

# *The PONY EXPRESS*



## 2016 NRLCA National Convention



IDRLCA Carrier-of-the-Year Glenda Sanders accepts her award from NRLCA President Jeanette Dwyer



IDRLCA President Patti Upton advances the flag during the Parade of States at the 2016 National Convention



IDRLCA Editor Lou Freeman accepts his General Excellence award from NRLCA Editor Melissa Ray



**Delegates to the 2016 National Convention:** (l. to r. Top Row) Glenda Sanders, Brian Draper, Bret Helle, Brett Parkinson and Mikea Hargrove. (l. to r. Bottom Row) IDRLCA Auxiliary President Robin Carver, Lori Bennett, Patti Upton, Lisa Hall, Sharon Atkins and Lou Freeman.

**Western Area  
Executive Committeeman**

Don Maston  
PO Box 902710  
Palmdale CA 93590-710  
(661) 266-3879

**NRLCA NATIONAL OFFICERS**

Jeanette Dwyer, President  
Ronnie Stutts, Vice President  
Clifford Dailing, Secretary/Treasurer  
Joey Johnson, Director of Labor Relations  
David Heather, Director of Steward Operations

**NATIONAL OFFICERS' ADDRESS**

1630 Duke Street, 4th Floor  
ALEXANDRIA VA 22314-3465  
(703) 684-5545  
WEB SITE ADDRESS  
<http://www.nrlca.org>

**SOUTHERN IDAHO DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE**

**Brian Draper**

PO Box 555  
Meridian ID 83680  
(208) 577-1759

**ADR Deb Hurd**

PO Box 943  
Kimberly ID 83341  
(208) 320-6084

**Idaho Area 832-833-834**

**ADR Alan Stonely**

PO Box 674  
Heber City UT 84032  
(801) 822-3852

**ADR Herschel Howard**

5103 Shalecrest Ct  
Boise ID 83703  
(208) 794-9231

**Idaho Area 836-837**

**ADR Ted Van Den Akker**

PO Box 312  
Magna UT 84044  
(385) 227-7095

**NORTHERN IDAHO DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE**

**Patrick Pitts**

PO Box 96  
Orting WA 98360-0096

**ADR Joyce Patteson**

PO Box 1005  
Selah WA 98942  
(509) 580-0043

**Idaho Area**

**ADR Renee' Pitts**

PO Box 1795  
Orting WA 98360-1795  
(509) 315-7012

**IDRLCA STATE AND DISTRICT OFFICERS**

**PRESIDENT**

Patti Upton  
3735 Wild Wood Lane  
New Plymouth ID 83655  
(208) 278-5568  
Cell: (208) 707-2665

**VICE PRESIDENT**

Brett Parkinson  
2401 West 1000 North  
Rexburg ID 83440  
(208) 356-7728  
Cell: 208-346-1288

**SECRETARY/TREASURER**

Lori Bennett  
306 N Dakota Avenue  
Fruitland ID 83619  
(208) 452-3539  
Cell: 208-880-5026

**AUXILIARY PRESIDENT**

Robin Carver  
3729 E Benton Ave  
Nampa ID 83687  
Cell: 208-880-9963

**DISTRICT 1**

**PRESIDENT**

Mikea Hargrove  
9736 W Silverspring St  
Boise ID 83709  
(208) 515-9634

**VICE PRESIDENT**

Mara Ralls  
420 Briar Hill Street  
Nampa ID 83686  
Cell: (208) 407-1103

**SEC/TREAS**

Glenda Sanders  
260 Cedar Avenue  
Kuna ID 83634  
(208) 602-8960

**DISTRICT 2**

**PRESIDENT**

Russell Hutchison  
1044 East 21st Street  
Burley ID 83318  
Cell: (208) 431-1509

**VICE PRESIDENT**

Chad Anderson  
2160 Holstein Street  
Heyburn ID 83318  
Cell: (208) 260-0015

**SEC/TREAS**

Amber Warr  
2556 Hansen Avenue  
Burley ID 83318  
Cell: (208) 670-5824

**DISTRICT 3**

**PRESIDENT**

John Thomas  
4075 East Menan Hwy  
Rigby ID 83442-5168  
(208) 745-8348  
Cell: (208) 589-9383

**VICE PRESIDENT**

Layle Cherry  
3433 HWY 20  
Ashton ID 83420-5739  
(208) 652-3649

**SEC/TREAS**

Lesley Greenwell  
712 N Marsh Creek Rd  
McCammon ID 83250-1501  
Cell: (208) 221-2912

**DISTRICT 5**

**PRESIDENT**

Jim Sullins  
1021 Granlund Rd  
Troy ID 83871-9625  
(208) 835-3203  
Cell (208) 301-3795

**VICE PRESIDENT**

Tony LeBlanc  
12242 S Tamarack Ridge Rd  
Cataldo ID 83810-9739  
Cell (208) 512-3062

**SEC/TREAS**

Alissa LeBlanc  
1521 N 9th Street #143  
Coeur d'Alene ID 83814  
Cell: (208) 704-6610

**PAC CHAIRMAN**

Bret Helle  
3729 E Benton Ave  
Nampa ID 83687  
Cell: (208) 695-1534

**PONY EXPRESS**

Lou Freeman  
1318 H Street  
Rupert ID 83350  
(208) 436-0687  
Cell: (208) 219-4050

**LEGISLATIVE  
REPRESENTATIVE**

Russell Hutchison  
1044 East 21st Street  
Burley ID 83318  
Cell: (208) 431-1509

**RETIRES REP**

Jo Aguirre  
10875 Hollandale  
Boise ID 83709  
(208) 376-1554  
Cell: (208)-995-7771

**AUTO INS REP**

Mikea Hargrove  
9736 W Silverspring St  
Boise ID 83709  
(208) 515-9634

**PROV GUILD**

Jim Sullins  
1021 Granlund Rd  
Troy ID 83871  
(208) 835-3203  
Cell (208) 301-3795

**HISTORIAN**

Mary Morris  
10106 W Kingsbriar Dr  
Boise ID 83709  
(208) 562-1606

**WEBMASTER**

Glenda Sanders  
260 Cedar Avenue  
Kuna ID 83634  
(208) 602-8960

**IDAHO FEDERAL LEGISLATORS**

**Senator James Risch (R)** [www.risch.senate.gov/webform.cfm](http://www.risch.senate.gov/webform.cfm)  
**Senator Michael Crapo (R)** [www.senate.gov~crapo](http://www.senate.gov~crapo)  
**Rep. Michael K. Simpson (R)** [www.house.gov/simpson.gov](http://www.house.gov/simpson.gov)  
**Rep. Raul Labrador (R)** [www.labrador.house.gov](http://www.labrador.house.gov)

*Please report corrections to The Pony Express.*

# LOCAL STEWARDS

OFFICE	NAME	ADDRESS	CITY-ZIP	UNION PHONE
American Falls				
Athol				
Blackfoot Main	Clade Ward	285 S Shilling Ave	Blackfoot 83221	(208) 681-8749
Boise Boi-Cole	Sharon Atkins	7106 San Fernando Dr	Boise 83704	(208) 376-1955
Boise Boi-Five Mile	John Urquidi	34276 Hot Creek Rd	Bruneau 83604	(208) 599-0979
Boise Boi-Garden				
Burley	Nancy Neiwert	339 S 50 E	Burley 83318	(208) 678-2541
Cambridge				
Caldwell Main	Sam Doyle	819 Settlers Dr	Caldwell 83607	(208) 392-0841
Coeur d'Alene	Peter Haynos	2984 W Grange Ave	Post Falls 83854	(208) 773-1925
Cottonwood Main				
Craigmont				
Culdesac				
Deary				
Eagle				
Emmett				
Filer	Marilyn Carrico	56 Northridge Way	Jerome 83338	(208) 326-5220
Fruitland Main	Lori Bennett	306 N Dakota Ave	Fruitland 83619	(208) 452-3539
Garden City Station	Herschel Howard	PO Box 140071	Garden City 83714	(208) 921-4833
Genesee				
Glenns Ferry				
Grangeville				
Gooding Main				
Greenleaf				
Hayden Main	Peter Haynos	2984 W Grange Ave	Post Falls 83854	(208) 773-1925
Homedale				
Horseshoe Bend				
Idaho Falls Main	John Thomas	4075 E Menan Hwy	Rigby 83442	(208) 745-8348
Inkom				
Jerome	Heather Ranger	578 Butte Drive	Twin Falls 83301	(208) 404-1207
Juliaetta	Jimmy Sullins	1021 Granlund Road	Troy 83871	(208) 301-3795
Kamiah				
Kendrick				
Kimberly Main	Deb Hurd	PO Box 943	Kimberly 83341	(208) 423-6013
Kooskia	Christine Hunter	1236 Battle Ridge Rd	Kooskia 83539	(208) 935-5159
Kuna Main	Paula Grigg	1350 W Avalon St	Kuna 83634	(208) 922-4555
LapwaiLewiston				
Marsing	Mara Ralls	420 Briar Hill Street	Nampa 83686	(208) 407-1103
McCall				
McCammon				
Melba				
Meridian Main	Glenda Sanders	260 Cedar Avenue	Kuna 83634	(208) 602-8960
Meridian Main	Mikea Hargrove	9736 W Silverspring St	Boise 83709	(208) 515-9634
Middleton Main	Ivan Smith	1801 Chicago Street	Nampa	(208) 989-6951
Mountain Home				
Moscow Main	Toad Brandt	1027 Hwy 95 N	Moscow 83843	(208) 669-1933
Nampa	Bret Helle	3729 E Benton Ave	Nampa 83687	(208) 695-1534
Nampa	Robin Carver	3729 E Benton Ave	Nampa 83687	(208) 880-9963
New Plymouth				
Orofino				
Parma				
Paul Main	Russell Hutchison	1044 E 21st St	Burley 83318	(208) 431-1509
Payette Main	Victoria Potter	2581 Reeds Grove Rd	Midvale 83645	(208) 355-2689
Pinehurst				
Pingree				
Plummer Main				
Pocatello	Lesley Greenwell	712 N Marsh Creek Rd	McCammon 83250	(208) 221-2912
Post Falls	Peter Haynos	2984 W Grange Ave	Post Falls 83854	(208) 773-1925
Preston Main	Earl Nelson	4382 N Hwy 91	Preston 83263	(208) 220-0623
Priest River Main				
Rathdrum				
Rexburg Main	Rhea Price	1910 E 200 N	Rexburg 83440	(208) 356-6524
Rigby				
Rupert	Amber Warr	2556 Hansen Avenue	Burley 83318	(208) 670-5824
Sagle Main	Peter Haynos	2984 W Grange Ave	Post Falls 83854	(208) 773-1925
Salmon	Christina Lewis	1532 HWY 93 North	North Fork 83466	(208) 539-4580
Sandpoint				
Star				
Troy	Jimmy Sullins	1021 Granlund Rd	Troy 83871	(208) 301-3795
Twin Falls	Darren Chernoh	3 Woodstock Circle	Twin Falls 83301	(208) 420-5169
Weiser Main	Glenda Heim	1471 Cove Rd	Weiser 83672	(208) 549-0755
Wilder Main				
Worley	Christine Hodgson	515 Pine Street	Plummer 83851	(208) 686-1327

Please Report Address and Telephone Number Corrections to The Pony Express  
 Email - ponyexpr@pmt.org or Telephone - (208) 436-0687



# Southern Idaho District Representative's Report

Salt Lake City/ Nevada-Sierra District Representative Brian Draper

## Engineered Time Standards Study Rural Street Database (RSD)

If you have only one article to read this year, this is the one. I feel that this is the most important one I have ever written. This article deals with the Engineered Time Standards Study which will

determine your pay, the future of the evaluated system and the rural craft. As you know, this study has been going on for some time and the USPS has spent millions of dollars and the NRLCA has also spent a large sum of money to make this work.

I have just spent the past two weeks training and implementing the Rural Street Database (RSD). The RSD is only one part of the engineered study and one of the last pieces that need to be done. There are 5,300 routes around the country which have been selected to collect street data for determining walk and drive times to calculate service times. In the Salt Lake City and Nevada-Sierra districts, the offices selected are Pahrump, Minden and Mesquite Nevada; South Jordan, Midway, Price and West Jordan, Utah and Five Mile Boise, Star, Inkom and Malad City, Idaho.

