

MOUND CITY CARRIER

Official Publication of Branch 343

2020 General Excellence
Award Winning Publication



St. Louis, Missouri
Chartered 1892

Volume 76, No. 3

"Diversity is our Strength and Unity is our Power"

March 2025

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

STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS: REGION 5 RAP SESSION WITH PRESIDENT RENFROE

NALC President Brian Renfro recently addressed the Region 5 RAP Session in Kansas City, Missouri. He discussed the contract, impending arbitration, and political legislation including the possible consequences of the recent national election on both the USPS and NALC.

CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

President Renfro reported that 32% of active members voted on the Tentative Agreement (TA), with 70% opposing and 30% in favor. He described the NALC's National Constitutional requirement to approach the USPS within 15 days post-rejection as perfunctory. He stated he would be "shocked" if they were to reach a new agreement warranting a second ratification vote. He emphasized that a work stoppage is illegal and off the table.

The NALC's bargaining positions, aligned with resolutions from past conventions, include:

- Eliminating the city carrier assistant (CCA) position (absent from the TA)
- Securing full cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) (absent from the TA)
- Implementing across-the-board Table 1 pay (absent from the TA)
- Achieving significant raises (absent from the TA)

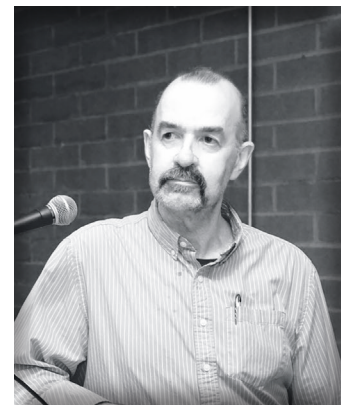
ARBITRATION PROCESS

Awaiting dates from Arbitrator Nolan, President

Renfro noted that the arbitration process could span 20-25 days, with intermittent open days, and cautioned that it would not be quick. He anticipated some media attention on the arbitration, partly due to the new administration's stance on collective bargaining agreements within the federal government. Additionally, he mentioned a potential joint route adjustment process by summer.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

- 1. Social Security Fairness Act:** Passed, but implementation details may take up to a year.
- 2. Protecting Our Letter Carriers Act:** Set for reintroduction in the House, aims to enhance carrier safety on the street.
- 3. Federal Retirement Fairness Act:** To be reintroduced, allowing carriers with non-career USPS time (e.g., casual, TE, CCA) to buy back this time for retirement credit.
- 4. USPS Retirement Investments:** Proposed legislation to permit USPS to invest retirement funds beyond government securities for potentially higher growth.



5. USPS Borrowing Limit Increase: Legislation will be needed to raise the current \$15 billion borrowing cap.

NEW ADMINISTRATION IMPLICATIONS

Despite the NALC's relatively strong position, President Renfro highlighted concerns with the new administration's proposed budget cuts affecting pay, benefits, and job protections, including:

- Elimination of the Social Security Supplement for those who retire before age 62,
- Increased FERS contributions for all employees to 4.4%,
- Giving employees a "choice" between being an *at-will* employee or to retain civil service protections but to take a pay cut to retain those protections,
- Eliminating the current health insurance model and replacing it with a voucher system, which will cost more and cover less.

President Renfro noted other things to watch with this new administration.

1. The recent Department of Labor heat safety standards introduced under the last administration are on hold now and are not likely to be reinstated. These standards are parallel with the HIPPA standards. We are the only developed country in the world that does not have any heat standards for working outside.
2. The Secretary of Commerce nominee Howard Lutnick is a fan of postal privatization.
3. Next Generation Delivery Vehicles (NGDV) funding may be in jeopardy due to the contract with Oshkosh calling for 60% electric vehicles and the new administration has made noise about canceling the contract.

These are just some cold facts and how elections have consequences. Two more things that may or may not be bad for the NALC when it comes to our postmaster general, Louis DeJoy. NALC Pres Renfro informed us that DeJoy is telling the administration to leave the USPS alone. Secondly, it has been reported that DeJoy is beginning his exit from his present job of systematically destroying the post office.

The timing of our contractual arbitration, our current PMG essentially resigning under fire, and the new administration dismantling every federal agency they can get their hands on, gives me considerable pause for 2025.

LOCAL NEWS

Our postmaster has assured me that there are no mandated end times at any stations. She explained to me that carriers are being held to the time in DOIS to be back by. She believes that if it takes a carrier any time over their forecasted time, they are simply stealing from the post office (i.e., stationary time). Your supervisor/manager will inform you that you "should" be back by such and such time.

I strongly urge you to ask them if that return time is a **direct instruction**. If it is **not an instruction**, tell them you will do your best, and if you do go past their "should time," you will message them through your scanner. If they say **it is a direct instruction**, then follow the instruction. If you cannot deliver your entire assignment within the "should time," return at your "should time" and fill out a *PS Form 1571 Undelivered Mail Report* to protect yourself from being charged with delaying/obstructing mail.

I would like to simply remind the postmaster and all of her underlings of the M-01664 which states:

*The **Delivery Operations Information System (DOIS)** is a management tool for estimating a carrier's daily workload, but it **doesn't change the reporting requirements** outlined in Handbook M-41, the supervisor's scheduling responsibilities in Handbook M-39, or the responsibilities detailed in Section 28 of Handbook M-41. The M-01664 states that **DOIS projections should not be the sole determinant of a carrier's leaving or return time, or daily workload.***

It is only February and it looks like 2025 is shaping up to be a very, very long year already.

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.

The following stations
were represented at the
February 2025
Shop Stewards Meeting

Affton	Mackenzie Pointe
Arnold	Maryville Gardens
Carrier Square	Mariam Oldham
Clayton	Normandy
Creve Coeur	Sappington
Gaffney	South County
Gravois	Southwest
Harriet Woods	Weathers
Jennings	West County
Kirkwood	



**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.

Name _____
Address _____
City/State _____
Zip _____

MOUND CITY CARRIER
Published monthly by:
Branch 343, NALC
1600 South Broadway
St. Louis, MO 63104-3806

Send change of address to:
Branch 343
1600 S. Broadway
St. Louis, MO 63104

100% Union Honor Roll

AFFTON	SALEM
CHOUTEAU	SOUTH COUNTY
CUBA	ST. CLAIR
DES PERES	WARRENTON
FREDRICKTOWN	WASHINGTON
JENNINGS	WENTZVILLE
MAPLEWOOD	WEST COUNTY
PIEDMONT	

BRANCH LEGAL PLAN

Advice and Consultation on
General Practice and Civil Actions.



JOHN H. GOFFSTEIN
ATTORNEY

GOFFSTEIN LAW, L.L.C.

225 SOUTH MERAMEC, SUITE 402
ST. LOUIS (CLAYTON), MO 63105
TELEPHONE: 314-932-1919
FACSIMILE: 314-932-5048
JOHN@GOFFSTEINLAW.COM
GOFFSTEINLAW.COM



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

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

Mar 13	Regular Branch Meeting
Apr 2	Retiree Meeting
Apr 3	Shop Stewards Meeting
Apr 5-6	29th Annual Reel in the Cure Bass Tournament for MDA
Apr 10	Regular Branch Meeting
May 3	Ole Timers Day (Letter Carriers Hall see ad)
May 10	NALC Food Drive

Executive Vice President ... *By Brian Litteken*

THE POWER OF UNIONS: STANDING UP FOR OTHERS AND THE IMPORTANCE OF WRITTEN STATEMENTS



Unions have long been a cornerstone of workers' rights, providing a collective voice to advocate for fair wages, safe working conditions, and equitable treatment. The essence of a union lies in its strength through unity, where individual workers band together to form a formidable entity capable of challenging unfair practices and negotiating for better terms. This unity is not just about shared goals but also about standing up for one another, ensuring that every member feels supported and protected.

One of the fundamental principles of unionism is solidarity — standing up for each other. This principle is rooted in the belief that an injury to one is an injury to all. When union members witness harm or injustice inflicted upon a fellow member, it becomes their collective duty to address and rectify the situation. This culture of mutual support fosters a sense of belonging and security, empowering workers to speak out against mistreatment without fear of retaliation.

In such scenarios, the importance of written statements cannot be overstated. Written statements serve as powerful tools in documenting and addressing harm to union members. They provide a clear and formal record of events, ensuring that the grievances are acknowledged and addressed in a structured manner. Moreover, written statements can serve as evidence in grievance proceedings, strengthening the case for justice and accountability.

Witness statements play a crucial role in the union grievance process. They serve as vital pieces of evidence that can substantiate the claims of the grievant, providing an objective and detailed account of the events in question. Here's why witness statements are essential to the success of a union grievance.

