) will be available for incidental leave. All incidental leave requests of a week or less will be approved on first-come, first-served basis. Seniority breaks a tie. Requests for incidental leave are to be made no more than 60 days or less that five days prior. Each station or branch will have an annual leave calendar posted listing unfilled periods.

(LMOU Negotiation Agreement 11/3/17) When requesting other annual leave above 14.5%, employees will be notified of approval or disapproval within three employee workdays following submission. **If not so notified, the leave will be approved.** Such leave requests may not be submitted more than 60 days prior to the first leave day to be covered by request.



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HEALTH BENEFITS PLAN/OWCP ... BARRY LINAN



May 2022 greetings to all of the brothers and sisters of NALC Branch 343. We continue to have problems with management not properly handling OWCP claims when carriers are injured on duty. If you are injured on duty, file a Form CA-1, request continuation of pay (COP), go to your choice of physician or ER for medical treatment, request and **keep copies of all paperwork**. Management must fill out the supervisors statement (page 2) of the CA-1, notify you if they are controverting (challenging) payment of COP, and they must provide copies of all forms to you upon request. If management tells you they are controverting your COP, request to see your steward immediately. Management must initiate payment of COP, submit their basis for controversion to DOL/OWCP, and the DOL (Department of Labor) will rule on entitlement to COP.

Management in Saint Louis mistakenly believes that they decide whether and when to pay COP. That decision is to be made by the DOL and not management. Management must pay COP for time loss due to medical treatment, partial disability, full disability, or when no limited duty work is provided per medical restrictions. COP is generally paid for up to 45 calendar days time loss after the date of injury. There is a three calendar day waiting period when COP is paid for full or partial disability and you must request SL, AL, or LWOP. On calendar day four, COP begins to be paid for time loss for full or partial disability. There is no waiting period for time loss for medical treatment. COP is paid, even during the first three days, for medical treatment. Also, if your full or partial disability exceeds 14 days, you are to be credited with COP for the first three days and any leave used returned to you. Unfortunately, many supervisors are either unaware of the rules regarding COP or choose to ignore them. If you are not paid COP or incorrectly paid COP, request to see your steward immediately.

HBP News: If you have received an unknown debit card in the mail, before you discard it, look to see if it was sent to you by the NALC HBP. We have a Wellness Incentive Program, found on page

157 of the 2022 brochure, for High Option members. You can earn “health savings rewards” to use towards eligible medical expenses. Each High Option member, 18 years of age or older, will receive a debit card with their “rewards” added on it. Examples of qualifying wellness incentives are tobacco cessation program, health assessment, and annual influenza vaccine. There is a list on page 157, and I believe COVID-19 vaccine has been added to the list. The NALC HBP wants you to stay healthy and will “reward” your efforts!

OWCP News: I mentioned earlier how payment, or lack thereof, of COP is an ongoing issue in Saint Louis. Recently, a new wrinkle was thrown into the mix of existing problems. You should be aware by now that if you test positive for COVID-19 after working, you can file a Form CA-1 for traumatic injury with the DOL/OWCP. The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, thank you President Biden, provided that federal employees who test positive for COVID-19 during a covered exposure period have by definition suffered a traumatic injury.

The new wrinkle is that a manager recently told me that they were informed by HRM (injury comp) personnel that the 45 days eligibility for COP begins counting from the date of the employee’s COVID-19 test and not from the date of injury. Huh? When asked what regulation indicates counting COP this way, there was nothing provided by the manager.

There is an FECA Bulletin 21-09 dated 4/28/21 that provides guidance for processing claims for COVID-19 under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. I have read this bulletin several times and I don’t see any change as to how COP eligibility is counted. It has always been counted from the date of injury. For COVID-19 claims, the bulletin states that FECA, “considers the date of last exposure prior to the medical evidence establishing the COVID-19 diagnosis as the date of injury.” If you have filed a CA-1 for COVID-19, you need to double-check your pay to see if COP was correctly paid/counted from date of injury and not from your test date.

NOTES FROM THE MANAGING EDITOR

... BY TOM SCHULTE



UNION ORGANIZING EFFORTS ON THE RISE

After years of complacency, U.S. workers fed up with low pay and lousy working conditions are developing a spine and standing up to billionaire employers and demanding a piece of the action. Employees have suffered for too long with low pay, long hours and little or no health benefits. People are beginning to wake up and say, “Hey, these employers are making record profits and they need us more than we need them. We need to take a stand!”

During the last presidential campaign, candidate Joe Biden promised to support organized labor and stating his position regarding unionization, “The middle class built this country. And unions built the middle class.” President Biden has continued to act on that promise. In April 2021, President Biden issued an executive order creating a White House task force to develop strategies for the federal government to encourage workers to organize and bargain collectively. He has also called on Congress to pass the Protect the Right to Organize Act (PRO Act) which would drastically expand the current National Labor Relations Act (NLRB) in favor of unions.

President Biden nominated two pro union attorneys to fill seats on the five-member NLRB, shifting the NLRB to a Democratic majority. This will likely result in a reversion of current rules and allow workers seeking union representation to petition for a union vote, then have an election in as short as 23 days. This would dramatically shift the paradigm to the worker and prevent the corporate lawyers from interfering with workers’ right to organize.

U.S. workers are finally standing up and speaking out. U.S. workers and labor groups filed 57% more petitions for union representation in the last six months than they did in the same period last year, Reuters reported. The NLRB received 1,174 petitions for union elections during the first half of fiscal year 2022 compared with 748 during the

first half of fiscal 2021. Organizing efforts at Amazon and Starbucks are indicative of the frustrations that workers have been dealing with for years. Perhaps manifested by the COVID-19 pandemic, workers have been taking abuse from the public at Starbucks because of mask wearing demands and low wages.

Because of the increased demands from its workforce through extended work hours and the indifference from their bosses, the Amazon employees have finally said, “enough.”

While Jeff Bezos, arguably the wealthiest man alive, amuses himself by playing astronaut and has the audacity to thank his minions for working for nothing to provide his entertainment, one can only assume what his employees were thinking. Maybe something like Bruce Willis’ famous line in Die Hard, “Yippie-ki-ay mother %\$#@er.