Within the next month and shortly after the peak season, all the carriers of these routes will input data on their own routes. They will be looking at every delivery and identifying each mailstop, mailbox, direct door delivery, door and traffic points. After these are completed, every route in the nation will undergo the same process. The purpose of the training for the past couple of weeks was to train the trainers that will need to be in place to get this accomplished. The trainers will work in teams consisting of a manager and an NRLCA member that will work with each carrier. What we have found so far, is that the carriers' responsibility in this process is so important that if it is not done, the entire process will be delayed.

The scanner and GPS device is tracking your movements on the route and determining your stops and line of travel. There are four (4) critical points you need to be doing; not just during this process but forever into the future.

#1. *Drive route per PS Form 4003 Official Route Description.* If you are deviating for any reason, you need to have management approve and correct the PS Form 4003 to show exactly how you deliver the route. You may be disciplined for being off your line of travel or having an accident; the USPS can say you were at fault for not following your line of travel.

#2. *Deliver Mail in Edit Book sequence.* It is vital that the PS Form 4003 and the edit book match. This is not just for the study; this is something that should be done at all times to insure you are being properly paid for the work you

do. The edit book does not increase or decrease your pay; the PS Form 4003 determines that.

#3. *Perform parcel scans at point of delivery and select correct attribute.* If a parcel is delivered at the door, it needs to be scanned at the door. This will identify it as a large parcel that would not fit in the mailbox and identify where the door is located.

#4. *Carry MDD during all dismounts, even if not scanning.* The MDD is sending a signal every few seconds and this will determine dismount points and distances. It has

always been a requirement to carry the scanner and scan parcels at the door, not at the vehicle.

Prior to inputting the data, the carrier will receive a checklist that

indicates these things are being done. Don't be caught short by rushing to do what needs to be done at the last minute. These are the things that our job requires, so it is best to do these things now and continue doing them.

Be smart, stay ahead of the game and be ready for the future of the rural craft.

*From the Idaho Statesman, January 27, 2013*

*Provided by IDRLCA Historian Mary Morris*

*Reprinted by permission of Arthur Hart and the Idaho Statesman*

### The Mail Had To Be Delivered, No Matter What

Delivering the mail to Idaho's mountain mining camps in the 1860s was lonesome work, often dangerous and sometimes deadly. In winter, when snow could be as much as 10 feet deep, men carried the mail on snowshoes. If caught in a blizzard, they sometimes died.

The Idaho World newspaper printed this letter from Silver City on May 6, 1865:

*"Myers Body Found - J.T. Myers, the man who was lost in the snow in December last, while carrying the mail at Reynolds Creek, was found about three fourths of a mile from Boonville. He was in a sitting posture; doubtless he had become fatigued, sat down and froze to death.*

*The mail bag, as yet, has not been found. A dog first discovered his body; persons from Boonville were in search at the time."*

(Boonville was on Jordan Creek a few miles below present Silver City. It was later developed into the town of Dewey by Col. William Dewey of Nampa.)

On the lighter side, the Idaho Tri-weekly Statesman noted on May 15, 1866, that, "There is a letter in the Boise City Post Office directed to 'Mr. Wm. Johnson, Boyse River, Idaho Oregon, Colorado Territory.' The letter has evidently had difficulty in finding all those places at once, for it has been since February traveling from Chandlerville, Illinois. Some indignant clerk has endorsed it: 'If you know where this letter belongs, for God's sake send it!'

"Postal clerks have their own amusement."



**Northern Idaho District Representative's Report**  
*Alaska District Representative Patrick Pitts*

---

**USPS-NRLCA National Agreement**  
**PS Form 3971 (Request For or Notification of Absence)**

---

Some of the most frequent calls I receive are related to the denial of leave or local managers not following the proper procedure when processing requests for leave. What follows is some basic information concerning leave. It is, however, important to note that this is not intended to be comprehensive and/or complete information nor would it be possible, in the limited space available, to cover all aspects of the referenced topic. I encourage you all to take the time to become familiar with Article 10 of the USPS-NRLCA National Agreement (contract). As always, if you have any questions concerning the usage of leave, those questions should be directed to your NRLCA representative. Your local manager should also be a reliable source of information concerning annual or sick leave, or leave without pay.

In general, the USPS policy should be to administer the leave program on an equitable basis for all employees, considering the needs of the Postal Service and the welfare of the individual employee. USPS officials are obligated not only to administer the leave program, but to inform employees of their leave balance, approve or disapprove (appropriately) leave requests in a timely manner and to record leave in accordance with related handbooks and manuals. Managers are also tasked with controlling unscheduled absences, which are defined as any absence from work that is not requested and approved in advance. There are some managers who may employ methods which could be construed as intimidating, harassing, and/or badgering in their effort to control unscheduled absences; managers are instructed to inform employees of leave regulations but are not allowed to intimidate, harass or badger them. Managers are obligated to discuss attendance records with individual employees when warranted, and maintain and review PS Forms 3972 (Absence Analysis) and 3971 (Request For or Notification of Absence). Improper techniques aimed at controlling unscheduled absences should be addressed through the appropriate channels.

As USPS employees, we are required to request leave by completing PS Form 3971 and obtaining approval before taking leave - except in cases of emergencies. An exception to the advance approval requirement (annual leave) is made for emergencies; however, in these situations, the employee must notify the appropriate postal authority of the emergency and the expected duration of the absence as soon as possible. A similar exception to the advance notification/approval requirement is made for sick leave. Leave requests from rural carriers must be approved or disapproved in accordance

with Article 10 of the USPS-NRLCA National Agreement.

Regarding the PS Form 3971, the employee is to request leave in writing, in duplicate, utilizing this form. The supervisor is responsible for approving or disapproving the request within three to five days, or sooner, if necessary, by completing their portion and signing the form, a copy of which is given to the employee. If the supervisor does not approve a request for the leave, the Disapproved block on PS Form 3971 is marked and the reasons for the denial given in writing in the space provided. These forms are to be retained by the installation head for two years from the date the leave is taken or disapproved and are then destroyed.

In general, annual leave is provided to employees for rest, for recreation and for personal and emergency purposes.

***In general, annual leave is provided to employees for rest, for recreation, and for personal and emergency purposes; sick leave insures employees against loss of pay if they are incapacitated for the performance of duties***

Sick leave insures employees against loss of pay if they are incapacitated for the performance of duties because of illness, injury, pregnancy and confinement, as well as medical (including dental or optical) examination or treatment. A limited amount of sick leave may also be

used to provide for the medical needs of a family member. Qualifying rural craft employees in a leave earning status, in certain situations, are allowed to take up to 80 hours of their accrued sick leave per leave year to give care or otherwise attend to a family member with an illness, injury, or other condition that, if an employee had such a condition, would justify the use of sick leave.

For annual leave, if the leave is approved and the employee has an insufficient leave balance, the leave is changed to LWOP when the employee's pay is processed. For regular carriers, annual leave is earned in accordance with the Employee Labor Relations Manual (ELM) 512.311 and the terms of the national agreement and is taken in minimum units of one day (eight hours) provided a leave replacement is available. An RCA (as the primary leave replacement) who has been assigned to and served in excess of 90 days on a vacant route or on a route from which a rural carrier is on extended leave or after an RCA has been assigned to and served in excess of 90 days on an auxiliary route, may take the accrued annual leave and is charged in minimum units of one day for regular routes, or one hour increments for auxiliary routes, provided a leave replacement is available. On the first day of the pay period following the 90 days of service, the RCA should be credited with the leave accrued for the 90-day qualifying period.

Regular carriers are credited at the beginning of the leave year with the total number of annual leave hours that they will earn for that leave year. The leave year begins with

*(See Leave on next page)*

(From previous page)

## Leave

the first day of the first complete pay period in a calendar year and ends on the day before the first day of the first complete pay period in the following calendar year. Leave credit at the beginning of the leave year reflects any change in an employee's accrual rate for that year. It is important to note that your leave balance (credit) may be reduced during the year based on the amount of time spent in a non-pay status. When an employee's absence in a non-pay status totals the equivalent of one pay period of regular service during the leave year, credit for leave is reduced by the amount of leave earned by the employee in a pay period.

Sick leave for regular carriers is credited at the end of each biweekly pay period in which it is earned. Sick leave (earned and unused) accumulates without limitation. Sick leave cannot be granted until it is earned, except as provided in Section 513.5 of the ELM (Advanced Sick Leave). An employee who is in a sick leave status may not engage in any gainful employment unless prior approval has been granted by the appropriate authority.

The conditions for which sick leave should be approved are multiple and varied; and as mentioned earlier, include, but are not limited to, illness or injury, pregnancy and confinement which would include absences required for physical examinations or periods of incapacitation, medical, dental, or optical examination or treatment, caring for a family member afflicted with a contagious disease or if an employee has been exposed to a contagious disease and would jeopardize the health of others, and for eligible employees to care for a qualifying family member if that person has an illness, injury, or other condition that, if the employee had such a condition, would justify the use of sick leave. It is important to note that each of the conditions/situations above, especially that of caring for a qualifying family member have their own unique qualifying regulations, policies and/or procedures.

As mentioned above, request for sick leave is made in writing, in duplicate, on PS form 3971. If the absence is to care for a family member, this fact is to be noted in the Remarks section. For periods of absence of three days or less, supervisors may accept the employee's statement explaining the absence. Medical documentation or other acceptable evidence of incapacity for work or need to care for a family member is required only when the employee is on restricted sick leave or when the supervisor deems documentation desirable for the protection of the interest of the Postal Service. Substantiation of the family relationship must be provided if requested.

For absences in excess of three days, employees are required to submit medical documentation or other acceptable evidence of incapacity for work. Employees who are on sick leave for extended periods are required to submit at appropriate intervals, but not more frequently than once every 30 days, satisfactory evidence of continued incapacity

for work or need to care for a family member unless some responsible supervisor has knowledge of the employee's continuing situation. When employees are required to submit medical documentation, such documentation should be furnished by the employee's attending physician or other attending practitioner who is performing within the scope of his or her practice. The documentation should provide an explanation of the nature of the employee's illness or injury sufficient to indicate to management that the employee was (or will be) unable to perform his or her normal duties for the period of absence. Normally, medical statements such as "under my care" or "received treatment" are not acceptable evidence of incapacitation. Supervisors may accept substantiation other than medical documentation if they believe it supports approval of the sick leave request.

*Leave Without Pay (LWOP):* LWOP is an authorized absence from duty in a non-pay status. LWOP may be granted upon the employee's request and covers only those hours that the employee would normally work or for which the employee would normally be paid. FLSA-exempt employees must take LWOP in one-day increments except when they are taking leave protected under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). LWOP is different from AWOL (Absent Without Leave), which is a non-pay status due to a determination that no kind of leave can be granted either because the employee did not obtain advance authorization or the employee's request for leave was denied.

***Medical documentation or other acceptable evidence of incapacity for work or need to care for a family member is required only when the employee is on restricted sick leave or when the supervisor deems documentation desirable for the protection of the interest of the Postal Service.***

Each request for LWOP should be examined closely, and a decision made based on the needs of the employee, the needs of the Postal Service, and the cost to the Postal Service. The granting of

LWOP is a matter of administrative discretion and is not granted on the employee's demand except as provided in the collective bargaining agreement or related handbooks, manuals and/or federal regulations. In granting approval for extended LWOP, the granting official should have reasonable expectation that the employee will return at the end of the approved period. LWOP is not granted for the purpose of enabling an employee to "try out" or to accept other employment. Installation heads may approve requests for LWOP that are not in excess of one year. District managers may approve requests for LWOP that are not in excess of two years. Exhibit 514.4 of the ELM identifies acceptable reasons and instructions for LWOP.

As you can well understand, there are substantial requirements which apply to leave usage and they vary based on the type of leave requested as well as the underlying reason for the leave. The ELM itself has some 67 pages of information concerning leave and additional information is contained in not only the National Agreement, but other related handbooks and manuals.

It is hoped that the information above will provide you a starting point on understanding the USPS leave policy and I reiterate my encouragement to direct questions you may have to the appropriate steward representative.