Establishing Credibility

Witness statements help establish the credibility of the grievance by corroborating the grievant's account of events. When multiple witnesses provide consistent and detailed statements, it adds weight to the grievance, making it harder for management to dismiss or refute the claims. Credibility is key in any dispute resolution process, and witness statements are instrumental in building a credible case.

Providing Objective Evidence

Witness statements offer objective evidence of the events that led to the grievance. These statements are particularly valuable because they come from individuals who observed the incident firsthand and are not directly involved in the dispute. This objectivity can help ensure that the grievance process is fair and impartial, and that decisions are based on factual information rather than personal biases and interpretations.

Enhancing the Investigation

Witness statements provide detailed information that can enhance the investigation of the grievance. They can offer insights into the context, sequence of events, and specific actions that were involved. This information helps stewards to reconstruct the incident accurately and identify any patterns of systemic issues that may need to be addressed.

Strengthening the Case

A well-documented grievance with multiple witness statements is more likely to result in a favorable outcome for the grievant. Witness statements can help strengthen the case by providing additional evidence and supporting the grievant's claims. They can also help counter any arguments or evidence presented by management, making it more difficult for the supervisor or manager to dismiss the grievance or avoid accountability.

Encouraging Accountability

When carriers provide witness statements, it encourages accountability within the workplace. Knowing that their actions may be observed and documented by carriers can deter management from engaging in contract violations. This creates a more transparent and accountable work environment, where workers feel empowered to speak out against injustices and violations of the national agreement.

Prevention

By highlighting instances of harm, written statements can help identify patterns of systemic issues. This awareness allows the union steward to file grievances to prevent similar incidents in the future, ensuring a safer and more equitable environment for all carriers at the station.

NALC statement on reported executive order attacking Postal Service

NALC President Brian L. Renfro released the following statement regarding reports from *The Washington Post* that President Donald Trump plans to issue an executive order firing the members of the Postal Board of Governors and placing the agency under the control of the Commerce Department:



The 280,000 active and retired members of the National Association of Letter Carriers have a message to deliver to the White House: **Hands off the Postal Service.**

Every day, 200,000 active city letter carriers uphold the Postal Service's constitutionally mandated universal service obligation, **delivering 376 million pieces of mail and packages to nearly 169 million delivery points nationwide.** USPS is central to a \$1.92 trillion mailing industry. U.S. letter carriers deliver 44% of the world's mail.

No private shipper guarantees or offers this unmatched universal service. Without our work, **51.5 million households and businesses in rural communities would have no guaranteed deliveries** of medications, checks, ballots, and other essential mail and packages.

The reported executive order **jeopardizes the jobs of 640,000 postal employees, more than 73,000 of whom are veterans,** and would affect the 7.9 million people employed in the mailing industry. While the potential consequences are deeply alarming, these proposals are also **unconstitutional and illegal.**

The Postal Service is older than our country and is enshrined in the Constitution. It is a service for the public good funded by postage and stamp sales, **not taxpayer dollars.**

The Constitution, carefully crafted by our nation's founders, gives Congress, **not the president,** a key role in setting postal policy. In fact, the Postal Reorganization Act of 1970 removed the Post Office Department from the president's Cabinet and created USPS as the independent agency that exists today.

Americans should see this reported executive order for what it is: **a direct attack on USPS employees, our universal service, and every citizen who relies on the Postal Service.**

The public consistently ranks the Postal Service as one of **the most trusted government agencies.** That's because Americans can count on their letter carrier in every community nationwide.

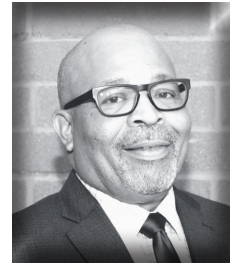
We are fighting like hell against any privatization efforts or reorganizational mandates. We will do everything in our power to ensure we continue upholding our universal service obligation that Americans depend on through a strong and public Postal Service.

RSS

Vice President Financial Secretary

... By Marvin Booker

PEOPLE NEED US!



Saturday, May 10, marks the 33rd anniversary of one of America's great days of giving — the National Association of Letter Carriers Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive. Letter carriers across the country collect non-perishable food donations from our customers. These donations go directly to local food pantries to provide food for people in the areas we serve who need help.

Over the course of its 32-year history, the food drive has collected well over 1.9 billion pounds of food, thanks to a Postal Service universal delivery network that spans the entire nation, including Puerto Rico, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The need for food donations is greater than ever. Food assistance programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), provide essential support to millions of low-income Americans. However, these programs face an uncertain future due to budget cuts, economic challenges, political debates and shifting priorities. As food prices rise and economic inequality grows, the demand for assistance increases daily.

In addition, federal workers are currently facing significant uncertainty under President Donald Trump's administration. In an effort to reduce the size of the federal government, the administration has implemented widespread layoffs and firings across various agencies. These actions have led to concerns about job security, financial stability and continuity of essential public services.

Currently, more than 42 million Americans are unsure where their next meal is coming from. More than 12 million are children who feel hunger's impact on their overall health and ability to perform in school. And nearly 5.2 million seniors over age 60 are food insecure, with many who live on fixed incomes and are often too embarrassed to ask for help.

The food drive's timing is crucial. Food banks and pantries often receive most of their donations during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday seasons. By springtime, many pantries are depleted, entering the summer low on

supplies at a time when many school breakfast and lunch programs are not available to children in need.

Preparation and coordination for Food Drive Day will be challenging. This will be the first food drive for many of our members. As much as we would like every letter carrier to take part — and a sizable majority of them do — some letter carriers opt not to take part in the national food drive, for a variety of reasons.

Despite the challenges, I encourage everyone to participate because of the important role we're playing in the fight against hunger in this country. What makes the food drive truly successful, year after year, is the efforts of letter carriers, other postal employees, postal customers, community volunteers and many more.

There will also be a need for food drive coordinators at every station to help with the weeks of up-front preparation, such as explaining why we do what we do, to those who have never done it, making sure that information about the food drive is disseminated within the station, drumming up support for it and for recruiting volunteers to help.

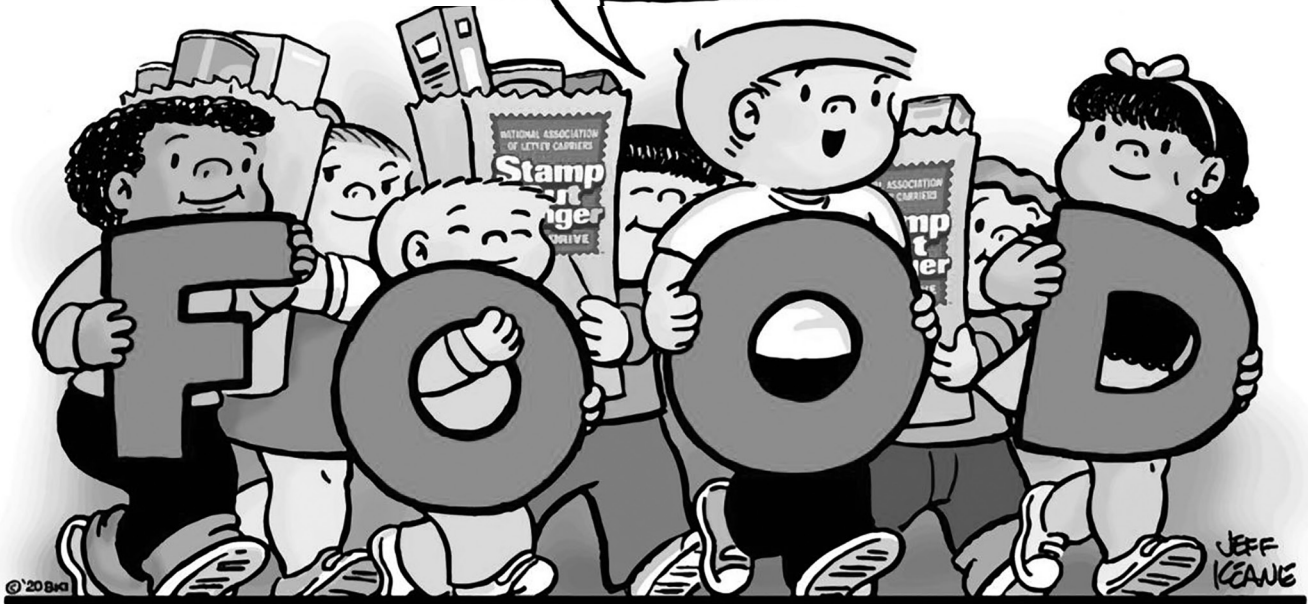
While food drive day may be one of the most challenging days of the year for letter carriers, it's also one of the most gratifying since each bag of donations represents a meal for a family in need. Additionally, some stations barbecue and invite retirees and family members in to help. We also offer volunteer certificates for anyone needing community service hours. It is a great opportunity to build camaraderie amongst co-workers.