You can bet your bottom dollar as union organizing efforts progress, how many millions of dollars employers will find to thwart any organizing attempts. Corporate managers are already listening for buzz words like “seniority,” “representation” and “grievances” to try to mitigate and dismiss any rabblousing conspirators who might be inclined to fan the flames of union representation. “We can’t pay you \$15 an hour, but we can find \$100 million to prevent you from making any effort to form a union.”

Emboldened by strong and vocal support from the White House, unions are increasing their organizing efforts. We may be witnessing a renaissance in organized labor. Workers are realizing the power that organized labor brings with it. No doubt fueled by the obscene profits of corporations, the lack of any taxes that those corporations pay, and the indifference that those employers show their employees. This may be that time that workers finally see the benefits of fighting for their rights.

REGION 5 NBA REPORT ... DAVID A. TEEGARDEN



Postal Reform: The postal reform bill was signed into law by President Biden on April 7. We are now moving on politically to address HR 82 WEP (windfall elimination provision) and GPO (Government pension offset) which repeals provisions that reduce Social Security benefits for individuals who receive other benefits. This bill would eliminate the government pension offset which reduces Social Security survivor's benefits for spouse, widows and widowers who receive government pensions of their own. The bill would also eliminate the windfall elimination provision which reduces Social Security benefits for individuals who also receive a pension from an employer who did not withhold Social Security taxes.

HR 4268 Federal Retirement Fairness Act: would provide federal employees the opportunity to make catch-up retirement contributions for time spent as temporary employees after December 31, 1998, making that time creditable service under FERS. This bill would cover postal employees who worked as casuals, TEs or CCAs after that date.

Staffing/12&60/Delayed Mail: Since my last article we have had a meeting with branch presidents and leadership from around the region. At that virtual meeting, we disseminated the Iowa Labor Center work-hour safety study and talked about how to file a grievance using this material. When letter carriers are forced to work in unsafe conditions and the Postal Service compounds that by requiring carriers to work 80, 90, 100 hours or more, it is unacceptable and must be dealt with. I have also sent a copy of a grievance starter to the branch presidents in the region to assist them in combating this issue. If there is any assistance the NBA office can provide branch officers or stewards, please reach out to us and we will be glad to help.

COVID-19: The pandemic positive rate has continued to drop in the last months. Most local and state mask mandates have been lifted. The Postal Service has recently changed their masking policy which can be found on the NALC website under the COVID tab. The new mask policy no longer requires employees to wear a face covering while at work. Employees may continue to voluntarily wear a mask or face covering and the Postal Service will continue to provide face covering for employees who request one. **COVID related MOU's have been extended through May 6, 2022.** The MOU on annual leave carryover M-01979 allows for employees to carry over 520 hours of accumulated annual leave from leave year 2022 to leave year 2023.

Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive: Registration for the NALC Food Drive to be held on May 14, is still open and postcards are available. Branch presidents can register their respective branches

in the "Members Only" portal on the NALC website or please call the NBA office and we can assist. Many of the new employees have not participated in this NALC event and the food we collect is vitally important in many Americans' lives.

Region 5 Training: Since last month we conducted a virtual retirement seminar on March 20 and a branch president meeting on March 30. On April 11 we will have a meeting with Region 5 arbitration advocates and beginning on May 19 we will conduct new steward training virtually for four consecutive Thursdays. This training is geared toward the new steward who has little to no experience in handling grievances and will cover the basics of investigating, filing and appealing a grievance to Formal A. Branch presidents will be able to register interested stewards or those who are thinking about becoming a steward on the "Members Only" portal of the NALC website in mid-April. This is a great opportunity for branches of all sizes to get their members trained. I have also created a mentorship program to assist branches in developing future leaders at the branch, state and regional levels. Initially six applicants will be selected to participate in this new program from across the region, with at least one from each of the four states in Region 5. Applications will be sent out to branch presidents very soon and the program will begin in early June. Lastly we have begun conducting local training at the branch level in person and if you are interested in setting something up please contact the NBA office.

Postal Initiatives & Updates: Signature capture was temporarily changed during the pandemic to allow delivery personnel to sign for delivery items such as packages and express mail for their customers. That temporary change is no longer in effect and all signature required mail items must now be signed by the customer or in accordance with provisions contained in the M-41 Section 122.22.

Hyper Electronic Badge Readers are being phased out. The service is replacing these time-clocks in "phases" and replacing them with updates in the MDD scanner. Best guess is that Region 5 is scheduled between February and March of 2023.

MDD updates have been made via a new software version that includes a more efficient login process and a drop down menu for, "Timekeeping" functions. During the 2021 peak season the Postal Service employed **webcams** to monitor mail conditions and processing in real time. They have decided to extend the use of webcams in certain locations to continue monitoring mail. The Region 5 list of offices is relegated to the St. Louis metro and includes Clayton, Mackenzie Pointe, Oldham and Weathers Station.

THE NEW FACE OF UNIONIZING

Amazon spent millions to fight worker unrest at the Amazon JFK8 facility and even deployed an “incident commander.” On the other hand, union organizers had a budget of \$120,000 raised through GoFundMe and deployed Tik Toks and homemade cooking at a bus stop.

The Walkout: Mr. Palmer and Mr. Smalls, both 31 at the time, confronted managers with safety concerns about the rising COVID-19 infection rates. Employees subsequently had a Walkout in March 2020 over their concerns about COVID-19. The company fired Mr. Smalls, saying he had violated quarantine rules by attending the walkout. Amazon’s chief counsel described Mr. Smalls as “not smart or articulate” and recommended making him “the face” of efforts to organize workers. As Amazon moved to fire Mr. Smalls that March, a human resource employee cautioned that the firing would be “perceived as retaliation,” but the termination proceeded anyway.

In early 2021, Smalls and Palmer took a road trip to another Amazon warehouse in Bessemer, Alabama. They found organizers from the retail union, who previously showed interest in organizing the JFK8 facility, less than welcoming to them and thought the professionals seemed like outsiders who had descended on the community. The union was rejected by more than a 2-to-1 margin even though they were better funded and more experienced. This independent movement outperformed traditional labor organizers who failed in Bessemer, Alabama. Amazon has fought unionization for years spending more than \$4.3 million just on anti-union consultants nationwide last year.

Turning Point: The National Labor Relations Board, under President Biden, made a key decision which allowed the workers to stay in the buildings to organize when they were off the clock.