# ***IDRLCA President's Report***

*IDRLCA President Patti Upton*

---

## ***Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) Certain Perfumes, Cleaning Products or Floor Waxes***

---

We all have problems in our offices. Our issues can range from disparate treatment to a hostile manager or co-worker.

I write to you today about an individual workplace environment issue. As many of you know, I suffer from a condition that doesn't allow me to work around or be near certain smells. I have what is called multiple chemical sensitivity (MCS). When exposed to certain perfumes, cleaning products or floor waxes, I instantly get a migraine and suffer for hours afterward. My symptoms may include lightheadedness and shortness of breath. Sometimes, I even feel like I am choking. If I do not address the problem, all of the above will become apparent. I have tried wearing a mask, but I can still smell the odor. I only bring this to your attention because it is important to realize your rights if management doesn't support you. If you suffer as I do, or know someone who does, perhaps this information will prove helpful for future reference.

To date most of the research on fragrance exposure has been localized in the health care profession and has not received the necessary attention it deserves for postal managers to become knowledgeable. They are unaware about the extent of employer liability and what constitutes a good faith effort to protect workers. This article will look closely at the rights you have, as well as the dangers, so that you will not be discriminated against for your disability that comes from synthetic fragrances.

Honestly, we are uneducated about the dangers and health risks associated with exposure to the chemicals used in synthetic fragrance products. Synthetic fragrance is added to many products to mask the odor of noxious chemicals contained in perfumes, disinfectants and cleaning products. As used today, fragrance is almost unlimited in where it is found and is used in hundreds of everyday personal care products. People who have multiple chemical sensitivity or problems with fragrance, can find thousands of other people who share the same ailment, yet little is done to protect them. Some businesses have reached out and made adjustments such as requiring fragrance free offices. I am blessed because anyone who knows me, chooses not to wear perfume or lotions. Thank you, my friends and coworkers who strive to keep the air around me free of toxins.

It has been reported that one in five people in the U.S. are adversely affected from exposure to fragrance. Fragrance is a known respiratory irritant and neurological toxin.

For many people, exposure to perfume can pose serious health risks such as migraines, nausea, tightening of the

throat and respiratory impairment. The problem with fragrance products is not the scent, but the properties of the synthetic chemicals they are derived from, such as petroleum or coal tar. In the past 50 years, 80-90% of fragrances have been synthesized from petroleum and some of the commonly found harmful chemicals in fragranced products include acetone, phenol, toluene, benzyl acetate and limonene. The United States tests less than 10% of the products on the market for toxicity and almost one-third of the chemical additives used in perfume are known to be toxic.

There are over 70,000 different industrial chemical products used today. Contrary to popular belief, synthetic fragrance is found not only in perfumes, but in over 4,000 chemicals used to make fragrances and hundreds can be used in just one product. Many of these chemicals vaporize into the air we breathe. If multiple people, working in the same work environment, use many of these products at the same time, it creates what is called a "chemical soup" of the indoor air.

There are new American Disabilities Act of America (ADA) guidelines for Fragrance Sensitivity. Employers need to be aware

***People who have multiple chemical sensitivity or problems with fragrance, can find thousands of other people who share the same ailment, yet little is done to protect them.***

that allergies to fragrance or multiple chemical sensitivities can be disabilities under ADA.

The Workers' Compensation laws also address synthetic fragrance sensitivity and MCS. The Workers' Compensation essentially operates as a no-fault insurance program. Workers who are injured or disabled while working, are provided benefits to compensate for injuries suffered during work, regardless of how the injuries were caused, even if the employee was at fault. At the annual Federal Workers' Compensation Conference, it was noted that Workers Compensation claims related to indoor air quality. MCS and fragrance sensitivity have been increasing over the past 10 years. Sadly, postal managers who refuse to recognize the negative health effects will be subject to increased costs of workers' compensation.

What proactive steps can be taken towards improving your workplace environment and indoor air quality? A manager could easily implement a fragrance free workplace policy. They could make a good faith effort to reduce or limit employees' exposure to synthetic fragrances. Let me remind you, though, that sometimes postal managers are resistant to change. However, it is important for everyone to be open and do their part to help. Most importantly, document every little detail if you are being discriminated against. Then take the time to talk to your steward about this problem and give them the necessary documentation to help with this issue.

*(See Multiple Chemical Sensitivity on page 10)*



## ***IDRLCA Vice President's Report***

*IDRLCA Vice President Brett Parkinson*

### ***Training a New RCA***

on the grass and windshields as we leave for work in the mornings. In fact, I've already heard reports of temporary snow accumulations in some of the higher elevations as cold fronts have moved through. As I write this article, I'd like to share some thoughts that have come into my mind recently, as I trained a new RCA on my route.

Sometimes it's difficult for we seasoned regulars to remember what it was like when we first started as RCAs. As I drove my new sub around my route the first two days of training, it didn't seem too difficult as I pulled up to each box and she put the mail in the boxes. I was right there in the front seat and was able to monitor everything she did and I could see if she was going to make a mistake. However, as I sat behind her, in her somewhat larger left hand drive vehicle, as she struggled to pull up to the boxes (sometimes too close and sometimes too far away) I was reminded just how difficult this job can be to a newly hired RCA. Not just the physical requirements, but also the mental stress that comes with all the things that must be remembered. Needless to say, by the time we got about two thirds of the way around

the route, her brain was pretty much fried.

I couldn't help but think, back 27 years ago when I was a new RCA, about how long it took me to sort and deliver the mail until I'd had enough time on the route to get to feel a little bit comfortable with the job. Then I hear stories of managers wanting to let new RCAs go because they aren't making the evaluation of the route after only a few days of work. That's when I think the manager should have to work the route for a day or two; then they might possibly get an understanding of the demands of our job.

At the same time, I see instances where new subs, or even some regulars, gain that feeling of confidence and once they have learned the case and all the addresses out on the route, they put all safety rules aside just to get done an hour or so earlier.

I cannot stress enough, how important it is to be safe as we deliver the mail and still take the time to be efficient, accurate and courteous to our customers and those with whom we share the road. If you see a new RCA struggling, I would encourage you to give them tips or pointers on how they might improve their sorting or delivery skills. If you're the one with a new sub on your route, it might require a period of patience and understanding as they learn their responsibilities. Then provide them with a little more instruction from time to time. Just remember that we are the most trusted government agency and we want to keep it that way.



## ***IDRLCA Auto Representative's Report***

*IDRLCA Auto Representative Mikea Hargrove's Report to the 2016 State Convention*

### ***National General Truly Cares About Rural Carriers***

I am Mikea Hargrove and I am The National General Insurance representative for the State of Idaho and this will be my report.

Now, I have been doing this for almost a year and I still don't really know what to report so, with that said, I am going to share some information with you that you may or may not know about National General Auto Insurance

National General Auto Insurance can help you with any insurance needs you have. They are experts in knowing exactly what amount of coverage you may need for you and your route. They can even give you a multiple car discount if you use a government owned mail truck or LLV.

At National General, they believe you should be benefiting from the route discount even if you no longer drive a POV on your route.

National General truly cares about rural carriers and their families. With all of the programs and National General's unique ability to protect you on and off the route, why would you want to go with an insurance company that does not specialize in the rural carriers or the protection they need?

What you can do is this: you can get a quote for yourself, and you can ask family and or coworkers. It will only take a few minutes, but you will benefit yourself and our state at the same time; it's a win, win, win.

Let's keep it going. National General has been working with rural carriers and the NRLCA for over 60 years. They continue to be #1 in rural carrier insurance and are the best at working with the Tort Claims Act.

The Tort Claims Act was established in 1961 as a federal statute that provides the power for a government administered protection plan for all government employees and the government itself should any liability be incurred by any of its employees or agents in the course of their official duties.

What this means is that Federal employees are protected against liability resulting from their operation of a motor vehicle while within the scope of their official employment. The protection is on route only and deviation on your route could jeopardize your tort claims coverage.

So give National General Insurance a call and let them show you what they can do for you. Remember to use promo code Idaho22.



# IDRLCA Secretary/Treasurer's Report

IDRLCA Secretary-Treasurer Lori Bennett

## History of Labor Day

### *Labor Day: What it Means*

Labor Day, the first Monday in September, is a creation of the labor movement and is dedicated to the social and economic achievements of American workers. It

constitutes an annual national tribute to the contributions workers have made to the strength, prosperity and well-being of our country.

### *Labor Day Legislation*

Through the years the nation gave increasing emphasis to Labor Day. The first governmental recognition came through municipal ordinances passed during 1885 and 1886. From these, a movement developed to secure state legislation. The first state bill was introduced into the New York legislature, but the first to become law was passed by Oregon on February 21, 1887. During the year four more states — Colorado, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and New York — created the Labor Day holiday by legislative enactment. By the end of the decade, Connecticut, Nebraska, and Pennsylvania had followed suit. By 1894, 23 other states had adopted the holiday in honor of workers and on June 28 of that year, Congress passed an act making the first Monday in September of each year a legal holiday in the District of Columbia and the territories.

### *Founder of Labor Day*

More than 100 years after the first Labor Day observance, there is still some doubt as to who first proposed the holiday for workers.

Some records show that Peter J. McGuire, general secretary of the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners and a cofounder of the American Federation of Labor, was first in suggesting a day to honor those "who from rude nature have delved and carved all the grandeur we behold."

But Peter McGuire's place in Labor Day history has not gone unchallenged. Many believe that Matthew Maguire, a machinist, not Peter McGuire, founded the holiday. Recent research seems to support the contention that Matthew Maguire, later the secretary of Local 344 of the International Association of Machinists in Paterson, N.J., proposed the holiday in 1882 while serving as secretary of the Central Labor Union in New York. What is clear is that the Central Labor Union adopted a Labor Day proposal and appointed a committee to plan a demonstration and picnic.

### *The First Labor Day*

The first Labor Day holiday was celebrated on Tuesday, September 5, 1882, in New York City, in accordance with the plans of the Central Labor Union. The Central Labor Union held its second Labor Day holiday just a year later, on September 5, 1883.

*(see Labor Day on next page)*

## IDRLCA Statement of Financial Position

*(As of September 8, 2016)*

ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
Checking APCU	2,592.31
Savings APCU	58,211.43
CD-APCU 70 April 4	26,757.82
CD-APCU 71 Oct 23	21,214.58
CD-APCU 72 July 20	21,056.46
CD-APCU 73 Jan 18	20,861.03
Total Checking/Savings	150,693.63
Total Current Assets	150,693.63
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	
<b>150,693.63</b>	
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Other Current Liabilities	
Payroll Liabilities	565.90
Total Other Current Liabilities	565.90
Total Current Liabilities	565.90
Total Liabilities	565.90
Equity	
Net Assets	152,452.71
Net Income	-2,324.98
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>150,127.73</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	
<b>150,693.63</b>	

## IDRLCA Statement of Activities

*July 1, 2016 through September 8, 2016*

Income	
Interest / Dividends	24.26
Membership Dues	27,052.53
Miscellaneous	125.00
National General Insurance	1,408.53
Reimbursements	0.00
Sales	0.00
Western States Conference Receipts	0.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>28,610.32</b>
Expense	
Accounting Fees	565.00
Awards, Recognition, Other	125.00
Education and Training	0.00
Equipment Maintenance	0.00
Equipment Purchases	1,519.97
National Convention	18,448.32
Office Expense	636.86
Payroll Taxes	278.18
Per Capita Dues	66.00
Postage	144.83
Printing	997.76
Rent	336.00
Salary & Wages	3,305.45
State Meetings	0.00
State Paper	847.52
Telephone & Internet	501.41
Travel	3,163.00
Western States Conference	0.00
Workers Compensation Insurance	0.00
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>30,935.30</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>-2,324.98</b>



# IDRLCA Webmaster's Report

IDRLCA Webmaster Glenda Sanders' Report to the IDRLCA 2016 State Convention

## Using My Webby Skills

Wow, Northern Idaho!

I drove up the scenic route yesterday and I must say that this place is incredibly beautiful! Those of you who get to live and work in this area are very blessed.

