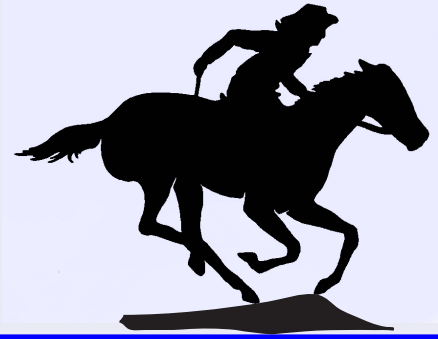


# The PONY EXPRESS



September 2017

## Idaho Goes to Washington



Idaho's banner was displayed proudly at the NRLCA 2017 National Convention near our nation's capital, in National Harbor, MD. It was the one hundred and thirteenth time that rural carriers have gathered together to plan a course for the future of the rural craft. In this issue, you will hear from all of

the delegates that were sent, by you, to represent Idaho. When you get a chance, please thank them for all the hard work that they put into these reports.



**U S P S**  
Postmaster General  
**Megan Brennan**  
addressed the  
delegates at the  
NRLCA National  
Convention in  
Maryland. She had  
much to say to rural  
carriers and we invite you to read her  
words contained within these pages.

*How many times is Brennan quoted in this issue? The first rural carrier that finds the answer will win a gift card and bragging rights. Send your responses via email to [pony@idrlca.org](mailto:pony@idrlca.org)*

## The 2017 Idaho Delegation at National Convention



Pictured from l to r: Anna Sullins, auxiliary; Sharon Atkins, delegate; Jim Sullins, non-delegate; Robin Carver, delegate; Brett Parkinson, delegate; Glenda Sanders, delegate; Bret Helle, delegate; Patti Upton, delegate; Kortney bronson, junior; Brian Draper, delegate; Lori Bennett, delegate; Mikea Hargrove, delegate

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*Please report corrections to [pony@idrlca.org](mailto:pony@idrlca.org)*

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|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------|----------------|
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| Athol               |                   |                      |                   |                |
| Blackfoot           | 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            | 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          |                   |                      |                   |                |
| Craigmont           |                   |                      |                   |                |
| Culdesac            |                   |                      |                   |                |
| Deary               |                   |                      |                   |                |
| Eagle               |                   |                      |                   |                |
| Emmett              |                   |                      |                   |                |
| Filer               | Marilyn Carrico   | 56 Northridge Way    | Jerome 83338      | (208) 326-5220 |
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| Glenns Ferry        |                   |                      |                   |                |
| Grangeville         |                   |                      |                   |                |
| Gooding             |                   |                      |                   |                |
| Greenleaf           |                   |                      |                   |                |
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| Homedale            |                   |                      |                   |                |
| Horseshoe Bend      |                   |                      |                   |                |
| Idaho Falls         | John Thomas       | 4075 E Menan Hwy     | Rigby 83442       | (208) 745-8348 |
| Inkom               |                   |                      |                   |                |
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| Juliaetta           | Jimmy Sullins     | 1021 Granlund Road   | Troy 83871        | (208) 301-3795 |
| Kamiah              |                   |                      |                   |                |
| Kendrick            |                   |                      |                   |                |
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| LapwaiLewiston      |                   |                      |                   |                |
| Marsing             | Mara Ralls        | 26714 Walker Road    | Parma 83660       | (208) 407-1103 |
| McCall              |                   |                      |                   |                |
| McCammon            |                   |                      |                   |                |
| Melba               |                   |                      |                   |                |
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| Meridian            | Miki Wilkinson    | 11549 Jump Creek Dr  | Caldwell 83605    | (208) 284-5090 |
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| Mountain Home       |                   |                      |                   |                |
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| Nampa               | Rod Munson        | 316 Crescent Dr      | Caldwell 83605    | (208) 880-7705 |
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| Orofino             |                   |                      |                   |                |
| Parma               |                   |                      |                   |                |
| Paul                | Russell Hutchison | 1044 E 21st St       | Burley 83318      | (208) 431-1509 |
| Payette             | Victoria Potter   | 2581 Reeds Grove Rd  | Midvale 83645     | (208) 355-2689 |
| Pinehurst           |                   |                      |                   |                |
| Pingree             |                   |                      |                   |                |
| Plummer             |                   |                      |                   |                |
| 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             | Earl Nelson       | 4382 N Hwy 91        | Preston 83263     | (208) 220-0623 |
| Priest River        |                   |                      |                   |                |
| Rathdrum            |                   |                      |                   |                |
| Rexburg             | Rhea Price        | 1910 E 200 N         | Rexburg 83440     | (208) 356-6524 |
| Rigby               |                   |                      |                   |                |
| Rupert              | Amber Warr        | 2556 Hansen Avenue   | Burley 83318      | (208) 670-5824 |
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| Salmon              | Christina Lewis   | 1532 HWY 93 North    | North Fork 83466  | (208) 539-4580 |
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| Star                |                   |                      |                   |                |
| Troy                | Jimmy Sullins     | 1021 Granlund Rd     | Troy 83871        | (208) 301-3795 |
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| Wilder              |                   |                      |                   |                |
| Worley              | Christine Hodgson | 515 Pine Street      | Plummer 83851     | (208) 686-1327 |

