

MOUND CITY CARRIER

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2020 General Excellence
Award Winning Publication



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"Diversity is our Strength and Unity is our Power"

May 2025

President's Article ... *By John McLaughlin*

ATTACK ON PUBLIC SERVICE: HANDS OFF THE USPS

On Sunday, March 23, our branch held a highly successful rally with over 300 supporters in attendance. I extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who participated. Media coverage from the Labor Tribune, Post-Dispatch, FOX News, and Channel 4 helped amplify our message: We will not quietly accept the privatization of the USPS. Privatization would be detrimental to our members, the Postal Service, and especially our patrons.

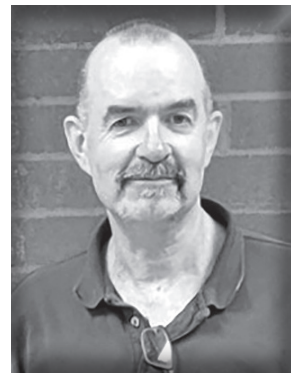
Tim Rowden of the St. Louis Labor Tribune provided an excellent write-up in the March 27–April 2 issue. He emphasized that the USPS is not designed to make a profit. As a self-funded, independent establishment of the executive branch, its primary mission is to provide universal mail service to all Americans, regardless of location, at a uniform price and quality. Annually, the post office is recognized as the most trusted federal agency. Moreover, it is enshrined in the U.S. Constitution. Privatization would disproportionately affect underserved and rural areas, undermining the universal service that binds our nation together.

We welcomed many supporters to our Union Hall, including the APWU and nine other letter carrier unions from the surrounding area. It was inspiring to see both seasoned and new members unite. I hope we won't need to rally again, but that

depends on the actions of the current administration. Should an executive order threaten our operations, we will be prepared to respond. We still have signs and a banner ready. Next time, perhaps management will join us on the sidewalk, alongside more young carriers whose jobs are most at risk from such drastic changes.

Regarding rally materials, we received 237 of the 250 "Hell No" red T-shirts ordered from national. Unfortunately, the banner arrived post-rally. The 250 signs were at a postal facility in St. Louis on the Friday before the rally. Realizing they wouldn't arrive in time; I decided to retrieve them personally. Marvin Booker asked how I planned to access the facility. I replied, "charm." He said good luck with that.

I arrived at the Earth City facility; hopefully it housed the signs. After waiting outside, a gentleman opened the door, and I showed my postal badge. Before entering, I met a young lady arriving for her shift. I introduced myself and explained the situation. She was eager to help, expressing concern about job security amid potential privatization. With only seven months on the job and needing two more to become regular, she was motivated. After 1.5 hours searching through about 15



parcel bins, we located the packages. She assisted me in loading them into my car, and I gave her the "Hell No" rally shirt off my back. She was thrilled and, though unable to attend the rally, supported our cause wholeheartedly.

COP MEETING: NALC PRESIDENT BRIAN RENFROE'S PERSPECTIVE

President Renfroe emphasized the gravity of our situation. Departing PMG DeJoy blocked the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) from accessing member data before resigning, signing a memo to that effect. Whether this measure will halt further issues remains uncertain. The selection of the next PMG is critical. Unfortunately, acting PMG Doug Tulino, arguably the most qualified, is unlikely to be chosen. One candidate has lobbied for FedEx and UPS, raising concerns about potential privatization.

President Renfroe highlighted three anticipated actions from the administration:

- 1. Eliminating Collective Bargaining Rights:**
This move would likely lead to legal battles, with cases potentially reaching the National

Labor Relations Board (NLRB), which is currently undergoing changes that will undermine its effectiveness.

- 2. Halting Union Dues Payroll Deductions:**
Such a step would financially cripple unions, aligning with efforts to weaken organized labor.
- 3. Forcing Union Work Off the Clock:** Mandating that union officials perform duties without compensation would strain resources and morale.

If the administration doesn't enact a sweeping executive order placing the USPS under the Department of Commerce, they may opt for a strategy akin to "death by a thousand cuts," implementing incremental changes that collectively cause significant harm. The damage inflicted by such tactics would be challenging to reverse, as legal remedies require time during which irreparable harm could occur.

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.

Armed, off-duty police security provided at every meeting at the Union Hall



MOVING? WE NEED YOUR NEW ADDRESS!

If you have moved, please notify the branch office directly. Personnel does not notify us of your change of address.

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Address _____
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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

DON'T SIT ON THE SIDELINES ... GET INVOLVED!

May 10	NALC Food Drive
May 26	Memorial Day Holiday Observed
June 4	Retiree Meeting
June 5	Shop Stewards Meeting
June 12	Regular Branch Meeting
June 19	Juneteenth Holiday Observed

Executive Vice President ... *By Brian Litteken*

BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE USPS



The Board of Governors of the United States Postal Service is the governing body of the United States Postal Service (USPS). The board oversees the activities of the Postal Service, while the postmaster general actively manages its day-to-day operations.

The board controls the USPS's expenditures, reviews its practices and policies, and conducts long-range planning. The board consists of 11 members. Six members are required for a quorum. Of the 11 members, one is the postmaster general, one is the deputy postmaster general, and nine are the presidentially appointed governors. The governors are appointed by the president of the United States with the advice and consent of the Senate. The nine governors elect the postmaster general, the chairman of the board, and the

USPS inspector general. The governors and the postmaster general elect the deputy postmaster general. No more than five governors may belong to the same political party. The board has the power to remove any of these officers.

The following table shows the current makeup of the board as of March 27, 2025. It does not have a quorum to conduct business.

On June 18, 2020, the Senate confirmed Louis DeJoy to succeed Megan Brennan as postmaster general. In March 2021, DeJoy issued a 10-year plan called "Delivering for America" which among other things worked to optimize the distribution network. This was an attempt to improve the middle mile delivery network to keep the USPS financially stable. The contract between United Parcel Service

(UPS) and USPS for SurePost last-mile delivery ended on December 31, 2024. DeJoy did not renew the UPS and FedEx contracts for last-mile delivery since these contracts were not profitable for the USPS.

Postmaster General Donahoe was focused on last-mile delivery. United Parcel Service kept its last mile deliveries in the profitable urban areas and the USPS had to deliver in the non-profitable rural areas under these last mile delivery contracts.

Who are the next postmaster general candidates?

- Robert Taub – vice chair of the Postal Regulatory Commission
- Thomas Day – member of the Postal Regulatory Commission
- James Cochrane – CEO of the Package Shippers Association

The website for the Package Shippers Association states that it "advocates for the package and shipping industry on Capitol Hill and with the Postal Regulatory Commission to help ensure the U.S. Postal Service is a viable resource for all to use in a fair and economically way. Due to its long-standing presence on Capitol Hill and relationships with key members at the Postal Service, PSA has demonstrated its ability to support members." Who are the members of PSA? Well, they are USPS's competitors who want the Postal Service to deliver their non-profitable last mile deliveries. The members include UPS, FedEx Ground, DHL eCommerce, and Amazon.

Position	Name	Party	Assumed office	Term expiration	Appointed by	Notes
Chair	Amber McReynolds	Independent	June 15, 2021	December 8, 2026	Joe Biden	Replaced David C. Williams
Vice Chair	Derek Kan	Republican	May 20, 2022	December 8, 2028	Joe Biden	Replaced John McLeod Barger
Governor	Roman Martinez IV	Republican	August 1, 2019	December 8, 2024	Donald Trump	Chair of Audit and Finance Committee Extended term ends December 8, 2025, or when a successor is confirmed.
Governor	Ron Stroman	Democratic	June 15, 2021	December 8, 2028	Joe Biden	Replaced Ellen Williams
Governor	Dan Tangherlini	Democratic	May 20, 2022	December 8, 2027	Joe Biden	Replaced Ron Bloom
Governor	Vacant			December 8, 2025		Replacing Mike Duncan
Governor	Vacant			December 8, 2029		Replacing Donald L. Moak
Governor	Vacant			December 8, 2029		Replacing William D. Zollars
Governor	Vacant			December 8, 2030		Replacing Anton Hajjar
Postmaster General (ex officio)	Vacant			No term limit	The Board	
Deputy Postmaster General (ex officio)	Douglas Tulino	Independent	May 12, 2021	No term limit	The Board	Chief Human Resources Officer of USPS Replaced vacancy left by Ron Stroman.

