

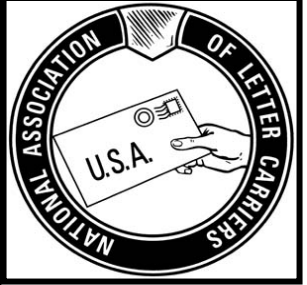
MICHIGAN LETTER CARRIER

Voice of the Michigan State Association of Letter Carriers

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*Merry Christmas &
Happy New Year*

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

CARL E BLASSINGAME, JR.

As some of you may know, we lost a union Brother, Matthew Little, President of Branch# 187 of Bay City, Mi. On October 11, 2023, Brother Little was in a head on collision with another vehicle which took both drivers lives. I ask that we continue to keep both families lifted up in prayer.

Brothers & Sisters, we have work to do with the election next year.

It is too early to predict what issues will be at stake in the upcoming elections. However, here are some issues that could potentially shape the election:

Social Security and Medicare: These are two programs critical for millions of Americans. There is talk about raising the retirement age to 70 years old which would cut Social Security benefits for tens of millions of seniors who have been paying into the system for years.

Health Care: Healthcare has been a continuous issue for politicians for decades and is likely to remain so in the upcoming election.

Climate Change: With increasing concerns and climate change I expect the candidates will address this in their campaign.

Immigration: immigration has been a hot topic in every election for years, yet with no solution.

At a time of uncertainty, we have to be ready to make a decision that will change this country for the better, even abroad.

It is also important that we stay informed of the House Resolutions and Bills in Washington DC. Some of these include:

Social Security Fairness Act H.R. 82, Introduced by Rep. Garrett (R-LA) and Rep. Abigail Spanberger (D-VA), which would eliminate the Government Pension Offset (GPO), and the Windfall Benefit Reduction (WEP). This will change the current law that reduces Social Security benefits for those who receive other benefits. As of today, there are (298) co-sponsors (201) Democrats and (97) Republicans. All (6) Democrats here in Michigan have signed.

Federal Retirement Fairness Act H.R. 5995, Introduced by Rep. Derek Kilmer (D-WA), Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-VA), Rep. David Valadao (R-CA), and Don Bacon (R-NE). This bill would allow certain federal employees to make catch-

up contributions for time spent as a non-career employee after Dec. 31, 1988, making that non-career time creditable service under the Federal Employees Retirement System. (FERS). There are (7) co-sponsors, (4) Democrats and (3) Republicans.

These are some of the Bills that are in Congress that are important to us and could affect our retirement benefits. I urge everyone to read your Michigan State Newsletter, Postal Record and NALC website to get updates on these bills and others.

Finally, as we approach the Holiday Season, let's take the time to think about those who lost a loved one and may be suffering with their loss especially during this time, keep them in your prayers.

May God keep you and your families safe through this Holiday Season.

Carl Blassingame,

President



The U.S Post Office Department issued its first Christmas stamp in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on November 1, 1962. Customers had requested such a stamp for years.

Anticipating a huge demand for the new Christmas stamp, the department had 350 million printed — the largest number produced for a special stamp until that time. The red and green 4-cent stamps featured a wreath, two candles, and the words "Christmas 1962." The initial supply sold out quickly and the Bureau of Engraving and Printing began working around-the-clock to print more. By the end of 1962, 1 billion stamps had been printed and distributed.

The decision to print a Christmas stamp generated some controversy, especially from groups concerned about maintaining the separation of church and state. Legal actions to bar the stamps were not successful.

Starting in the 90's the Postal Service began issuing holiday stamps recognizing other religions. Throughout this issue we have featured some of them. Regardless of how you celebrate the season, the officers of the Michigan State Association of Letter Carriers want to wish you a joyous, prosperous and safe peak season and best wishes for a Happy New Year.