Simmering Conditions: What set the stage for this uprising was a turnover rate of 150%, denying workers benefits and firings. Black employees were 50% more likely to be fired than white employees. The turnover rate was so high, half the people who signed cards in the effort to unionize no longer worked at the warehouse and could not be counted. Anti-union consultants called the mostly black labor organizers “thugs.” Amazon sounded so dismissive about workers who could not take bathroom breaks and had to urinate in bottles that it had to apologize.

The anti-union apparatus implemented by Amazon monitored organizers’ social media, text messages and held mandatory meetings which mostly criticized unions. Mr. Smalls was bringing lunch to the break room when Amazon called the police, saying he had trespassed. He and two current employees were arrested. The response may have backfired: The union’s videos of the incident on TikTok have been viewed hundreds of thousands of times.

The final vote was 2,654 for the union, 2,131 against. “We did it! We won!”

“We want to thank Jeff Bezos for going to space because while he was up there we were organizing a union.”



Chris Smalls, who was fired by Amazon in 2020 for union organizing, is now President of the Amazon Labor Union.

RETIREE REPORT

... BY GUEST GUEST RECORDING SECRETARY TOM SCHULTE



MINUTES FROM THE APRIL 6 MEETING

Chairman Tom Schulte called the meeting to order at 12:40 p.m. Chaplain Gus Frank led us in prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance. Tom thanked Geno Iberg for providing the delicious lunch from P'sghetti's and the equally delicious desserts from his wife, Glenda. Tom welcomed Vice Chairman Ray Breakfield back following complications from a weak back and sent out get well cards to our Recording Secretary Nick L. Prado and our Treasurer Clif Nelson who are both dealing with medical issues. Tom said he hoped to see both members back soon.

Volunteers: Kevin Welby and Sandy Thiesmann volunteered to provide lunch for the May meeting and NBA David Teegarden volunteered to provide lunch for an upcoming meeting to be determined.

Minutes from the last meeting: Read by Chairman Tom Schulte

NBAs Report: NBA David Teegarden reported on the new J-CAM available to all carriers online. COVID-19 masking is no longer required at the stations, but carriers can wear them if they choose. HR 3076, The Postal Reform Act of 2022, passed in the House and the Senate and will be signed by President Biden shortly. Dave asked all the retirees to call Senators Blunt and Hawley and thank them for their support. Dave said that we may need their vote on other postal related issues in the future. Dave stated that the retention of new hires is predicated on them being properly trained. He stated that training will be conducted at the branch level in the hopes of putting an end to the terrible turnover rate.

Presidents Report: President John McLaughlin reported on talks with the new area manager and stated that he would likely be speaking to him frequently since the new St. Louis postmaster is no good to his employees. We have a new computer company delivering a new data base at the Union Hall. John asked the retirees for help with the upcoming NALC Food Drive slated for May 14.

Health Benefits Report: Brother Barry Linan spoke about the new Medicare integration which will take place following the signing of the Postal Reform Act of 2022 by President Biden. Those details are yet to be worked out.

Legislative Report: Mike Weir reiterated that the Medicare expansion would not take place until 2025. Legislation to watch: HR 82 the Social Security Fairness Act, HR 4268 the Federal Retirement Fairness Act and HR 2954 the Securing a Strong Retirement Act are all legislation which could be of benefit to retirees. Mike acknowledged President Biden's pledge to place a black woman on the Supreme Court which he did with the confirmation of Ketanji Brown Jackson.

Chairmans Report: Tom confirmed that this year's Ole Timers Day celebration will be held on Saturday June 4. Tom secured the services of Russo's Catering to provide the meal and encouraged all the members in attendance to please make plans to attend and to honor those members receiving their Gold Cards and 60-Year pins. Look for an Ole Timers Day attendance sheet in the May issue of the Mound City Carrier. Please call Tom or the Union Hall to confirm your attendance and if you will be bringing a guest. Retirees are free but it will cost \$12 for a guest. See details in the May MCC. Tom encouraged everyone to please come for this event. Despite the Ole Timers Day celebration on June 4, we will still hold our regularly scheduled retiree meeting on June 1.

Deceased Members: A moment of silence was held for Fred Bargmann-gold card and Virgil Ashley-retired.

50/50 Winner of \$20 won by Executive Vice President Brian Litteken who donated it to the NALC Food Drive.

Closing Prayer: Offered by Chaplain Gus Frank

Meeting Adjourned: 1:25 p.m.



93rd Annual Ole Timers Day

JOHN H. HAAKE BRANCH 343
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

HONORING RETIRED MEMBERS

SATURDAY, JUNE 4, 2022

Open 11 a.m. Lunch at Noon Drinks Till 4 p.m.

*BRANCH 343 UNION HALL
1600 S. BROADWAY*

Please join us in honoring our Gold Card and Service Pin members.

Guest Speakers NBA Dave Teegarden and a National Officer

RSVP your attendance by returning the coupon below by May 20, 2022.
There is no cost to the retiree and only \$12 for each guest.

JOHN McLAUGHLIN, PRESIDENT

TOM SCHULTE, CHAIRMAN OF THE RETIREES



Branch 343 Old Timers Day

RSVP by May 20, 2022

Yes, I will be there!

(Please Print)

Retiree: _____

of additional guests attending _____ @ \$12 each

If you are bringing guest(s), please make check payable to: Branch 343.

You may also call Tom Schulte at 314-629-7629 to RSVP

VICE PRESIDENT FINANCIAL SECRETARY

... BY MARVIN BOOKER



THE MORNING STRUGGLE

It has come to our attention that carriers are being instructed to leave for the street within an hour of beginning their tour regardless of their mail volume. Management uses a computer program called the Delivery Operations Information System (DOIS) in almost every post office. A supervisor will enter mail volume into DOIS and the program projects how much time a route will take to complete for the day. While this program, and others like it, project the time that will be needed to complete an assignment based on several factors, it does not take everything into account. Estimating the workload on a route is, and has always been, the letter carrier's responsibility.

The value of management's daily workload projections, DOIS, have been resolved in agreed upon national-level settlements such as M-01664 (2007) and M-01769 (2011). These settlements very clearly state daily workload projections by management do not determine a carrier's leaving or return time or daily workload.