Please take this opportunity to give back to the communities that we serve on this one day during the year. As letter carriers we are keenly aware of the meaning of the word "service." A quote by Marian Wright Edelman captures the true essence of the word.

"Service is the rent we pay for being. It is the very purpose of life, and not something you do in your spare time."

Until next time, be safe and be professional.

THIS SPELLS
HELP FOR LOTS OF
FAMILIES THIS
YEAR!



LETTER CARRIERS' FOOD DRIVE SECOND SATURDAY IN MAY

PUT YOUR NON-PERISHABLE DONATION IN A BAG BY YOUR MAILBOX.
WE'LL DELIVER IT TO A LOCAL FOOD BANK.

National Partners



Recording Secretary ... *By Richard Brown*



Happy St. Patrick's Day to all and may the luck of the Irish grace those who may believe in the same.

ROUTE INSPECTIONS

By the time you read this, the St. Louis area may have already started the route inspection process. Southwest Post Office is slated to be the first office visited, beginning March 8, and will run for two consecutive weeks. West County, Maryville and Town & Country are scheduled to follow, respectively. One thing to remember is that inspections would not take place in your office unless management thought they could take a couple of routes out.

This process has gone back to the way known by most carriers. You will be followed or walked with three days of the week by a route examiner and the mail will be counted every day. The examiners doing the following and counting of the mail are not pros at this process, but some of them may have participated in examining routes in the past.

There are a couple of things that should take place prior to the actual start of the inspection.

1. Unit/Route Review = verifying the conditions of the office to include the route cases and make any corrections, route(s) out of adjustment, etc. ... Things that warrant the inspection to take place
2. Dry Run = Instruct all carriers on how to complete the PS 1838-c

The unit review is just taking place and management is required to go over this review with each carrier. If that does not happen, notify your shop steward.

A few things to remember. The examiner has no reason to talk to you about your assignment, unless you are doing something unsafe. They do not know your route or daily activities, so let them know when you are taking a break and when you are going to lunch. Also, they have already gathered prior data regarding your route/daily activities, and they are supposed to compare that to what happens during the week of and the week after the inspection to determine what is most representative of your route.

In the end, routes that are found to be out of adjustment should be adjusted to as near eight hours as possible. You must verify the information put before you, when consultations are conducted to make sure everything is documented properly.

We are hopeful that training will be conducted at the Union Hall prior to the inspections start dates. Once a date and time has been

established, the stewards will be notified of the same. All stations that are in line to be inspected are encouraged to attend.

SERVICE

The word service is part of the company name, but it seems to evade our customer at every turn. The Postal Service has reduced the service it provides to our customers faster than it can get a package across town. I have been waiting on a certified item for 21 days now, which was mailed from Clayton, Missouri. This is happening because management has decided to make Amazon its priority instead of prioritizing the mail.

The price of stamps, and the cost of mailing a package has increased regularly over the last two years. Yet the service has decreased. Pretty soon the customer may not be able to afford to buy stamps or mail anything with the Postal Service. This may in turn drive away business, possibly putting the company in the red instead of profiting.

I say all of this because the aforementioned issues will eventually have a trickle-down effect on the letter carrier. The "get more done in less time" theory is what management is attempting to force on us. Well, we can see how that is working out. Mail is being curtailed daily in most stations simply for management to capture undertime.

Management is instructing carriers to leave their mail so they can deliver mail on open routes. If this happens in your office, please don't be afraid to write a statement and be as specific as possible. Also, complete a PS Form 1571 for curtailed mail management instructed you to leave behind. If you have photos to go along with the statement, please send them to your steward or the branch president.

We must do all we can as letter carriers, to provide the best possible service to our customers once we get the mail in our hands. I know management has been stressing a "made up end tour time", usually 7 or 8 p.m. Follow their instructions, but be sure to document any undelivered mail on PS Form 1571.

If you don't have overtime on another assignment and still believe you can't complete your assignment in eight hours, fill out a PS Form 3996 requesting overtime to get the route delivered. Follow whatever instruction you are given and at least you know you have tried everything possible to get the customer their mail and/or package in a timely manner. The weather sometimes prevents a delivery, and you must make that judgement call. After all, we are here to serve the customer so please provide that service.

Who is Responsible!

Health Benefits Plan/OWCP ... By Barry Linan



March greetings to all of the brothers and sisters of NALC Branch 343. February was a cold month for delivering mail and here's hoping March warms up a bit.

Did you see that the governor of Utah just signed a bill, HB 267 passed by Utah's Legislature, that bans collective bargaining with any "public employee union?" So, Utah is now banned by law from negotiating contracts with teachers, firefighters, police, and government worker unions. Similar anti collective bargaining laws are already in effect in North and South Carolina. Don't think that it can't happen here too people. Elections have consequences and you need to be voting for politicians that show support for your union job.

HBP NEWS: One year ago, I wrote about why some members might have a reason to opt out of the SilverScript Part D (PDP EGWP) prescription drug plan. **Now in 2025 you still have the option to opt out, but not really.** OPM decided to make a "rule" on October 24, 2024, for postal employees or retirees enrolled in a PSHB plan in 2025, but not for all the other federal enrollees still in the FEHB plans. Those who opt out of their Part D prescription drug plan (SilverScript) would not be allowed to revert back to using the regular prescription drug benefit (CVS/Caremark) from their PSHB plan. The only exception to this is if you opt out and enroll directly into your plan's offered Medicare Advantage plan (MAPD EGWP). That is because an Advantage plan is considered a Medicare Part C plan and has its own prescription drug benefit. So, unless you are switching to your FEHB plan's offered Medicare Advantage plan, **by opting out of your offered Part D plan, you would lose all prescription drug coverage!**

I have warned the members in attendance about this opting out issue at the last several Branch 343 retiree and branch meetings. I don't understand why OPM decided to make an arbitrary rule change that onerously affects some of our members. Just for reference, the Postal Service Reform Act of 2024 did require all the PSHB plans to **offer** a Medicare Part D prescription drug plan, but it did not require that all PSHB retirees be **enrolled** in a Part D plan. I think we need to make

our voices heard and express our displeasure to OPM and our own HBP about this unnecessary OPM "rule" that could cost some of our members thousands of dollars!

OWCP News: If you are filing an OWCP claim for an injury on duty and are not sure what to do, remember at least these two things.

1. When you request medical treatment your supervisor is required to issue a **Form CA-16 Authorization for Treatment** to **your chosen** physician or facility. Keep a copy of the CA-16 and a copy of the attached Attending Physician's Report. You want to make sure both these documents get copied to your claim file with OWCP.
2. File a **Form CA-1 Report of Traumatic Injury** documenting your injury and how, when, and where it happened. Your supervisor is required to give you the Form CA-1 to be filed in writing or provide computer access so you can create an ECOMP account and file your CA-1 online with OWCP. You go to **ecomp.dol.gov** to create an ECOMP account. You should do this anyway when filing an injury claim so you can monitor your claim status and upload documents to your file. Do not rely upon your supervisor to upload your medical documents to your OWCP file! Many times supervisors fail at this most basic requirement, and you suffer the consequences.

Once you have established an ECOMP account you can monitor your claim status online. You can also upload documents to your file thru ECOMP. It is best to do this by scanning the documents into a Word or PDF file on your computer. After naming and saving that document file, you can then upload it thru ECOMP. It is a fairly simple process once you have done it a few times. *I do not recommend taking JPG pictures of documents with your cell phone and uploading those onto ECOMP.* Too many times I have seen bad images that are unreadable. Once you have uploaded documents, review them in your file by clicking on "Case Imaging."

Notes from the Managing Editor

... By Tom Schulte



ORGANIZED LABOR BACK IN THE CROSSHAIRS

Hardly a week into his second term President Trump fired National Labor Relations Board General Council Jennifer Abruzzo, who was a powerful advocate for workers during her tenure as an appointee; and board member Gwynne Wilcox, whose illegal dismissal leaves the NLRB without quorum; signaling tough times ahead for organized labor.

The firings effectively halt the independent NLRB, whose task is to protect the rights of working people. The firing of Wilcox, who was confirmed by the U.S. Senate in September 2023 to a second five-year term is unprecedented and explicitly violated the law, the AFL-CIO said.