Vice President Financial Secretary

... By Marvin Booker



WHAT'S IMPORTANT?

Important is defined as: *of great significance or value; likely to have a profound effect on success, survival, or well-being.*

What's important to some people is the fact that offices are short staffed, mandatory overtime is excessive, management is more hostile than ever, carriers are being surveilled and interrogated daily creating a toxic work environment. In addition, if you are one of the lucky ones you are going through route inspections and wondering where the hell is the mail and what's in the locked tractor trailers parked behind the post office. While all the above are important, there are more pressing issues that must be pondered.

The United States Postal Service (USPS) and the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) are navigating a period of significant change and uncertainty. Financial challenges, leadership transitions, labor disputes, and discussions about privatization are all contributing to a complex landscape for all.

FINANCIAL CHALLENGES AND LEADERSHIP CHANGES

The USPS continues to face substantial financial difficulties. In fiscal year 2024, the agency reported losses of \$9.5 billion, despite efforts to modernize operations through the "Delivering for America" plan, that has slowed down first-class mail and prioritizes the delivery of parcels at the expense of everything else.

Leadership changes have also added to the uncertainty. Postmaster General Louis DeJoy resigned in March 2025 after nearly five years in the position. His tenure was marked by efforts to cut costs and reduce losses, including plans to cut 10,000 jobs and reduce the USPS budget by billions. These measures have raised concerns among postal employees and unions about the potential impact on service quality and job security.

LABOR DISPUTES AND UNION ACTIONS

Members of the NALC overwhelmingly rejected a tentative labor contract with the USPS, that did not serve their interest leading to an impasse and the initiation of interest arbitration. This resulted in an underwhelming pay increase, no protection from mandatory overtime, reductions in allotted time

in the office, and no real mechanisms to enforce contract compliance or address the toxic work environment.

Despite the shortcomings the 2023-2026 National Agreement retained the no-layoff clause for career employees with six years of service and continued prohibitions against contracting out of city carrier work. These provisions provide some level of job security for letter carriers amid the ongoing uncertainties.

PRIVATIZATION CONCERNS AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

Discussions about privatizing the USPS have intensified. President Donald Trump and advisor Elon Musk have proposed placing the agency under the Commerce Department to improve efficiency, a move that has been met with resistance from postal unions and some lawmakers. Privatization would harm service quality, particularly in rural areas where private carriers may not deliver.

The NALC and other postal unions have expressed concerns that privatization efforts could lead to job losses and reduced services. They emphasize the importance of maintaining a public postal service that serves all Americans, regardless of location.

The USPS and the NALC are at a critical juncture in 2025. Financial challenges, leadership changes, labor disputes, and privatization discussions are shaping the future of the Postal Service and its workers. While there have been some positive developments, such as the retention of job protections in the latest labor agreement, significant uncertainties remain. The actions of legislators, postal leadership, and unions in the coming months will be crucial in determining the direction of the USPS and the well-being of its employees.

I chose to write this article, because I know there are those among us who don't take these threats seriously, or they voted in the most recent election against their best interest. With that being said, what is important today, may be insignificant tomorrow. Remember elections have consequences.

Until next time, be safe and be professional.

Recording Secretary ... *By Richard Brown*



Greetings, brothers and sisters and happy Mother's Day to all the moms. I hope the change in weather has provided some relief to your cold bones, but now allergy season will plague us. This means that you should be getting your over-the-counter medicines and prescriptions filled, to be prepared for the pollen and mold that our area frequently endures this time of year. Wearing some type of glasses and/or a face covering may help reduce the number of airborne allergens you may take in, so consider that if you have bad allergies. Either way, I hope you all have a healthy and injury free summer.

NATIONAL AGREEMENT

As you may have heard, neutral arbitrator "Nolan" has made a ruling on the terms of the 2023-2026 National Agreement. The biggest attention grabber of the agreement is the pay. There will be three general wage increases (1.3% retroactive to Nov. 2023, 1.4% retroactive to Nov. 2024 and 1.5% paid in Nov. 2025). These percentages will be based on your yearly salary at the times in which they apply.

There will also be six COLAs paid to career carriers. Four of which, totaling \$2,725, will also be paid retroactively with the first being for August 2023 proportionately paid, and derived from four parts: \$978, \$353, \$978 and \$416. Finally, there will be a general wage increase of \$1,000 to your annual salary, for carriers at Step P.

Carriers who have retired since the expiration of the 2019 – 2023 National Agreement will also receive back pay and their annuities will be retroactively adjusted by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

The service has 180 days from the date of the interest arbitration award to make these adjustments, so sit tight because we do not have an exact date when the adjustments will be made. For more details of the agreement, go to NALC.org.

Right now, we are still waiting for a signed

agreement between the parties, and Article 8 items are the pending issues. For those details, please go to NALC.org.

WORK HOURS

I'm sure everyone is fed-up by now, with the whole schedule change nonsense that has been occurring in the installation. This has happened in some places, as many as three times within a month. Management has been so bold as to change the starting times the day before the change goes into effect. That instant change in start time is a violation and information regarding this can be found on pages 8-4, 8-5 and 8-6 of the JCAM.

Management has shown that they have no regard for your personal life and the adjustments that some will have to make due to these changes, but they are doing it anyway. While these changes may come from higher up the management chain, the grievance must be filed at the lowest level, and elevated if necessary. We know that every carrier in the unit is affected, but some may not qualify for anything additional, so ask your steward if you believe you may be entitled to anything extra.

Speaking of work hours. If you have your own route like a T-6, hold-down or the regular, you have certain responsibilities to the assignment. One of those responsibilities is the casing of the mail which belongs to said route. If you report to work and discover mail has already been cased, speak to your steward. Management should not have anyone working on your route prior to your arrival, unless you are extremely late and fail to advise them ahead of time. This type of action by you could also lead to discipline over a period of time, so be aware of your reporting time and keep management in the know if there is an issue with regards to arriving to work on time.

Who is Responsible!!!

Health Benefits Plan/OWCP ... By Barry Linan



May greetings to all the brothers and sisters of NALC Branch 343. Take the time to deliver your mail safely and **accurately**. Make sure to verify that the address is correct before placing that mail in the mailbox or handing it off to a business owner. We need to retain our customers' satisfaction because we will need their support to keep the USPS from being privatized. If enough Americans pressure Congress to keep the USPS open for business as usual, our newer employees will also be able to someday enjoy their retirement benefits.

In March, the Trump appointed director of homeland security announced an arbitrary cancellation of the collective bargaining agreement for 47,000 workers at the Transportation Security Administrations (TSA). The TSA was created after the 9/11/01 terrorist attacks and the federal agency that provides airport security. The TSA workers are represented by the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) and a lawsuit has been filed in federal court. A letter sent to TSA workers stated that terminating collective bargaining rights would "eliminate the undue influence of the AFGE." Well yes, cancelling the TSA collective bargaining agreement certainly does "eliminate" the ability of the AFGE to enforce their workers' contractual rights doesn't it? That is precisely the point and one of the Trump administration's goals is to eliminate collective bargaining rights altogether for **all** federal workers.

HBP NEWS: Active and retired letter carriers are no strangers to joint pain. The job is physical and it definitely wears on your body over time. The NALC HBP offers a **no cost** virtual musculoskeletal program through **Hinge Health** that can help you overcome back and joint pain. Hinge Healthy uses exercise therapy programs to treat joint and muscle pain. You will be assigned a dedicated physical therapist to create a care plan that's personalized for your needs, goals, and ability. Your physical therapist can also conduct virtual physical therapy sessions as needed. If you continue treatment for chronic pain, defined as recurring for three months or longer, you can get one-on-one coaching from a certified health coach.

For more information or to sign up for Hinge Health, call 855-902-2777 or visit www.hinge-health.com/nalchbp. If you decide to join up, you will be asked to fill out a health questionnaire and then create an account.

OWCP News: I wrote last month about filing a Form CA-1, Report of Traumatic Injury, and creating an ECOMP account at ecomp.dol.gov. Once your supervisor completes their portion of the CA-1 and it is sent to OWCP, you will be assigned an OWCP Case File Number. You can then monitor your claim on ECOMP, and you can upload documents directly to your case file thru ECOMP. This is much more preferable than relying on your supervisor to forward your documents to Injury Comp and then on to OWCP.