I am so thankful to be here

with you all today, reporting on the Idaho state website. It has been five years since your board extended me the opportunity to create it. It took lots of time, patience and frequent frustration, but we finally went live in June of 2012. We became part of an elite group of states that have a web presence associated with the NRLCA. At the time, there were only six state websites. The Washington site, WARLCA, was a pioneer, and it was the first one I saw. Now there are 17 state sanctioned websites and more in the works. Many state boards are skittish about posting things on the internet, and with good reason. The Idaho state board has had many discussions about content, privacy and the NRLCA SOP. We are confident that our Idaho website is in compliance with all the rules and guidelines. I get weekly statistics from our webhost company and we are being looked at and used more than ever. Last week we had 31 visitors. Last year at this time, we were averaging 15

*We became part of an elite group of states that have a web presence associated with the NRLCA. At the time, there were only six state websites.*

visitors per week.

I'm very proud to be able to use my webby skills for the betterment of this great association. We all have such a diverse talent scheme that together we are amazing! I truly love being on the state board, giving my opinion on the course of action that our state puts forth. I must say that I was a big voice in opposition of the Rural Carrier Symposium idea. The brilliant Idaho state board members considered my opinion, and then quickly discarded it. They voted to go ahead with the idea, and then extended to me the opportunity to be a part of it as their media person. I must say that I was shocked when 70 people showed up for that first one in Meridian. Humbly, I say that they were

right and I was wrong.

It's like I said before, our diverse talents, opinions and the tolerance we extend to each other are working to our advantage.

Your Idaho state board is a mix of;

- Beauty and brains.
- Class and silliness.
- Opposing views and common goals.
- Actors and money crunchers.
- Tall and short.

We are all working together to strengthen this association and lead the way to a better informed membership.

(From page 7)

## Multiple Chemical Sensitivity

This problem may seem unrealistic or unreasonable to some of you. To those of us who suffer with MCS, it is a disability that we wouldn't wish on anyone. If your workplace environment isn't a safe place for you to work in or if management is harassing you, remember you are not alone. If you can't find help in your office, reach out to me and I will put you in touch with someone who can and will help you. We all deserve an office that works for the betterment of our craft.

(From previous page)

## Labor Day

In 1884 the first Monday in September was selected as the holiday, as originally proposed, and the Central Labor Union urged similar organizations in other cities to follow the example of New York and celebrate a "workingmen's holiday" on that date. The idea spread with the growth of labor organizations, and in 1885 Labor Day was celebrated in many industrial centers of the country.

### *A Nationwide Holiday*

The form that the observance and celebration of Labor Day should take was outlined in the first proposal of the holiday — a street parade to exhibit to the public "the strength and esprit de corps of the trade and labor organizations" of

the community, followed by a festival for the recreation and amusement of the workers and their families. This became the pattern for the celebrations of Labor Day. Speeches by prominent men and women were introduced later, as more emphasis was placed upon the economic and civic significance of the holiday. Still later, by a resolution of the American Federation of Labor convention of 1909, the Sunday preceding Labor Day was adopted as Labor Sunday and dedicated to the spiritual and educational aspects of the labor movement.

The character of the Labor Day celebration has undergone a change in recent years, especially in large industrial centers where mass displays and huge parades have proved a problem. This change, however, is more a shift in emphasis and medium of expression. Labor Day addresses by leading union officials, industrialists, educators, clerics and government officials are given wide coverage in newspapers, radio, and television.

The vital force of labor added materially to the highest standard of living and the greatest production the world has ever known and has brought us closer to the realization of our traditional ideals of economic and political democracy. It is appropriate, therefore, that the nation pay tribute on Labor Day to the creator of so much of the nation's strength, freedom, and leadership — the American worker.

*Article taken from the Department of Labor website, DOL.gov*

# 2016 National Convention

## **Tuesday Morning, First Day of Convention**

*Reported by Patti Upton*



Each year I am amazed at the feeling I get as the National Convention begins. I never tire of the captivating things that happen on Tuesday morning of each and every National Convention. It is a rare and lovely treat.

The opening ceremony always brings tears, joy and respect for our great nation and our union. It's a time of reflection, flag waving and pomp and circumstance. The convention body stands and remains quiet, hands over hearts as the U.S. flag is carried in and then placed at the front of the stage. The music begins and, one by one, each state flag is carried forward by the respective state presidents. It is a reminder to us all, of the many states that make up this great nation and the reverence that we each feel while we carry our own state flag.

Once all state flags have been placed on the stage the ceremony continues as we recognize our military. One by one as the music selection of each branch of service is recognized, the rural carriers who served in this branch stand. We applaud them and you can't help but realize the sacrifices that they made for our country, as well as those who are currently serving abroad. There is a stillness in the room as 1500 carriers bow their heads and give a moment of silence for those who were lost or who are still missing.

Postmaster General Megan Brennen spoke to us. She continues to support the rural carriers in a way that we haven't seen in years. It is refreshing to see someone who recognizes the hard work that we do and then applauds and thanks us.

The convention goes heard from Vice President Joshua Colin of the USPS Eastern Area Operations. He thanked the carriers for the outstanding work they have been doing through the Rural Reach Program. He stated that rural carriers are the brand and face of the USPS and reminded us that through social media we are being watched closely, so be aware and do the right thing when it comes to delivering the mail. Good press is the best press, so represent us well. Safety on the job is black and white. The purpose is to go to work and arrive home in the same condition you left. Please be mindful of your surroundings and be safe always.

Auxiliary Executive Committeeman Julie Houston spoke next. She recognized and thanked everyone for the outstanding job they did last year. She gave a brief background on Tennessee, the Volunteer State. She reminded us that Nashville is the Music City and that the radio station WSM was broadcast live from the motel that we were residing in.

Executive Committeeman Don Maston gave a brief history of Tennessee as well. He shared that it had been 17 years since the last time that we met in Nashville.

He said, "We see many differences between now and then. We now navigate through the world much differently.

The USPS is rapidly charging ahead with the times. Our employer has changed more in the last five years than in the last 15 plus years."

Maston reminded the delegates that they would be making some informed, yet difficult decisions for this union. Surely our debate will be interesting, our ideals and opinions will differ, but in the end we will all support the decisions of this great union and its delegation.

The National Auxiliary President Helen Shuster introduced her board and Junior officers. The project this year was human research for the Muscular Sclerosis (MS) Society.

Andrea Lindsey, an MS sufferer, spoke from her own personal experiences, "When you have this disease you only have hope for a cure. You do not know how much research has helped to pioneer the way for our future and quality of life." She thanked the Auxiliary for their efforts to fight MS.

NRLCA Junior President Liam Gibson spoke of his experiences as a junior from the first time he attended a National Convention until now, his last. He shared that the opportunities that he'd been afforded were experiences that some will never be lucky enough to have. In closing he shared that he felt like we were all his family and thanked us for the opportunity.

The auxiliary members and outstanding Members of the Year were recognized. Idaho's Member of the Year, Glenda Sanders, was in attendance to receive her well-deserved award. Congratulations, Glenda.

## **Tuesday Afternoon, First Day of Convention**

*Reported by Glenda Sanders*



The Tuesday afternoon session started off with the Credentials and the Mileage and Per Diem Committees reports. The Credentials Committee announced that Idaho has 804 members in good standing and therefore is allowed nine delegates. That doesn't seem like a lot compared to the biggest member state of Texas, which has 7,946 members with 80 delegates. However, we have many more than Wyoming, which has 70 members and gets only two delegates.

Idaho was also mentioned in the Mileage and Per Diem Committee's report as having three delegates serving on national committees. Our President Patti Upton, served as Delegate-at-Large and was on the Teller Committee. Our Secretary-Treasurer Lori Bennett, served on the Credentials Committee. Our Editor, Lou Freeman, served on the Press Room Committee. This saves Idaho the cost mileage and per diem for these folks and it would be great to have more Idahoans on more national committees next year!

Next on the agenda was a speech from Don DeCinque, the President of the Atlanta Postal Credit Union.

National Secretary-Treasurer Clifford Dailing gave the membership report and gave awards to the state secretaries who had recruited the most members over the past year.

*(see Tuesday Afternoon on next page)*

# 2016 National National Convention

## Tuesday Afternoon

Director of Government Affairs Paul Schwartz spoke about the 66 days that congress has left to do anything this year. He believes that the six-day delivery language will be preserved in any legislation.

National PAC Chair Tim Barker gave out the Outstanding PAC Chair awards. Our own Bret Helle won an honorable mention!

Clifford Dailing presented the NRLCA's Financial Report. The many graphs and charts all concluded with the statement: "We are in stable financial condition". The outside auditor, Doug Boedeker, then concurred with the statement: "All the books were in order."

The session ended with awards for state publications. Lou Freeman won the General Excellence award for The Pony Express. Lou has been serving as our state editor for 21 years. This will be his last year of service as he is retiring from that position at the end of June, 2017. He is also retiring from his ten year service on the National Press Room Committee. Lou's commitment to this association cannot be overstated. This past June, at our state convention, he was awarded with the IDRLCA Distinguished Service Award. An award well deserved! He will leave us with a large, vacuous hole to be filled. Good Luck, Lou, and God bless you in your future endeavors!

## Wednesday Morning

Reported by Brian Draper



It was with great pride that I represented the Idaho Rural Letter Carriers' Association for my 20th consecutive National Convention. This has been a duty and responsibility I have taken very seriously each and every year.

While Tuesday is taken up with pomp and circumstance and speeches, I always have looked forward to Wednesday, as that is the

first day we get down to the business we came to do.

President Dwyer called the Wednesday morning session to order.

After Chaplin Doug Bryam gave the invocation, Provident Guild President Susan Robertson presented her report. Provident guild is a fraternal organization, that provides a member's family some immediate money when the member passes.

NRLCA Legal Counsel Michael Gan addressed the assembly. Gan laid out the past 10 years of contract negotiations dealing with time standards.

With the time standards off the table, the bargaining this year was very productive. The parties came close to an agreement but could not finalize it. President Dwyer kept us moving forward and utilized Postmaster General Brennan's open door policy to keep the negotiations alive and reach a

final agreement. The NRLCA agreement would be ratified by 83% of the votes, but less than one quarter of the ballots sent out were returned. Other unions, such as FedEx, had a 96% return and the UAW had an 85% return. The National Board is trying to figure out why people did not vote when so much information was put out there.

Gan spoke of his partner and mentor, Bill Peer, who spoke at this convention in Nashville in 1999. He spoke of USPS managers needing to walk the walk and listen to the voice of the employee. There is a natural struggle between management and labor and we return to Opryland 17 years later singing the same old song. We need to call out harassment when seen, as we are the protectors of fairness and stability.

Gan invited the assembly to join him and his colleagues on an easy 25 mile bike ride on the Sunday prior to the 2017 National Convention at National Harbor, MD.

The William H. Peer Scholarship Awards recognizes the best and the brightest of the local stewards in the four parts of the nation. Area Two was Margaret "Sue" Hunter of North Las Vegas, NV. I was very proud to be the one who nominated her. Sue and I were sworn to secrecy to not tell anyone she was to receive this award and it came as a surprise to her fellow Nevada delegates. The other recipients were Diane Collins, FL; Katie Morris, MD and Angela Boyle, VA.

Next was the nominations and acceptance speeches for the six National officer positions:

- President - Jeanette Dwyer.
- Vice president - Ronnie Stutts and Kent Stock.
- Secretary-treasurer - Clifford Dailing.
- Director of labor relations - Joey Johnson.
- Director of steward operations - David Heather.
- Executive committeeman, four-year term - Don Maston and Michael Aitchison.

A certificate of appreciation was presented to Dennis Doyle of Doyle printing, for 30 years of service to the NRLCA.

The Wednesday morning session concluded with the adoption of constitutional amendments 1-7. The first three amendments dealt with the new assistant rural carrier (ARC) position. Of the others, one dealt with director of steward operations duties, one dealt with the number of years ahead for planning national conventions and the last two were on the appeals process. *(see Wednesday Afternoon on next page)*

## Your National Delegates

***Your Idaho Delegates to the National Conventions work hard, often under less than comfortable conditions, to represent the Idaho rural letter carriers in the deliberation of issues important to their jobs and working conditions.***

***Please take note of the fact that Idaho delegates are among the most trusted and respected of the delegates attending the National Conventions.***

# 2016 National National Convention

## Wednesday Afternoon

Reported by Lori Bennett



I was assigned to report on the events of Wednesday afternoon at the National Convention.