Liz Shuler, president of the AFL-CIO stated, "President Trump's firing of NLRB member Gwynne Wilcox is illegal and will have immediate consequences for working people.

"By leaving only two board members in their posts, the president has effectively shut down the National Labor Relations Boards' operations. Leaving the workers it defends on their own in the face of union-busting and retaliation. Alongside the firing of NLRB General Council Jennifer Abruzzo, these moves will make it easier for bosses to violate the law and trample on workers' legal rights on the job and fundamental freedom to organize.

"Ms. Wilcox has already indicated she will challenge her firing, and we fully expect she will succeed in the courts and be restored to her position so that she can continue to be a critical pro-worker voice on the NLRB." Her term was set to run until 2028 before she could legally be removed.

Jake Hummel president of the Missouri AFL-CIO stated, "It was expected that the president would get rid of whoever the chairperson was, but he did not have the authority to fire them for a board term that didn't end until 2028.

"What that has effectively done is leave two openings on the NLRB, and now there are only two sitting members. That means every union election and every case that has been in front of the NLRB with timelines coming up for some of the decisions that are going to be made are now effectively frozen. There could be no work done at the National Labor Relations Board because of this until such time

as the president appoints new members to that or the legal process plays out for the existing board members that were terminated."

The American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) have joined government watchdog groups Public Citizen and the State Democracy Defenders Fund in filing lawsuits against the so-called Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) arguing that it violates a law requiring any advice presented by federal advisory committees be objective and accessible to the public.

The lawsuits charge that President Trump and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) are violating the Federal Advisory Committee Act because DOGE's members do not have balanced viewpoints, their meetings are held in secret, and its records are not available to the public.

The members of DOGE do not represent the interests of everyday Americans and are not a department of the United States government. DOGE will be considering cuts to government agencies and programs that protect, health, benefits, consumer finance, and product safety. Its work and recommendations thus may endanger hundreds of thousands of everyday people whom they represent.

DOGE's mission to slash government regulations and cut expenditures puts at risk important consumer safeguards and public protections. "It fails to consider how to more efficiently regulate companies to better protect consumers, how to eliminate wasteful and inefficient subsidies and inefficient public investments to make America stronger," said Public Citizen co-President Lisa Gilbert.

"This is not about cutting redundant staff; this is about billionaires gutting important programs that American citizens across the country rely on," said Norm Eisen, co-founder of Democracy Defenders Fund. "We are a country where everyone is beholden to the rule of law. No one, no matter the size of their checkbook or the office they hold, is exempt from following our laws."

Strap on your hats, it's going to be a battle for the next four years.

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

REGION 5 RAP SESSION

This year's event has come and gone. But overall, it was a success in most people's minds that participated in the event survey. My staff and I have already discussed what went right and what went wrong, reviewed your feedback and started planning for next year's event. As always, we will do our best to make next year's event even better than this year's by instituting some of the feedback suggestions we've received.

Many of you have commented on breaks between classes, more interactive training, a meet and greet on Thursday evening and better distribution of class times and places. We will address these issues next year and hopefully make changes for the better.

The past two years we have utilized the QR code to sign up for classes. When you use the QR code, the class times and tentative locations are on the sign-up page. I also distribute the registration times and locations to the branch presidents via email and I will continue to do that, in addition to making some of the suggested changes we've received in the feedback concerning times, classrooms and registration. We also intend to increase the size and number of signs to better direct participants during our event.

Our hope is to have two full days of training that will enable us to better serve the members of Region 5. This will allow us to extend lunches to one and a half hours each day and end our main session by approximately 4:30 p.m. on Friday and Saturday evenings. In addition, this will give participants time to move between classes, take a small break and give class instructors plenty of time to teach their respective classes.

Thanks to all of you that have given us feedback so we can continue to make this event better.

REGION 5 SOLIDARITY AWARD



This year's winner of the Region 5 Frank Ferro Solidarity Award is Jon Vance from Lincoln, Nebraska. Jon was given the award posthumously. It will be my pleasure to present the award to Jon's family at the Lincoln retiree luncheon this spring. Jon was a steward, vice president and president of Branch 8 in Lincoln, Nebraska, for many years. Jon's larger than life personality, physical stature and booming voice made him a force to reckon with. Jon's love of his union extended not only to the NALC but to the Nebraska AFL-CIO and Lincoln Central Labor Union as well. His leadership and desire to help others is reflected in those he mentored and in Branch 8's leadership going back more than two decades. A well-deserved award.

HERO OF THE YEAR



Region 5 is proud of Topeka Branch 10 member Jerry Loney who is the Western Region NALC Hero of the Year recipient. Jerry Loney was returning to his vehicle when a man covered in blood approached him asking for help. Jerry immediately called 911 and began to apply first aid care to the man, applying tourniquets to both wrists with the assistance of the 911 operator. Without the quick thinking and action by Jerry, the man would certainly have perished. Emergency responders thanked him for saving the man's life. Jerry, thanks for being there and being the person you are. Region 5 is proud that you have been selected as a Hero of the Year. You represent the very best of all letter carriers!

Until next time stay safe out there.

Retiree Report

... By Guest Recording Secretary Mike Chenot



Chairman Tom Schulte called the meeting to order at 12:36 p.m. Chaplain John Haake led us in prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance. Tom thanked Rich Rhyner for providing the delicious lunch and also thanked Glenda and Geno Iberg for providing the desserts.

Volunteers: Tom announced that Geno Iberg will be providing lunch for the April retiree meeting.

Sick Call: Get-well cards were signed and sent out to Ray Breakfield and Ken Weldele.

Introduction of new members: The retirees welcomed newly retired South County member Wayne "Hoss" Englert.

Minutes from the last meeting: In the absence of guest recording secretary Nicki L. Prado, the minutes from the previous meeting were read by Tom Schulte.

Treasurers Report: Treasurer Mike Chenot reported a checking balance after expenses of \$1,035.36 and cash on hand of \$518.

NBAs Report: RAA Larrissa Parde spoke about the current threats to privatize the Postal Service by the Trump administration and that the NALC is going to conduct a nationwide day of protest. Titled "Fight Like Hell" the rally will take place Sunday, March 23, in front of the Main Post Office, 1720 Market St., beginning at 1 p.m.

Branch 343 Presidents Report: President McLaughlin spoke about the National Rally Day on March 23. John asked all the retirees to please attend. The local has ordered 250 shirts with the "Fight Like Hell" logo to be given to all participants. Food will also be provided. Rally begins at 1 p.m.

Legislative Report: Mike encouraged the retirees to contact their congressmen and senators regarding H.R.1065 and S.5463 Protecting Our Letter Carriers Act. Mike warned the retirees to listen to the rhetoric being used by the current administration to "deceive, distract and divide the country. Make no mistake, the Republicans are going to try and privatize the Postal Service.

Chairmans Report: Tom spoke about Brother Tom Harman's passing and that copies of the tribute edition to Tom in the February Mound City Carrier were mailed to his wife. A vote was taken not to hold the retiree meeting scheduled for May 7 because of the annual Ole Timers Day celebration on May 3. Tom also requested volunteers to help on Ole Timers Day.

New Business: It was agreed by the membership to change the name of our annual Retiree of the Year Award to the Tom Harman Retiree of the Year award.

Deceased Members: A moment of silence was held for Vern Harrington and Tim Birkett.

50/50 won by RAA Larrissa Parde who donated it to help sponsor a hole for the upcoming MDA Golf Tournament.

Closing Prayer: Offered by Chaplain John Haake.

Meeting Adjourned: 1:33 p.m.

PLEASE NOTE !

There will be no monthly retiree meeting in May.

The monthly meeting will not take place because of the annual Ole Timers Day celebration which will be held on May 3.

1930

96th Annual Ole Timers Day

2025

JOHN H. HAAKE BRANCH 343
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS

HONORING
RETIRED MEMBERS AND PAST PRESIDENTS

SATURDAY, MAY 3, 2025
BRANCH 343 UNION HALL
1600 S. BROADWAY

LUNCH SERVED AT NOON
REFRESHMENTS UNTIL 3 P.M.

JOHN McLAUGHLIN
PRESIDENT
Branch 343, NALC



TOM SCHULTE
CHAIRMAN
of the Retirees



South County ... *By Matt Gleiforst*

Hello from South County. As of writing this we have voted down the initial tentative agreement by an unprecedented margin. I am not sure whether round two of negotiations offered anything better, but I have a feeling that we are headed to interest arbitration. I will not lie and say that I am super confident. In fact, I am downright nervous. There is no guarantee that an arbitrator will side with us, but I will say this, **"I am incredibly proud of our membership for making their voices heard."** For far too long the Postal Service has been abusing our craft with constant micromanaging and bullying of us carriers. They cry about loss of money, when it is the upper management decisions that are causing the Postal Service to lose money. For too long we have been dealing with the consequences of the Postal Service's mismanagement. If we go to arbitration, whether we do better or worse than the initial tentative agreement, I for one have no regrets in voting that insulting offer down. I am still confused how that was their best offer after nearly two years of negotiations. We certainly deserve better than what the Postal Service seems to think of us.