We still have too many offices where these settlements are ignored and workload projections create a breeding ground for disputes when a letter carrier fills out a PS Form 3996, Carrier Auxiliary Control, requesting auxiliary assistance or approval to work overtime to complete their daily assignments. Below is some advice on how to speak to your supervisor in the morning when you are running late on your assignment, and how a PS Form 3996 should be filled out:

1. Verbally inform your manager when you believe you can't complete your assignment in eight hours:

Sections 131.41 and 131.42 of Handbook M-41, This language requires every letter carrier to tell the manager when you cannot carry all the mail distributed to your case in eight hours or within your normal schedule. Management is required to tell you what it wants you to do. Follow the manager's instructions. If you still believe you will not be able to finish your route in eight hours, proceed by requesting a PS Form 3996.

2. Request PS Form 3996

Section 122.33 of Handbook M-39 requires the manager to provide you with a 3996 when you request one. Explain that the instruction you were given by your

supervisor does not change the fact that you cannot complete your assignment in eight hours and request a PS Form 3996. No matter what your manager says to you, say the words "I am requesting a 3996" and explain the reasons for your request. If you are denied the form, immediately request to see your shop steward.

If your request to see your shop steward is denied, then make sure another carrier hears you say the words. Don't scream the words at the top of your lungs, just make sure someone other than you and your manager hears you.

3. Fill out the form completely

In the "reason for the request" box, you must write down why you believe you cannot complete your assignment in eight hours. If your belief is related to your mail volume or type of mail you have, you should write comments such as: "full set of ADVOs," "half set of marriage mail," "utility bills," "full set of coupons," "circulars in the DPS," etc. Your reason could also be related to your street duties. Situations that may affect your ability to complete your assignment within eight hours could be: "known road construction," "weather related issues," "excessive accountable mail," etc.

Comments such as "heavy volume" or "route overburdened" aren't enough in this section. You must fully explain your situation. Often, there are other circumstances present which may add to (or be) the reason why you will need overtime or auxiliary assistance on a given day.

Statements by your supervisor such as, "This is your demonstrated performance," or "You are not making standards," **are not legitimate** and do not change your situation. Most importantly, don't let these comments get under your skin and stop you from requesting the assistance you need.

The computer doesn't take any of the other possible circumstances listed above into consideration. If you don't write these things down, then you leave the door open for management to accuse you of working "unauthorized overtime" and possibly issue you discipline. Providing details gives your supervisor an opportunity to make a more informed judgment regarding your request.

If your supervisor is not interested in treating you fairly, then you must look at protecting yourself. Recording the best information, you can on your 3996, will give your shop steward a better chance of successfully defending you should the need arise later.

4. Keep your cool.

Don't lose your cool. This whole process is sometimes very insulting, but you will do nothing to help yourself by getting excited or becoming angry and possibly losing your temper. If your manager denies your request for overtime or assistance, state to them that you will do your best. Then politely ask what they want you to do in the event that all the mail isn't delivered by the time they want you back. Typically, their answer will be something like, "I just told you what I want you to do," or "Deliver all the mail and be back in eight hours." Your manager has just put the ball back in your court and placed you in a situation where you can't honor their instructions.

5. Don't argue.

There is no advantage to arguing with your manager at this point. It will not help your cause to stand there and argue, because your manager has already made up their mind. The only thing you will accomplish by arguing with your manager at this point is to become frustrated and angry.

The smartest thing you can do at this point is to just say, "OK, I'll do my best," and ask for a copy of your 3996. Go to the street. Do the best that you can.

6. Don't make any decisions.

This is the point where many letter carriers make a mistake by forgetting how our current system works. **Letter carriers get paid to deliver mail and managers get paid to make decisions.** You should do everything you can to put the ball back in the manager's court. Many times, letter carriers make the decision to either bring some mail back or deliver all the mail and get back late. After all, these seem to be the only available options. The idea is to force the manager to make the choice. That's their job. The best way to handle this situation is to call your supervisor, per local instructions. If you have no local instructions, try calling at least an hour and a half to two hours before the time you are scheduled (approved on PS Form 3996) to be back. Let your supervisor know where you are and how long you think it will take you to finish. Ask him or her whether they want you to bring the mail back or finish the route. Let him or her make the decision

about what they would like you to do with the mail: deliver it or bring it back.

7. Providing Assistance to Another Carrier

If you're instructed to carry part of another route, whether on "projected under time" or for overtime, a PS Form 3996 should be provided to you indicating this additional work. Make sure you fill out the bottom of PS Form 3996 showing both your travel and delivery times for whatever loop you are carrying.

If you don't believe you can complete the work in the amount of time authorized, explain to the supervisor why this is true. If you can't get your supervisor to agree with you, then say the words and handle this situation in the same manner as explained above in #2. Many times, letter carriers fail to use these procedures. Then management takes advantage of the situation and keeps pressuring letter carriers to perform more work without challenge.

Following these procedures makes it much easier to defend you should you be disciplined! You also make it possible for the union to pursue a grievance forcing management to stop recording this time as "unauthorize" in the first place, thereby avoiding a discipline situation altogether.

8. Instructed to Leave and Must Leave Mail

When your manager or supervisor instructs you to leave for the street within an hour of your arrival, any curtailed mail must be recorded on a PS Form 1571, Undelivered Mail Report. Use the PS Form 1571 when mail assigned to your route at your case is not delivered for any reason. It could be mail that your manager or supervisor instructed you to leave in the office or mail you were unable to deliver on the street. If you did not deliver the mail, then the *reason*, *amount*, and *type of mail* must be recorded on this form and estimate the number of pieces of mail.

Article 41, Section 3.G of the National Agreement also requires management to provide you with copies of both the 3996 and 1571 when requested. It is not your responsibility to make two copies; management must provide copies to you once requested. If management refuses to provide you with copies, then ask to see your shop steward. Remember, you have rights. If you need overtime or assistance, then request it and don't let a bully manager take advantage of you.

Until next time be safe and be professional.

WEST COUNTY ... *By PAM STEPNEY*

Greetings sisters and brothers of Branch 343. How's everybody doing? Fine, I hope. The boss said as of May 1 there will be a lot of changes coming down due to the snitching scanner. Who would have thought watching the Jetsons in the '60s would turn into real-life for letter carriers in 2022?