Please note that it is preferable to first save the documents you want to upload into a PDF or Word file on your computer and then upload that file, no more than 20 pages, to ECOMP. Taking pictures of documents with your cell phone and uploading does work, but be forewarned the images of the documents can be blurry and sometimes illegible. You can also mail copies of documents to OWCP at their PO Box address in London, Kentucky, but be sure to put your Case File Number on the upper right corner of **every page** that you mail.

Several days after uploading documents to your file I recommend calling your OWCP claims examiner (CE) at 202-513-6860 and let them know you have new documents for them to review, especially if you are responding to a 60-day development letter requesting documents to support approval of your claim. Failure to provide documents supporting your claim within the 60-day time frame provided will usually result in your claim being denied. If you are not sure what documents are needed or need more time to obtain the needed information, call your CE for clarification. I can also try to assist you from the hall on Tuesdays or Wednesdays.

Notes from the Managing Editor

... By Tom Schulte



SO ... DO YOU THINK POSTAL UNIONS ARE SAFE?

On March 27, President Donald Trump issued an executive order stripping federal workers of their collective bargaining rights, citing a little-used provision of federal labor law relating to national security issues.

"President Trump's latest executive order is a disgraceful and retaliatory attack on the rights of hundreds of thousands of patriotic American civil servants — nearly one-third of whom are veterans — simply because they are members of a union that stands up to his harmful policies," said American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) President Everett Kelly.

"This administration's bullying tactics represent a clear threat not just to federal employees and their unions, but to every American who values democracy and the freedoms of speech and association. Trump's threat to unions and working people across America is clear: Fall in line or else."

A fact sheet issued from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) makes clear that the executive order is retaliation against AFGE and other federal unions that have dared to challenge Trump's agenda.

According to the OPM Fact Sheet: *Certain federal unions have declared war on President Trump's agenda.* The largest, AFGE, describes itself as "fighting back" against Trump and is widely filing grievances to block Trump's policies. Veterans Association union has filed 70 national and local grievances over Trump's policies since his inauguration.

Who is affected? The executive order currently affects the Departments of Defense, State, Treasury, Veteran's Affairs, Justice and Homeland Security. Also affected are subdivisions including U.S. Citizenship and Immigration, Customs Enforcement, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Witnessing these actions, it's not a stretch to

anticipate actions being taken against all postal unions. In fact, the first salvo has already been lobbed at us from the president who wants to see the U.S. Postal Service come under the auspices of the Department of Commerce and its billionaire secretary, Howard Lutnick. Lutnick is not a fan of labor unions and would like nothing more than to see us privatized. It would be foolish to assume that presidential actions against all other federal labor unions would somehow exclude the largest of all federal unions, the NALC.

Unless you live under a rock, the current administration is purposefully targeting the collective bargaining rights of every federal employee. The president and unelected, self-appointed South-African minion Elon Musk have already devastated the operations of numerous federal agencies and in so doing have threatened the lives and livelihoods of millions of Americans who depend on the social services of all those federal agencies.

It isn't enough that a half a dozen multi-billionaires hold 90% of all the wealth in the world. They feel empowered to work on obtaining the last 10%.

Branch 343 hosted a "Fight Like Hell" rally to save the Postal Service in front of the Main Post Office downtown on March 23. We were joined by nine area union locals making up a contingent of over 300 brothers and sisters, wives and friends. Our goal was to secure the public trust and have them stand with us to save the U.S. Postal Service.

This was likely the first of many such rallies to save our careers. If you are a postal or federal employee, you can't afford to be complacent. Now is the time to voice your opinions and concerns. Email your senators and congresspersons. Demand that they keep their mitts off the most trusted agency of the federal government. Do it today, tomorrow and the next day. And when the next call comes to rally to save the Postal Service, make sure we all turn out en masse.

Region 5 NBA Report ... *By David A. Teegarden*

POLITICAL NEWS

Since my last NBA Report a lot has happened politically. Rallies across Region 5 and the country by letter carriers, postal employees, family members, congressional members and customers took place on March 23. Region 5 rallies were very well attended even though there were some hiccups with signage and shirts not arriving on time. Thanks to Anthoney Mitchell, who represents the Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF); the branch presidents; and all branch organizers for planning and setting these events up. We proved it's not about a free T-shirt; it's about protecting letter carrier jobs and the economy of our country. Thanks to all that attended. And if you couldn't, more rallies are planned in the future. So, get involved and help save your own job.

Although the executive order moving the Postal Service to the Dept. of Commerce hasn't materialized, our political focus must still be on preserving the service. Despite numerous problems we deal with internally, such as delivery standards, the Postal Service still receives one of the highest scores each year for federal employees. These internal issues must be fixed, but we can't fix them if we are privatized.

Since those rallies were held on March 23, a couple of key things have happened. PMG DeJoy has resigned effective March 24, and board of governor member Robert Duncan resigned effective March 27. There is a lot of chatter in online groups about whether DeJoy was placed in the job to destroy the Postal Service. A lot of us don't like his S&DC or 10-year plan. Despite that there were actual savings from that plan, a \$1.8 billion annual reduction in transportation costs and a \$1 billion annual savings by shifting mail and package delivery from air to ground transportation.

The wrinkle in all of this is now we have four vacancies on the board of governors and a need to replace the PMG. There is no doubt that the current administration has an interest in who will fill those vacancies and that could shape the future of the Postal Service for years to come. This will most certainly test the resolve of the remaining governors on the board. Our friends in Congress, on both sides of the aisle, are beginning to push back on the idea of privatization of the service. Simultaneously they are concerned with the current situation regarding delivery standards. Many members of Congress are calling on the Office of Inspector General, (OIG) for investigations into mail processing and facilities and plants. There are numerous reports of significant delays in mail that are currently being investigated by

our friends in Congress. For the time being they still believe in a public Postal Service, however, the threat has not passed us by, and we must continue to do what we can to make sure the Postal Service remains the great public institution it has always been.

The question I continue to ask: Is there any reason why all USPS employees can't get behind saving the Postal Service? If there is no reason you can't get behind saving your own job, join us by getting involved in rallies, contacting members of Congress and contributing to the Letter Carrier Political Fund, even if only for a year or two until this threat passes. It could mean the difference between having a job or not.



HIPP TRAINING AND GRIEVANCES

I recently sent out Heat Illness Prevention Program (HIPP) information to the branch presidents of the region from Director of Safety and Health Manny Peralta. Awhile back we sent out HIPP grievance starters to your branch presidents as well. If you need them or assistance on how to file grievances if you are not receiving the proper training, please contact us at the NBA office at 314-985-8040 and we will be happy to assist you.

REGION 5 TRAINING

We are in the process of planning informal and formal Steward College training. Once the dates and locations are determined we will get that out to the branch presidents for registration. We will also be conducting arbitration advocate training for the advocates in Region 5 sometime early this summer. In addition, we will have updated contract training at each of the state conventions this spring and fall. We will continue our route count and adjustment training that we put on twice last year so we can develop more specialists that can assist branches in assuring our members get fair route inspections and adjustments. We look forward to seeing you in our travels throughout the year.

In addition to the training, we will begin an initiative to assist branches with moving to an all-career model. Branch presidents will get a call from the NBA office to discuss. If you aren't currently an all-career model office, please contact us and we can get started.

Until next time stay safe out there.

Retiree Report

... By Guest Recording Secretary Nicki L. Prado



Chairman Tom Schulte called the meeting to order at 12:40 p.m. Chaplain Lawrence McHaynes led us in prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance. Tom thanked Geno Iberg and his wife, Glenda, for providing the lunch and delicious desserts.

Volunteers: Region 5 NBA David Teegarden will provide lunch for the June meeting. Tom reminded everyone that there would not be a May 7 retiree meeting due to the Ole Timers Day celebration on May 3.

Minutes from the last meeting: Guest Recording Secretary Nicki L. Prado read the minutes from the March meeting.