I have stated before that if you have decent management in your station, you should let your bosses know that you appreciate them keeping the workplace civil. I will not speak for everyone at my station, but right now I have a lot of respect for my supervisors. They generally seem to try and

treat carriers with respect. This really does go a long way. I find that when they are struggling, I actually want to help them out. If we are down routes and the overtime list is maxed out, I have no problem volunteering my services as long as I do not have something else I need to do after work. A lot of damage has been done to my station in the past because of a tyrant manager we had for a couple of years. But I am hopeful that we are on a path to carriers and supervisors treating each other with dignity and respect again.

Unfortunately, these tyrant managers still exist all around the Postal Service. I have heard that at one station the manager is refusing to give carriers a PS Form 3996 when requesting overtime. He will instead give them an attitude and say they do not need overtime. If this happens at your station, immediately file a grievance. It is the carrier's job requirement to notify management if they need overtime and that is done with a PS Form 3996. Once notified verbally, the supervisor or manager **MUST** provide the carrier with this form. If they wish to approve it or disapprove it, that is up to them, but they cannot refuse you the Form 3996. This particular manager is simply acting like a petulant child and has no business leading a station.

At a different station I heard a story of a manager who was short staffed and needed to draft. This particular station was short

staffed because this manager came into the station a couple of years ago and made everyone so miserable that the majority of the experienced carriers bid to different stations. I even saw a community page on Facebook calling out this manager by name. The entire community is aware that this tyrant of a manager is the reason for their terrible service. Anyway, realizing he wouldn't have his routes covered, this manager sent an Express Mail envelope to a carrier's house with a draft letter in it for the carrier to come in on their weekend off. How asinine! This manager wasted resources and time trying to intimidate a carrier to come in on their day off. That is not how drafting works. It must be done prior to the carrier leaving the previous day. If this ever happens to you, just remember that even if you sign for an Express, it doesn't mean you opened it and read what was inside. This was just a bully trying to make a younger carrier scared into coming in on their day off even though it is the manager's abuse and mismanagement that created his predicament!

These bullies believe they are ruling with an iron fist. It is up to us to realize that their iron fist is simply a thin piece of plastic painted silver. We must learn our rights and stand up to these tyrants that are destroying our service and work environments. Until next time keep your head held high and keep surviving!



Determining Safe Delivery ... By Richard Thurman

1. What are the general rules for a carrier's accessibility to a mailbox?

Postal Service employees will make **every reasonable, safe attempt to deliver mail to the addressee during and after a storm.**

For successful mail delivery during and after storms, we ask for the cooperation of our customers so that our employees return home safely at the end of each work day. Carriers are not required to deliver to locations where safety issues — such as icy steps, snow-packed path, or icy overhangs — create perilous conditions. Some things to consider:

- **Painted porches and steps** are particularly hazardous. While salting or rubber-backed mats help make them less slippery, we rely on our customers to clear the snow before a letter carrier arrives with the mail.
- **Keeping your steps and sidewalk clear** of snow and ice and removing snow from around curbside mailboxes allows us to provide you with the safest, most efficient service possible.
- **When delivery is suspended**, we look for the customer to contact local postal officials to discuss ways to eliminate the hazard. Sometimes, we can offer suggestions that help restore delivery quickly.
- **Slips, trips, and falls are the leading causes of accidents among letter carriers.** In addition to the carrier's safety, injuries to a letter carrier — or **any** visitor to your home — can result in costly liabilities to homeowner.

2. Is it the carrier's call on what is safe/accessible?

Yes! Carriers are not required to deliver to locations where safety issues — such as

threatening animals, slippery steps, snow packed paths, or icy overhangs — create perilous conditions. Even when customers make a path for us, we recognize conditions can and do change throughout a particularly stormy day. Inclement weather could affect your mail delivery.

While our goal is to deliver the mail, **we stand by the decisions** of local managers and/or **carriers when delivery is suspended** due to an immediate, serious safety concern — particularly during changeable weather conditions. EL 801 3-1.1 *Managing Contract Safety and Health Compliance*. Carriers are not required to risk personal injury from icy steps, broken or rotten steps, porches, protruding nails, sharp edges on mailboxes, or other hazardous conditions.

3. The plow knocked over the mailbox. What do you do in that case?

Procedures for replacing a mailbox in these conditions require the customer to sign PS Form 4056 *Your Mailbox Needs Attention* or PS Form 1507 *Request to Provide Mail Receptacle*. We cannot provide curbside service to a residence without a mail receptacle. Sometimes, we see short-term creative placements of mailboxes, or residents will ask us to hold the mail for a short period until the box is replaced. But we need the box to make regular delivery.

4. How is the postal patron notified if the carrier can't access the mailbox?

There is no formal notification process. If mail is curtailed, delivery is attempted the next delivery day. Suppose the customers have a temporary situation where mail delivery is unsafe. In that case, we will hold the mail at the post office where delivery originates, and the customer can pick up the mail at that post office.

5. What happens to the patron's mail? Is it held at the station? For how long?

When we face this situation, customers can pick up their mail at the post office for a reasonable period. Once the box is restored, we will resume delivery immediately.

As each situation is unique, we ask customers to talk to their local postal manager about it. When the snow finally clears, customers may want to discuss the best location for the mailbox with the delivery supervisor to minimize these delivery disruptions. PS Form 1507, in conjunction with PS Form 4056, is required.

Each carrier must understand the M-41 *City Delivery Carriers Duties and Responsibilities*. Specifically 112.4 *Safety Addresses*. The following details are to conduct yourself and not to endanger yourself or others (See Section 133 for General Safety Practices and Section 812 for Vehicle Safety Practices).

Section 123.2 Report to the unit manager all unusual incidents of conditions relating to mail delivery, including mail found trapped behind wall-mounted and wall-recessed apartment house mailbox units, condition of street letterboxes, and relay boxes (including unanchored boxes).

Complete PS Form 3996, *Carrier-Auxiliary Control*, if overtime auxiliary assistant is authorized in the office or on the street.

Section 131.44 report on PS Form 1571 *Undelivered Mail Report* all mail undelivered, including all mail distributed to the route not cased and taken out for delivery. Estimate the number of pieces of mail in conjunction with section 131.45; do not curtail or eliminate any scheduled delivery or collection trip unless authorized by management; in this case, you must record all facts on PS Form 1571, process in conjunction with safe practice.

West County Retiree ... By Pam Stepney

Greetings sisters and brothers of Branch 343. How's everybody doing? Fine, I hope. Thank you for taking the time as a dues-paying union member, and for voting down a contract that did not reflect the beating we took by being a letter carrier delivering mail during COVID. Management never staffed enough help to get us home early to our families. How soon the Postal Service forgot that we kept mail flowing to businesses and residents. Letter Carriers went to work every day delivering to customers' homes, some of whom were sick with the virus, and sometimes letter carriers caught COVID along the way. Stop where you are and give yourself a round of applause. This is the first time a contract has been voted down in the history of negotiations. When we stand together, we are strong, when we go it alone divided we fall.

We have the worst management in the history of supervision working for us. Every day there's some new mess up. They are young and dumb, following instructions from the young and dumb promoted to the top, with less than five years in the service. They give instructions to the workers such as:

1. Change the start time to 8:30 a.m., even though our competitors start at 6 or 7 in the morning.
2. One hour office time, even though our competitors' trucks are loaded for them when they report to work
3. Return to the office after you're on the street working to retrieve parcels and mail even though they have all of those supervisors who could get up and sort the mail with our skeleton clerk crew.
4. Hurry up and get done, even though you followed all those stupid instructions causing you to run over on your appointed route.

It's so funny hearing from letter carriers about the

supervisor getting into a fight over who's doing what, running the workroom floor. The morning supervisor comes in at 5 a.m., and the 8 o'clock supervisor has **no** clue what's going on and never asks the morning supervisor what's happening. There were routes without letter carriers on them and the supervisor didn't even notice until 3 p.m.

Why not come in and:

1. Talk to the young dumb supervisor to see what's going on at 8 a.m.
2. Put your breakfast sandwich and coffee down and walk around the workroom floor to observe what's going on.
3. Call in help if you notice an open route.
4. Check to see who's off, on vacation, or called in.
5. Communicate with the other supervisor about what you're doing to get the mail delivered to our customers.
6. If they have a supervisor out on the street doing safety checks and harassing working letter carriers, shut that program down this day and put the young and dumb supervisor back in craft to help deliver the mail.