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

ERIK VENZKE

As many of you may have heard or seen on the news there has been a steep increase in robberies of letter carriers recently. The Postal Inspection Service reported that armed robberies of carriers increased sharply between 2018 and 2021, rising from 36 incidents to 154. In 2022 it increased to 412 letter carriers having been robbed, and in just the first half of fiscal year 2023, 305 incidents. Although not a new phenomenon, there was a string of arrow key thefts back in 2011, the increase and frequency of the current robberies is of great concern and must be addressed on a national level to protect our brothers and sisters. To draw attention to the assaults and robberies the NALC has been holding rallies in multiple cities (including Detroit) with the message of “enough is enough” and seeking aid from Congress. This message has not fallen on deaf ears as it is now garnering support to create legislation that would provide assistance for our safety. Currently Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick (R-Penn) is drafting legislation to provide funding for the full replacement of the arrow key system, increase the number of Postal Inspectors that will be dedicated to prevention and investigation of these crimes, and also place a Prosecutor in all 53 United States attorney's offices that are dedicated to prosecuting these crimes.

The Department of Justice (DOJ) already has tools that can help deter and prosecute armed robberies against letter carriers. The law currently provides a penalty of up to 10 years for robbing, attempting to rob, or assaulting with intent to rob a letter carrier or other person having lawful charge, control, or custody of any mail matter or other property of the United States with the possibility of a 25-year-sentence if the victim is injured or in the case of a repeat offender. In addition, any person who receives or possesses property taken in such a robbery, knowing it to be unlawfully obtained, is subject to a penalty of up to 10 years (Sections 2114(a and b) of title 18 of the U.S. Code). However, the DOJ must use these laws to prosecute the offenders and direct funding allocated specifically for the prosecution of these crimes will ensure this.

These attacks on letter carriers are happening everywhere, urban and rural, and are a traumatic event for the victims that can cause a myriad of psychological impacts such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and depression. In just my branch alone in the last year and a half we have had multiple carriers robbed at gunpoint, assaulted, and/or were witness to violent crimes. Speaking to these carriers you can see the toll that the traumatic event took on them and the fear and anxiety they now have about returning to work and having to go back out on the street.

The following is excerpted from *Well-Being and Functioning at Work Following Thefts and Robberies: A Comparative Study* – [Front. Psychol., 20 February 2018 Sec. Organizational Psychology Volume 9 – 2018 | <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.00168>]

“...studies have shown that a robbery may be a traumatizing experience for workers, which may initiate the development of or increase existing mental health problems, such as psychological distress, major depression, acute stress disorder, and post-traumatic stress symptoms (Van der Velden et al., 1992; Kamphuis and Emmelkamp, 1998; Hansen and Elklit, 2014a,b; Hansen et al., 2014). This, in turn, may lead victims to experience reduced overall job satisfaction (Giorgi et al., 2015b), decreased work productivity (Zatzick et al., 2008), and increased demand for medical and mental healthcare services (Van der Velden et al., 1992; Mucci et al., 2015).”

In the unfortunate event that you as a letter carrier or a co-worker are the victim of a robbery while in the performance of duty and experience **any** physical and/or emotional trauma you have the right to file a traumatic injury claim (CA-1) through the office of workman's compensation (OWCP) and should seek the advice and/or assistance of either your branch's injury compensation specialist or the NBA's office.

Recently the Department of Labor (DOL) has issued a new FECA Transmittal (23-04) in response to the increase in emotional condition claims that are being sought for carriers who are robbed for arrow keys or have other traumatic emotional injuries. Transmittal 23-04 allows for the initial acceptance of emotional injury claims with medical evidence from any doctor, not just a psychiatrist or clinical psychologist as previously required in the FECA Manual part 2 0805 3.d.3.c (and is still required for occupational health claims CA-2) This change makes it easier for carriers to get approval for a traumatic emotional stress claim. Prior to the change it was difficult for members to find a psychologist or psychiatrist who one, accepts OWCP and two, will see the claimant timely to meet the requirements for them to be eligible to receive continuation of pay (COP) from the Postal Service.

Stay safe out there and remember, if you were or become a victim of a robbery or assault while on duty and experience any physical and/or emotional trauma you have the right to file a CA-1 traumatic injury claim through OWCP.

Erik Venzke,

Vice President

TREASURER'S REPORT

CATHERINE TONDREAU

This month, I am going to talk a bit about audits being conducted by your membership or the Department of Labor (DOL).

Dave Dorsey, partner at the accounting firm Withum, Smith and Brown, has told us some things to look for

including:

- **Absent local officials**
- **Membership complaints**
- **Changes in personal health or habits**
- **A disorganized office**

He also spoke on internal financial controls. Union officials must ensure the union's funds and other assets are used solely for the benefit of the union and its membership.

You should know that the Department of Labor can conduct an audit of your branch at any time, they can audit because of a complaint by one of your members or what they call a compliance audit - which is usually random. The Department of Labor will usually contact the Treasurer of the branch and/or the President because they are the ones who sign the LM reports. Don't hang up on them thinking it's a joke.

Some things that you should know when they are conducting an audit:

Don't make it harder for auditors to get the information they are asking for; get it in a timely manner.

Comply with what they ask for. If you have an officer that is also a State officer and/or does work for the National, you may need to get information from the State Association or headquarters of the officer to be sent to the Department of Labor.

Often, it is just a review of your books to make sure things are being put in the LM report properly and you are not missing items from your report.

The DOL states the most investigated crimes are fraud and embezzlement.

The NALC has not had as much trouble with embezzlements as some other unions or companies, but we always need to be diligent.

Studies have shown that about 10% of the U.S. population is completely honest, 10% is totally dishonest while the

remaining 80% are at a level of honesty that varies with each circumstance or situation they find themselves in.

This suggests that many of us would take cash from our employer or other impersonal source if we knew we wouldn't get caught. The average embezzler believes that the company can afford to lose the cash and that they will not be caught. The embezzler must be in a position of trust, yet employers are shocked when this trust is betrayed.

Embezzlers are normally the hardest working, the most trusted and well-liked employees, therefore, they are the least likely to be suspected. Usually, embezzlers do not seek their jobs with the intent on embezzling. Often times, the embezzler can rationalize the crime. Once they take the money and don't get caught, they normally don't stop until they are caught. Embezzlers look and act just like other employees and most companies think they don't have to worry because their employees are honest and trustworthy.

With that said, don't forget it is getting near the end of the year and it's time to start getting your books in order to complete your LM reports and your 990s.

Hopefully this information has been of use to you.

Catherine Tondreau,

Treasurer



SECRETARY'S REPORT

JAYME ROMINE

Why good communication matters. Miscommunication happens all the time. Sometimes the results are laughable and easily corrected. Other times, it can cause great pain or sorrow. Because of this ensuring good communication can be vital to a civil and pleasant workplace. When you work to make your communication better you also influence how others communicate with you, leading to even better communication throughout the workplace. People at times define communication as: I talk and you listen. This perspective does not often improve interpersonal relations, especially in difficult or volatile situations. A better option is the 90-10 Rule: Listen 90% of the time and speak 10% of the time. Listening is often a sign of respect. When people feel respected they reciprocate easily. By following this rule you show respect and earn respect. Another good rule to follow is; look at the person while they are speaking, if possible. By making eye contact you ensure them that you are engaged in the conversation. When you are listening, try to focus and truly hear what the other person in the conversation is saying. Listening is both an art and a science, and too few of us practice world-class listening skills. Shop stewards can put good

listening skills to practice on the work room floor, while addressing a letter carrier's individual concerns and during an investigative interview (also known as PDI). The average letter carrier can put good listening skills to practice on the work room floor and while out on their route addressing customer concerns.

When you actually hear what someone is saying, you can respond to them effectively and solve the real problems that are presented, rather than stuck in disagreement and misunderstanding. For shop stewards, this aids in requesting the correct information, drafting quality interview questions, and settling with an appropriate remedy. For the average letter carrier, this aids in limiting tension in the workplace and promoting customer and job satisfaction.

No matter what role or atmosphere you currently experience in your workplace, listening can have a positive impact.

I hope every one has a safe and joyous holiday season!

With Solidarity,

Jayme Romine,

Secretary

The U.S. Postal Service unveiled a new series of "Holiday Celebration" stamps in 1996 with the debut of the first stamp commemorating the Jewish holiday of Chanukah, the Jewish Festival of Lights. The Chanukah stamp is the first U.S. stamp to recognize a Jewish holiday. Jointly issued with Israel, both countries feature the same design. The U.S. version contains the English spelling of "Hanukkah" and the Israeli stamp features the Hebrew spelling. Thus, that stamp and the year it was first issued, 1996, was historic, as explained:

In 1962 the United States Postal Service issued its first Christmas Stamp and has been issuing new and different Christmas stamps every year since. Beginning in 1965 and every year (with 3 exceptions) since then the USPS has issued a Christmas stamp with a religious theme (predominantly the "Madonna & Child"). After years of refusing to issue a Hanukkah stamp, citing specific religious reference as the reason (while claiming the "Madonna & Child" stamps were merely art reproductions), the USPS issued its first Hanukkah stamp in 1996. This only after, in November of 1994, the USPS announced it would discontinue the "Madonna & Child" Christmas because of its specific religious theme. And, within a week "Bowing to public pressure" reversed that decision. U.S. Hanukkah stamp has been "available" every year since 1996.



REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

JOHN SERWACH

I suspect this newsletter will hit your mailbox right around the end of “peak” season. Congratulations, you survived another one. And that means that 2024 will be here momentarily. The time between the end of the holiday season and the beginning of the New Year is a great time to reflect on what’s passed and what we hope for the future. As they say here in Detroit, *Speramus Meliora; Resurget Cineribus* which is the motto of the city, its Latin and means *We Hope For Better Things; It Shall Rise From the Ashes*.

The ashes of 2023 will be left behind and with them the ghosts of goals unachieved:

Our hopes for a new fair contract that rewarded us for our labor.

Legislation that would enable our brothers and sisters with non-career time to enjoy the fruits of their labor in retirement.

An end to the violent attacks on our fellow carriers in Michigan and well beyond our states borders.

Dignity and Respect on the workroom floor.

A route adjustment process that works for everyone.

Fairness and equality for all regardless of your gender or the color of your skin.

While these are the “ghosts” of goals not achieved we should not mourn our failure but use this time to reflect on how we can do things differently in the coming year. While we did not achieve these goals in 2023 we have sown the seeds for tomorrow. We have held rallies here in Michigan and throughout the country to garner support for legislation that will bring an end to the criminal attacks against our fellow letter carriers. We have built relationships with Congress to bring about changes to our pension system for those with non-career time, we’ve established agreements across the aisle that will bring us to a fair contract. We’ve tried to make this country a better place for everyone and while it might not always look that way, it’s a far different place then it was 25 or 50 years ago.

Take the time to relax, to spend time with your family and your friends. Take some time away to plan for the things you want to achieve in 2024, both personally and profes-

sionally.

The New Year will have its own set of challenges. A tough congressional map, a Presidential election that is guaranteed to be absolute chaos and the ever growing challenges of technology on our workplace. Now is the time to prepare for those challenges.

Make a list of the things you want to achieve and consider how you will do it. If you want to cut down a tree you have to take the time to sharpen the axe first. If you’ve never been involved in your union or you have members who never have, why not? Why not now? Make 2024 the year to get involved, come to a meeting, bring a friend to a branch meeting. Sign up for LCPF, plan to vote. Participate.

If you’ve made it this far, well, God bless you, I hope you had a wonderful holiday and have a better New Year’s. We can do this—the way we always have, together.

John Serwach.

Director of Education

In 1992, the U.S. Postal Service issued its first Chinese Lunar New Year stamp—a rooster stamp for the Year of the Rooster. Clarence Lee of



Honolulu, working with art director Richard Sheaff, used the ancient Chinese tradition of paper cutting to create the artwork for the series, which included all twelve traditional animal signs.

Lunar New Year is one of the most important holidays of the year for many Asian communities around the world and is primarily celebrated by people of Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Tibetan, Mongolian, Malaysian and Filipino heritage. Across these varied cultures, many traditions exist for ringing in a new year of good luck and prosperity.

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF RETIREES

MIKE SHERIDAN

The date was December 15, 1973, and a young man knocked on the front window of the Sterling Heights Post Office and was met with the statement "We open at 8:30am". My reply was "I'm supposed to start working here today". Thus began a journey that would last 33 ½ years ending on June 2, 2007 retiring with my coworkers Ed Jackimowicz, and John "Wojo" Wojtunicki. Mayor Notte of Sterling Heights would make an appearance and give us all certificates commending our work on behalf of the USPS. It is just like the sendoffs carriers receive now! Wait a minute! Doesn't happen anymore? Don't let the door hit you on the way out!