Management said over the intercom, "You asked for the new scanners and now they're here." The scanners are not only tracking packages, but they're also tracking letter carriers on the street. Management posted a notice on the bulletin board by the time clock showing the percentage of time the scanner was with you while you were out delivering mail. The rating went from high to low. The higher the percentage, the more you did not take your scanner with you while delivering. The lower the percentage the more you took the scanner with you and scanned the sample request, aka scanning letters for a particular address when requested by the Postal Service. They use this information to tell them something they already know. The Postal Service is automated and they know which letters go to which address at all times. Scanning the letters and flats shows the letter carrier is delivering the mail to the address. If a sample request came through your scanner and you didn't scan the bar codes on the flats and letters, a talking head will greet you the next morning.

The snitching scanner is watching you more than the supervisor sitting in the back on the computer. The snitching scanner also tells your story on the street. If you are sitting in one place for more than 10 minutes, it's sending an alert to the supervisors telling on you. So, I say to you, take your DPS mail to the street to deliver your mail in a timely manner. When you are walking your relays take your scanner with you, to show that you are moving and not standing still. Make sure you take your lunch, if you want, both ten-minute breaks and comfort stops on the street to show your time. I said this before, and I'll say it again. Deliver your route as though you are getting inspected every day.

Late start times are hard on your family life. So if you have something to do, you can put a change of schedule in for the days you need to start early. The union steward and your supervisor will sign the form changing your time. You don't have to run your route off, do undertime, or do any special favors for management or the postmaster. Stop getting mad at the union and listen up for contract violations. That's what the union is about, protecting your rights as a member.

Thank you in advance to all the retirees, families and friends coming out to help us pick up, sort and deliver the food on NALC Food Drive Day, Saturday May 14. I called a few of the retirees — Kurt Mullens, Mike

McCoy, Derrick Williams, Sharon Thrash, Michele Williams, and Jim



Clements — to come out and help. A couple of them said yes. Please make sure you are there on time, ready to work, and get done so we can all go home to our families.

Make plans this month to come to the union meeting on the second Thursday of the month, 7:30 p.m. Come on out, you can do it.

Congratulations to all three John Haake Scholarship winners this year. Go out and live your life, and be the change you want to see in the world. Make sure you come back and give back to your community. Regretfully, no one submitted applications for trade schools, so this scholarship went unfilled.

Once again, if I forgot something count it to my head not my heart.

Remember to do your best, leave the rest, don't stress, register to vote, go out and vote, GOD bless, and thank you for coming.



SAFETY & HEALTH ... BY RICHARD THURMAN

Hello, my fellow union sisters and brothers. I'm here to make you aware of upcoming events in the new (MOKAN) district that is the largest in the country. We are the only area with two large metropolitan cities located in its district. Safety captains are needed! We also needed every individual to get involved with the safety in their own facility. We need you to identify deficiencies that you have in your facilities. Previously, we were called the Gateway District. That district is **no more**, but we still have issues that remain. Gateway never spent money to maintain our facilities. So, we have equipment throughout our facility that is defective, i.e., bathrooms with broken toilets, water fountains that do not work, stopped up drains, broken equipment. I need all these deficiencies identified. Use PS Form 1767 to begin the process of red tagging this equipment.

Additionally, we are looking for safety captains for each facility, unless your facility has one currently. Everyone should take a moment and understand your responsibility and the Postal Services' responsibility for safety. Safety teams are being formed to address the issues. Get involved, everyone must take issue with their working environment in order to go home the same way you came.

Each facility should have a 3165 OSHA poster on the board. Each facility should have a Joint Statement On Violence memorandum posted. Additionally, each facility

should have zero tolerance stand up posted. We as letter carriers determine what is safe for us! Be safe out there. If you see something wrong, speak up! Our most valuable asset is every employee who works in his organization. Everyone should be proud of what they do and how they do it. Everyone cannot do this job! But we must do the job safely. We must identify risks and hazards within our working environment. Everyone must take ownership to fix the problem.

ARTICLE 14 SAFETY AND HEALTH

Section 1. Responsibilities: It is the responsibility of management to provide safe working conditions in all present and future installations and to develop a safe working force. The union will cooperate with and assist management to live up to this responsibility. The employer will meet with the union on a semiannual basis and inform the union of its automated systems development programs. The employer also agrees to give appropriate consideration to human factors in the design and development of automated systems. Human factors and ergonomics of new automated systems are a proper subject for discussion at the National Joint Labor-Management Safety Committee.

Section 2. Cooperation: The employer and the union insist on the observance of safe rules and safe procedures by employees and insist on correction of unsafe conditions. Mechanization, vehicles and vehicle equipment, and the workplace must be maintained in a safe and sanitary condition, including adequate occupational health and environmental conditions. The employer shall make available at each installation forms to be used by employees in reporting unsafe and unhealthful conditions. If an employee believes he/she is being required to work under unsafe conditions, such employee may: (a) notify such employee's supervisor who will immediately investigate the condition and

take corrective action if necessary; (b) notify such employee's steward, if available, who may discuss the alleged unsafe condition with such employee's supervisor; (c) file a grievance at Formal Step A of the grievance procedure within 14 days of notifying such employee's supervisor if no corrective action is taken during the employee's tour; and/or (d) make a written report to the union representative from Article 14.2 59 the local Safety and Health Committee who may discuss the report with such employee's supervisor. Upon written request of the employee involved in an accident, a copy of the PS Form 1769 (Accident Report) will be provided. Any grievance which has as its subject a safety or health issue directly affecting an employee(s), which is subsequently properly appealed to arbitration in accordance with the provisions of Article 15 may be placed at the head of the appropriate arbitration docket at the request of the union.

Section 3. Implementation: To assist in the positive implementation of the program: A. There shall be established at the employer's headquarters level, a Joint Labor-Management Safety Committee. Representation on the committee, to be specifically determined by the employer and the union, shall include one person from the union and representatives from appropriate departments in the Postal Service. Not later than 60 days following the effective date of this collective bargaining agreement, designated representatives of the union and management will meet for the purpose of developing a comprehensive agenda which will include all aspects of the employer's safety program. Subsequent to the development of this agenda, priorities will be established and a tentative schedule will be developed to ensure full discussion of all topics. Meetings may also be requested by either party for the specific purpose of discussing additional topics of interest within the scope of the committee. The responsibility of the committee will be to evaluate and make recommendations on all aspects of the employer's safety program, to include program adequacy, implementation at the local level, and studies being conducted for improving the work environment.