I can't understand why they're doing street supervision when we have the best safety captain in our branch, Richard Thurman. They are trying to run us into the ground because they want to privatize the Postal Service. I don't know how much time you have as letter carriers in the service, but you need to start this month — March 2025 — coming out to the meetings to hear the officers tell you what's going on and teach you your rights. I'm retired and yet I still care what happens to the letter carriers coming behind me.

Route inspections are here, and you need to come to the training to learn how to protect your assignment. The officers are here for you, so take

advantage of what they have to offer.

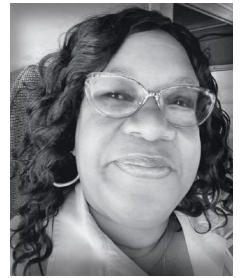
If you are a resident of the city of St. Louis, you need to make sure you get out and vote. There are four people running for mayor and so if you know who you're supporting, March 12 is the last day to register for the April election.

All our union sisters and brothers are in harm's way with this new administration, especially when Trump took office. The National Labor Relations Board had 24 investigations into Elon Musk's corporations for violating worker's rights. But presto ... Trump fired three officials at that agency, effectively stalling the board's ability to rule on cases. See how this works? Keep an eye on how the Trump Administration manages budget cuts and priorities around labor relations. It's going to be very interesting to see what true attitudes both Elon Musk and Donald Trump hold toward labor union members when both operate as independent business owners that now have a hand in government affairs. Can you say conflict of interest?

Letter Carrier Food Drive is coming on the second Saturday in May, so get ready to order your one color T-shirt and come in to work with your children to help everybody go home with their families in a timely manner.

What is going on with Project 2025? Who would have thought voting for someone in an election would result in you being forced to retire or give up your career? All the changes coming down from the top will affect workers in one way or another. Sit back, eat popcorn, and watch what happens or get out in these mid-term elections and put people in government who are honestly making **you and your family** a priority.

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



I Told You So ... *By Retired Letter Carrier Mike Laury*

This "new" catch phrase by Nike isn't exactly innovative when it comes to new slogans in the shoe marketing industry. The athlete in the new commercial for Nike talks about how he has prepared for the big moment against his opponent by working harder. He even tells his opponent ahead of time how he was going to do it. Near the end of the commercial the Nike athlete dominates the opposition and says to his opponent, "I told you so." Now hang with me folks as I draw a comparison to this Nike commercial and our former NALC president, Vince Sombrotto.

There was a five-page rebuttal by former Union President Sombrotto to Bernard Unger (director, government business operations issues) on March 13, 1998, regarding the "shit-show" of attempts towards DPS implementation. The USPS kept telling our NALC president that DPS would be a success. It would benefit everyone involved, including letter carriers. USPS had hoped to have 70-85% of all letters received by carriers each day to be generated by DPS. (Don't know about you guys, but a 70% in high school usually ended in a date with summer school for yours truly.) The actual percentage of DPS landing on a carrier's desk each day was closer to the 55 percentile, and that didn't make much sense to me. I thought clerks would be putting the trays of DPS next to our route case. Not so much. It seems that most of the DPS came locked up like several cages full of trayed wild mistakes each day.

For the time being, I would like to pivot back to that government fat report concerning the implementation of DPS. It was a 70-page document that President Sombrotto was responding to in the "Continued implementation

of DPS" by the USPS back in 1998. The sentiment at the time by USPS to our union president, Sombrotto, was to "give us (USPS) more time. We'll eventually get this implementation thing right." In short, they never really did get the DPS fixed. They wanted it, broke it, then tried to fix their street time saving brainchild, but never really could. (My own personal opinion).

Currently, I want to thank our union for protecting our jobs and interpreting the silly mumbo jumbo of "union language over the years. Let me make the following analogy: Does anyone remember when you closed on your first house back in the day and you signed your signature to 30 pages of documents that for the most part was a mind-numbing experience? Our union reps have been dealing with "union word speak" ever since our union was formed. From President Sombrotto and those who went after him, from shop stewards and reps who willingly chose to represent our fine union and agreed to translate, fight and apply our union contract and grievances, I say, thank you. You were the people who may not have enjoyed the daily literature of a house closing, yet you had the knack and intelligence of understanding it.

I still remember carriers complaining about all the issues of DPS over the years. I can recall guys shimmying on their bellies like characters in the movie, *The Great Escape*, crawling under cases in order to use a sneak attack on the cages of DPS. The "Captain," who we'll just nickname the "Colonel," would divert a supervisor's attention day after day after day with some BS complaint, to allow fellow carriers like "fictitious Tom, Dick, and Harry" to secure their trays of DPS. There was one

time a carrier had snuck his DPS and covered it with his jacket. The station manager caught wind of it from one of her supervising spies and became pro-active. She crawled under the carrier's case, retrieved the DPS, then put it back in the DPS cage, from whence it came. Eventually, some carriers realized that taking DPS to the street created less stress for themselves, in the long run. More importantly, taking DPS to the street, as shop stewards were telling us on a regular basis, helped us to show more consistent office time and street times, thereby decreasing the chances of a route addition.

Finally, let me return to that analogy from the beginning of this article. In the first lines of the last paragraph of President Sombrotto's five-page response to USPS, Vince said: "This is not an exercise in 'I told you so.'" "This is an effort to urge GAO to confront the reality that USPS has seriously jeopardized the proper implementation of DPS because of their arrogance, inefficiency and self-deception."

I respectfully disagree with our dear departed friend and former union president on his comment, borrowed by Nike many years later. It has always been an exercise in "I told you so" from our union to the USPS. But you wouldn't say "I told you so," to postal management and the "higher ups." You were too classy of a guy. You, President Sombrotto, seemed like more of a guy who would have said, "Just do it." You might have said to the USPS, "Come on guys, let's work together and fix this ongoing DPS problem. 'Let's just do it together.'" That scenario I just described was more of a fairy tale on my part. Thanks for reading and remember, "Safety is no accident."

Democracy or Oligarchy? ... By Mike Weir

During the first month since President Trump's inauguration, Project 2025 has been on full display. Despite his claim on the campaign trail to know nothing about this document, President Trump and his henchman Elon Musk have been very busy imposing its tenets on the federal government. **DOGE (the so-called Department of Government Efficiency) is not yet a congressionally authorized federal agency; and Elon Musk is a multi-billionaire private citizen who has not been vetted to have such unfettered access to sensitive government records, including social security numbers and other personal information of ours and our fellow citizens.** Additionally, Musk has significant conflicts of interest between his companies and the agencies he is "investigating." None of this seems to be a problem for President Trump as he continues to voice unwavering support for Musk's actions. **Sometimes, it is difficult to tell who is actually president as Musk is the one who is decimating federal agencies, undermining their ability to do the job for which they were created, or calling for them to be eliminated altogether.** He is alleging that he is uncovering billions of dollars-worth of fraud, without providing any evidence of his findings or being subjected to any accountability for his allegations.

In case you have not been paying attention, there is a method to their madness. This is not a question of just trimming a bloated

bureaucracy. They have been firing and/or laying off thousands of federal employees, and halting payments for spending which Congress already approved, allegedly to make the government more efficient and to cut the deficit.

The reality is they are cutting funding to social programs that average citizens depend upon, in order to continue and build upon the 2017 tax cuts that were skewed toward the wealthy and corporations.

House Republicans unveiled their fiscal year 2025 budget resolution which called for \$4.5 trillion in tax cuts and slashing federal spending by \$2 trillion. The cuts would come from "mandatory spending" on federal food assistance, Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, to name just a few of the targets, without specifying how much would be cut from each.

So far, Congressional Republicans have not been pushing back against President Trump's executive orders or DOGE's attacks on federal agencies and employees, even though many of their actions infringe upon Congress' authority and are patently illegal. In the Senate, Republicans are rubber-stamping Trump's nominees for his cabinet despite the fact that the overwhelming majority of them are not qualified and are lying through their teeth during their confirmation hearings. Lately, there have been some concerns raised by Republican lawmakers about how the cuts in social services will affect their constituents. Apparently, they are finally

realizing that red states will be disproportionately impacted by these cuts. Nonetheless, Congressional Republicans are not speaking out in sufficient numbers to force the administration to reconsider their approach to governing. **President Trump has always wanted to be an autocrat. Governing by executive order and avoiding oversight by Congress is certainly a blueprint to achieve that goal.** Currently, there are numerous lawsuits filed against his and Musk's actions, and there has been some success in the courts to address these issues. However, ultimately, the Supreme Court will decide these cases. I am not feeling overly confident that the conservative majority there will rule based on the law instead of politics. **They have already provided Trump with significant immunity for his actions as president. As a result, this administration seems to believe that President Trump's power to do anything he wants is not limited by law or the Constitution's checks and balances between the three equal branches of government: executive, legislative and judicial. If the Supreme Court affirms this, then our democracy will truly become an oligarchy where the richest members of society will run the show.** In the 2024 election, the wealthiest citizens and corporations spent nearly \$2 billion to ensure that result.