*If your office has no steward listed, consider becoming one!  
Brian Draper and Hersh Howard will train you  
and give you all the help that you might need.  
Call Hersh at (208) 921-4833*



# Northern Idaho District Representative's Report

Alaska District Representative Patrick Pitts

## Disaster Relief

**My heart goes out** to those devastated by the wildfires here, and across the country and those whose lives have been, or will be torn asunder

Applications for relief grants from PERF must be received within six months of the date the disaster occurred (with limited exceptions). All applicants must have their application signed by a union officer or management official prior to submission to PERF.

by the violent weather that leads the newscast on a seemingly daily basis. Disasters come in a variety of forms. As I write this article wildfires are raging in our area and across the country; hurricane Harvey has left a swath of destruction in its wake; and hurricane Irma is bearing down on Florida after slamming Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands with hurricane Jose not far behind.

**You can help** and have three ways in which to do so; by making a donation directly to PERF through the website above (credit card donation); mailing a check or money order to: Postal Employees' Relief Fund, P.O. Box 7630 Woodbridge VA 22195; or

*The United States Postal Service is present in every community across the nation and some of our "family members" are in the path of danger anytime disaster strikes.*

designating the Postal Employees' Relief fund as a recipient of your charitable contributions during the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC - #10268), October 2, 2017 -

While the full story is yet to be told, it is clear that tens of thousands of homes will have been destroyed or rendered uninhabitable, hundreds of thousands of families will have been temporarily displaced and millions of individuals will have been adversely impacted by current and recent disasters. There are many in our rural carrier family, which itself is part of our postal family, who are included in those numbers.

January 12, 2018. The Postal Employees' Relief Fund is a 501(C)(3) charitable organization and contributions are tax-deductible. Retired postal employees also can designate PERF as a contribution choice through their annuity checks—CFC #10268.

Rural letter carriers, regular, relief and retired have always come to the aid of those in need. While there are many charitable organizations who rely on donations to provide immediate relief – food, water, shelter, clothing, etc., there is one dedicated to postal employees and that is the Postal Employees' Relief Fund (PERF). PERF exists to help active and retired postal employees whose homes have been destroyed or left uninhabitable as a result of a major natural disaster or house fire.

Grantors of the relief fund include Megan J. Brennan, Postmaster General of the United States and Jeanette Dwyer, President of the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association (NRLCA) as well as the presidents of the NALC, NPMHU, APWU and management associations (NAPS, UPMA). The PERF Executive Committee, which handles the day-to-day operations in the field includes NRLCA Vice President, Ronnie W. Stutts.