Treasurers Report: Brother Mike Chenot reminded the retirees that there would not be a retiree meeting on May 7 due to the Ole Timers Day celebration on May 3. Mike reported a checking balance after expenses of \$975.36 and cash on hand of \$426.

NBAs Report: David Teegarden discussed the recent arbitrated contract settlement and the current administration's threats to privatize the USPS. Dave encouraged everyone to contact their respective congressmen and senators to support H.R. 70 and the Senate companion bill S. 147 to prevent the USPS from being privatized. Postmaster Louis DeJoy who announced his resignation pending approval of a new PMG, was forced to resign prematurely. The new PMG will likely not have the interests of the USPS at heart.

Branch 343 Presidents Report: President McLaughlin discussed the specifics of the arbitrated NALC contract and encouraged everyone to see the comparison chart in the April MCC. John also spoke on the recent March 23 "Fight Like Hell" rally in front of the Main Post Office downtown. The rally had an estimated attendance of 300 and received excellent press coverage. John thanked letter carrier Mark Jackson who volunteered to provide the BBQ luncheon following the rally. John warned that this is likely to be

the first of many rallies because of the current administration's overtures to privatize the post office.

Legislative Report: Mike Weir reported that the Trump administration has its eyes set on going after Social Security and Medicare and Medicaid in order to give billions in tax cuts to the ultra-wealthy at the expense of the American taxpayers. We can't allow this to happen. Social Security offices are being closed, and federal workers are being fired, making it harder to get assistance by phone or in person. Support H.R. 1876 which keeps Social Security offices open and H.R. 1877 protecting Social Security data.

Health Benefits Report: Barry Linan reported that he is dealing with workman's comp. issues lately. Carriers dealing with stress related issue including carriers being robbed at gunpoint. Issues created by OPM continue with regards to the drug coverage and Silver Scripts if you opt out.

Chairmans Report: Tom reminded everyone that there would not be a retiree meeting in May due to the Ole Timers Day celebration on May 3. Tom encouraged everyone to attend the Ole Timers Day celebration to honor all the brothers and sisters receiving awards.

Unfinished Business: V.P. Marvin Booker asked for assistance for the 33rd NALC Food Drive Day coming on May 10 and displayed this year's Food Drive T-shirt.

Deceased Members: A moment of silence was observed for Ken Weldele and Howard "Howie" Neels.

50/50 Winner: \$16 won by Barry Linan who donated it back to support a hole sponsorship for Br. 343 Golf Tournament.

Closing Prayer: Offered by Chaplain Lawrence McHaynes.

Meeting Adjourned: Tom announced that there would not be a retiree meeting on May 7 due to the Ole Timers Day celebration on May 3. Meeting adjourned at 1:44 p.m.

South County ... *By Matt Gleiforst*

Hello from South County. I will try and start on a positive note. We finally have a contract. It is certainly not much better than what the tentative agreement was, but at least after all of this time, it is finally settled. Now, the membership just needs to be sure and vote in our next National Union election for the person we think will provide a better contract next time. If you are satisfied with it, then no worries I suppose. If you are not satisfied with it, the good news is that there will be plenty of candidates in our next election to choose from and it is up to us as a membership to vote for who we think will do best.

On another high point, the distribution trucks have been seeming to arrive earlier to our station. I

don't know if this is true for all stations, but here at South County it seems as though we are getting our mail a bit earlier which is helpful in ensuring that all the mail is actually getting delivered. We also seem to not be exhausting the overtime list as often, which is also a good indicator that more routes are being consistently covered, and less mail is being delayed. I know it is unfortunate for those of us that are wanting the overtime hours, but I am hopeful that our customers will start getting better and more consistent service.

Now on a not-so-great note, management seems more worried about getting 99s done than they do about getting the mail delivered. One day last month I witnessed two carriers getting a

99 that were told to roll quite a bit of mail for their route so that they could have an 8-hour day. This seems highly inappropriate to me. To have an accurate PS Form 3999, all of the mail should be delivered. If it takes longer than eight hours, so be it. If this instruction is being given to you be sure to fill out a PS Form 1571 explaining why you are delaying mail. There also is a comment section on the completed PS Form 3999, and I would highly encourage you to notate here that not all available mail was delivered per management's instruction.

Finally, I want to once again stress the importance of not being intimidated when filling out a PS Form 3996. It is your right and your responsibility to let management know when you cannot complete your route within eight hours. You should not feel threatened when filling out this form. Sometimes the volume is simply too heavy, or a route is overburdened. If you are honest, you have nothing to fear when filling out a PS Form 3999. If anyone from management gives you an attitude about it, or worse, refuses to allow you to fill it out, get a shop steward immediately. Filling this form out is part of your job duties as instructed in the M41 Handbook. Do not ever feel rushed because management says you do not need overtime. They cannot predict your route better than you can.

Until next time, keep your head held high and keep surviving!



The "U" ... By Frank Enlow



Letter carriers across the country believed it was the Postal Service's time to show us the money for the long hours and the continued dedication to the job. But it was the membership who unanimously voted down the contract negotiated on our behalf by our current union president, Brian Renfro.

Arbitrator Nolan issued his binding arbitration decision to set the terms of our contract which expires again in 2026. This contract didn't give us what we wanted, but we didn't lose anything either. And we all should be compensated for the wait within the next 180 days.

Brothers and sisters, the continued threat of privatization from the current administration played a big part in arbitrator Nolan's decision. For those of you that voted for this administration and for those of you that chose not to vote at all, have an opportunity to right your wrong in the midterm elections on November 3, 2026.

There are 435 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives and 33 of the 100 seats in the U.S. Senate that will be contested. The only way to stop privatization is to vote against the candidates that support privatization and if you are not contributing to the Political Action Fund, you should sign up now.

Now, let's get back to the matters at hand, **route inspections.**

Carriers, if you have been in the post office for one, five, 15, or 25 years, you know that the post office has always found ways to attack us carriers and the current attack on our routes is no different.

There has never been a time in my career that so many stations went undelivered for weeks, or carriers were instructed to deliver packages only and bring back the mail. And now they are going into stations during route inspections and taking out four or five routes at a time because we didn't see the writing on the wall and got comfortable not delivering mail.

Sleight of hand has always been the game the post offices likes to play. They know how to divide and conquer. They will let you get away with just enough so that they can come back and use it against you.

Brothers and sisters, the Postal Service is our employer, and they

spend a lot of time and energy every day trying to figure out new ways to screw us over. Many times we allow it to happen by failing to do our jobs properly.

We are being attacked on the outside with threats of privatization and on the inside with route adjustments. Carriers, we can't fight both battles standing alone. If we don't learn how to stand together, united as one, we won't have a job to fight for. There are many of you that may not need to care about this job, but for many of you, this is all we have.

Finally, carriers, wear your shoulder and lap belts, don't fasten your seat belt behind you. Don't get caught riding with your doors open or leaving the vehicle running unattended. And don't be caught wearing headphones while out delivering the mail.

Management has a new safety team, and they have been putting a lot of carriers off the clock for these violations. STAY SAFE!



West County Retiree ... By Pam Stepney

Greetings sisters and brothers of Branch 343. How's everybody doing? Fine, I hope. Wow, I made it, I'm retired now! Who would have thought with all the hours I worked delivering mail as a letter carrier, lifting 70-pound parcels and beyond in my 60s, delivering accountable mail with and without scanners, running collections, delivering mail to the VIM room, being a router, shop steward, Step A rep., a member of the scholarship committee, labor council, route inspection team leader, driver, and classroom instructor for our new letter carriers, and the district Customer Connect coordinator for our great union. And I even had the opportunity to write an article for the Mound City Carrier.

Wow, those are a lot of hats to wear. All sponsored, supported, and fought for by my great union. I bet you can't say that about management. With all the backstabbing, back-biting, and politicking they do, they are barely loyal to themselves, let alone you. If you want to do more in the union, start this month by showing up to the meetings and get involved. I only became the steward because they were harassing certain letter carriers and allowing their friends/family members to get away with foolishness. They would fire the hard-working union sisters and brothers and cover for the others. Remember, minding your business is a full-time job, but if you see something wrong, say something. Marvin Booker said at the union meeting last month, "It used to be if management hit one of us, they hit all of us" Nowadays everybody is trying to look out for themselves when you have sisters and brothers standing right beside you on the workroom floor.

Start this month working toward putting on some of those hats I've worn in the 37 years of working in the Postal Service. You're already doing a good job by showing up on time, in uniform and delivering mail to our customers. Continue to give your customers good service by delivering all mail and parcels to the correct addresses and businesses every day. The news media has a lot to say about our company and workers every time you turn on your TV. Make it your business to take care of our business as though you are being watched by your customers and the postal inspectors. We must show our integrity as letter carriers to the public. And for some of you who don't know what I'm talking about, let us read the definition of integrity. It means the quality of being honest and showing a consistent and uncompromising adherence to strong moral and ethical principles and values. In ethics, integrity is regarded as the honesty and truthfulness or earnestness of one's action. So, let us do our jobs with integrity every day because the pay is great with wonderful retirement benefits. Plus, we need our customers to purchase stamps and continue to do business with us.

Moving on! If you decide to retire and have a party, make sure you look in the letter carrier craft at your sisters and brothers working right beside you. Jocelyn Robinson catered Richard Thurman's and my retirement parties, and the food was superb. My customers asked for her business card and vowed to use her services in the future. The seasoned salmon and three different flavored wings were delicious. The seven-layer salad, potato salad, baked beans, and homemade rolls were also delicious. I'm telling you she comes in,

sets up her food, serves with gloves on, and it is so good that sometimes you don't have words, you just lick your lips and go to your happy place. Justin Barnes said "You can't buy time," so live your best life!

Jamie Hill from North County cooked fried rice and Lo Mein noodles for letter carriers and it was so good. I'm telling you if you need something done, talk to these wonderful letter carriers. They will come to you to set up and serve your guests.

The annual Letter Carrier Food Drive is Saturday, May 10, ready or not it's on and popping. Don't forget to bring in your children to help collect and sort the food. It makes it easier for letter carriers bringing back their food to unload. Plus, the union will send a letter to their school for volunteering. I know it's a hard day, but if everybody came in to deliver their route, we could get done and go home early to enjoy Mother's Day on Sunday.

Happy Mother's Day to all of you mothers and fathers taking care of your beautiful children.

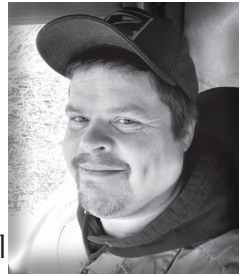
West County employees gifted me a beautiful blanket with pictures of some of our best memories. I want to thank everyone for this amazing gesture.

Remember to do your best, leave the rest, don't stress, GOD bless, register to vote, exercise your right to vote, if you're retired come to the meeting, and as career letter carriers, thank you for coming.



Postal Math? It Doesn't Add Up

...By Jerry Cantrell



For letter carriers, the summer months are a scorcher, both literally and figuratively. Delivering mail under a blazing sun takes a toll, but even more concerning is a trend some carriers are noticing management practices that seem to defy logic.

The heart of the issue lies in the overtime desired list (ODL). Carriers sign the ODL to volunteer for overtime when they are at work and possibly to work their non schedule day. However, some managers seem to have a peculiar way of utilizing this list.

The scenario goes something like this: A carrier on the ODL clocks in for their usual eight-hour shift. The day is already hot, and the mail volume is heavy. As the carrier sweats through their uniform, management announces they need additional help. Here's where the math stops adding up. Instead of calling in a fresh carrier from the ODL for a standard eight-hour shift, they ask the existing ODL carriers to extend their workday by four grueling hours, pushing them to a 12-hour shift in the unrelenting heat.

The illogic of this approach is astounding. A carrier who's been working for eight hours is already fatigued and dehydrated. Adding four more hours in scorching temperatures significantly increases the risk of heat exhaustion, dehydration, and even accidents. Exhausted carriers are more prone to errors in judgment, leading to

potential safety hazards for themselves and the public.

But wait, there's more. Management often complains about "stationary time" – periods where carriers aren't actively delivering mail but are sorting or completing paperwork. It's easy to understand why stationary time might increase after an eight-hour shift is extended by four hours in the heat. Exhausted carriers need more breaks to rehydrate and recover, impacting their overall efficiency.

So why this illogical approach? Some speculate it's a cost-cutting measure. Calling in a fresh carrier would trigger overtime pay, whereas extending an existing ODL carrier's shift might be seen as less expensive. This theory, however, falls apart when considering the potential for accidents and worker's compensation claims.

The true cost of this illogical practice extends far beyond finances. It impacts employee morale, safety, and ultimately, the quality of

service. Exhausted carriers are more likely to call in sick, further straining the system. Customer service suffers when fatigued carriers struggle to meet tight delivery deadlines.

There's a simple solution: Utilize the ODL effectively. Call in fresh carriers for additional shifts, prioritize employee well-being by encouraging breaks and proper hydration, and ensure carriers have adequate time to complete non-delivery tasks during their regular shifts. This approach might seem more expensive at first glance, but the long-term benefits far outweigh the initial costs.

Postal math needs to be recalculated. Prioritizing short-term savings over employee well-being is a recipe for disaster. Investing in a healthy and efficient workforce is the only way to ensure smooth operations and quality service, especially during the demanding summer months.

THE US POSTAL SERVICE DELIVERS MORE THAN THE MAIL!	
\$90 MILLION USPS RAISED FOR BREAST CANCER RESEARCH	\$1 MILLION USPS RAISED FOR VETERAN PTSD RESEARCH
\$5.7 MILLION USPS RAISED FOR ANIMAL PROTECTION FUNDS	1.75 BILLION POUNDS OF FOOD COLLECTED FOR LOCAL FOOD BANKS

The Fight Is Here: Are You Ready?

... By Steven Powers



There's an old saying that still holds true: "If you don't take an interest in politics, don't think politics won't take an interest in you." For letter carriers, that interest isn't theoretical — it's real, it's ongoing, and it's aimed squarely at everything we've built: our paychecks, our benefits, our retirement, and the future of the Postal Service itself.

Let's be blunt; we are under attack. Not in some distant or abstract way, but here, now, and relentlessly. From corporate boardrooms to Capitol Hill, there are people actively working to dismantle what we do. They don't see dedicated public servants or essential community infrastructure. They see a line item to be slashed, a workforce to be outsourced, and a system to be gutted for profit.

If we don't fight back, we will lose. The only way to fight back effectively is by contributing to the Letter Carrier Political Fund. This isn't a suggestion, and it's not someone else's burden — it's our responsibility. It's the only tool we have to protect ourselves in Washington, where the real power over our future lies. Without political influence, our contract, our benefits, the union, and the service itself can be dismantled with a single stroke of a pen.

Yes, we all pay union dues — and those dues are vital. They keep our union functioning and protect us on the workroom floor. But as

federal employees, we face threats most workers don't. Legislation written behind closed doors, corporate lobbying targeting our jobs, and coordinated efforts to strip away everything we've earned. That's exactly why the Political Fund exists: to give us a voice.

Here's the part many carriers don't realize, union dues cannot be used for political action. Not one penny. Every bit of our advocacy work — defending six-day delivery, stopping privatization, protecting bargaining rights — is paid for by voluntary PAC contributions. However, if more carriers don't step up and contribute, we risk being outspent, outmaneuvered, and left without a seat at the table. When that happens, the consequences will hit every single one of us.

Know our enemies are not sitting still. In 2024 alone, UPS, FedEx, and Amazon spent tens of millions of dollars lobbying Congress. Their goal? Weaken labor rights, carve out the Postal Service's most profitable operations, dismantle what's left, and rewrite the laws to fit their business models. They don't want to compete — they want to eliminate us ... and they're buying the influence to do it.

However, all is not yet lost. We can fight back; we've done it before. We've blocked harmful legislation, defended collective bargaining, and preserved critical protections through targeted political

engagement. But we desperately need more of us involved. The same handful of donors cannot carry this fight on forever.

Please understand the NALC does not care about political parties. We support candidates who support us, Democrat, Independent, or Republican alike. This fight isn't about ideology. It's about our very survival. Your paycheck, your health care, your retirement, your family's future — all of it is on the line. Contributing to the Political Fund is the single most effective form of job security you will ever have.