This could have a significant impact on us as letter carriers, active and retired, and our families. Trump has already taken action against federal unions by stopping

the implementation of collective bargaining agreements that were signed within 30 days of his inauguration. **He looked into privatizing the Postal Service during his first term and has indicated there may be a need to privatize the Postal Service this time around. Changes which were proposed in the past are, once again, being considered, including: eliminating the Special Annuity Supplement, forcing all FERS employees to pay 4.4% into the Civil Service Retirement & Disability Trust Fund**

every pay period, changing the high three to high five, and eliminating FERS COLA & reducing CSRS COLA. While NALC works to achieve a reasonable collective bargaining agreement with USPS, all of us must join in the fight to protect our jobs, benefits, and retirement. And we must also ensure that our democracy and the values that it embodies are not diminished.

One thing each of us can do is contact our Senators and Representatives to support

legislation important to us, and to voice our concerns about the direction this administration is taking. Another very important thing we can do is contribute to the Branch 343 PAC Fund and the Letter Carrier Political Fund. Let's be sure we elect and retain leaders in Washington who support working men and women, not corporate and monied elites! And let's strengthen our democracy, protect our most vulnerable citizens, and make the world a better place for everyone.

Thoughts from a Retiree ... *By Lynn Ray Pratt*

BETTER TRAINING NEEDED

Every job I ever held began with someone with experience training me how to do it the best possible way. Whether it was my first job stocking shelves and bagging groceries in our local market or my stint in the U.S. Navy aboard the U.S.S. Midway in the South Coral Sea. Every job I ever held began with someone with experience showing me the ropes.

When I first began my career with the Postal Service, I had an experienced letter carrier with me to make sure that I learned how to do my job properly and safely. Training didn't end after three days. There were always questions I needed answers for and even extended training until I felt familiar learning my craft.

In those days you could always find a carrier with experience who was willing to take the time to teach you the proper way to do your job. In my days letter carriers were public servants, and we took pride doing our jobs to the best of our abilities. And to that end, training was essential.

I don't know what's going on in the Postal Service today, but I see news stories about undelivered mail for days on end, stealing out of the mailboxes and even theft of mail contents. What's happening? To my mind everything falls on the shoulders of postal management, or lack thereof. A new employee needs to know how to do their jobs properly and that entails proper training, and proper training takes time.

There needs to be a sense of pride and appreciation for a job well done and from what I read I don't know how we get that back with the incompetent people running the post office. Everything starts at the top. If the service has any hope to regain the public's confidence a thorough housecleaning needs to take place starting at the top.

BRANCH MEETING

BRANCH 343, ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

FEBRUARY 13, 2025

Summary of Branch Action

MSC To pay the branch bills.

Health Benefits Representative Barry Linan made a motion requesting to be paid for the two holidays he was not paid for (Christmas 2024 and New Years 2025). After some discussion, **motion failed**.

Recently Retired Members

Lindy Baker Carrier Square 1/29/2025
 Tim Bader Creve Coeur 1/11/2025
 Anthony Brooks Oldham 1/31/2025
 Wayne Englert South County 1/31/2025
 Rachel Lester Oldham 1/30/2025
 Alex Miles Creve Coeur 1/11/2025
 Craig Sander Kirkwood 1/11/2025
 Shelly Schnobrich Sikeston 01/31/2025

Deceased Members

Angelika Pierce Active 2/03/2025
 Waitstill Webb Retired 1/21/2025



New Members

Denzel Abram Jennings 1/25/2025
 Elisha Alexander South County 1/17/2025
 Angela Belton Harriet Woods 1/11/2025
 Justin Blatecky Affton 1/11/2025
 Kaelah Davis Weathers 1/11/2025
 Kelsey DeClue Mackenzie Pointe 1/11/2025
 Brandy Dixon Kirkwood 1/11/2025
 Brandon Falbe Weathers 1/25/2025
 Sheri Faries Chouteau 1/25/2025
 Markel Glass Oldham 1/11/2025
 Kerrion Green Southwest 1/11/2025
 Jammie Haymer Weathers 1/25/2025
 DeMondria Howard Jennings 1/11/2025
 Marcus Kelley III Normandy 1/11/2025
 Rezan Kflu Weathers 1/25/2025
 Brandon Killion Jennings 1/11/2025
 Jasmine Kyles Harriet Woods 1/25/2025
 LeNay Leggins Chouteau 1/17/2025
 Jaiden Maxey Affton 1/11/2025
 Jeffrey Miliken West County 1/11/2025
 Larry Miller II Affton 1/17/2025
 Christa Newson Chouteau 1/25/2025
 Dyson Pearson Southwest 1/17/2025
 Steven Price Sappington 1/11/2025
 Antonio Stomer Olivette 1/18/2025
 Antria Thomas Gaffney 1/17/2025
 Tarry Tolliver Cuba 1/17/2025
 Nathan Tran Affton 1/25/2025
 Kirsten Watson Jennings 1/11/2025
 Wayne Williams Southwest 1/25/2025

BRANCH MEETING ATTENDANCE PRIZES

1. SLU Billikens vs Rhode Island
2. SLU Billikens vs Rhode Island
3. Blues vs Las Angeles Kings

Feb 22
 Feb 22
 Mar 1

Pamela Stepney, Retired
 Barry Linan, Retired
 Joe Canman, Retired



\$56

Nate Markovich

Highlights

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

NBA's Report, Dave Teegarden: Dave spoke about leave being taken when a carrier has no leave balance. Step B team recently ruled that scheduled leave must be charged as LWOP when you have no leave available. Route adjustments are coming up, NBA office will provide training at the branch. Three teams in both KC and Gateway are working to reduce backlog of grievances. They have about 700 pending arbitrations. Safety teams are still out looking for violations.

Legislative Report, Mike Weir: The 2026 COLA is .1%. Mike referenced several bipartisan bills. He explained that the Postal Service is part of the Constitution. Mike also informed us that Project 2025 is on full display.

Retirees Report, Tom Schulte: Greetings from the 30 retirees in attendance at the February meeting. They are preparing for the 96th Ole Timer's Day, scheduled for May 3.

Labor Council Report, Pam Stepney: The Labor Council interviewed candidates running for citywide offices in the upcoming elections in the City of St. Louis.

MBA Report, Saronda Sutherland: The MBA now has a plan for families. Children, grandchildren, etc.) must be 18 years old to participate. You must deposit \$1,000 to start the plan and contribute as little as \$25 per month.

Health Benefit Report, Barry Linan: Silver Scripts is still a problem; you must have Medicare Part D plan for prescription coverage. NALC Health Plan offers free gift cards for different Wellness Reward Programs.

Mound City Carrier Report, Tom Schulte: Cardinal tickets will be on sale after the meeting next month. The 29th annual Reel in the Cure Bass Tournament is coming up. Please read the articles in the MCC about Tom Harmon.

Haake Scholarship Report, Pam Stepney: There were 25 applications received, and we are hoping for three winners.

Safety and Health Report, Richard Thurman: A new safety team (6-14 people) have been activated. They are focusing on Jennings and Weathers areas first. Some stations are working on the buildings that may contain asbestos. They are not notifying carriers. If you see something you think is harmful, complete a PS Form 1767.

OWCP Report, Barry Linan: CA-1's still are not being completed, and carriers are not receiving COP. Upon injury, go to ECOMP, set up an account and upload your documents.

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 everyone to give to LCPF and the PAC funds.

Executive Vice President/Treasurer Report, Brian Litteken: The National Agreement was rejected by 71% of the carriers. The database framework is being updated. A safety engagement team has been set up by headquarters. Brian advised all to follow the safety rules.

Vice President/Financial Secretary Report, Marvin Booker: The bidding for routes process is out of control (routes not posting timely, vacancy sheet not posting timely). Notify the Union Hall if the posting is not up before the opening day. Food Drive is Saturday, May 10, Marvin is looking for station coordinators. The cards will be delivered directly to the Foodbank this year.