SOUTH COUNTY ... BY MATT GLEIFORST

Hello from South County. I'm sure everyone has noticed a lot more stand-up talks lately. A common theme seems to be office times being too long or that we're taking too long on the route. Often, I hear how there is no mail and we should be getting ready to pull down. Then the clerks bring around a couple more tubs of flats that need to be thrown and the hot case is jam packed. It seems like the orders from above are to rush, rush, rush. **Please do not rush!** It is far more important to make sure you are being safe and accurate than to be Speedy Gonzalez out there. If you go over on time, you may have to hear about it annoyingly. But if you have an accident, you may have to fight to keep your job, or worse, get seriously injured.

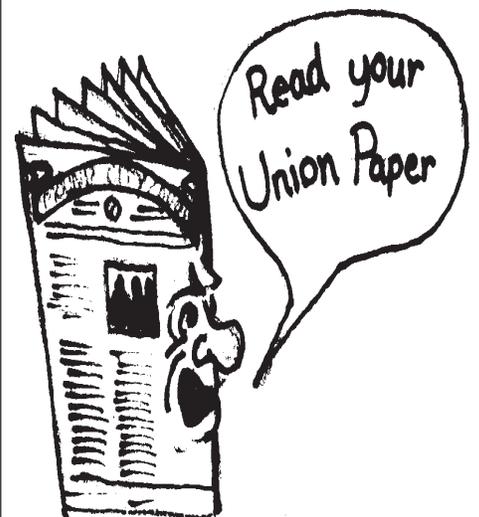
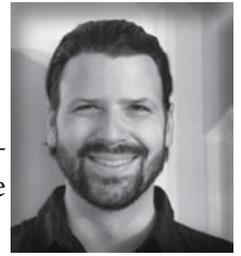
I don't care what management's reports are saying. There is more to do in the morning than just throw mail. We need to keep up with our removals and make sure we are checking our hold orders/premium forwards among other office duties. Also, on the street we get two 10-minute breaks and a 30-minute lunch. If we need to take a comfort stop, that is **not** part of our break time. We seem to be hearing a lot about stationary time. Just because the scanner is stationary does not mean you are not working. After all, the scanners are not the ones delivering or sorting the mail. Please don't let yourselves be bullied into skipping breaks. It will only hurt you in the long run. If you have any questions about what is actually

allowed and expected, be sure to talk to your shop stewards or anyone else who knows the contract.

When I have questions, I am fortunate enough to have a few people I can always turn to here at South County. One of whom is our former Vice President Brad Layton who I was lucky enough to interview this month. Brad started with the post office as a PTF in April of 1988 at the old South County station. When he made regular in 1989, he went to the old Webster Groves Station for a couple of years and came back to South County for a few more years as an R-man. After that he went back to Webster Groves (Mackenzie Pointe) for several years until becoming the union's vice president in 2018. After three years as a full-time officer, he came back to carrying at South County in January of 2021. Brad has a plethora of knowledge on our contract, so he is one I often go to for advice. Brad's favorite part of carrying is getting to be his own boss while out on the street and enjoying the fresh air. He loves to provide the best service possible to his customers and seeing how they appreciate it. Brad's best customer interaction was when he got to be a hero back at Mackenzie Pointe. He noticed one day that a woman on his route did not collect her mail or grab her newspaper one day. Knowing this was incredibly unlike her, he decided to check on her. When he looked into her sunroom he saw her lying on the floor. He immediately called 911. Apparently she

had hit her head and fallen. Luckily, the ambulance got there in time and rushed her to the hospital where she recovered. If not for Brad's attention to detail, she most likely would not have been discovered in time. Brad's advice to new carriers is some of the best advice a new carrier can get: This is not a job; it is a career. This is one of the few places that you can still retire with a pension and a Thrift Savings Plan. New carriers should always keep this in mind during their first couple of years when being worked so tirelessly.

I am truly fortunate to have a carrier like Brad here that I can turn to with questions. We should all look for people like this at our stations so that we can be sure not to be taken advantage of. Until next time, even though it can be tough sometimes, keep your head held high and keep smiling.



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JUNE 26, 2022 10 A.M. TO 2 P.M.



LOCATION!

WE WILL MEET AT THE TRAIL HEAD PARKING LOT THAT IS SHARED BY GRANT'S LOG CABIN AND ORLANDO'S GARDEN.

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3. MAKE A PLEDGE OR SEND DONATION DIRECTLY TO THE UNION HALL

NAME: _____

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CIRCLE CHOICE BELOW:

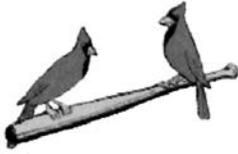
REGISTER ME DONATE ONLY

IF YOU PAY BY CHECK, PLEASE MAKE PAYABLE TO NALC/MDA



ST. LOUIS CARDINAL BASEBALL TICKETS STILL AVAILABLE

The Union Hall still has an excellent selection of unsold St. Louis Cardinal Baseball Tickets for purchase.



Great Seats (Behind Home Plate)
Section 249
Row 6
Seats 5 and 6
\$128 for the pair



Contact Executive Vice President Brian Litteken at:
314-241-4297 [ext. 2]



Retiree Chairman Tom Schulte presents retired letter carrier Loren Loerch with his 40-year union pin



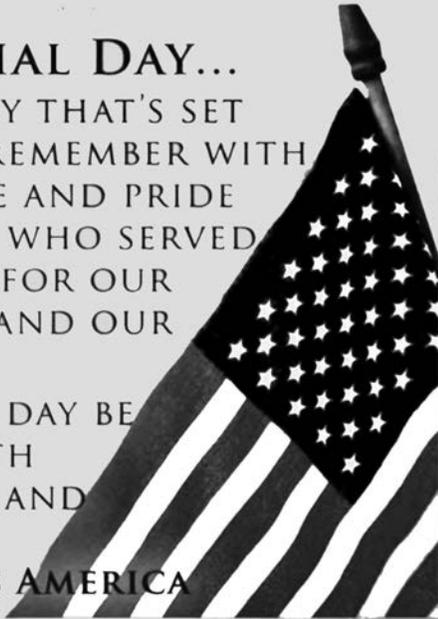
Members who purchased St. Louis Cardinal baseball tickets at the April 14 regular branch meeting: (LtoR) Mike McCoy, Mike Weir, Barry Saak, Dan Costello, Frank Allen Enlow Jr. and Br. 343 President John McLaughlin

MEMORIAL DAY...

...IS THE DAY THAT'S SET ASIDE TO REMEMBER WITH GRATITUDE AND PRIDE ALL THOSE WHO SERVED AND DIED FOR OUR COUNTRY AND OUR FREEDOM.