The afternoon session opened with further discussion on previously passed constitution amendment proposals regarding the appeals process. This discussion was to clarify if any class action appeals had been previously accepted. The answer was no, they had not.

The report of the Constitution Committee was continued. The Finance Committee had submitted a change regarding the sick leave benefits of the National Board, Article V. Section 6. At the current reimbursement rate, sub-hire, the liability on the books as of June 30th was \$281,346.18. If the amendment passed, it would change the reimbursement rate to the current salary rate, which would increase the liability to \$495,960.55. The proposed Constitutional amendment failed.

The proposed changes to Article V, Section 5, regarding meal allowance for national officers passed without discussion, as did the proposed change to Article IX, Section 12 in regards to the meal allowance for stewards.

Additional proposals regarding national officer salaries and national delegate compensation failed after debate. Other changes presented dealt with changing the time allowances for submitting nominations for national delegate and the contract ratification process which also failed. This concluded the report of the Constitution Committee.

So, how are constitution amendments proposed? It all starts at the local level. At the annual district election meetings, constitution changes at all levels of the Association can be proposed. District level changes are either passed or failed at that meeting. State and national changes are debated and if passed, they are again discussed at the state convention. If passed at the state level, the state constitution proposals are adopted and any national changes are then submitted to the National Convention. Additionally, the National Board and the Finance Committee can propose changes to be voted on by the national delegates.

The report of the Resolutions Committee then ensued. The overall process for submitting resolutions is much the same as for constitutional amendments. They start at the local level, and then proceed to the state level, and eventually the National Convention. This year, six binding resolutions were submitted. Binding simply means that if passed, the National Board has full authority and is bound to implement them. In the Convention Standing Rules, as each resolution is presented, any delegate has the right to object to it. If there is no objection, the proposed resolution is passed at the sound of the gavel. If objected to, then the resolution will be debated and voted upon. Of the six binding resolutions

proposed, only one passed at the sound of the gavel, the other five were debated and all five failed.

There were 198 non-binding resolutions presented. Non-binding resolutions are used to guide the National Board in future negotiations with the Postal Service, or require cooperation with outside entities. The procedure to object or adopt at the sound of the gavel is the same. There was not much time left in the afternoon session, so only 13 of the non-binding resolutions were presented. Of those, eight were objected to, and five were passed at the sound of the gavel. The five that were passed, dealt with benefits, such as annual leave, earned leave for RCAs and bereavement leave.

## Thursday Morning

Reported by Mikea Hargrove



Non-delegate Hargrove, Idaho. I have wanted to say that all week.

I am reporting the Thursday morning business session of the 2016 National Convention in Nashville. With a long day ahead of us, we quickly got down to business. We got started with resolution #14 and with over 180 more resolutions to go, we knew it was going to be a long day. As

this was my second time to National Convention I knew what to expect. However, I do have a hard time sitting still for more than an hour. Even though I did not physically work as hard as I would have on a mail route, I did have a mental workout like no other.

I found it increasingly pleasing to listen as the delegates conducted union business. It was nice to hear the passion in the voices of the delegates as they spoke for or against the resolutions at hand. Sometimes it would take a great deal of time to pass or fail resolutions being debated. It was interesting to witness how the body of the NRLCA delegates would listen and take into consideration different opinions. Being a part of such large organization is amazing, but it is better because even the little guy can have a say in how things are conducted.

It was a great day to be an RCA and I am glad that I get to report on some of the resolutions that pertain to me and my fellow RCAs. The NRLCA delegation passed many resolutions including resolution #15 which will help future RCAs and provide better training for future RCAs. This resolution means a regular carrier training a new sub will be paid for his or her time beyond the route evaluation. This will help the future RCAs because the trainer will not be forced to work without compensation. Some routes take a while to learn and this will eliminate the need of having to switch with the regular because of time issues or to make dispatch. This will aid in the trainee gaining the proper skills necessary to his or her new route. An RCA may have one of the hardest jobs in the Postal Service, but it was nice to see the delegate body of the NRLCA working to make our jobs better.

(see Thursday Morning on next page)

# 2016 National National Convention

## Thursday Morning

Some of the other resolutions were aimed at getting more benefits for the RCAs such as sick leave and annual leave. As all of you know your RCA years can drag on for a long time and it would be nice to be able to earn leave and sick leave.

Being an RCA is a choice, but it can be many years before an RCA is given the opportunity to be a career employee and that is not a choice. I have been an RCA for nearly nine years and I am glad that I get to be a part of people working together to improve work life for so many. It is an eye opening process to see progress in action. Before I realized it our morning session was over and we were released for lunch.

Director of Steward Operations David Heather were both declared elected by Secretary-Treasurer Clifford Dailing.

Ronnie Stutts was challenged by Kent Stock, IA, for the office of Vice President. Stutts was re-elected by 957 votes to Stock's 165.

In the race for four-year Executive Committeeman, Don Maston faced Michael Aitchison, OH. Maston was re-elected by 851 votes to Aitchison's 277.

While awaiting the results of the Tellers Committees' vote counting of the two contested offices, the convention delegates debated the resolutions remaining from Thursday's business session. Fourteen of the remaining resolutions had already been passed by gavel and, of the 17 resolutions debated by the delegates, four were passed and 13 failed.

The resolutions passed included one directing the NRLCA to pursue full membership on the District Advisory Committee, another resolved that a place for accumulated "O" time to be added as a line item on the paystub and a third that demanded the USPS provide every route with a selection of plastic bags in which to enclose parcels during inclement weather.

The fourth resolution passed by the delegates stated that the family and/or estate of any rural carrier killed while wearing a lap belt and operating a POV while sitting in the middle of the front seat, should be paid \$10,000.

Following the election of officers, Executive Committeeman Susan Knapp introduced the four Past National Officers attending the day's session.

With 48 years of service, Roger Moreland, AZ, was attending his 36th consecutive National Convention. He served as Executive Committeeman, Secretary-Treasurer and Vice President during the period of 1986 - 1995.

Brady Porth has given 50 years of service and was an Executive Committeeman from 1994-2002.

Gus Baffa served as Executive Committeeman, Director of Labor Relations and President during the period of 1991-2003.

Donnie Pitts served as Executive Committeeman, Vice President and President during his years on the National Board.

While awaiting the Appeals Committee's report to be distributed to the delegates, PAC Chairman Gus Baffa auctioned several items that had been donated to PAC for the purpose of raising funds. He auctioned ten items, adding an additional \$8,100 to the PAC contributions. The final total of funds raised for PAC during the convention was \$119,731.29.

The Appeals Committee presented eight appeals to the national delegates for consideration. The delegates upheld the committee's findings that the National Board's decision to declare the appeals by Terri Board, IL; Trudy Ewing, AZ; Dennis Dressler, KS and Kevin Lyons, NH, who had two appeals, were without merit.

Appeals numbered six, seven and eight were made by Sherri D Shields, CA. In appeal number seven, Shields appealed a decision by the National Board to ban her from membership in the Association for a period of five (5) years.

*(see Friday, Last Day of Convention on next page)*

## Thursday Afternoon

*Reported by Lisa Hall*



Thursday afternoon was spent on resolutions. The way this works is if no one objects, then the resolution is passed by the pound of the gavel. Resolutions considered addressed retirement, time standards, vehicles, work rules and RCAs. By the end of the session we had addressed six binding and 198 non-binding resolutions. One binding and 108 non-binding resolutions passed. The convention ran very

smoothly with this many resolutions.

Thursday night was caucus night. That's when all the candidates for national office come in and speak to the various caucuses of rural carriers. Idaho carriers are in the Western States caucus. Next year's Western States Conference will be held in Seattle, Washington.

## Friday, Last Day of Convention

*Reported by Lou Freeman*



The Friday business session opened with the election of officers. Jeanette Dwyer was declared to be the NRLCA President by Secretary-Treasurer Clifford Dailing, under Article V, Elections, Section 3D. Article V states that when there is only one nominee for an office and nominations have closed, the President or Secretary-Treasurer shall declare that the nominee is elected.

Other uncontested nominees were Secretary-Treasurer Clifford Dailing, declared elected by President Jeanette Dwyer; Director of Labor Relations Joey Johnson and

# 2016 National National Convention

## *Friday, Last Day of Convention*

This ban was made as discipline for a letter of extortion she wrote to three members of the board, demanding a payment of \$60,000 to prevent her from attending future conventions where she would, "...be forced to attend and campaign against all three of you. along (sic) with Rural Info, Facebook etc." When the payment was not made, she wrote another letter demanding a payment of \$1,000,000. This second letter gave lie to the statement made later in her defense that she had acted in the heat of the moment.

The Appeals Committee supported the National Board's decision to impose a five-year ban on Ms. Shields, but felt strongly that a lifetime ban was an appropriate consequence to the attempted extortion. The committee recommended that Shields be expelled from the Association for life.

After a long debate that ranged from leniency and forgiveness to a lifetime ban and escorting the appellant from the convention hall by a Sergeant-at-Arms, the delegates

voted to uphold the Appeals Committee's recommendation of a lifetime ban. Shields was allowed to depart the convention without an escort.

The National Board left unanswered the question of whether it would pursue criminal charges and/or civil litigation against Shields. Shields' appeals numbers six and eight were also found to be without merit by the committee.

Several constitution changes and resolutions presented to the convention body under New Business, including a constitutional change requiring armed guards at the national conventions as protection against terrorist attacks, were not adopted.

One resolution, requiring the financial impact of proposed constitutional changes and resolutions to be included in the financial reports, was passed.

In the final order of business for the convention, Past National Officer Gus Baffa performed the installation of National Officers.

## 2016 National Delegates' Reports

### **Postmaster General Megan Brennan**

*Reported by Lori Bennett*



Postmaster General Megan Brennan addressed the 112th National Convention of the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association. In her keynote address, she spoke about the state of our organization.

Ms. Brennan is the 74th and first female Postmaster General of the United States. She is considered the CEO of the world's largest postal organization. She was

appointed to this position in February, 2015.

As PMG Brennan began her talk, she shared her background as a member of a postal family. Her brother was a rural carrier for 36 years. She stated that she sees customer service when she sees rural carriers. Ms. Brennan was pleased to see that the Rural Reach program brought in \$42 million of revenue, which is a 41% increase over last year.

The USPS is the largest civilian employer of veterans, with 155 million delivery points, 630,000 employees, 31,000 post offices and utilizes 215,000 vehicles and 287 processing centers. Ms. Brennan said that the majority of growth in the USPS is in rural areas. She wants us all to take pride in the mission of delivering to America and to focus on serving the customer.

She said that our trillion dollar industry matters to

the economy. We have an unrivaled network, which continues to grow by adding 1 million addresses per year. Our business is limited in the products and services we can provide to meet the customers' needs. We have constraints put upon us, and she is trying to work towards expanding the definition of postal products.

The Postal Service wants to remain at the forefront of innovation. This can be accomplished by adapting to a changing marketplace. Statistics show that customers check their phones 150 times a day, consult their phones 82% of the time while in a store and 61% prefer customizations to their own location. Marketers are working with printers and the Postal Service to create multi-media to get their attention. We need to promote mail as the most effective medium. There is a need to become more customer centric, by making it easier to do business with us; at the same time we need to be more mobile and agile. We have to continue to innovate and create visibility end-to-end.

The Postal Service is working on informed delivery; how to make mail part of the daily digital experience. Testing is under way to show an image of the mail coming to your house that day and figuring out how to generate profitable revenue from it.

Ms. Brennan shared some financial data and volume statistics. She talked about the joint legislative effort with union and industry leaders. She credited NRLCA President Jeannette Dwyer with being the first of the unions to sit down and negotiate a contract.

In closing, PMG Brennan thanked rural carriers for helping make the Postal Service remain the most trusted federal agency and for connecting rural America. She reiterated the need to leverage what we have to spur growth and that dedication and commitment of the employees is key.