President's Comments, John McLaughlin: Only 29% of carriers voted to approve the Tentative Agreement. President Renfroe advised that it will not be a quick process in re-voting on a new Tentative Agreement. Renfroe also said that one of the hot topics is route inspections and there may be a joint process by summer. A bill will be reintroduced to allow TEs and CCAs to buy back their time. The government is looking to eliminate the current health insurance model for civil service and replace it with a voucher system. Funding for NGDV vehicle may be in jeopardy.

Respectfully Submitted, Richard Brown, Recording Secretary

29th Annual



MDA



AT LAKE OF THE OZARKS

Tournament

April 5-6, 2025

6:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Registration Dinner and Meeting

Saturday, April 5, 6-8 p.m.

and ...

Meet MDA Ambassadors

and Guest Speaker at the Dinner!

Fun - Barbecue

- Silent Auction - 50/50 Raffle

Social Distancing Observed at Dinner and Tournament

First Place
\$1,500 Guaranteed!
 Top teams receive percentage of entry fee.
 Entry fee is \$165 per boat.
 Includes Big Bass

TOURNAMENT TO BENEFIT THE MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY ASSOCIATION - ST. LOUIS

OFFICIAL ENTRY BLANK

A. BOAT OWNERS NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____

STATE: _____

ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____

B. BUDDY'S NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____

STATE: _____

ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____

☐ YES, I will be attending the dinner.

Total attending _____

☐ No, I will not be attending the dinner.

ENTRY BY MAIL ONLY

Entry fee of \$165 must be postmarked by April 1, 2025. Checks, money orders and cashiers checks will be accepted. All entries received after deadline will be subject to a \$25 LATE FEE, accepted in cash only during check-in.

Need Lodging or Have a Question?

Call Ken Young at Southwest Station

314-654-6310

or Check Out

7/24outdoors.com

or

bassbob.com



MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO:
MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY ASSOCIATION

C/O Ken Young
 5422 Wilson Ave.

St. Louis, MO 63110



Political Action Honor Roll

JOE FITZJARRELL★★★★

ART BUCK★★★

IN MEMORY OF JIM ROBERTS★★★

LAWRENCE McHAYNES JR.★★

JOE POLITTE★★

MIKE WEIR★★

MARVIN BOOKER★

JIM BRUGGEMAN★

JOE CANMAN★

CATHERINE CIARAMITARO★

BEVE CREELY★

SAMUEL GOODMAN★

JOHN HAAKE★

GENO IBERG★

LAURA KEIM★

BILL LISTER★

LYNN RAY PRATT★

IN MEMORY OF JOSEPH P. REGAN★

TOM SCHULTE★

NBA DAVID TEEGARDEN★

MIKE WEIR★

DEAN WERNER★

CATHERINE CIARAMITARO

ROBERT ECKER

JOHN HAAKE

LAWRENCE McHAYNES JR.

LYNN RAY PRATT

GARY ROBERTSON

DENNIS STEGMANN

SARONDA SUTHERLAND

MIKE WEIR

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

Laura Keim

Shonna Randle

IS YOUR NAME LISTED? WHY NOT?
SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS PAYABLE TO BRANCH 343, P.A.C.

MIKE WEIR**612 CHARLESTON OAKS DR.****BALLWIN, MO 63021-7387***(Donations are not tax deductible)***PLEASE BE ADVISED IN REGARDS TO ANY ARTICLE SOLICITING CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE LETTER CARRIER FUND OR OUR OWN POLITICAL ACTION FUND**

By making a contribution to the Letter Carrier Fund or our local Political Action Fund, you are doing so voluntarily with the understanding that your contribution is not a condition of membership in the National Association of Letter Carriers or of employment by the Postal Service, nor is it part of union dues. You have a right to refuse to contribute without any reprisal. The Letter Carrier Political Fund and Branch 343 Political Action Fund will use money it receives to contribute to candidates for federal office and undertake other political spending as permitted by law. Your selection shall remain in full force and effect until cancelled. Contributions to the Letter Carrier Political Fund are not tax deductible for federal income tax purposes. Federal law prohibits the Letter Carrier Political Fund and Branch 343 Political Action Fund from soliciting contributions from individuals who are not NALC members, executive and administrative staff or their families. Any contribution received from such an individual will be refunded to that contributor.



West County letter carrier Andrea Pearson receives congratulations on her recent retirement from Pam Stepney, Br. 343 St. Louis Labor Council delegate.



South County letter carrier Wayne "Hoss" Englert, receives congratulations from L to R "Hoss", Mark "Turtle" Beck, Dale Ethridge, Carl "Geno Iceman" Iberg, and Brian Fleshren.



The Creve Coeur posse gathers to offer congratulations to retiring letter carrier Alex Miles. Pictured L to R Frank Jones, Floyd White, Lee Chambers, Marlon Hardin, Ed Johnson, Alex, Br. 343 VP Marvin Booker, Reggie Jackson, Ralph Jackson and Marcus Kelly.

John H. Haake BRANCH 343

—OFFICERS—

John McLaughlin President
 Brian Litteken Executive Vice President/
 Treasurer
 Marvin Booker..... Vice President/
 Financial Secretary
 Richard BrownRecording Secretary
 Frank Enlow Sergeant-at-Arms
 Saronda Sutherland MBA Representative
 Barry Linan Health Benefits Representative

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

La'Tecse Litteken Shonna Randle
 Germaine Anderson Nathaniel Markovich
 Michael Rucker

CORRESPONDENT POSTAL RECORD

Tom Schulte

MEMBER-AT-LARGE NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE

Jerry Cantrell Lamont Broomfield
 Andrew Garces Marvin "Blu" King

DELEGATES TO THE ST. LOUIS LABOR COUNCIL

Pamela Stepney Frank Enlow
 Barry Linan William Lister
 Marvin Booker Mike Weir
 Richard Brown

MOUND CITY CARRIER

Published monthly by NALC Branch 343
 Contents may be reproduced by NALC
 publications — Just mention Branch 343.

STAFF

Tom Schulte Managing Editor
 Brian LittekenEditor
 Barry Linan Editor
 Meaghan LakeyEditor
 Matt Gleiforst.....Asst. Editor

ADVISORY BOARD

Brian Litteken John McLaughlin

All correspondence and all articles intended
 for publication in this paper should be
 addressed to:

Tom Schulte, Managing Editor
 1600 S Broadway
 St. Louis, MO 63104-3806
 Phone: 314-241-4297

or

You may submit articles and photos from
 events and retirement photos to:

tomnalc@sbcglobal.net

If you submit a photo, please identify all
 members in the photo.

**All copy should be TYPED in upper and
 lower case, double spaced and written on
 one side only. Articles are to be limited to
 500 words and must be signed.**

Opinions expressed intend no malice toward anyone
 — neither do they necessarily express the views of the
 editor nor that of Branch 343 N.A.L.C.

Articles may be edited for brevity and potential libelous
 statements.

LETTER CARRIERS BUILDING BRANCH OFFICE

1600 S Broadway
 St. Louis, MO 63104-3806
 314-241-4297

President: 314-761-1784
 EVP: 314-753-1699
 VP: 314-517-3200

Hours: 8 am - 5 pm (M-F)
 8 am - Noon (Sat)

Fax: 314-241-2738

Website: www.branch343.org

HEALTH BENEFITS HOT LINE

Barry Linan — Hall: 314-241-4223
 Tuesday 8 am to 5 pm

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION HOT LINE

Barry Linan — Hall: 314-241-4223
 Wednesday 8 am to 5 pm

SAFETY & HEALTH

Richard Thurman, Creve Coeur
 314-218-4829

EEO REPRESENTATIVE

Andrew Garces
 314-353-5702

MBA LIFE INSURANCE

Saronda Sutherland, MBA
 314-623-9354

FOR PERSONAL HELP CALL: 1-800-EAP-4-YOU

NBA OFFICE

David Teegarden — 314-985-8040
 RAA Charles Sexton RAA Larrissa Parde

RETIRED MEMBERS MEETING

LETTER CARRIERS BUILDING
 1600 S Broadway

1st Wednesday of the month.
 Lunch at noon, meeting at 12:45 pm

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 APRIL issue is MARCH 17, 2025

★ ★ ★

REGULAR BRANCH MEETING THURSDAY, MARCH 13, 2025 7:30 pm

★ ★ ★

SHOP STEWARDS MEETING THURSDAY, APRIL 3, 2025 7:30 PM

The Letter Carriers Building
 1600 S Broadway



Non-Profit
 Organization
 U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
 St. Louis, MO
 Permit No. 1452

John H. Haake Branch 343
MOUND CITY CARRIER
 1600 S Broadway
 St. Louis, MO 63104
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED