



THE BUZZ

BRANCH 3 NALC
BUFFALO / WESTERN NEW YORK

Strength in Unity - Working Together the Hive Survives

JUNE 2023 Volume 77, Number 5



**2023
FOOD DRIVE**



*Thank
you!!*



*More food drive
pictures on
pages 8, 9 and 10*



*Awesome
job!!*

SUCCESS!

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Armed robberies of letter carriers finally make it to Buffalo

On Wednesday, May 10th at approximately 10:20am two males approached a Northside, Zone 7, letter carrier and told him to turn over his arrow key as they had a gun. While no weapon was ever brandished the carrier did turn over the keys and the males fled on foot. This is the first robbery of a Buffalo letter carrier for his/her arrow key. The good news is the carrier was not harmed and is safe. The Buffalo Police Department and the United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS) immediately conducted interviews with the carrier back at the station. I am being told there is video footage of the robbery and the identification of a get-away vehicle.

Many of you are aware of the epidemic of robberies and assaults of letter carriers nationwide for arrow keys. This is a major topic at the Committee of Presidents meetings that are held each Spring and Fall and a top priority for the NALC in this round of contract negotiations. One of the leading voices on this topic is US Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin from Illinois. Senator Durbin has been working on the increase in armed robberies of letter carriers for some time now, easily over a decade. In a letter to Attorney General Merrick Garland and USPS Postmaster General Louis DeJoy, Senator Durbin pressured the Department of Justice (DOJ) and USPS to work together to address the growing threat of armed robberies against USPS letter carriers. This included aggressively investigating these crimes and prosecuting those who commit them. Senator Durbin in his 4/24/2023 letter (reprinted in newsletter) stated:

“It is critical that your respective agencies work together to better protect these public servants and ensure the security of our mail system...The motive for letter carrier robberies often is the theft of master or 'arrow' keys, and instituting a pilot program to update cluster boxes with new technology could only improve this dire situation. The prosecution of these crimes is also an important means of holding armed robbers accountable for their criminal activity and deterring future robberies. I urge DOJ to prioritize enforcement of these statutes and all other provisions applicable to these reprehensible assaults on the men and women who deliver the nation's mail.”

The Postal Inspection Service reported that armed robberies of letter carriers increased distinctly between 2018 and 2021. They rose from 36 incidents to 154 incidents. The arrow keys can fetch thousands of dollars on the illicit market because they allow access to cluster mailboxes and their contents, which include Social Security checks, prescriptions, and other valuable items. Senator Durbin has asked for updated technology from the USPS which would require two-factor authentication – a common security practice – for cluster mailboxes, which would render stolen arrow keys useless.

When a similar string of arrow key thefts took place in 2011, Durbin urged the former Postmaster General to imple-

ment a rapid alert system that informed carriers of the crimes committed in their vicinity. These alerts have been discontinued under the current Postmaster General.

The following morning at the Northside station there was a stand-up talk about the robbery that included me, the Acting Buffalo Postmaster, The Buffalo Manager of Customer Service Operations (MCSO) and the United States Postal Inspection Service officials. Management and the USPIS said all the right things in light of the events the day before. The talk included protocols of what to do if this happens while you are delivering on the street and a reminder to only keep your arrow key on its chain. Keeping just the arrow key on the chain will limit the thief's access to for example, the postal vehicle you have that day or access to apartment buildings and businesses via fobs. When I was given the opportunity to speak, I assured the membership that if these criminals were caught, the branch would do everything we can to make sure this crime is prosecuted Federally and not locally. What we have been seeing across the country is local law enforcement agencies are overseeing these cases. When I mentioned this the United States Postal Inspection Service agents spoke up and agreed these crimes should be prosecuted Federally also.

The Department of Justice (DOJ) has important provisions already in the law that can help deter 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 persons having lawful charge, control, or custody of any mail matter or other property of the United States. This also includes 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.

As I mentioned earlier this is a top priority for the NALC. I have used the NALC HQ reporting method which is the Letter Carrier Crime Report which is a report that tracks these incidents nationwide. Hopefully, these criminals can be caught. If this happens the branch will then make sure we do everything we can to make sure the case is prosecuted Federally by working with U.S. Attorney for the Western New York District Trini E. Ross.

The NYSLC delegation had its annual Congressional lobbying trip from April 19th through the 21st. We met with Senator's Gillibrand and Schumer as well as Congressman Brian Higgins. In our meeting with Senator Gillibrand, I was asked to sit right up front in the NY delegation. This was due to Senator Gillibrand taking the time to speak about the inhumane treatment of Buffalo's letter carriers during the December blizzard, winter storm Elliott. She spoke of the

(Continued on page 4)

good work that letter carriers do for this nation. The Senator spent the majority of her time focusing on the plight of many of Branch's carriers during the deadliest storm WNY has ever seen. She vowed to make inquiries into the inept actions of managerial officials during the storm. Her office has been collaborating with me for about a month and a half to craft a letter to the PMG, OSHA, and the OIG. This letter dated 4/19/2023 is included in the newsletter. The Branch had unprecedented input into crafting this letter and for this I am thankful. After meeting with Senator Gillibrand, she tweeted the following on April 21st:

I always have a fun time with the New York members of @NALC_National! I'll always fight to support postal workers, especially those in New York who've been a critical lifeline to our vulnerable neighbors. Thank you for keeping our mail moving!

On April 26th Congressman Higgins tweeted the following:

With @SenGillibrand and @SenSchumer we are calling for the @usps & @OIGUSPS to investigate how @NALC_National Branch 3 workers and WNY @APWUnational employees were treated during the December blizzard.

Congressman Higgins also went on to post another tweet on the 26th stating the following:

Each day dedicated letter carriers & postal workers deliver for America. But processing & delivery the mail shouldn't leave workers stranded, threatened or at risk. That's what happened during WNY's December Blizzard. We need answers & a plan.

Attached to his 2nd tweet is a forty-four second video of Congressman Higgins speaking on the House floor on April 26th calling for an investigation after USPS employees were put at risk during the blizzard. He made the following comments on the House floor:

Speaker day in and day out our dedicated letter carriers and postal workers deliver to America, for

America, but processing and delivering the mail should never leave these workers stranded, threatened or at risk of losing their lives. However, that's what appears to have happened when a massive winter storm hit Buffalo and WNY in December. After numerous personal accounts of unsafe conditions for postal employees we are calling on the Office of Inspector General in coordination with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to investigate. Whether emergencies happen especially in Buffalo in the wintertime, we need a clear process to protect America's postal workers when they do...I yield back.

The feedback I am getting locally since the 4/19/2023 Congressional letter was released is that the District Manager has several local managerial officials on telecons daily addressing the letter and the questions asked in it. Some of the things I am being told are being discussed are supplying stations with portable generators and rations. Additionally, the USPS is considering changing the rules on postal employees and driving bans. I believe this is the best process to pursue. You will not need generators or rations if employees are not mandated to report during a driving ban. Also, I believe that with the monstrosity that is the district, NY-3, if rules were changed to allow station supervisors and/or managers to make the call to decide to call off workers or send them home without having to wait for the archaic upper managerial chain of command to respond would be helpful. It was clear that upper management had no idea how to react to the conditions we are used to dealing with in WNY as they are located in NYC or out of state.

The branch thanked Senator's Gillibrand and Schumer and Congressman Higgins for all their hard work and dedication not only to letter carriers, but all postal employees. As you can see the Branch will do everything within its power to correct what happened during Winter Storm Elliott and any crime committed against WNY's letter carriers.

~ In Solidarity, David J. Grosskopf, Jr.

22nd ANNUAL MDA GOLF OUTING

SUNDAY, JUNE 25, 2023

8 AM SHOTGUN START

CHESTNUT HILL COUNTRY CLUB, 1330 Broadway, Darien Center

Reserve your four-some today!

Linda DeLuca (585) 730-1414 or Jay Koch (716) 574-9799

\$100 per individual
(includes lunch and dinner)

50/50 AND RAFFLES
WILL BE AVAILABLE.





PS Forms 1571 and 3996

You may be asking yourself what is a PS Form 1571? You know, that long skinny form with all the boxes on it...or better known as the Undelivered Mail Report. What is PS Form 3996? That is a form to request assistance when you will be over 8 hours in your route or when management gives you alleged “downtime” and drives management bonkers when you utilize it. You should be filling out your 3996's or 1571's each day you need assistance or to report curtailed/delayed mail. There are several reasons why you should fill out this form...for starters it is a job requirement. Secondly, it protects you, as no carrier has the right to curtail/delay any mail or take unauthorized overtime. Lastly, it helps your steward when fighting discipline, forced overtime grievances and route adjustments.

It is your job as outlined in the M-41 Sec. 131.4:

131.4 Reporting Requirements

131.41 **It is your responsibility to verbally inform management when you are of the opinion that you will be unable to case all mail distributed to the route, perform other required duties, and leave on schedule or when you will be unable to complete delivery of all mail.**

131.42 **Inform management of this well in advance of the scheduled leaving time and not later than immediately following the final receipt of mail.** Management will instruct you what to do.

131.43 **Complete applicable items on Form 3996,** Carrier-Auxiliary Control, if overtime or auxiliary assistance is authorized in the office or on the street.

131.44 **Report on Form 1571 all mail undelivered** – including all mail distributed to the route but not cased and taken out for delivery. Estimate the number of pieces of mail.

131.45 Do not curtail or eliminate any scheduled delivery or collection trip unless authorized by a manager, **in which case you must record all facts on Form 1571.**

131.46 Before you leave the office, enter on Form 1571 the mail curtailed; when you return, add any mail which was not delivered, and which was returned to the office. Follow any special local procedures set up to identify errors and corrective actions for mail returned because it was out of sequence.

It is Management's job in the M-39 Management of Delivery Services:

111.2 Daily Operations

The delivery service manager must daily:

j. **Issue Form 1571** when the carrier is instructed to curtail mail, indicating action thereon. **Upon request, a duplicate of**

the completed form will be provided the carrier.

122.33 **The employee, upon request, will be provided a PS Form 3996,** Carrier - Auxiliary Control, after the supervisor has been verbally informed as to the reason for the request. **The employee shall not be denied the form, and, upon request, a duplicate of the completed form will be provided to the employee.**

This form is used to report all delayed (curtailed) pieces of mail on a delivery assignment on any given day. Some carriers may be unaware that, unless authorized by a manager, they are required to case all mail distributed to the route they are serving. They are not allowed, without authorization from management, to curtail or eliminate any scheduled delivery or collection trips. Form 1571 plays a significant role because it provides a written record of any management instruction to curtail mail. After the authorization is given to curtail mail and Form 1571 completed, management is required to verify the type and amount of mail curtailed to see if it agrees with that shown on Form 1571 (M-39 126.12). Carriers are also required to record any mail that was not delivered and returned to the office, meaning every day you bring back mail from the street, this form shall be used to record that mail. Finally, supervisors are to report to the appropriate manager the total amount of curtailed mail recorded by carriers on Form 1571. These forms (PS Form 3996 and 1571) are not only vital to showing management how long your route is by providing a written record; these forms are what may save you from being disciplined. You have the right to fill out these forms on the day they apply too, not the next morning or several days later. Fill PS Forms 3996 and 1571 out in duplicate, get them signed by a supervisor, and get your copy back to hold for your own personal record or if a steward needs this information to help you or your fellow carriers.

M-00413:

We agreed to settle this case based on our mutual understanding that forms 1571 and 3996 are to be completed on the day to which they apply.

Remember, filling out these forms are part of your job requirement and protects you from route adjustments and disciplinary actions! Additionally, they take time to fill out and it forces management to do their jobs making it less likely to have to “observe” carriers. Are you filling out these forms and keeping copies of them each day? You have that right to duplicate copies and management must supply you with them as per Art. 41.3.G of the National Agreement which states:

JCAM Page 41-26:

41.3. G. The Employer will advise a carrier who has properly submitted a Carrier Auxiliary Control Form

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THE EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT

(Continued from page 6)

3996 of the disposition of the request promptly after review of the circumstances at the time. Upon request, a duplicate copy of the completed Form 3996 and Form 1571, Report of Undelivered Mail, etc., will be provided the carrier.

If, while in the normal course of picking up DPS mail, a letter carrier determines the need to file a request for overtime or auxiliary assistance (or to amend a request that was previously filed), the carrier may do so at that time. The supervisor will advise the letter carrier of the disposition of the request or amended request promptly after review of the circumstances.

Management should only fill out box L on the PS Form 3996. Indicating approved, disapproved, hours, minutes, and their initials. The following from the instructions on the back of the 3996.

L. MANAGEMENT ACTION - This section is completed by the manager reviewing the form. The manager reviews the request and makes a determination as to the appropriate actions. The manager shall check the appropriate actions and initial each section.

Carriers who provide assistance should take the time to fill out the lower portion of the 3996 and enter that time on your MDD with the appropriate move function. Again, this is immensely helpful in any future route adjustments and to protect the integrity of the routes. All it takes is a few improper MDD entries, and management will be foaming at the mouth with regards to adding more time to routes. The following is relevant:

M-00294:

In order not to undermine the purpose of the Form 3996, it is agreed that any employee who provides carrier assistance shall complete the lower portion of the Form 3996 as instructed on the form itself.

Please do not be afraid and take the time to fill out these forms when necessary as they are a requirement. You are not only protecting yourself, but future carriers. As always if you have any questions, see your Steward, or call the hall.

~ In Unity and Solidarity,
Michael Levering, Executive Vice-President



MEMBERSHIP RECOGNITION

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT!

40 Years

Receiving his Lapel Pin



Leon (Griz) Sojka



35 Years

Receiving his Lapel Pin

Joseph K. Quinlivan

30 Years

Receiving her Lapel Pin



Rosetta Hunter



25 Years

Receiving his Lapel Pin

Richard F. Mazella

RETIREMENTS (May 2023)

John Bockman (Jamestown)

NEW MEMBERS (May 2023)

Deejay Kriner	David Benkelman	David Cruz	Breyonne Manning	Fred Foster
Marae James	Elizabeth Espinosa	Ryan Dowd	Mindy Pritchard	Jeremy Bari
Eric Jablonski-Rice	Jennifer Mae Snow	Ty Dash	Erik Machajewski	Zachary Rojek
Tanner Loretto	James Garavaglia	Anthony Fuller	Kayleigh Seise	Juliana Tatar



2023 FOOD DRIVE



SUCCESS!



Galaxy S21 Ultra 5G

**AWESOME
JOB**





PAPER FORMS ARE STILL HERE...FOR THE TIME BEING

ECOMP is a website that provides federal agencies with an electronic system for recording workplace injuries and illnesses, and processing claims under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA) with the Dept. of Labor/Office of Workers' Compensation Program (DOL/OWCP).

While ECOMP is the easiest way for members to file a claim, not everyone has the means such as weak or no internet service.

You can still file a paper claim when you sustain a traumatic injury on the job via CA-1, Federal Employee's Notice of Traumatic Injury and Claim for Continuation of Pay/Compensation. If you paper file, request a copy of the employee's portion you fill out including any written statement management requests. While you have reporting requirements for an injury, management has responsibilities also.

EL-505 Supervisor and Control Point Responsibilities in an Emergency When an emergency work-related accident or illness occurs... in part:

3-6 Assisting the Employee in Reporting an Injury and Making a Choice of COP or Leave – supervisor

- Provide the employee with CA-1, Federal Employee's Notification of Traumatic Injury and Claim for Continuation of Pay/Compensation. Instruct him or her to do the following:
 - Complete the employee's section of the form.
 - Make choice of treating physician. – Elect COP, annual leave, or sick leave if time loss occur from the job-related injury.
 - Promptly return CA-1 with supporting medical documentation, if available, to the supervisor. If the employee submits medical information later, forward that information to the ICCO for submission with the CA-1, or with the case number, to OWCP.

The employee is responsible for submitting prima facie medical evidence of disability to the supervisor within 10 working days. If he or she fails to do so, COP can be terminated.

Prima Facie Evidence Prima facie evidence is medical evidence that indicates the employee is disabled as a result of a job-related injury and thus cannot perform the job held at the time of injury.

Often, management fails to inform the employee of these responsibilities/rights, especially the need for medical information sufficient to support any disability from work due to the injury.

Management is required to submit your claim to the District Occupational Health Center (OHC) within 24 hours of receiving your claim. Management has additional responsibilities as follows:

Handbook EL-505 Section 3-6:

- Upon receiving the completed CA-1 from the employee, do the following:

- Document on CA-1 the date the form was received.
- Complete the receipt attached to CA-1 and give a copy to the employee or his or her representative.
- Review the CA-1 for completeness and accuracy, and assist the employee in correcting any deficiencies found.
- Complete the official supervisor's report of traumatic injury, items 17 through 18.
- Inform the employee of his or her right to elect COP or annual or sick leave for time loss resulting from the job-related injury.
- Comment on the employee's narrative statement by either confirming it, refuting it, or providing additional, relevant, and probative information in a separate cover letter to the OWCP.
- Complete Form 1769, Accident Report.
- Submit the completed CA-1, a copy of Form 1769, Accident Report, and all other documentation to the ICCO within 24 hours of receipt from the employee.
- Inform the employee whether COP will be controverted and whether pay will be terminated in accordance with one of the eight regulatory reasons.
- Explain to the employee his or her responsibility to submit prima facie medical evidence of disability within 10 working days of the date of receipt of the CA-1 from the employee.

As a claimant, you are responsible for all aspects of your claim. However, this does not absolve management of fulfilling their responsibilities as outlined in the Handbook EL-505 Injury Compensation. Members have not received information on their responsibilities/rights, receipt for their CA-1 claim and/or illegible, inaccurate CA-16, Authorization for Examination and/or Treatment, just to name a few. This is unacceptable.

If management fails to properly handle your claim, see your steward. If you ECOMP your claim or establish an ECOMP log-in afterwards, do periodic reviews of your claim. There have been instances where the paper filing of a CA-1 is NOT in the case file. Additionally, the Service has been changing the dates on the employee's portion of the CA-1 and signing the form as acting as your agent. As an example, the employee's portion Item #13 Date of This Notice has been changed by the 'agent' from the USPS District's OHC.

See your Steward or call the office if the information management has submitted on their electronic submission of your CA-1 is not what you filed. While local management may claim they have no control over what OHC does, the Post Office's OHC and the specialists are still bound by the National Agreement which includes handbooks, manuals, and the law.

Stay Safe & Stay Healthy - Judy Kersten

GILLIBRAND, SCHUMER AND HIGGINS LETTER TO USPS OIG

A call for change after alleged mistreatment of WNY USPS workers during Christmas blizzard

Congress of the United States

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 19, 2023

The Honorable Louis DeJoy, Postmaster General
United States Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza, S.W., Washington, DC 20260

The Honorable Tammy Whitcomb Hull, Inspector General
United States Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza, S.W., Washington, DC 20260

Dear Postmaster General DeJoy and Inspector General Whitcomb Hull,

We write to urge that the United States Postal Service Office of Inspector General (“USPS OIG”) investigate potential mismanagement by postal managers and other decision-makers within USPS that endangered the lives of letter carriers during the onset of Winter Storm Elliott in Western New York. We ask that in addition to an investigation by the OIG, that USPS also work with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (“OSHA”) to develop, implement, and update any procedures for protecting the postal workforce in severe winter weather events.

By December 23, 2022, it was clear that Winter Storm Elliott would become a “once in a generation” winter storm, with plummeting temperatures, heavy snowfall, and wind chills that posed extreme danger to New Yorkers and other Americans in the Northeastern and Central United States.¹ However, we are concerned that management at a number of postal facilities in western New York ignored warnings about the storm and wasted precious hours deliberating with colleagues in Albany and Pittsburgh - hundreds of miles from the center of the storm - that would have instead allowed mail carriers to return home and prepare themselves and their loved ones. According to impacted workers, the weather continued to deteriorate, mail carriers were denied the ability to leave their stations and return home, with some employees being told that unless they took out of their Annual Leave to depart, that they would be considered “AWOL” by management.

Although the blizzard arrived at 8:39 AM local time and a county driving ban had been issued at 9:30 AM, Postal Service managers did not instruct employees to return home until the afternoon.² By then, carriers were left to navigate a storm that would result in the tragic deaths of 47 people. Our office are also aware of reports suggesting that certain managers were aware that USPS carriers were exempt from the county driving ban, which may have been used as leverage in order to get employees to continue working. It is especially alarming for us to learn of reports that when employees did try to shelter at their offices, managers allegedly threatened to call the police and remove them.

If not for our brave first responders, the strength of the local community, and luck, many of these carriers may not have survived. One employee noted that he was unable to drive away from his facility in Williamsville, and instead spent two nights at his facility until he was able to leave on Christmas Day. Another carrier’s infant son who was breastfeeding had to go two days without his mother. Another worker who was eight months pregnant was delayed until nearly 4:00 PM on the 23rd, became immobilized attempting to drive home due to the blizzard, and had to be recovered by volunteer firefighter. For another carrier, her vehicle careened into a ditch, only to be rescued by a nearby resident, who took her to safety and allowed her to stay with his family.

The allegations of delays and poor decision-making that risked the lives of employees during such an extreme weather event is highly alarming. In addition to the development of an extreme weather safety plan, we also ask that USPS respond to the following questions:

1. Will employees who were stranded or immobilized due to the extreme weather be fully compensated?
Have they been offered psychological counseling?
2. What is the chain of command and decision-making process for releasing employees back to their homes in extreme weather scenarios?
3. Weather outlets and federal agencies were reporting for days ahead of Winter Storm Elliott that it would be a “once in a generation” winter storm. Did managers and their superiors develop a contingency or safety plan in advance of the storm?
4. Have managers who allegedly held employees until the afternoon on the 23rd and threatened to call law enforcement on sheltering workers faced any disciplinary action? If not, is there currently an ongoing investigation?
5. Under what scenarios, if at all, are managers and other USPS officials able to delegate the authority to send employees home to leaders working on-site?

Thank you for considering these questions. We look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely, *Kristen Gillibrand, United States Senator* *Charles E. Schumer, United States Senator* *Brian Higgins, Member of Congress*

cc: The Honorable Douglas L. Parker, Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health
Occupational Safety and Health Administration

¹ National Weather Service Buffalo (@NWSBUFFALO). “A once-in-a-generation storm will produce high winds east of Lake Ontario Thursday night into Friday morning, then over a larger coverage of our region Friday into Saturday. Winds could gust over 65 mph, leading to at LEAST scattered power outages, if not widespread outages.” 21 December 2022, 7:37 a.m. Tweet.

² Herbeck, Dan. “Postal Service managers accused of endangering workers during Buffalo blizzard,” *The Buffalo News*, 29 Jan 2023, https://buffalonews.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/postal-service-managers-accused-of-endangering-workers-during-buffalo-blizzard/article_5b74c1a4-9350-11ed-9da7-0f0b146c0bd4.html

DURBIN URGES DOJ, USPS TO WORK TOGETHER TO PROTECT LETTER CARRIERS AND BETTER INVESTIGATE AND PROSECUTE ARMED ROBBERIES

RICHARD J. DURBIN
ILLINOIS
MAJORITY WHIP

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1304

April 24, 2023

The Honorable Merrick Garland
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

The Honorable Louis DeJoy
Postmaster General
United States Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza, SW Room 10300
Washington, DC 20260

Dear Attorney General Garland and Postmaster General DeJoy:

I write to urge the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the United States Postal Service (USPS) to work together to address the growing threat of armed robberies against USPS letter carriers, including by vigorously investigating these crimes and prosecuting those who commit them.

The Postal Inspection Service reports that armed robberies of letter carriers increased sharply between 2018 and 2021, rising from 36 incidents to 154 incidents. In previous letters to both Postmaster DeJoy and the USPS Board of Governors, I have urged USPS to reinstate a system of local area crime alerts, which it inexplicably has stopped sending to employees. Though some alerts continue to be sent via mail scanning devices, local postmasters can, and frequently do, opt out of the service. I reiterate my request for USPS to reinstate this system of crime alerts and encourage DOJ to consider how it may partner with USPS to further improve the safety of letter carriers. Knowledge of criminal activity in the vicinity can in some instances help letter carriers to avoid dangerous situations, including robberies.

I also urge USPS to reduce the incentive for this crime by updating cluster mailboxes to require two-factor authentication. The motive for letter carrier robberies often is the theft of master or "arrow" keys, and instituting a pilot program to update cluster boxes with new technology could only improve this dire situation. These arrow keys can command thousands of dollars on the clandestine market because they allow access to cluster mailboxes and their contents, which include checks and other valuable items.

The prosecution of these crimes is also an important means of holding armed robbers accountable for their criminal activity and deterring future robberies. Section 2114(a) of title 18 of the U.S. Code 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. The maximum penalty increases to 25 years if injury results or in the case of a repeat offender. Moreover, 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 under section 2114(b). I urge DOJ to prioritize enforcement of these statutes and all other provisions applicable to these reprehensible assaults on the men and women who deliver the nation's mail.

It is critical that your respective agencies work together to better protect these public servants and ensure the security of our mail system. I respectfully request an update on these efforts in the coming weeks.

Sincerely,
Richard J. Durbin, United States Senator

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WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1304
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230 S. DEARBORN STREET
SUITE 3892
CHICAGO, IL 60604
(312) 353-4952

525 SOUTH EIGHTH STREET
SPRINGFIELD, IL 62703
(217) 492-4062

1504 THIRD AVENUE
SUITE 227
ROCK ISLAND, IL 61201
(309) 786-5173

250 W. CHERRY STREET
SUITE 115-D
CARBONDALE, IL 62901
(618) 351-1122

durbin.senate.gov

DIRECTOR OF RETIRED MEMBERS

KENT HANKIN



To all retired and active members

Starting in the year 2025 or the Health Benefits open season of November to December of 2024. Every member will have to pick a health plan for the Postal Service Health benefit plan (PSHBP). It is a subset of the Federal Employees Health Benefit Plan (FEHBP). If you are or were employed by the Postal Service (active or retired) you will have to make a pick from the new plans. If you do not pick a plan, one will be assigned to you. Plus, for us retired members who didn't take Medicare when we turned 65 there will be an amnesty program in the year 2024. If you want to start your Medicare part B you will not be charged the ten percent (10%) penalty for every year over age 65. This is a one time shot so think hard about it since we are not getting any younger. Keep informed through the BUZZ, Judith Kersten's articles, the Postal Record and of course the Postal Service Retirement magazine.

By the time you read this the 85th annual Old Timers/Letter Carrier Appreciation Day will have passed. This year we were HONORING sixty-two members. This is always a nice event and I learn so much from these men and women. Just listen to the stories about how they started and were getting \$1.39 an hour, no overtime, no annual leave, no sick leave, no health plan, no clothing allowance etc. These are the men and women who fought to get us the benefits we have NOW.

The Burns/Connors Retirement Association is having our annual picnic on Wednesday, June 21st at Depew's Firemen Park starting at noon. If you are interested, please call me so that we have enough food. The cost for the members of the association is \$10. Call me at (716) 685-4648 or (716) 864-6948.

Please be safe during the summer months and we will see everybody back in September. God bless everyone with a beautiful Summer and good health.

The quote for the month is from John Churton Collins. *"To profit from good advice requires more wisdom than to give it."*

~ Kent Hankin, Director of Retired Members



BURNS/CONNORS RETIREMENT ASSOC.

This is a short objective of what the Burns-Connors Retirement Association does. The object of this association is to protect in all ways the ways the interest of retired letter carriers, renew old friendships, talk over old times, to promote good will and fellowship by means of planned get-togethers and in general try to advance the welfare of all our members mentally, morally and spiritually. We call and write our Congressmen and Senators when legislation is going to effect the Postal Service, the Union or active and retired carriers. We attend rallies as a show of support and we vote.

We are looking for more retirees to join the Association. The dues are only \$20.00 per year.

Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of every month, with the exception of July and August. Meetings are held at the Magruder's Restaurant, 4995 Broadway, Depew. We have a small meeting at 1:00 and the luncheon right after the meeting for a small fee.

Any retirees interested in joining the Burns-Connors Association can come to any of the meetings which are held on the third Wednesday of the month.

If interested call Kent Hankin - 685-4648.

DEATHS (May 2023)

Thomas Pyszczynski
(Life Member - deceased May 2021)

Albert Segal
(Life Member - deceased December 2022)

Stanley LaRoe
(Life Member - deceased March 2021)

LAST PUNCH Good luck on your retirement!

THOMAS TIERNEY
Williamsville Carrier



I'm at Tim Horton's and there's a man with a gun

Safety begins with us. We are responsible for our own safety, but some situations require management's involvement to help ensure the safety of others. An incident happened on April 18th at approximately 10am in the morning. I received a phone call from one of our Union sisters with a simple but terrifying statement, **"I'm at Tim Horton's and there's a man with a gun...."** and then simply silence. Within a split second I experienced shock, worry and fear for my fellow carrier. I immediately called the carrier back without an answer and attempted to notify management also without answer (no surprise there). Thankfully another one of our union sisters was near the area and without hesitation drove to the scene to make sure the police were on site. She was able to confirm that our union sister was safe. During that time, I had sent out a group text message notifying my management team to call me immediately. Within minutes I received a phone call from my Postmaster stating that she just heard what happened and she had just spoken to the carrier. I was then informed that the carrier was recommended to go home for the day and EAP was provided to them. During this time, I made sure our local union leadership was made aware of the situation and I spoke to our union sister later in the day to make sure she was ok.

I was told the carrier was delivering to a Tim Horton's when one of the staff stated, "hit the panic button he has a gun." The carrier immediately went and banged on the women's bathroom and asked to be let in so she could hide. The carrier and a fellow patron hid in the bathroom as the carrier made several phone calls for help.

After hearing this story, I knew enough was enough and something had to be done. I had previously filed a grievance for management not safely handling situations that involved carriers and shootings before. Also, like before I knew that more had to be done and just filing another grievance wasn't enough. I immediately requested a meeting with my postmaster and our safety captain to discuss the idea of a safety plan. For once, I did not encounter any resistance from management. In fact, I was encouraged to do so. The next day when the postal inspector was there, he was informed of our idea. The postal inspector stated that it was an excellent idea, especially because there is no current plan for this type of situation. I was then also informed that once it was completed the postal inspector would be sending it to all the POOM groups he covered so they could have something in place as well. So that night I immediately wrote a safety plan.

This plan is unique because it is a plan that tells not only the steps a carrier involved in an incident should take. But also, the steps that management and the union steward/safety captain should take. This is a collaboration between management and the union when it comes to the safety of carriers. I would not accept a plan that didn't put in detail exactly what management will do, and even prioritizes carrier safety over mail delivery. As we all know, not every manager has experienced certain situations that do happen on the street to us letter carriers.

I prioritized automatically notifying ALL carriers of exactly what happened as well as offering EAP/CA-1 to carriers. Our safety captain during our meeting demanded two items from management and both were at once complied with. The first was no carrier will be sent back out to deliver to an area that was deemed unsafe by another (whether by direct order, or not knowing the situation). The second was every carrier will be given a "safe zone" that if they can safely arrive there, will be used for accountability and safe shelter purposes. This overall plan is provided to the union steward/safety captain and the management team, so everyone understands each other's roles and how to assist one another. Two smaller laminated copies will be provided to each of the carriers. One for their satchel that they always keep on themselves while they are delivering and the second for their case. The front of the card states the steps carriers should take, the route number and their safe zone for the route. The back of the card states emergency services numbers, the office numbers, all manager cell phone numbers, union steward's/safety captain's cell phone number, union hall's number, and the postal inspector's number.

Unfortunately, this type of situation has become all too common in my office. The need for this plan is a sad, but necessary one. The first week of the plan being implemented, there were three different incidents being reported by carriers. Thankfully, the plan worked without any issues. I understand this plan won't magically solve many of the issues that we city letter carriers face every day. I just hope that it prevents another carrier from receiving a phone call from one of their union brothers/sisters and feeling helpless because you don't know what to do in a crisis situation. If anyone is interested in seeing our safety plan and has a management team interested in taking part in a similar plan (it must be a joint effort). Then please feel free to contact me.

~ In Solidarity, Andrew Harrison

NEW MEMBERS:
Zachary Rojek, Eric Jablonski-Rice,
and Connor Mauche





*Join the family & friends of John Ayers
as we celebrate John's everlasting
Positive Vibes with his ideal summer day.*



SUNDAY, AUGUST 6TH, 2023

HYDE PARK GOLF COURSE

11:00AM REGISTRATION & LUNCH @ THE COURSE

12:00PM SHOTGUN START

SCRAMBLE FORMAT



FOLLOWED BY CASUAL DINNER

@ LASALLE YACHT CLUB

\$125/GOLFER

INCLUDES: LITE LUNCH, GOLF, DINNER, DRINKS, MERCH

\$60 DINNER ONLY

INCLUDES: DINNER, DRINKS, MERCH

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

- CART SPONSOR** \$50
Your company logo will be displayed on one of the golf carts.
- HOLE SPONSOR** \$100
Signage with your company logo will be placed on one of the 18 tees in use.
- LUNCH SPONSOR** \$500
A banner with your company logo will be displayed at registration.
- DRINK CART SPONSOR** \$1,000
A banner with your company logo will be displayed on the drink cart.
- MERCHANDISE SPONSOR** \$2,000
*A banner with your company logo will be displayed at registration and the yacht club.
You will choose the merch item and the design.*

**PLEASE FB MESSAGE, OR EMAIL VICTORIA AYERS TO SECURE YOUR SPOT,
PARTICIPATE AS A SPONSOR OR TO MAKE A DONATION OF ANY KIND!**

JOHNSPOSITIVEVIBES@GMAIL.COM

Proceeds will go to the Niagara County SPCA, Niagara Falls Firefighter's Christmas Toy Fund, Better Together Pet Resource Center, & towards a memorial bench for John at the Niagara Falls State Park.



GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING - MAY 9, 2023

- President Grosskopf called the meeting to order at 7:32pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.
- The Executive Board made a motion to **purchase a full-page ad** in the NYS 65th Biennial Convention journal for \$300. Motion passed.
- The Executive Board made a motion to **sponsor a hole in NALC Syracuse Br #134's 27th annual golf tournament** at the cost of \$100. Motion passed.
- The Executive Board made a motion to be a **bronze sponsor in the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) annual mini golf tournament** at the cost of \$100. Motion passed.
- The Executive Board made a motion to participate in the **Juneteenth Parade on June 17th, 2023**. Total fee paid is \$150.00. Motion passed.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- *Fellowship committee:* Chairman Robson informed the membership that the **annual volleyball/cornhole tournament** will be held **Sunday, June 11th at Bowen Grove. 9am check in, 10am start**. Food, pop, water, and beer will be supplied. **Please bring a dish to pass**. Contact the union hall to sign up your team. Brother Robson informed the membership that **food drive cards** should be delivered on **May 9th**.
- *Muscular Dystrophy committee:* Chairwomen Deluca informed the membership that the **22nd annual MDA golf outing** will be held **Sunday, June 25th, 2023, at Chestnut Hill Country Club**. The cost is **\$100 per individual**. **Foursomes must be paid by June 15th**. Contact **Sister Deluca 585-730-1414 or Brother Koch at 716-574-9799**. A motion was made to cover the **cost of key chains** for participants at a total cost of **\$350**. Motion passed.
- *Insurance:* Chairwomen Kersten informed the membership that details on the health insurance plans will be coming soon. She also informed the membership to **not rely on management to forward any comp bills**. She urged the membership to work safely in the warm weather as it creates new safety challenges. She also reminded everyone to **fill out 3971s for prime-time vacations**.

OLD BUSINESS:

- President Grosskopf announced **article 8 payouts** since the last membership meeting totaling **\$36,265**.
- President Grosskopf also spoke on ongoing building issues. **Johnny's pizzeria** still has **not settled their payment**, so President Grosskopf is **going forward with a failed settlement claim**. The **generator installation has been completed and both electrical inspectors have passed the installation as proper and complete**. President Grosskopf is attempting to get a fencing estimate to enclose the generator.
- President Grosskopf announced the payout for the **Hiler start time arbitration**. **24 carriers received approximately \$25,500 in compensation** for management improperly changing their start times.

NEW BUSINESS:

- President Grosskopf **read the letter that Senator Gillibrand sent to PMG/OIG and OSHA regarding the way in which the Postal Service handled the December blizzard**. She is demanding answers for the poor postal decisions.
- President Grosskopf also **met with Congressman Higgins** during the Congressional lobbying trip to **thank him for all his positive legislative work** on behalf of letter carriers.
- TIAREAP process: The **last zone selection period is May of 2023**. If any zone or installation wants to **opt in, it must be done by May 29th**.
President Grosskopf announced **Amherst 14226 live week** was rescheduled to **May 6th** and is currently going on after interference from the PM and MCSO.
Central Park's inspection went off as planned on **April 29th**.
- Present Grosskopf announced the branch is attempting to put together a contingent to march in the **Juneteenth parade on June 17th, 2023**. If interested, please **contact Eastside carrier Ty Thomas at 716-536-6220 or email at Tyshawn_Thomas@yahoo.com**.
- President Grosskopf read a **statement from EVP Barner on President Renfroe's leave of absence**.
- President Grosskopf spoke on the **CWA 1168's attempts to negotiate their 1st contract** at the **Veterinary Medical Center in Orchard Park**. He encouraged members to take the lawn signs provided and put them in their yards to bring attention to this matter.

FROM THE FLOOR:

- President Grosskopf spoke on a question regarding **reserve positions in Williamsville**. The Union will **not allow management to abolish any reserve positions**.
- Sister Kersten informed the membership that Sister **Michelle Brooks** is doing well and has **officially retired**. She thanked everyone for their support during her recovery.
- Brother Hankin informed the membership that **Bison tickets** will be available at a cost of **\$7 per ticket**. Contact the hall if interested.
- Brother Hankin also reminded the membership that our annual Old Timer's Appreciation Luncheon will be held on **June 4th at Sean Patrick's**. Tickets are going fast, call the hall if interested.
- Brother Harrison made a motion to purchase **5 tickets** at a cost of **\$60 for the John Ayers Memorial golf outing dinner**. Tickets not to be used. Motion passed.
- Brother Robson announced the "if you are here drawing". Eastside carrier **Manuel Greer** was present and **won \$50**.

Next General Membership Meeting will be held on June 13th, 2023, at the Matthew Glab Post 1477 @ 7:30pm

UNION MEETING NOTICE

JUNE 13th

6:00 pm Officers Meeting
6:30 pm Stewards Meeting
7:30 pm General Membership Meeting


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JUNE 2023 *Monthly Calendar of Events*

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
4	5	6 9:00 am Chktg Breakfast Alton's Restaurant 7:30 pm AFL-CIO Mtg.	7 10:00 am Hiler Sta. Retirees at Greek on the Street 3189 Delaware Ave. 6:00 pm Officers Meeting	8	9 BUZZ ENTRIES DUE	10
11	12	13 11:45 am Tonawanda Retirees at TC Wheelers, 341 Wheeler St., Tonawanda, NY 6:00 pm Officers Meeting 6:30 pm Stewards Mtg. 7:30 pm General Membership Meeting	14	15 9:30 am Williamsville Retiree's Dennys (French & Transit)	16	17
18	19	20	21 1:00 pm Burns-Connors Retirement Assoc. meets @ Magraders	22	23	24
25	26	27 9:30 am Amherst & Kensington Retirees at Wehrle Family Rest.	28	29	30	JULY 1
2	3	4 9:00 am Chktg Breakfast Alton's Restaurant 7:30 pm AFL-CIO Mtg.	5 10:00 am Hiler Sta. Retirees at Greek on the Street 3189 Delaware Ave. 6:00 pm Officers Meeting	6 9:00 am Kenmore Retiree's Breakfast at Olympic, 1601 Military Rd. 9:30 am Williamsville Retiree's Brunch at Family Tree Rest., 4346 Bailey, Amherst	7 9:00 am Southtowns Retiree Brkft at Alton's - Transit & Seneca	8

The Deadline for submissions to the Buzz is the 2nd Friday of every month.