# 2016 National Delegates' Reports

## Legal Seminar

reported by Brian Draper



The legal team of Michael Gan and Mark Geisler conducted a Legal Seminar on Monday evening during the National Convention. Both are lawyers whose firm is retained by the NRLCA. The firm of Peer and Gan addresses all and any legal issues the NRLCA may have, which include labor charges, lawsuits, negotiations as well as representing rural carriers during arbitrations.

This year's seminar was well attended; the room was filled almost to standing room only. Michael started the seminar by stating he did not know where Mark was. Later, Mark came strolling in with his phone to his ear. Then came some loud discussion, some pushing, shoving, wrestling and finally some yelling as Mark left the room. Having experienced years and years of these gentlemen's acting in many training videos, it was easy to assume this was a set-up and not an actual fight.

When Mark returned, he and Michael revealed the skit as a scenario that involved two union officials having a disagreement on Postal Service property, with the 200 plus people in attendance as witnesses. Michael and Mark had everyone in the room take a couple of minutes to fill out a witness statement. Then they questioned a few of the witnesses to show that it was probable that no two statements were identical.

The two lawyers then led a discussion on how one steward could not represent both grievants. They took a vote to see which one or both should be appealed, if denied. They will take one or possibly both cases to the legal seminar at next year's National Convention. Stay tuned to see how this case is resolved.

## Thrift Savings Plan

Reported by Bret Helle



I attended the Monday afternoon, Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) seminar presented by Lazetta Braxton. She is a Thrift Savings Plan training and liaison specialist for the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board and, as I've learned before, there are many different ways you can contribute to your TSP to maximize your investment into your future retirement.

Did you know you can divide your maximum allowable contribution to TSP by the number of pay periods and

benefit from over a thousand more dollars than if you were to simply contribute a fixed percentage of your pay check?

I heard this several years ago at a TSP seminar in Grapevine, TX. At the time I did not understand the logistics of the comparable contributions but this year it was made quite clear! In a nut shell, if you decide to contribute a percentage of your paycheck and you reach your \$18,000 limit before the year has ended, the remaining pay periods will not allow a contribution.

Why is this important? The postal service matching funds will not be allowed either, so you essentially are out the matching funds for the remaining part of the year that the Postal Service would have normally matched. Thus, If you divide that \$18,000 by 26 pay periods, and make a SET contribution number in dollar amounts, you will be guaranteed to not only make a set contribution per pay period, but will also be guaranteed the matching funds by your employer! If you have more questions on this matter, go to the [tsp.gov](http://tsp.gov) website and watch the videos, or just go to Youtube and type in TSP and there are many instructional videos there as well.

Remember, your retirement can come from several sources and the more you maximize your controllable investments, the more options you can have and more comfort as well, in your retirement! There are other calculators that can include your social security benefits for retirement, so you really need to calculate with all of these incomes in mind when you start approaching retirement age or eligibility, with the Postal Service! Remember: Always Pay Yourself First!

## Legislative Seminar

reported by Brett Parkinson



Is there time left this year for the passage of postal reform?

On August 15th, at this year's National Convention in Nashville, I attended the Legislative Seminar presented by NRLCA Director of Governmental Affairs Paul Schwarz. Schwarz updated those present on the progress, or lack thereof, of the postal reform bills being considered in the House and Senate this year.

With Congress scheduled to convene for only 33 days in the months of September, November and December, it might be questionable as to whether postal reform will make it to the floor this year or die in committee and need to be pursued next year with a new congress.

The two bills being considered are S. 2051, Improving Postal Operations, Service and Transparency Act of 2015 (iPost) introduced by Sen. Carper (D-DE) and H.R. 5714 Postal Service Reform Act of 2016 introduced by Representatives Chaffetz (R-UT), Meadows (R-NC), Cummings (D-MD), Connolly (D-VA) and Lynch (D-MA). The Senate Bill (iPost) is still in committee while H.R. 5714 was voted out of committee on July 12. These two bills are

(See Legislative Seminar on next page)

# 2016 National Delegates' Reports

## Legislative

somewhat similar, but simpler in nature from previous bills that have been introduced in congress. The reasoning behind the simpler bills is a hope that something simpler will have a better chance of passage. The issues addressed in these two bills are:

- Full Medicare Integration
- Pre-Funding
- Pension Reform
- Postal Rates
- Conversion of Door Delivery
- Service Standards
- Investment of Pre-Funding.

If the Senate Bill can make it out of committee, the Senate and the House will have to form another committee to iron out the differences in the two bills in order to bring it to the floor to be debated and voted upon. I wonder what the chances are that the two houses of Congress could agree on something that would pass and be signed by the President.

Anyway, it's looking like the stars and planets will have to align for a postal reform bill to be passed this year. If it happens, it would most likely be passed by a lame-duck Congress following the elections in November.

With the exception of Conversion of Door Delivery, the Postal Service, the postal unions and the mailing industry are in favor of passage of these two bills. Other than these two bills, there are three house resolutions which have been brought forth.

HR 12 expresses the sense of the House of Representatives that the USPS should take all appropriate measures to ensure continuation of six-day mail delivery service. This resolution already has 235 co-sponsors, which is enough for passage. HR 28, which expresses the sense of the House that the USPS should take all appropriate measures to ensure the continuation of door delivery for all business and residential customers, has 201 co-sponsors but needs 218 for passage. HR 54, expressing the sense of the House that the USPS should take all appropriate measures to restore service standards in effect as of July 1, 2012, has 235 co-sponsors, enough for passage.

If you want to delve into the details of the issues these bills are considering, you can go to the NRLCA website under Legislative and read up on them in detail. The important thing is to become informed of the issues that may affect your jobs and then let your congressmen know which ones you want them to support.

*From the R.F.D. News, December 16, 1916*

### Admit Mail Robberies

Mail robberies, amounting to thousands of dollars, were disclosed in Buffalo, N.Y., a day or two ago, postal authorities announced, in the confessions of Richard and Frank Chapin, mail wagon drivers.

Jewelry valued at between \$10,000 and \$15,000 was recovered at the Chapin home, but it is said much other loot, consisting of stock certificates and negotiable paper, was destroyed. The accused men are brothers.

## Political Action Committee

*Reported by Bret Helle*



As delegate to this year's National Convention, I was tasked with covering the Pac Seminar as well as the Thrift Savings Plan Seminar on Monday afternoon. First of all, I just want to thank all of those who supported PAC this year; you really made a difference! For those of you who still don't know about PAC, it's the Political Action Committee of the National Rural Letter Carrier's Association. When we receive donations to

PAC, those funds are added to a larger, national fund which is overseen and managed by our Director of Governmental Affairs Paul Schwarz. Assisted by Chana Ryan and several National PAC co-Chairs, this department allots the necessary funds to make it possible to communicate directly with our Representatives and Senators in Washington D.C. Without these people and this organization, it is likely our voices would not be heard outside the negotiating table with the USPS and the Postal Regulatory Commission which oversees how the Postal Service operates as a whole. Most of the contacts they make in the great halls of the House and Senate truly can influence the way legislation is directed toward rural carriers as well as our business as a whole. Six-day delivery still remains a fragile topic and with the latest Amazon Parcel delivery increase, seven-day delivery could very well be a viable future as well. I'm not saying this is in discussion at this time, but cutting service has rarely helped any business grow!

Paul mentioned with the election year upon us and what could be just a lame duck session, they are scrambling to make any progress they can with the limited number of days Congress is actually in session. HR 5714, the Postal Reform Act of 2016, was passed favorably out of committee by voice vote. This House resolution was the result of comments by stakeholders, including the NRLCA, thus allowing the Congressional Budget Office to score legislation. HR 5707 was also voted favorably out of committee by voice vote. HR 5707 would allow the Treasury Department to allow a higher percentage of the prefunding payment by the Postal Service into higher yielding funds.

Here's a link to our PAC page at the NRLCA website for members. This gives a total breakdown on how and where your PAC dollars are allocated and how to support your PAC! <https://www.nrlca.org/PublicPages/PoliticalPAC.aspx>

Or, if you just want to go to the NRLCA website, use the pull down menu for legislative and click on PAC!

2015 was a record breaking year for PAC in Reno, NV. This year there were even more records broken for individual state contributions and the national total as well. This year, we achieved over \$117,000 dollars for PAC. This was several thousand dollars more than last year and we hope to continue to grow with your support.

*(See Political Action Committee on next page)*

# 2016 National Delegates' Reports

## Political Action Committee

There are many ways to contribute to PAC. With the addition of the previous two withholding allotments you can have taken out of your paycheck, there is one additional allowance this year. You can also have a direct deposit taken once a month from your checking account. As little as \$5.00 per month can make a substantial difference and if you have any questions on how you can donate to PAC, please contact me, Bret Helle, for more information. My phone number and email address are both in the contact information in The Pony Express.

## NRLCA Vehicle Insurance Plan

Reported by Mikea Hargrove



I was elected to go to the NRLCA National convention in Nashville. I was very excited to be able to attend the National General Auto representatives' breakfast. It was great to meet some of the representatives from other states and also the representatives from National General. Since this was my first time at the event, I was unsure of what I needed to do and I was quickly taken in by the information. I was in disbelief

at some of the things I did not know that could affect my future as a rural carrier.

National General Insurance has been around for many years and has been helping insure rural carriers for over 63 years. It is the most trusted auto insurance company for rural carriers and is the only insurance company endorsed by the NRLCA, so you can bet that they can help you with any and all your insurance needs. National General is the best at handling claims and they know all the steps involved in the Federal Tort Claims Act.

Those of you who do not know what that is or entails, should give National General a call. They will explain how you are protected and how other insurance companies may not know how to properly protect you in the event of an on-route accident. Even worse, if you are insured by another insurer, they may elect to drop your insurance, because if you do not inform your insurance company that you're delivering mail with your route car, you are omitting pertinent information. This could lead to a violation of your contract with the insurance company. The Federal Tort Claims act only protects you from liability and does not cover your privately owned vehicle, so making sure you have the right coverage is extremely important. You can call National General at 1-888-325-7727 and while you are one the line, check and see if they can save you money by switching your insurance. They will also give you a \$10 gift card and donate \$10 to your state PAC if you just take the time for a free insurance quote. Friends and family are also welcomed and encouraged to do this.

## Provident Guild

Reported by Sharon Atkins



Nashville, Music City USA, was a great venue for our national convention. Some of us arrived a day early to enjoy the Grand Ole Opry, the Hermitage and even a ghost tour of the city. Then down to business.

I attended the Provident Guild Seminar. The Provident Guild is NOT insurance, but a fraternal benefit open to those under 56. By making an annual payment, your

chosen beneficiary will be eligible to receive a payment at your passing. Your beneficiary will never receive less than you put in.

I also learned something that I had not understood before. I thought that there was a set amount that had to be paid according to your age. But, you can join at a younger age and pay the least required amount of ten dollars annually. You can increase that amount at any time you wish as long as you are in the right age bracket:

- under 35 - \$50 or \$40
- under 40 - \$35
- under 45 - \$20
- under 50 - \$15
- under 56 - \$10

The class you choose remains in effect as long as your dues are paid. The benefits will never decrease as you age. If you leave the Postal Service (or change to a different craft), you can retain your Provident Guild membership.

One caveat: If you pass away in June, your beneficiaries must report IMMEDIATELY, as, at the close of the fiscal year (June 30), benefits will not be paid. Normally, you have 60 days to report a death. This is something that has been brought to the attention of the Provident Guild president as this seems an unfair issue.

## Ad Hoc Academy Training

Reported by Glenda Sanders



Cynthia Barnes, AZ, and Chrissy Miller, PA, gave a presentation on the revamped Ad Hoc Academy classes. On October 1, 2016, classes around the nation will have newly trained trainers. There will never be more than six students per teacher. Teachers will have a power point containing all aspects of the job, along with many other newly included training tips.

One huge change is the inclusion of an actual street delivery set. There will be one indoors for training real box events while pushing around a

(See Ad Hoc Academy on next page)

# 2016 National Delegates' Reports

## *Ad Hoc Academy*

pseudo-LLV that mimics a trip around the town. There will also be a course set up outside for training from an actual LLV, serving up to 20 boxes. These changes alone will help the academy tremendously, but there are more changes.