If you've never donated, start now. If you do not know how to donate, reach out to me or call the Union Hall. Just \$5 a pay period makes a huge difference. We don't need a few giving a lot, we need everyone giving something. The threat we face today is more real and more dangerous than ever before, and if you don't act soon, it may be too late ...

In solidarity ...



Just a Tip of the Nice-berg

... By Mike Laury, Retired Letter Carrier

Johnny Rabbit, (Ron Els) lived on my route, 0933, which was located near Dubourg High School, and he would occasionally regale me with stories from his days as a DJ on KXOK during the 1960s. Johnny Rabbit was one of the highest paid DJs back then and probably the most popular. "I was lured away from KXOK in 1969 to work as a DJ in Los Angeles for a salary of \$100,000 per year. But it was the worst decision I had ever made, and I returned to St. Louis a year later. Oh, and Mike, **I'm the one who came up with the idea of wearing rabbit ears during my show.** Don't believe anything else you've been told, because it's a lie!" (OK, Mr. Rabbit, I have to go now.)

"B" and "C" lister celebrities seemed to gravitate to my route, I'm guessing because it was so close to Francis Park. A beautiful area in the city called St. Louis Hills. B celebrities like Martin Kilcoyne (Fox 2 sportscaster), Brian McKenna, (radio sports) and several other radio and TV personalities lived in that same area where I delivered the mail.

Martin used to salivate over a certain doughnut delicacy which was a croissant stuffed with sweet cream cheese and a butter crumb topping made at the donut shop on my route. I stopped by his house one day with a couple of these treats and must have woken him up from his nap. There he was, answering the door in his "tighty-whities" and an awkward frown on his face. "What's up, Mike?" I said, "I got the doughnuts you like," as I handed them to him in an uncomfortable exchange of thank you and you're welcome. It took a little bit of time to get that image out of my head.

Tim McKernan's (sports radio) mom and dad were also patrons of my route and Mrs. M told me about how she dated Joe Theisman when her and Mr. M attended Notre Dame University back in the day. "That was before she met me," Mr. McKernan winked. "She was just waiting for the right guy to come along." One time, Tim was having a health issue while on the radio and I quickly stopped by his mom and dad's house to snitch

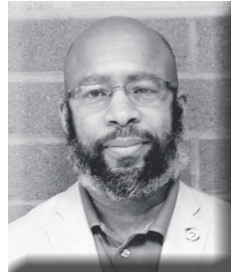
on him. Mrs. M thanked me, and she immediately called Tim's cell phone while he was still on the air.

Then there was Jennifer Sparks (Sparky) from J.C. Corcoran's radio show who was working with J.C. when the two planes hit the twin towers on 9/11. She lived on Eichelberger. I've delivered mail to Steve Mizerany, Doug Vaughn, Pat McBride, (who once had the dubious task of trying to mark the legend Pele in a soccer match) and other personalities over the years during my time at Affton, Southwest, and Sappington Station.

But my favorite story was what happened to the daughter of a fellow carrier, Fred Z. Fred and his family lived behind Pietro's on Watson and his daughter worked there as a waitress for several years. Fred told us that a patron used to always insist that his daughter Lisa serve him. If her section was full, the man would wait. Lisa got tired of the old guy having to wait, so she gave the old man her cell number so he could call her and find out when a table was available. Lisa always put a smile on the old guy's face and would spend extra time talking to the lonely widower if the restaurant wasn't too busy. Fred gathered a few of us around his case one morning and was beaming when he said, "You know what that old guy left as a **tip** for my Lisa on her last night at Pietro's before she left for college? A \$10,000 tip to help with her tuition and books!" "She almost fainted," Fred said to us. "Hell, I almost fainted when she told me." Lisa insisted on giving the money back to her old friend, but he would have none of it. He told her that he had plenty of money and he insisted she keep it as a huge thank you for her being such a good friend over the years that she waited on him. She did keep the \$10,000 tip and that's a true story.

Try to be safe out there, both active and retired letter carriers, and remember, "I'm the guy that saw both of Bob Forsch's no-hitters." And the crowd groans.

Safety & Health ... By Richard Thurman



Each year, approximately 4.7 million Americans are bitten by dogs, with about 900 requiring medical attention daily. Safety protocol checklists are provided for postal supervisors and letter carriers to ensure safety measures are taken regarding dog bites, including documentation, communication with animal control, inherited dog bite policies, and municipal and state law. Over 5,800 letter carrier dog bites were reported in fiscal year '23. Upon visiting countless stations throughout the Kansas/Missouri district, we have found the failure to respond appropriately and control issues. Please review the documentation below to ensure your station is adhering.

DOG - HAZARD CHECKLIST:

1. Can the postmaster or supervisor(s) locate the dog bite letters (#4 sent) with tracking, policies, and procedures on the computer? **YES / NO**
2. Is Publication 174 (How to avoid dog bites and dog repellent) posted? **YES / NO**
3. Is the dog bite policy posted? Was the yearly service talk given? **YES / NO**
4. If YES to #2 and #3, are they posted on the Safety Board? **YES / NO**
5. Are dog policy letters posted? (ONLY THE DISTRICT MANAGER CAN AUTHORIZE THE DELIVERY OF MAIL AFTER A DOG BITE) **YES / NO**
6. Is RIMS being used for hazard warnings? **YES / NO**
7. How many entries are there this fiscal year? _____
 - Do entries correspond with PS 1778s (Dog Warning Card)? **YES / NO**
 - Do the route books have corresponding hazard letters? **YES / NO**
 - Does the PS Form 1564B list all hazards? **YES / NO**
 - Does the latest 3999 indicate dog or hazard problems? **YES / NO**
 - When were the entries? _____
- Who made the entries? _____
- If there has been a **dog bite**, do carriers know how to get ahold of their city or county Animal Control (AC)? **YES / NO**
8. Were photos immediately taken of the injury? **YES / NO**
9. Is a PS Form 1571 attached with the mail that was brought back stating "Aggressive Dog at the Door or Running Loose"? **YES / NO**
10. Has the customer signed the Dog Control Agreement? **YES / NO**
11. Get all notes and documentation from Animal Control. **YES / NO**
12. Were the animal's dog shot records provided? **YES / NO**
13. Did the carrier receive shots? If so, what? _____
14. Do the dates on the dog warning card, letter to the customer, dog bite control agreement, and notes all match up as the same date or date immediately following the dog bite? **YES / NO**
15. Was the bite entered in the Safety and Health System as an accident or injury? **YES / NO**
16. Was the carrier taken off duty immediately and sent to a doctor? **YES / NO**

Reel in the Cure Buddy Bass Tournament for MDA Raises \$10,000 for the Cure on April 5-6 The net total for the 29-year history is \$233,000

**Congratulations to Tournament Director
Ken Young from Southwest Station**



Carriers enjoying the recent "Reel In the Cure" Bass tournament for MDA. L to R: Ken Aubuchon, Tournament Director Ken Young, Everett Simmons, Dave Gerik and Tim Brennan.

BRANCH LEGAL PLAN

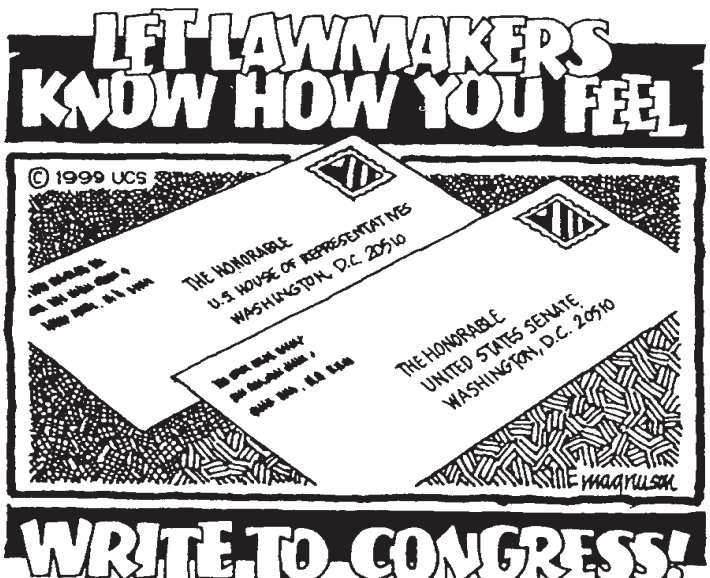
Advice and Consultation on
General Practice and Civil Actions.



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Tariff Tantrums ... *By Mike Weir*

On Wednesday, April 2, we celebrated President Trump's "Liberation Day" at the Branch 343 retirees luncheon. **Given the destructive nature of his policies up to that point, it felt like the only thing we were being liberated from was our democracy. The reciprocal tariffs that Trump announced on that day were based, as usual, on bogus facts and nonsensical numbers.** It would be an understatement to suggest that not everyone was particularly thrilled with his approach to "making America great again." On April 3 and 4, the stock market dropped by over 3,800 points. The following Monday and Tuesday, it lost another 670 points, ultimately shredding \$5 trillion in value! At that point, someone must have mentioned to President Trump that his tariff tantrum was not such a great idea. On April 9, he called for a 90 day pause on imposing the tariffs (excluding China which retaliated in kind) to give the world the chance to bend the knee to him. Initially, the stock market rose by over 2,900 points. **The next day, however, investors apparently remembered that honesty is not Trump's strong suit, while unpredictability is; so, the market dropped over 1,000 points. Since then, the stock market has been up and down.**

Despite the uncertainty surrounding this approach, it does not appear that President Trump will abandon his tariff strategy anytime soon. **He and his fellow Republicans are intent on using the revenue from these tariffs to help**

pay for the \$4.5 trillion to \$5 trillion in tax cuts for corporate America and the richest citizens among us. They also hope to make some kind of convoluted argument that tariff taxes will bolster their claim that their legislation has a deficit-neutral cost, thereby minimizing a scoring issue with the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office. **The reality is that this legislation will add trillions of dollars to the deficit and undermine the stability of our economy. Additionally, there is no viable way to provide up to \$5 trillion in tax relief for corporations and rich folks without making significant cuts in essential services for the rest of us. Despite their claims that they are decimating so many federal agencies to cut out fraud from a bloated bureaucracy, they are really just minimizing and/or eliminating essential services to help pay for the continuation and enhancement of their 2017 tax cuts which provided significant relief for corporations and the monied elite and crumbs for the rest of us.** They are also looking to replace seasoned federal workers with newbies whose only qualification for any federal job, just like the president's cabinet, is absolute loyalty to Trump.

Elon Musk and his DOGE wrecking crew have been busy bulldozing through numerous federal agencies. In late March and early April, they inserted themselves into the Social Security Administration. **President Trump has frequently claimed that they were not going to touch Social Security;**

in fact, they have been doing a lot more than just touching it. They have begun the process of firing and/or pushing out thousands of experienced workers (7,000 at last count), closing nearly 50 local offices and making it more difficult to speak to someone over the phone regarding social security questions and issues. **The Social Security Administration was established in 1935. For 90 years, it has been consistently providing benefits to retirees and disabled citizens. For many of our fellow citizens, social security is the only money that they can rely upon to sustain them in their "golden years."** For FERS employees, it is a very important component of their (your) retirement, part of the three-legged stool that includes your annuity and the Thrift Savings Plan. **And, despite claims to the contrary, Social Security is not an entitlement; you earned it by paying for it throughout your working life.**

Musk had tried to justify his intrusion into this agency by asserting that fraud is running rampant there. He has made similar assertions with every federal agency, without providing any legitimate documentation; Again, the facts are very different than the allegations. Social Security services approximately 73,000,000 Americans, with a fraud rate of less than 1%. Still, the Trump administration appears intent on undermining



this venerable agency. **Trump wants to eliminate federal taxes on Social Security.** That would cause it to become insolvent more quickly since that money is credited to the Social Security Trust Funds. Also, the Trump administration's obsession with deporting undocumented immigrants (and even those who are documented) is cutting off significant tax revenue for Social Security and Medicare. The Institute on Taxation & Economic Policy reported that, in 2022 alone, undocumented immigrants paid nearly \$26 billion into Social Security and \$6 billion into Medicare; both programs they are not entitled to use despite the misinformation and disinformation being

alleged on right-wing news outlets and social media.

There seems to be no limit to the Trump administration's plans to destroy our federal institutions and undermine essential services that all of us, some more than others, rely upon to provide for ourselves and our families. They are arbitrarily firing experienced, productive workers, canceling union contracts, pursuing policies that will increase inflation and will cost most of us thousands of dollars more each year, and laying the groundwork for privatizing the Postal Service. Our democracy, our freedoms, our very way of life are all at risk. **Earlier in this article, I jokingly referred to Trump's signature claim that**

he is doing all these things to "make America great again." As I noted in last month's article, America was already great.

President Trump's hyperbole notwithstanding, his actions are clearly causing America to lose much of its standing in the world and undermining our leadership role as a beacon of light for other democracies and those that aspire to be democracies.

All of us must step up to protest what is happening and to protect our families and the families of our fellow citizens. Please join us, when you can, at a protest; and please contribute to the Branch 343 PAC Fund and the NALC Letter Carrier Political Fund.

ATTENTION CARRIERS!



5-CALLS

There has never been a greater time to become more politically active. Discussions regarding privatization of the Postal Service are front and center in the current administration. The good news is that we have political friends on both sides of the aisle that favor preserving the Postal Service. But we can't become complacent in holding them to their word. Download the "5-Calls" app to your phone. Enter your zip code which will give you immediate access to your respective senator or congressperson and demand that they support legislation favorable to the retention of the United States Postal Service. The job you save may be your own.

BRANCH MEETING

BRANCH 343, ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

APRIL 10, 2025

Summary of Branch Action

- MSC To pay the branch bills.
- MSC That the branch pay the remaining balance for the cost of food supplied by Marius Jackson, in the amount of \$2,260 for the "Fight Like Hell" rally.
- MSC That the branch donate up to \$100 to each office in Branch 343 (not to exceed in total \$2,600) towards the purchase of food and non-alcoholic beverages for the workers at each of the Food Drive hub sites accompanied by a valid purchase receipt (not from Sam's or Walmart).
- MSC That Branch 343 host a John H. Haake Scholarship Dinner for the Scholarship Committee and the National Education Association members who worked on the 2025 Scholarship Awards.

New Members

Jomar BarretoMackenzie Pointe3/22/2025
 Nyla Dodd.....Southwest.....3/7/2025
 Jonathan Ellison.....South County3/22/2025
 Marshal HenleyTown & Country.....3/22/2025
 Aviasha Holmon.....Jennings.....3/7/2025
 Diasia Howard.....Mackenzie Pointe3/7/2025
 Lisa JohnsonGaffney3/7/2025
 Chaz Lovett-LangMackenzie Pointe3/7/2025
 Christina OrtizDes Peres4/7/2025
 Tyler Ruff.....O'Fallon.....3/7/2025
 Jared StubbsGaffney3/7/2025
 Arnell Williams.....Harriet Woods.....3/12/2025

Recently Retired Members

Christopher Calgher...Fenton03/31/2025
 Peter KimFenton03/31/2025
 Theresa Mitchell.....Mackenzie Point.....01/31/2025

Deceased Members

Howard J. Neels.....65 Year Member03/30/2025
 Dennis HolwayRetired04/09/2025



BRANCH MEETING ATTENDANCE PRIZES

1. Cardinals vs Philadelphia Phillies	April 11	Lawrence Tarkington, Marian Oldham
2. Cardinals vs Philadelphia Phillies	April 12	John McLaughlin, Union Hall
3. Cardinals vs Philadelphia Phillies	April 13	Demetrius Potter, Clayton
4. Cardinals vs Milwaukee Brewers	April 27	Richard Rhyner, Bartender
5. Cardinals vs New York Mets	May 4	Brian Litteken, Des Peres
		Hannah Lockette, Kirkwood
\$60		

Highlights

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. The invocation and Pledge of Allegiance were led by Chet Drain and the minutes were read by Recording Secretary Richard Brown and accepted.

NBAs Report, Pat Baker: The NBA office has been receiving calls about Article 8 items in the new National Agreement. They won't be in effect until the national parties determine when, however everything else is currently in effect. Route counts and inspections are the worst ever, with violations are occurring in every aspect. Teams have been trained in the region to review the data from the inspections. You must speak up at consultations and ask for documentation for any deductions they are making. PM DeJoy was essentially forced out because he wouldn't sign the new last mile agreements with UPS and Amazon. LCPF is more important now than ever, to support those in Congress who support us (Republican and Democrat alike).