MAY YOUR DAY BE FILLED WITH MEMORIES AND PEACE.

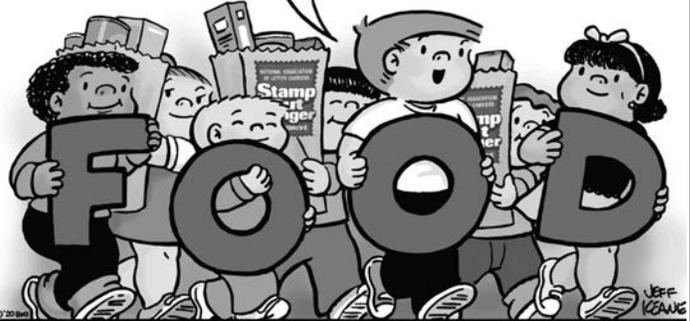
GOD BLESS AMERICA



memorial day inscription by walterberndjedyk

Zazzle

THIS SPELLS HELP FOR LOTS OF FAMILIES THIS YEAR!



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SEAT BELTS

The lap belt, shoulder belt and shoulder harness policy for the Long-Life Vehicle (LLV) is as follows: The driver must wear the lap belt and shoulder belt at all times the vehicle is in motion. Exception: In instances when the shoulder belt prevents the driver from reaching to provide delivery or collection from curbside mailboxes, only the shoulder belt may be unfastened. The lap belt must remain fastened at all times the vehicle is in motion.

M-00968 3/23/87

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BRANCH MEETING

BRANCH 343, ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

APRIL 14, 2022

Summary of Branch Action

- MSC To pay the branch bills.
-
- MSC That the branch reimburses food drive hub sites up to \$100 for purchase of food and non-alcoholic beverages. Submit valid receipts from any store except Wal-Mart or Sam's

Recently Retired Members

- Deanna Stuckey..... Cuba..... 01/1/2022
 Steven Brummet..... Des Peres02/25/2022
 Andrea Rucker..... Chouteau 03/15/2022
 Raquel Rogers North County 03/15/2022
 Tamela Wiemann Affton 03/31/2022
 Thomas Brockman.... Sappington 03/31/2022

Deceased Members

- Fred Bargmann..... Retired Gold Card
 Virgil Ashley..... Retired

New Members

- Ashley Allen Weathers..... 3/4/2022
 Andrew Bayer Maryville Gardens 3/19/2022
 Patrick Bell..... Mackenzie Pointe..... 3/4/2022
 Ryan Boyd..... Weathers..... 3/26/2022
 Destiny Brown..... Gravois..... 3/4/2022
 Shaun Brown Jennings 3/4/2022
 India Bulard..... Maryville Gardens 3/11/2022
 Jonas Clapp Southwest 3/4/2022
 Timika Coleman Kirkwood..... 3/26/2022
 Marquise Crumble ... Kirkwood..... 3/19/2022
 Necarla Eason Maryville Gardens 3/11/2022
 Twana Flye Kirkwood..... 3/19/2022
 Joshua Gay Town & County 3/19/2022
 Duane Giles Maplewood..... 3/4/2022
 James Hayes Jr. Mackenzie Pointe..... 3/4/2022
 Alandria Herman..... Jennings 3/4/2022
 Aliyah Herrion Weathers..... 3/11/2022
 Sydney Hill Gravois..... 3/11/2022
 Jaylin Howard..... Gravois..... 3/11/2022
 Ronald Johnson Jennings 3/11/2022
 Jacob Lakin Affton 3/11/2022
 Sean Lowery..... Maryville Gardens 3/11/2022
 Jaylin McCall Gravois..... 3/11/2022
 James Meadows West County 3/11/2022
 Detrick Miller..... University City..... 3/4/2022
 Frank Murphy Mackenzie Pointe..... 3/4/2022
 Johnthan Pham..... Des Peres 3/4/2022
 Joanisha Rowan Gravois..... 3/19/2022
 Tina Ruffin Gravois..... 3/26/2022
 Michael Schnellbacher .. St. Clair 3/5/2022
 Carla Smith..... Gravois..... 3/4/2022
 Damien Spencer Wentzville 3/4/2022
 DeVonte Steward Chouteau 3/11/2022
 Veronica Taylor Weathers..... 3/26/2022
 Denzil Webb Veto Reid 3/4/2022
 Destiny Wilkerson Clayton 3/11/2022



Highlights

The meeting was called to order at 7:38 p.m. The invocation and pledge of allegiance were led by Chet Drain and the minutes were read and accepted.

NBAs Report: No report

Retirees Report: Tom Schulte reported that they had 39 in attendance at the April 6 meeting. Geno Iberg provided lunch. Ole Timers Day to be held June 4 at the Union Hall. Food will be provided by Russo's Catering.

Labor Council Report, Pam Stepney: Wentzville School District had one of the top ten superintendent's in the country. He was being given a hard time by board members; union labor members voted to removed them.

MBA Report, Saronda Sutherland: Handed out brochures for NBA family retirement savings.

Health Benefit Report, Barry Linan: The NALC HBP is issuing rewards card for each person in your family who participates in the Wellness Incentive Program.

Mound City Carrier Report, Tom Schulte: MCC seems to be getting out earlier than usual. Cards tickets on sale tonight. Remember May 14 is the food drive, he is hopeful that some retirees will help with picking up food on May 14. Deadline for next issue is April 18.

Haake Scholarship Report, Pam Stepney: Received 10 completed scholarship packets. Scholarships will be awarded at the May regular branch meeting (three winners will be chosen). No one applied for the trade school scholarship.

Safety and Health Report, Richard Thurman: A CCA broke an arm on Amazon Sunday trying to evade a dog. Management failed to turn in report until 11 days later. The Postal Service will be fined for the late report. Cooling towels to be provided for every carrier. New water fountains (non-standard ones) are to be installed in every office and every carrier is to receive water bottles. Inspection teams are coming to facilities to ensure everything is operating properly.

OWCP Report, Barry Linan: If you catch COVID-19 you can file an OWCP claim. COP is based on your date of injury, not the test date. If

there is an issue with pay, contact the Union Hall. Reminded us that injury compensation is divided into two departments, and they go by your last name in terms of who handles your case.

Trustees Report, La'Tecse Litteken: The books were audited and found to be in good order.