Have we lost that sense of humanity? I attended our Branch Social Night on October 22, 2023 and was awarded my gold card along with Al Dybalski (Shelby) and Dor-

othy Wurth (Shelby). We were joined by eight new retirees that are now beginning the journey called retirement! I would hope these new retirees would join us every year as we celebrate the new retirees next year.

Will these new retirees make it to gold card status?? Let's hope so. Next year we will be giving Pat Carroll his gold card and last year Fred Rolando gave Jim Korolowicz his gold card. Time marches on and we must be vigilant in making sure that the USPS is around for the next 50 years. It rests on all our shoulders to remain vigilant to see that the USPS remains a part of the American fabric.

Mike Sheridan,

Director of Retirees



Five years of lobbying comes to fruition on September 1, 2001, as the U.S. Postal Service released the first American stamp celebrating Muslim holidays. A blue stamp featuring gold calligraphy celebrating Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, along with the English words "EID GREETINGS," the stamp is included alongside stamps celebrating other religious holidays, a victory for Muslim representation in America.

For years, many American Muslims pushed for the creation of a holiday stamp of their own, arguing that their two holiest days (Eid al-Fitr marks the end of Ramadan fasting, while Eid al-Adha marks the culmination of the haj) deserved the same level of recognition as Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa. After a letter-writing campaign in which more than 5,000 Muslim children sent messages to the Postmaster General, the Postal Service announced the new stamp in August of 2001. Calligrapher Mohamed Zakariya designed the stamp, which was released as part of the Postal Service's "Holiday Celebration Series." The Eid stamp, designed by Zakariya of Arlington, Va., features the Arabic phrase "Eid mubarak" in gold calligraphy on a blue background. English text on

the stamps reads "EID GREETINGS."

Employing traditional methods and instruments to create this design, Zakariya chose a script known in Arabic as "thuluth" and in Turkish as "sulus." He describes it as "the choice script for a complex composition due to its open proportions and sense of balance." He used homemade black ink, and his pens were crafted from seasoned reeds from the Near East and Japanese bamboo from Hawaii. The paper was specially prepared with a coating of starch and three coats of alum and egg-white varnish, then burnished with an agate stone and aged for more than a year.

Zakariya's black-and-white design was then colorized by computer. The colors chosen for the stamp Eid al-Fitr marks the end of Ramadan, the Islamic month of fasting, prayer and reflection. Ramadan remembers the month in A.D. 610 when Muslims believe that the prophet Muhammad received the revelations from God that would form Islam's holy book, the Quran.

REPORTS FROM YOUR EXECUTIVE BOARD

JOHN DICK

There it sits now. The Nike store on 1261 Woodward Avenue in downtown Detroit. It's trademark "Swoosh" logo overshadowing the events from decades past. Looking Back, Moving Forward.

February 27, 1937. This Nike store was once the site of one of Detroit's Woolworths stores, the Walmart of its time. It was the largest retailer in North America, with over 2,000 stores across the U.S. and Canada. It employed low-wage workers, mostly young women from the age of 16 years old and up. They paid 25 to 28 cents per hour and the women worked 52-hour work weeks with no overtime. They paid to have their own uniforms laundered. The family that owned the stores was vehemently anti-union.

The ladies were fed up. They knew they deserved more. They devised a plan and carried it out. On this cold Saturday morning in 1937, a whistle blew. The store was packed with customers. The young female workers of Woolworths escorted the customers out of the store. They then locked the doors in protest. The Woolworths Sit-Down Strike of 1937 began. The ladies whooped and shouted in Solidarity.

The bravery of these budding young women decidedly did the impossible. They took on the largest retailer in the United States. They locked themselves inside the store, in complete defiance of the law and big money. They were righteous, and they knew it. And the whole country began watching.

They had organized themselves into committees to conduct an orderly sit-in. There was a food committee, a beauty committee that kept their hair and make-up in fashion, a cleaning committee, a publicity committee, and more. When Saturday night came along and the ladies started complaining about not being able to see their boyfriends, a Love Booth committee was formed. The boyfriends were snuck in for five-minute private time. Legend has it that most of the ladies said that was three minutes too long!

The Sit-Down Woolworths Strike lasted eight days. 108 women gained much favorable publicity from the local and national press; the company finally negotiated a settlement. The strikers won a five-cent an hour raise, a 48-hour workweek with time and a half after 40 hours, paid uniform laundry by the company, and half pay for the eight days they were locked in the store. And most importantly, they won the right to a closed Union shop. They were now all part of the Restaurant and Hotel Employees Union.

The windows of this Woolworths store on Woodward once proudly displayed the hand-made letters that spelled "WE WON." I believe in the words of Myra Wolfgang, the leader of this sit-down strike, who famously stated "WOMEN WERE IN LABOR BEFORE MEN WERE BORN." Let us all support the many striking men and women today who are bravely on the picket lines earning only strike pay while they demand what they have worked for. The past has taught us that the working class only gets its fair share when it is demanded. Eat The Rich; they give us breadcrumbs when we need bread. And let us pass on the stories of working-class struggle from the past to our children, the history they should be learning in school. Looking Back, Moving Forward.

John Dick,

Trustee

First Women City Carriers—1917

The first women known to have delivered mail in U.S. cities were appointed during World War I, when manpower shortages induced the Post Office Department to test women as city letter carriers.

On November 6, 1917, Mrs. Permelia S. Campbell and Mrs. Nellie M. McGrath began delivering mail to customers in Washington, D.C., in the vicinity of Union Station.



Campbell, about 40 years old, was the widow of a letter carrier and had four children to support. McGrath, in her early 30s, had two young sons. McGrath's husband, who had also been a letter carrier, was serving in the military. Washington's postmaster, Merritt O. Chance, explained:

"This is the first time in the record of the Post Office Department of the United States that women have been used for carrying mail on routes in a city. It must be considered more or less in the nature of an experiment."

ELAINE JONES

The holiday season is upon us. For some of us it's a joyous time, while for others it's an overwhelming time of the year. There seems to be so much we need to get done, and so little time to do it in. We need to shop for gifts, clean the house, prepare meals for visitors, and visit relatives. The cost alone can be more than we planned for. We spend the next year trying to pay for all the damage we've charged on credit cards, trying to keep up with the Joneses. Can you say STRESSFUL?

It's October and you just broke up with that special someone. Oh, my goodness, now you have to spend the holidays without a plus one. Who will I attend the office Christmas party with? Can the holidays get any worse? That's the situation for several co-workers. Just plain lonely.

This time of the year, many of us can only remember the family and friends that we no longer have with us. The people we've lost recently as well as long time losses always seem to come to mind during the holiday season. These feelings can make the holiday season dreadful. Life can become hard to cope with. It tends to bring on a great feeling of depression. Can't wait until it's over, don't know why everyone is so happy, are the thoughts we have. You want to go in the house and not come out until after the New Year.

These emotions can be difficult to cope with. The holidays can be overwhelming. All is not lost. You are not alone. Article 35 addresses how to get help for all these feelings bundled up inside of you. The EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP) is a great benefit to all the postal employees and their families. Don't struggle unnecessarily. Make the call, 1-800-EAP4YOU. No money needed. Hope this helps to brighten your holiday.

Elaine Jones.

Trustee

DARRYL CLAY

Hello in solidarity,
As letter carriers it is important for us to stay informed on issues that are brought to Congress. Together we pressed on and got HR 3076 enacted into Law. HR 3076, ending the pre-funding mandate, set the Postal Service up for a more stable future and protected six day delivery.

HR 5995 is here, and we have to be just as active as we were with HR 3076.

HR 5995 is the Federal Retirement Fairness Act.

This legislation would allow Casual, TE, or CCA's and other affected employees the opportunity to purchase retirement credit for the time they spent in these non-career positions.

Stay tuned and stay informed on HR 5995.

Darryl Clay.