The number of days of training will change from three to four. That will be four full days of training with actual hands on experience for each new sub hired before they get to their assigned offices. There is also a new casing speed test, where students are timed on the first day of classroom casing and then every day until their last day. The hope is that this will bolster confidence in the new subs and they will understand that casing over and over again will increase their speed whatever their route classification.

Providing new tools and re-engineering the academy was a joint effort of Postmaster General Megan Brennan and NRLCA President Jeanette Dwyer. On President Dwyer's behalf, Vice President Ronnie Stutts has commanded this effort of hiring and training academy specialists called Train the Trainer (TTT). These TTTs from each district will set up classrooms and train all the newly hired academy instructors. This is all on track to be done by October 1, 2016. We all hope that the academy, along with the hiring of qualified RCAs, will churn out well prepared RCAs with knowledge and speed to cover their assigned routes.

## *CSRS Seminar*

*Reported by Sharon Atkins*



I attended one of the CSRS/FERS retirement seminars given by Joni Montroy, a very knowledgeable and fabulous resource. Retirement comes in three phases:

- #3 - "No-Go"
- #2 - "Slo-Go"
- #1 - "Go-Go"

Are you ready? Are you planning? Too young? Too late?

Lite Blue has a section on retirement that is very helpful. Know that you need to start well before you plan to retire. If you need to make a deposit for eligible service, it can take from nine to 12 months for Shared Services to get back to you after the deposit application is submitted. There are calculators on Lite Blue to estimate what you will be earning in retirement.

Ever wondered what that figure at the bottom right of your paycheck means? That is what you contribute towards your retirement for the year. The USPS also adds to that so what you receive is different than what I was aware of.

These are some of the things that you need to think about when considering retirement: How much money do I need to have? What is the best time to retire? If I

stay longer will it make a difference in what I receive or eliminate some debt? Make a list. Get organized with your information. Remember retirement is paid monthly not bi-weekly.

There are many choices to make when considering retirement. Do I leave a survivor's annuity for my spouse? What happens to my medical benefits? What should I do with my TSP? Do I need Medicare Part B? What happens to my annual and sick leave? How is my FSA handled at retirement? I hope I have whetted your curiosity to look into YOU and this time of life that we all aspire to reach.

## *FERS Seminar*

*Reported by Lisa Hall*



The 2016 National convention was held in beautiful Nashville TN. My assignment was the FERS Retirement seminar held Tuesday evening. Joni Montroy led the seminar. She is great at helping you understand and navigate through the retirement process. It is a maze. Retirement for FERS is a three legged stool comprised of your postal pension, Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) and your social security.

When you decide to retire, you will be sent a blue book. This book has all your information in it. You fill it out, send it back and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) will send it back to you with all the information. It will tell you what your retirement annuity from the Postal Service will be.

Your TSP withdrawals can be accessed in several different ways: A lump sum payment, monthly payments, an annuity or a combination. You also have a survivor's annuity for your spouse to consider. You can select 50% or 25%.

You have to select something if you want your spouse to remain on your health insurance. Also, if you want to keep your health insurance, you have to have had the rural carriers' insurance for five years prior to retirement.

What your pension will be is based on how many years you worked and the average of your highest paid three consecutive years. The minimum retirement age is 56 with 30 years of service, 60 years of age with 20 years of service or age 62 with 5 years of service. If you retire before any of these requirements are met, 5% per year will be deducted from your retirement payment.

As you can see, retirement is something different to each person. OPM says you should start getting your paperwork and things together as soon as you decide you might want to retire. When you do retire, you need to have some money saved up because OPM is back-logged all the time. It may be several months before your start receiving your pension from the Postal Service.

Joni Montroy is available to help, but she does charge a fee and she, too, is back-logged. She likes a year's notice to get you ironed out.

*(See FERS Seminar on next page)*

# 2016 National Delegates' Reports

## *FERS Seminar*

In closing, if you are thinking of retirement, you can find a calculator to give you a ball park figure of your retirement income on the internet at [lite blue](#).

### **OWCP**

*Reported by Brett Parkinson*



As a delegate to this year's National Convention, one of my assignments was to report on the OWCP seminar that was presented there. Devin Cassidy, who has been hired by our national officers as the NRLCA Director of Workers' Compensation, presented this seminar. Although I attended this seminar three years ago, I

was surprised this time, through the comments and stories of some of those present, by how complex an OWCP claim can possibly become. That's why we have someone at the national office to help us through the claims process if we happen to be injured on the job.

Having personally been injured on the job several years ago, I have had a little experience with an OWCP claim. Fortunately, my supervisor at the time was familiar enough with the process that I was able to get through it without too much difficulty and without an unreasonable amount of paperwork. I was lucky enough to get an in-office light duty work assignment and receive COP (Continuation of Pay) till my injury healed and I was able to resume my regular work duties.

COP is payable for 45 calendar days immediately following disability, in traumatic injury cases. The first three calendar days are considered waiting period days. If the disability exceeds 14 calendar days (including three waiting days) then waiting period days are converted to COP days. If limited duty work is offered and approved by the treating physician following an injury, there are certain responsibilities that must be fulfilled by both the employer and the employee.

For example, the employer must provide a description of the duties and specific physical demands of the work assignment. They also have the responsibility to provide the effective date of the position, the date the employee must accept or refuse the job and pay rate information. The employee has the responsibility of ensuring that the treating physician specifies work limitations and provides them to the control office. Also, the employee must ensure a prompt response from the doctor, with an opinion on whether and how soon the employee can be expected to return to work in any capacity. The employee should also be seeking suitable work.

I found it interesting that there are limited duty assignment guidelines for the USPS to follow.

Following are some you might keep in mind:

- The limited duty job and work environment

should be similar to that of the regular job and have similar pay with little or no training required.

- The assignment should not be a make work job and should be a function where temporary additional help is useful.

- Whenever possible, qualified employees should be assigned to limited duty in their regular craft, during a regular tour of duty, and in their regular work facility.

Because there are numerous and varied types of injuries one may sustain on the job, there are also different forms and paperwork that must be filled out when an injury occurs or is realized. All forms that relate to workers' compensation should be kept in each post office, but they can also be found at [www.dol.gov](#).

Since there are many time restrictions that must be met when filing a workers compensation claim, if you sustain an on the job injury, your best course of action would be to contact Devin Cassidy at the national office, who will walk you through the process. You can also access more complete information on OWCP on the national website at [nrlca.org](#).

### **Editors Seminar**

*Reported by Lou Freeman*



The Editors' Seminar for 2016 was held on Monday, August 15, at the National Convention in Nashville, TN. The meeting was presided over by the Editors' Association President Jeff Oakley, IA, who began the meeting by asking the editors to rise by turn, introduce themselves and state the number of years they have served their states as editors.

New editors were presented their editors pins by Managing Editor Melissa Ray. Ray and NRLCA Vice President Ronnie Stutts also presented rockers to editors who have reached their five and fifteen year milestones.

Officers elected for the coming year, 2016 – 2017, are President Diane Irrgang, NJ; Vice President Gary Plumer, IN, and Secretary Michelle Smith, MI.

Publication winners, selected from 26 entrants, were announced by Melissa Ray. They are:

Category I (1 - 999 members) General Excellence, Lou Freeman, ID; Honorable Mention, Cathy Field, ME.

Category II (1,000 - 2,000 members) General Excellence, Diane Irrgang, NJ; Honorable Mention, Todd Hohn, CO.

Category III (2,001 - 3,500 members) General Excellence, Jeff Oakley, IA; Honorable Mention, Mariann Estes, CA.

Category IV (3,501 + members) General Excellence, John Shrode and Christine De Nino, IL; Honorable Mention, Emma McCarty, TN.

All winners received their awards during the first business day of the National Convention.

Three members of the Press Room Committee are rolling off this year. They are: Jeff Oakley, IA and Mariann Estes, CA, each with 14 years on the committee, and Lou Freeman, ID with ten years. Altogether they have had 38 years of

*(See Editors' Seminar on next page)*

# 2016 National Delegates' Reports

## *Editors' Seminar*

Press Room Committee experience.

The current officers presented a PowerPoint program, "The Basics of Publication Design" to the assembly of editors. The program covered the use of Adobe InDesign and MS Office Publisher in designing nameplates, tables of content, mastheads, headlines, jumplines and pull quotes

The photography portion of the program covered the use of Adobe Photoshop and Corel PaintShop Pro to produce headshots, cutlines and general photos in designing the pages of the editors' respective newspapers.

NRLCA Legal Counsels Micheal Gan and Mark Gisler spoke of legal issues involved in the content of newsletters concerning candidates, election campaigns, free speech and libel issues. They stressed the importance of absolute impartiality in publishing campaign articles and photos. Editors were cautioned by the attorneys that even the appearance of possible favoritism for any candidate over another should be avoided.

Stutts spoke to the group about the possibility of having a more extensive training for the editors, given that the national office is only five miles from the 2017 convention center. The meeting adjourned at noon.

## *First Timers' Orientation Seminar*

*Reported by Jeff Marler*

The First Timers' Seminar was hosted by NRLCA Vice President Ronnie Stutts. NRLCA Past National President Gus Baffa and NRLCA Auxiliary Past National President Dwight Broome were also there with Stutts to talk to all of us newbies. NRLCA President Jeannete Dwyer also came in to speak with us for a few minutes. All of the officers were amazed at how many first timers there were (and mentioned this was the most ever) and that many of us were there as delegates as well.

Baffa started off by encouraging us to be as active as we can and to enjoy the Advancement of the Colors and the National Anthem. He was right, it was a very moving presentation. He also reinforced the fact that every delegate has as much right of going to the microphone as any other delegate or officer.

The remainder of the time was spent by Baffa and Broome walking us through the daily agenda so that we would have an idea of what to expect during this convention. It was an amazing experience to see how focused on the family this organization is and I look forward to being a part of the IDRLCA Auxiliary for a long time!

*Hi, Guys and Gals,*

*I need to purchase a bigger route vehicle. I'm looking for a Cherokee or something similar in size. Meridian's packages are growing so much I can no longer get everything into my DJ 5.*

*So, if you hear of anything, please let me know. My number is 208-515-9634; my email is d1mikea5@gmail.com, If you hear of anything, thank you so much for letting me know.*

*Mikea Hargrove*

## *Ten Things Every Rural Carrier Should Already Know*

*1. If you receive discipline, you have only 14 days from the day you receive the discipline to file a grievance.*

*2. You do not need a steward to initiate a grievance. In fact, the first step in any grievance, especially when grieving discipline, is a discussion between you and your immediate supervisor.*

*3. If you receive discipline, your steward cannot initiate the grievance for you unless you are incapacitated or incarcerated.*

*4. If agents of the Office of Inspector General (OIG) wish to interview you, you should ask for a steward immediately.*

*5. The agents **ARE NOT** required to offer you union representation and they, most likely, will not. It is incumbent upon **YOU** to request union representation.*

*6. After you request union representation, you are not required to answer any questions until your steward is present. If you choose to voluntarily answer questions without union representation, your answers **CAN be used against you.***

*7. Numbers 4, 5 and 6 also apply to Pre-disciplinary Interviews or Investigative Interviews conducted by postmasters and supervisors.*

*8. Postal regulations require that we **REPORT ALL ACCIDENTS immediately**, even minor ones. Generally, carriers do not get fired for having an accident. Failing to report an accident is another story. Failing to report an accident can and does result in removal from the Postal Service.*

*9. A copy of our contract (National Agreement) is available to all members at **www.nrlca.org**. It is also mailed to all members in the form of The National Rural Letter Carrier magazine whenever a new contract is ratified or implemented.*

*10. Arbitrators who hear grievances over discipline have little or no patience for postal employees who steal, dispose of or mishandle mail. Their attitude seems to be that trust is one of the main things the Postal Service has going for it. Employees who violate that trust will often times find themselves out of a job.*

# ***IDRLCA STATE BOARD MINUTES June 9 - 11, 2016***

---

## ***Pre-Convention Meeting***

The regularly scheduled meeting of the IDRLCA State Board was held Thursday, June 9, 2016, 8:30 am, at the Silver Mountain Lodge, Kellogg ID with both the President and the Secretary being present. The ground rules were reviewed by Vice President Brett Parkinson. The meeting agenda was reviewed and adopted as amended.