PERF is not an "immediate need" or "emergency relief" agency such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) or the American Red Cross. PERF provides relief grants to assist those in our postal family re-establish residence and to help replenish basic necessities in the aftermath of a devastating loss. Postal employees and retirees whose homes have been left uninhabitable or destroyed by fire, flood, earthquake or storm can apply for a grant by visiting the Postal Employees' Relief Fund website at [www.postalrelief.com](http://www.postalrelief.com).

The United States Postal Service is present in every community across the nation and some of our "family members" are in the path of danger anytime disaster strikes. Like so many of you, my thoughts and prayers are with all those impacted by recent and impending disaster. Whether it be through PERF or a charitable organization of your choosing I encourage all in our rural family to do what you are able to help those who stand in need.



# Southern Idaho District Representative's Report

*Salt Lake City/Nevada-Sierra District Representative Brian Draper*

## *No Jackpotting in the Rural Craft*

You may not have heard the term "jackpotting" before due to it being a city carrier term and is not used in the rural craft. The term

means, as an example, to take a CBU with say twelve deliveries and only allow a six inch separation in the case. The mail is inserted in no order and is then separated out on the street.

The language of the PO-603 223.22 gives a specific minimum of two addresses per two-inch separation for rural cases. Every

route needs to be set up to allow any carrier the option to put the entire route in delivery order before leaving for the street. You may have a personal preference to case that way and can do so but each delivery needs to have a minimum of one inch for each address whether it's a regular box or a centralized box as you are not the only one that works the route.

Several managers have come from the city craft and do not understand, misinterpret or choose to ignore the language of the PO-603. This has caused some local grievances and in ALL cases the PO-603 has been upheld in the grievance process. Yet the managers have stated they are going to continue forcing carriers to jackpot their cases. When it got to the point that the district was going to back up those managers, the association was left with no choice but to file a grievance outside of the district directly to the western area. On August 25, th 2017 a settlement was written which states: *The parties agree to abide by the language of PO-603 213.1, 223.22 and 223.23. The parties agree that centralized deliveries require the same case separations as non-centralized deliveries. In Rural delivery, there is no option that will allow "jackpotting" of central deliveries on the carrier's case.*

***The parties agree that centralized deliveries require the same case separations as non-centralized deliveries.***

Many routes have been identified for non-compliance in the Sierra-Nevada district. Now all the case labels need to be corrected and in compliance with the settlement and the PO-603, there will be no exceptions or allowances. When they instruct you to change the labels you have no option, there is no past practice, no grievance to file and as I said no exceptions. You will be paid PS form 8127 time or auxiliary assistance to complete the task. Under PO-603

213.1 *Your manager or supervisor will provide you with adequate casing equipment.* It has been established that if you have

more than 700 deliveries it requires more than three large pieces of equipment. The Salt Lake City District has sent out an email to the field with the instruction that there is "no jackpotting". There are some cases of jackpotting in the Salt Lake City District and those also need to be corrected. If management refuses to correct this then any individual who works the route or the association can file and win a grievance to get it corrected.

You have heard it many times, that you need to look at the big picture. The big picture for rural carriers is the handbooks and manuals. Mostly the PO-603 and the national agreement for the terms that both the USPS and the NRLCA have agreed to work under. To protect the entire rural craft, carriers and managers must adhere to the agreement and not allow exceptions for a few individuals.

Carrier of News and Knowledge  
Instrument of Trade and Commerce  
Promoter of Mutual Acquaintance  
Among Men and Nations and Hence  
Of Peace and Goodwill

Dr. Charles W. Elliot



# IDRLCA President's Report

IDRLCA President Patti Upton

## Opportunities for Enlightenment

As a rural carrier, do you feel that you are appreciated at work? I personally feel like management never recognizes the potential of each and every carrier in this nation. The attitude toward carriers that I am often witness to refer to things like, as long as there's a "warm body" to do the route that is all that they care about. It is a sad truth, but one that could be easily remedied. I know that management has pressures and I also understand that they have someone to answer to. I've heard that they have hundreds of emails to answer daily. However, if carriers heard a simple "thank you" or were told "good job", I believe it would go a very long way to carriers who feel beaten down or discouraged. I find this extremely sad and the reason for the sour attitudes that some carriers have. I believe that if our efforts were applauded we would all give a little more. This is just a simple reminder of what is needed to feel better about a very demanding job. For the most part, we are appreciated by our customers. It's an awesome feeling to pull up to a box with the flag up and we find various treats of appreciation. This is what makes our jobs exceptionally special and a reason to feel like you are a good carrier!