Trustee



TONYA CASEY

New carriers, there is a great importance to attending union meetings and trainings. Finding out what is happening around you as well as in other stations; to know what management is going to focus on next is critical. The Post Office is evolving and the use of numbers and data from computer programs is only going to increase. Union meeting's provide a good opportunity to ask questions and talk to your union board members to see how to protect yourself from discipline. By attending Union meetings it also gives you the opportunity to attend trainings such as: Region 6 K.I.M.(Kentucky, Indiana, Michigan) training, and the State and National Conventions where they provide training on a variety of topics like: *OWCP (Occupational Workers Compensation Program)*, *Attendance and Deems Desirable*, *TIAREAP (Technology Integrated Alternate Route Evaluation)*, *Route Protection*, and *Legislative Action*, to name a few. These trainings will allow you to meet letter carriers from all over Michigan and carriers from all over the United States. However, if you are unable to make your local union meetings; there are many other ways to inform yourself of what is going on. There's, our national magazine (*The Postal Record*), and the state newsletter (*The Michigan Letter Carrier*), as well as your branch newsletter. There is also a letter carrier app that you can download from the Apple / Google Play Store called, "NALC Member App". There's multiple Facebook pages like: the Michigan State Association of Letter Carriers, NALC stewards help page, OWCP for NALC, and the NALC Region 6 KIM page. There is a wealth of information out there to be tapped into. Please take the time to learn as much as you can...remember knowledge is power. Please stay safe and stay informed.

Tonya Casey,

Trustee

RON ZALEWSKI

Who wants to be a millionaire? Everyone, of course!

I was talking to a new hire carrier (so new that she was still with her trainer) and she mentioned that one day she wanted to be a millionaire. After making a wisecrack about being a millionaire isn't all that it's cracked up to be, I told her I had a plan that would guarantee that she became a millionaire. She looked at me as though I was full of fertilizer. I told her the plan.

Start saving now. 10 % of every check she gets as a CCA. Put it in a retirement account. I made a quick pitch for the Mutual Benefit Association here, but the truth is that any retirement plan or IRA will do. Save 10% of her income first. Don't spend any of that money. Leave it in the account. Once she is promoted to career and has access to the Thrift Savings Plan, put the 10% she is saving in a life cycle account appropriate for her retirement age. In her case it was 2060 or 2065. As her raises come in, either contractual or step, increase the amount of her contribution to 15%. Another carrier overheard and stepped in to remind me that 15% was no longer the cap. I told her to keep increasing the percentage until she reached the new cap. The trick here is that you won't notice the savings coming out of your check if you ease into it. It's literally painless. With 35-40 years of contributions and compound interest, she wouldn't just be a millionaire. She'd have multiple millions on which to live comfortably.

There are other steps to financial success like using credit sparingly, playing it off quickly, and living within your means. It's easier to save if you have a smaller mortgage, no credit card payments, and a reasonable car. Using the TSP to set aside the money you'll need after you stop delivering is the biggest step of them all.

Ron Zalewski,

Trustee

In 1989 the USPS designed the Stamp below for us. Designed by Jack Davis, a renowned cartoonist whose work has appeared on the covers of Time, TV Guide and, yes, Mad magazine. Alfred E. Neuman, Mad's infamous "What, Me Worry?" character, does not appear on the stamp honoring the 100th anniversary of the National Association of Letter Carriers. But Davis has captured three smiling carriers, clad in the service's familiar blue uniforms, in a style that he made the cartoon signature of Mad. The stamp, is the first to bear the Postal Service's new advertising theme: "We Deliver."



Holidays and the City Carrier

Letter Carriers have been associated with the holidays for as long as anyone can remember.

Below is a card left by Charles Stebbins, Letter Carrier number 5, for his patrons in Binghamton, New York wishing them a Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year from the late 19th Century..

At left is an image by Norman Rockwell which appeared on a stamp in 1963 to commemorate 100 years of City Delivery, its artwork is a timeless tribute to a service that nearly all city-dwelling Americans now take for granted. This illustration is also vintage Rockwell, from the dutiful civil servant and the enthusiastic youth to the dog racing purposefully at their heels.



Times may have changed but it still takes teamwork, dedication and planning to deliver a successful holiday mailing season — just like it did a hundred years ago.

This holiday season USPS projects delivering over 11.7 billion mailpieces, most in just 2-3 days. Michigan carriers are the best carriers in the world—you get the job done. You are everyday heroes and a symbol of American determination.

On behalf of all of us at the Michigan State Association of Letter Carriers, thank you for your service, we wish you a Safe, Prosperous, Joyful, "Peak Season".



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