Political Action Committee Report, Mike Weir: Mike read the name of contributors and asked everyone to please give to the PAC fund. New projected COLA according to the CPI is currently 5.5%. New Medicare integration goes into effect in January 2025. HR 82 Social Security Fairness Act has lots of support. HR 4268 Retirement Fairness Act has only 35 sponsors. HR 2954 Secure Act of 2022, minimum distribution from IRA, from 70.5 to 72 years old. Ketanji Brown Jackson confirmed to Supreme Court.

Executive Vice President/Treasurer Report, Brian Litteken: National Convention August 8-12, all eligible delegate, will be paid. Three months left to make eligibility. President McLaughlin will name three-member convention committee. Delegates need to sign form to accept or decline. Cardinal tickets sold electronically, need your email to receive.

Vice President/Financial Secretary Report, Marvin Booker: Read financial report for March. Food Drive will have 15 hub sites this year. Branch will reimburse each hub site \$100 with receipt (except Walmart / Sam's for food and non-alcoholic beverages). Cards will be folded with bag, not to be delivered until May 7. Gave prices and sizes of shirts. Orders needed by April 22.

President's Comments, John McLaughlin: President McLaughlin announced new members (36). Two deceased. Six newly retired. Motion to reimburse hub sights \$100 (must have itemized receipt) for NALC Food Drive day. Redo Run, Ride, Roll on June 26 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Golf Tournament October 9 at Normandie. Sam Reed replaced Pam Dunaway.

Respectfully Submitted,
Frank Enlow for Tina Hunt, Recording Secretary

POLITICAL AND LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

... BY MIKE WEIR



After 12 long years of lobbying and educating Congress on the issues impacting the Postal Service's financial stability, postal reform legislation was finally signed into law on April 6. In a Congress where senators and representatives cannot even agree on whether the sky is blue, this legislation was passed in an overwhelmingly bipartisan manner. This is a tribute to the diligent and determined efforts of our national, state and local officers and members. Additionally, strong public support for USPS played an important role. There are numerous beneficial provisions in the law; but three stand out. **First, the onerous pre-funding of future retiree healthcare has been rescinded.** This accounted for 84% of the red ink that has plagued the Postal Service since 2007. Eliminating it allows us to get beyond the constant efforts to lower service standards, raise prices and undercut our wages and benefits. Perhaps now, we can concentrate on long-neglected capital improvements and on growing our business to strengthen our position in the delivery marketplace. **Secondly, this bill enshrines six-day delivery as the law of the land.** We will no longer have to petition Congress to include that language in appropriations bills each year or fight off continuous efforts to take delivery days away from us to benefit private industry. **And thirdly, this law establishes a method for implementing Medicare integration for postal employees retiring after December 31, 2024, and reaching the age of 65 to be eligible for Medicare. This was an important**

component of the bill to ensure the elimination of the pre-funding issue. Currently, about 80% of postal retirees are enrolled in Medicare Part B. Since Medicare becomes the primary insurer for its enrollees after retirement (and at age 65), maximizing postal retirees' participation will reduce health care costs for both the Postal Service and postal participants in the FEHBP (Federal Employees Health Benefits Program). Retirees who did not take Part B will be given an opportunity to enroll without incurring the 10% per year penalty that currently applies. I will provide additional information on this issue as it becomes available.

There is other legislation in Congress that is of particular interest to us as letter carriers and working men and women. The **Social Security Fairness Act (HR 82)** would rescind the **windfall elimination provision (WEP) and the government pension offset (GPO)**. There is significant support for this bill (it has 245 co-sponsors), but there is no corresponding bill in the Senate. We dinosaurs (CSRS retirees) have been lobbying for this change since 1983. It appears we'll be disappointed again. The **Federal Retirement Fairness Act (HR 4268)** would make federal non-career service time after December 31, 1988, eligible for inclusion toward one's eligibility to retire and the computation of one's annuity. It only has 35 co-sponsors and no corresponding bill in the Senate. Unfortunately, this is yet another piece of legislation that is not going anywhere soon. However, the **Secure Act 2.0 (HR 2954)** recently passed the House by a margin of 414-5 and seems

to have significant support in the Senate as well. This legislation would raise the age at which we must begin to make IRS required minimum distributions from the Thrift Savings Plan, IRAs, etc. Currently, the age is 72. It would increase to 73 in 2022, 74 in 2029 and 75 by 2032. The bill would also increase the limit on catch-up contributions to employer-sponsored retirement plans (like TSP). The significance of these changes is that we would have more time and more opportunity for our retirement savings to grow before we are required to begin withdrawing from it. Hopefully, Congress will move quickly on this legislation.

On April 7, Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson was confirmed to become the 116th Associate Justice of the Supreme Court. Three Republican senators rose above the nonsensical questions and hostile rhetoric of their party to join with the Democrats to ensure this historic confirmation. **Justice Jackson's credentials are impeccable, her character is unimpeachable, and her unwavering dedication to the rule of law will be a welcome addition to a court where four current justices are essentially partisan hacks.** At a time when the Supreme Court seems to be catering to a rising wave of right-wing extremism by undercutting voting rights, ignoring precedent in favor of personal beliefs, and weakening our democratic ideals, Justice Jackson brings a level of integrity and commitment to fairness that the Supreme Court as well as all of us are sorely in need of.



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BRANCH MEETING ATTENDANCE PRIZES

APRIL 14, 2022

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Cardinals vs New York Mets | Tuesday, April 26, 6:45 | Pamela Stepney, West County |
| 2. Cardinals vs Baltimore Orioles | Wed., May 11, 6:45 | Barry Linan, Retired |
| 3. \$25 | Target Gift Card | Lawrence Tarkington, Marian Oldham |
| 4. \$25 | Home Depot Gift Card | Dan Costello, Retired |
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Published monthly by NALC Branch 343
 Contents may be reproduced by NALC
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1st Wednesday of the month.
 Lunch at noon, meeting at 12:45 pm

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 Ray Breakfield, Vice Chairman 573-358-5266
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Deadline for articles for
 the JUNE issue is
MAY 16, 2022

★ ★ ★

**REGULAR BRANCH MEETING
THURSDAY, MAY 12, 2022**

7:30 pm

★ ★ ★

**SHOP STEWARDS MEETING
THURSDAY, JUNE 2, 2022**

7:30 PM

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