The following reports are to be given during the convention:

President, Patti Upton

Vice President, Brett Parkinson

Secretary/Treasurer & Financial Report, Lori Bennett

Editor, Lou Freeman

Retired Representative, Jo Aguirre

Webmaster, Glenda Sanders

Legislative Representative, Russ Hutchison

Auto Rep, Mikea Hargrove

Provident Guild, Jim Sullins

Auxiliary President, Robin Carver

The following reports were given and placed on file:

Executive Committeeman District 1, Mikea Hargrove

Executive Committeeman District 2, Russ Hutchison

Executive Committeeman District 3, John Thomas

Executive Committeeman District 5, Jim Sullins

Voucher Review Committee Report, Chair Brett Parkinson

Budget Report, Lori Bennett

During unfinished business, the contact sheets were reviewed, no changes were noted.

Jo Aguirre shared information regarding having the IDRLCA banner made. The final cost was \$306.34.

Lori showed the final financial breakdown of the Rural Carrier Symposiums. Brian Draper said that they gained four new local stewards, and a fifth one is interested. The board members shared their views on the symposiums.

The IDRLCA State Board Policy was also reviewed. Lori made a motion that the board policy be amended to include in Article IV, Meetings & Seminars, "G. Orientation Representatives shall be paid one (1) day per diem and mileage." A second was made, the motion passed.

Attendees to the Western States Conferences shared their thoughts.

Historian Mary Morris reported on the progress of archiving the historical documents.

Webmaster Glenda Sanders suggested the possibility of meeting with other state webmasters informally at the National Convention and encourage networking. There were no objections from the board.

Auxiliary President Robin Carver announced the new Auxiliary Secretary-Treasurer Jeff Marler.

Editor Lou Freeman expressed the desire to start a transition year for a new state editor, with the possibility of appointing a co-editor for one year. The board decided that a constitutional proposal would be appropriate for that. Lou will prepare the needed changes to be submitted to the Constitution Committee. Lori expressed concern about the print quality of the paper. Lou said it was mainly a paper quality issue. Lou will report a cost estimate for making changes at the September board meeting.

Patti relayed that Pete Haynos was appointed as the orientation representative for northern Idaho.

She then discussed electronic voting and presented appreciation awards to the board members.

Patti reviewed the state convention Delegate Committee assignments.

Lori presented constitutional proposals regarding the Assistant Rural Carrier (ARC) position. After discussion, Glenda Sanders made a motion to amend the change to \$25.00, a second was made, motion was withdrawn. Jim Sullins made a motion that the board submit the proposed constitution changes regarding the ARC position, as presented, to the Constitution Committee for consideration. A second was made, the motion passed.

The board discussed having the Budget Committee meet to prepare for any financial proposals made during convention. Jim shared some ongoing convention issues.

Vice President Brett Parkinson read the Carrier-of-the-Year nomination letters. The board broke into executive session to make the selection which will be announced later during the state convention.

The board meeting was recessed at 11:30 a.m. Personal concerns were expressed and the meeting was adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

## ***Post-Convention Meeting***

The IDRLCA post-convention board meeting was called to order at 12:50 p.m.

The following appointments were made:

Editor - Lou Freeman

Co-Editor - Glenda Sanders

PAC Chair - Bret Helle

Webmaster - Glenda Sanders

Provident Guild Representative - Jim Sullins

Retired/Benefits Representative - Jo Aguirre

Historian - Mary Morris

Auto Representative - Mikea Hargrove

Legislative Representative - Russ Hutchison

Assignments to National Delegates will be made by State President Patti Upton at the National Convention. All paid delegates are required to be in attendance beginning Monday, August 15, and must be in attendance until adjournment. Any missed meetings or assignments will be deducted from the delegate's pay.

Delegate reports need to be as detailed as possible for *The Pony Express*.

Travel advances for delegates are available after July 1st if needed.

Glenda expressed the desire for new delegate shirts. Discussion was held. Glenda will research options, and email the other delegates.

Under new business, Webmaster Sanders brought up the glitches with the Media Committee during convention. Glenda made a motion that the webmaster purchase a computer suitable for all different types of awesomeness with a budget of \$600. A second was made, motion passed.

Any other convention concerns were discussed.

The next state board meeting has been scheduled for September 24, 2016 at 8:30 a.m. at the Candlewood Suites in Meridian.

Personal concerns were expressed and the meeting was adjourned at 1:25 p.m.



# IDRLCA AUXILIARY PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Robin Carver, Auxiliary President

## Support The Humanitarian Projects

I would like to thank everyone for all your support past, present and future, of the humanitarian projects each year. I have had the honor of being the Auxiliary President for this state for 11 years and I have enjoyed

every minute. Part of the responsibilities of this appointment is to create, contribute and support the projects used for the humanitarian projects.

You may be surprised to know that the humanitarian projects you contribute to each year are well thought out programs by the National Auxiliary officers. Many of these folks become National Auxiliary officers to further their personal pursuits in their favorite charities and usually know what their project will be before they are ever elected. The National Auxiliary officers spend time pursuing and finding the best way to distribute the money donated to the auxiliary and sharing this knowledge online at the NRLCA website and through their fliers and, most importantly, their state officers.

I have learned about many different diseases and the treatments used to cure them. Some of these projects, over the years, have meant more to me on a personal level, than others. Juvenile diabetes is the disease my mother succumbed to and learning the new techniques and treatments used to defeat this disease has been inspiring and hopeful. The cochlear implants for those with hearing loss, meant more hope for my sister who is now deaf.

The project for Type 2 diabetes is an ongoing educational journey for many of us and the cure is within us, with a little help along the way. I am sure many of you have your own personal projects that mean more than others. Regardless of your personal preferences, year after year you have continued to support the National Auxiliary project of the year and I feel truly blessed and thankful to all of you.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my teammate, partner and best friend who, after an eye roll and a long deep sigh, continues to go along with my kooky ideas and then makes them work, whether building projects for the auxiliary or building a shed in the backyard. He is a very talented and patient man. Thank you, Bret.

I would also like to thank my auxiliary officers, past and present, for backing me up and helping when I need it.

### **Humanitarian Project: PNO Scholarship**

National Auxiliary President Sheila Reardon-Gilman, having chosen the PNO Scholarship as the Humanitarian Project for 2016-2017, says, "While considering a project for the coming year, it became apparent that the Auxiliary was about to lose some scholarships that have been in place for several years. I believe the scholarships that are offered through the NRLCA Auxiliary are an important part of what we do.

"The expense of a college education can be overwhelming. The scholarships we are able to offer can help put a dent in those expenses.

"I chose the name PNO Scholarships to honor all the Past National Officers. These PNOs include all prior NRLCA, Auxiliary and Junior Officers."

Motto: *"Our Past Supporting Our Future"*

Symbol: *Mailbox and Graduation Cap*

Americanism: *Our Freedoms*

Songs: *"How Great Thou Art," "God Bless America"*

Flower: *Iris and Apple Blossoms*

### **Inspiration:**

*"Let us think of education as the means of developing our greatest abilities, because in each of us there is a private hope and dream which, fulfilled, can be translated into benefit for everyone and greater strength for our nation."*

- John F. Kennedy

### **Safety: Preventing Suicide**

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a 24-hour, toll-free, confidential suicide prevention hotline available to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress. By dialing 1-800-273-TALK (8255), a call is routed to the nearest crisis center in a national network of more than 150 crisis centers. The Lifeline's national network of local crisis centers provides crisis counseling and mental health referrals day and night.

### **Junior Contests**

The following rules apply to all age groups. Entries with incorrect or incomplete information will be disqualified. All essays and posters must be on or attached to a letter-size manila folder. Each entry must have the following information legibly written, printed or typed on back of the folder: name, address, date of birth and age as of 8/01/2017, name of parent or grandparent and state in which dues are paid. All entries are judged on originality, neatness, grammar and spelling. There is no requirement on how many sides of the folder you use. You must be able to fold the folder. Please have fun and participate!

Age 6 - 8: Design a Poster *"Eastern Bluebird"*

Age 9 - 11: Design a Poster *"Our Freedom"*

Age 12 - 14: Design a Poster *"Going to College"*

Age 15 - 17: Write an Essay *"College Scholarships"*

Age 18 - 20: Write an Essay *"Preventing Suicide"*

Special Education: Design a Poster *"Mailbox and Graduation Cap"*

### **Scholarships**

The National Auxiliary offers several scholarships to children and grandchildren of rural letter carriers and Auxiliary members seeking higher education. Rules and caretakers of each scholarship will be available on the NRLCA website: [nrlca.org](http://nrlca.org). Applications may be obtained from Auxiliary state officers and the newly elected National Board Member. All applications must be postmarked by MARCH 1, 2017 UNLESS otherwise stated. Applications will be available beginning this month.

### **NRLCA PAC**

Your contributions to PAC are more important now than ever, considering the condition of the USPS. Please support PAC generously. We have a stronger voice when we all give.

## Friends

When I turn from my tasks at dusk,  
Though cold winds blow, though lilacs bloom,  
I find him waiting at the gate  
To walk with me across the gloom,  
And, entering a little house,  
We leave the world and all its woe,  
The while we eat our meat and bread  
Within the lamplight's mellow glow.

*His eyes as bright as twinkling stars,  
He hearkens, as the kettle croons,  
And, supper done, he wants to help  
To put away the plates and spoons,  
But laughingly I shake my head  
And say he is a clumsy elf,  
And so he wisely watches me  
Place each thing on its proper shelf.*

I tamp tobacco in my pipe,  
I settle in my easy chair,  
And, as he sits across from me,  
I know that life is strangely fair,  
In spite of tears and shattered dreams,  
In spite of selfishness and lies,  
For I am finding peace and strength  
Within the trust that fills his eyes.

*Although we never say a word,  
The shadows and the drifting smoke  
Are startled, as they hear us laugh  
Or chuckle at some silent joke,  
For hearts, that truly understand  
Each other, in a nod, a sigh,  
A look are speaking fluently,  
Just as we do, - my dog and I.*

Edgar Daniel Kramer

Go to the IDRLCA  
Website, [idrlca.org](http://idrlca.org), for the  
latest and most  
comprehensive postal  
news.

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION  
US POSTAGE PAID  
PAUL ID 83347  
PERMIT # 53

## The PONY EXPRESS



### ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Please send address changes to:  
IDRLCA Secretary Lori Bennett  
306 N Dakota Avenue  
Fruitland ID 83619

### IN THIS ISSUE

<i>NRLCA 2016 National Convention - Nashville</i> .....	1
IDRLCA Officers' Contact Information .....	2
IDRLCA Local Stewards Contact Information .....	3
South Idaho DR Brian Draper's Report - <i>Rural Street Database</i> .....	4
From 1865 - <i>The Mail Had to be Delivered</i> .....	4
North Idaho DR Patrick Pitts' Report - <i>PS Form 3971</i> .....	5
State President's Report - <i>Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS)</i> ..	7
Vice President's Report - <i>Training a New RCA</i> .....	8
IDRLCA Auto Insurance Rep's Report - <i>National General Cares</i> ..	8
Secretary/Treasurer's Report - <i>Histor of Labor Day</i> .....	9
Webmaster's Article - <i>My Webby Skills</i> .....	10
NRLCA 2016 National Convention Reports .....	11 - 15
National Delegates' Reports .....	15 - 21
From R.F.D. News-1916 - <i>Admit Mail Robberies</i> .....	17
<i>Ten Things Every Rural Carrier Should Know</i> .....	21
<i>Looking For a Cherokee Jeep</i> .....	21
IDRLCA State Board Minutes for June 9 - 11 .....	22
IDRLCA Auxiliary President's Report .....	23

## Coming Events

**IDRLCA  
State Board Meeting  
October 15, 2016**

8:30 a.m.

Candlewood Suites,  
1855 Silverstone Way, Meridian  
*IDRLCA Members Invited*

**Western States Conference**

April 20 - 22, 2017

1-800-222-8733

Double Tree Suites by Hilton  
16500 Southcenter Parkway,  
Tukwila, WA 98188

**NRLCA**

**2017 National Convention**

**August 15 - 18, 2017**

National Harbor, MD