Retirees Report, Tom Schulte: Greetings from the 31 in attendance. They are preparing for the 96th Ole Timers Day celebration (May 3). People are getting 50 year Gold Cards, 55 year pins, 60 year pins, 65 year pins and 70 year plaques. One person is getting a 75 year plaque, who at last check was still driving and playing golf. Shout out to the people who attended the rally on March 23, this will not be the last one and we are hoping to see more people next time.

Labor Council Report, Frank Council: While disappointed with our contract, others have more problems than we do. Many are being laid off and losing their bargaining rights. Some companies are losing grants that they once received. Everything that is happening in government is affecting everyone in some way, but we have been spared so far.

MBA Report, Saronda Sutherland: There is a hospitalization plan that will pay you for each day you are in the hospital.

Mound City Carrier Report, Tom Schulte: Front page is a glimpse of the Rally from March 23. Ole Timer's Day is May 3, and the food drive is the following weekend. There is a comparison chart in the MCC regarding the arbitration award. Tom did mention the American Federation of Government Employees and APWU marches that some from NALC attended.

Haake Scholarship Report, Pam Stepney: All applications have been turned into the committee. They are hoping to get all the winners here in May, to be presented with the scholarships.

Safety and Health Report, Richard Thurman: What does it take

to be responsible for yourself in your work environment? If you feel unsafe in the building, complete a PS 3971 and/or PS 1767 to report the issue. Understand your office functions based on handbooks M-41 and M-39 and identify hazards on your route. If customers don't comply with safeguarding you, they do not get mail. If you cannot see at least 4 ft. in front of or behind your vehicle, you are driving the wrong vehicle type. Management does not determine what's safe for you.

Trustees Report, La'Tecse Litteken: Books audited and found in good standing.

Political Action Committee Report, Mike Weir: Mike read names of contributors and encouraged every member to give to LCPF and the PAC fund.

Legislative Report, Mike Weir: The 2026 COLA is now 1.5%. Mike spoke on some house resolutions and their purpose. Trump claimed he would not touch Social Security. Local field offices are closing, which stops people from getting the help they need. House Resolution 1876 is designed to stop him from attacking it. Contribute to our PAC fund and LCPF.

Executive Vice President/Treasurer Report, Brian Litteken: During the Committee of Presidents meeting, President Renfro spoke on the loss of revenue by the post office. We received a new quote for the database for our cloud server and the officers thought it was too high. They have made an agreement with SWIP to pay only \$100 monthly versus \$500 monthly.

Vice President/Financial Secretary Report, Marvin Booker: Booker read his financial report for March. He showed the food drive T-shirt for this year. The prices will remain the same, and the deadline for orders and money is April 18. He also listed which stations will take their food to other stations, and where they will take it to.

Presidents Comments, John McLaughlin: Last labor management meeting was fine, but the postmaster did not follow up afterwards. The PM did confirm that there is no set return from the street time. The district manager visited stations with John, but announced his arrival prior to, so they had time to clean up. John had to go to Earth City to get the signage for the rally. We currently have 30 Republicans supporting the Postal Service fight.

Respectfully Submitted,
Richard Brown, Recording Secretary



NALC Fact Sheet

Department of Legislative and Political Affairs — National Association of Letter Carriers, AFL-CIO
100 Indiana Ave. NW — Washington, DC 20001-2144 — 202-393-4695 — www.nalc.org © NALC

Protect Our Letter Carriers Act (H.R. 1065/ S. 463)

Since the inception of the nation's post office 250 years ago, letter carriers have delivered to every community on every street in the United States without being the targets of violence. In recent years, that has changed.

Between 2019 and 2023 (the most recent data available), the number of serious crimes against postal employees nearly doubled. In 2023, postal inspectors opened 1,367 cases—542 assaults, 628 robberies and 197 burglaries—against postal employees in almost 500 metropolitan areas. Tragically, five letter carriers have been murdered while dutifully doing their jobs since 2022.

An increase in robberies—which have increased an astonishing sevenfold—is the primary driver for the overall increase in severe crime cases over the period, according to U.S. Postal Inspection Service (USPIS) data. Due to the solitary nature of their work and the sensitive equipment they carry, city letter carriers are the target in 90 percent of these robberies. More than two-thirds of these attacks involve a firearm or other weapon. Unfortunately, nearly every day, we learn of other instances of letter carriers being assaulted, robbed, and even murdered while delivering mail and essentials.

The Protect Our Letter Carriers Act (POLCA) would devalue key infrastructure, deter these crimes through increased prosecution and sentencing guidelines, and keep letter carriers safe on the job. The nation's 180,000 city letter carriers deliver medications, checks, ballots, packages and other essential mail that Americans depend on. It is imperative that America's mail is protected and, most importantly, that the letter carriers who deliver it are, too.

Secure and modernize postal infrastructure

POLCA would provide \$7 billion in funding for the Postal Service to secure its infrastructure, including the installation of high-security collection boxes as well as the replacement of items carried by letter carriers with more secure electronic versions. The funding would be appropriated over five years, \$1.4 billion annually in Fiscal Years 2026-2030.

A recent audit of USPIS data found that 52 percent of robberies of a letter carrier involved the theft of postal infrastructure items that

have become highly sought after on the black market in recent years. Similarly, the Postal Service has reported increased high-volume mail theft incidents from mail receptacles, including blue collection boxes.

In response, the Postal Service has begun reinforcing its infrastructure, including items carried by letter carriers on the job. The bill would provide the necessary funding to implement this updated technology nationwide. When key infrastructure is devalued and more secure, letter carriers will be safer on their routes.

Increase prosecution rates

Alarming, while crimes against letter carriers have persisted, arrests and prosecution against the alleged perpetrators have not. Though the number of assaults and robberies against letter carriers has surged in recent years, the number of arrests and convictions for these crimes has markedly decreased, according to USPIS. Due to workload and other priorities, these cases often sit on district attorneys' desks, are not federally prosecuted, and the alleged assailants are not held accountable.

POLCA would require the attorney general to promptly appoint an assistant U.S. attorney in each judicial district to prioritize any case that involves an assault or crime against a letter carrier. Their principal responsibility in the district would be coordinating and supervising the investigation and prosecution of these alleged crimes.

Harsher sentencing for robbery and assault of a letter carrier

Even though letter carriers who are victims of these crimes are federal employees in uniform on the job, under current law, the sentencing guidelines for those found guilty of these crimes are overly weak and permissive. In 2024, a San Francisco defendant was convicted of robbing a letter carrier at gunpoint and sentenced to only 30 days' imprisonment, while in Mississippi a defendant was sentenced to eight years.

This bill would standardize and strengthen sentencing guidelines for these crimes, ensuring that they are treated in the same manner as assaults on federal law enforcement officers.

NALC supports the Protect Our Letter Carriers Act, which would modernize key infrastructure, deter these crimes through increased prosecution and sentencing guidelines, and keep letter carriers safe as they deliver essential mail and packages to every community in the country.

Sponsored by Reps. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA) and Greg Landsman (D-OH) and Sens. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Josh Hawley (R-MO)

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Four Fenton letters carriers called it a career on March 28. Offering best wishes are L to R Br. 343 President John McLaughlin, retirees Chris Calgher, Dan Hansen, former Br. 343 President Bill Lister, Pete Kim and Gary Vaughn.

John H. Haake BRANCH 343

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MOUND CITY CARRIER

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RETIRED MEMBERS MEETING

LETTER CARRIERS BUILDING
 1600 S Broadway

No Meeting in May

Tom Schulte, Chairman636-255-3057
 Ray Breakfield, Vice Chairman.....573-358-5266
 Mike Chenot/Kevin Welby, Treasurers ..314-779-3356
 Tom Schulte, Recording Secretary636-255-3057

Deadline for articles for the JUNE issue is MAY 12, 2025

★ ★ ★

REGULAR BRANCH MEETING THURSDAY, MAY 8, 2025 7:30 pm

★ ★ ★

SHOP STEWARDS MEETING THURSDAY, JUNE 5, 2025 7:30 PM

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