I would like to personally thank all of the RCAs for the exceptional work that they do, often in very difficult circumstances. It doesn't matter whether you're in a huge office or a small office, your dedication and willingness to step up when called on is deeply appreciated by the regular carriers you relieve. RCAs are under appreciated and not thanked enough for the job that they do. Thank you for your willingness to be a vital part of the Rural Carrier family.

***Rural carriers' job requirements are constantly changing despite the fact that it seems like we do exactly the same thing every single day.***

Rural carriers' job requirements are constantly changing, despite the fact that it seems like we do exactly the same thing every single day. It can be very hard to keep track of the rules, the changing regulations and all of the requirements that are necessary to do this job. Thank goodness, as your President, I am surrounded by other union members who network thoughts, ideas and strategies. It is essential that you attend the different meetings throughout the year. If you aren't involved you should consider becoming an active member. There are many avenues and opportunities available throughout the year to have your questions answered. These meetings are filled with substantial information that you will not hear from management. Each district has meetings; we have the Idaho State Convention, the Western States Conference and the NRLCA National Convention. All of these reveal the newest and most pertinent information that we face on a daily basis. The contents of the Pony Express, The IDRLCA website (IDRLCA.ORG) and the National Rural Carrier Magazine also provide invaluable information. If you want to have a voice and affect change, become an active part of your union. I can guarantee that you will gain a new perspective and you will leave as an enlightened carrier.

While we might not always agree, we will agree on this: Rural Carriers are the best of the best, a rare group of individuals who carry the mail thousands of miles each day. Our union connects us and together we can make a difference. I respect and value you for all that you do for the postal service. I personally want to tell you that you are appreciated and thank you for a job well done.

# IDRLCA Vice President's Report

IDRLCA Vice President Brett Parkinson



## *Heroes Among Us*

Have you ever helped a stranger, or been helped by a stranger? At our most recent national convention, five rural carriers from across the country were recognized as “heroes” for giving assistance to someone they found in dire circumstances while delivering their routes. As these heroes received their awards, I couldn’t help but wonder how many other carriers were nominated for similar service, but weren’t being recognized that day. Then I wondered how many of our craft have given assistance to someone in distress and then went on their way without telling anyone or receiving any public recognition. As each of these heroes received their awards, they were given the opportunity to speak and they all basically said that they just did what anyone else would have done.

Many years ago, I was on the receiving end of assistance. As I was driving a truck down the highway, I was stung by a bee that was trapped inside the cab. Not knowing at that time that I was allergic to bee stings, I soon went into anaphylactic shock and ended up passing out, sideswiping a guardrail and then stopped on the side of the highway. Luckily for me, there was someone following who could see that I was in distress and stopped to help me. Had it not been for him giving me assistance that day I might possibly have died. Other than just a “thank you” to him, the police and the paramedics that treated me and got me to the hospital, there was no other recognition given.

I’m sure that many of you have been in similar circumstances, whether on the route or not and assisted someone in need, or received

assistance in your time of need. I often find myself passing by people stopped on the side of the road and justify not stopping to help because I’m in a hurry or need to be somewhere.

I’m reminded of the parable of the good Samaritan from Luke Chapter 10 in the Bible. While the Samaritan was not the first to come upon the Jew who was beaten and lying on the side of the road and probably had as much reason as anyone to pass him by, he was the one who stopped and helped, even to the point of putting him up in an inn until the Jew could travel on his own. I wonder how many of us are like the priest, or the Levite that passed him

***Luckily for me, there was someone following who could see that I was in distress and stopped to help me.***

by, or are we the good Samaritan who stops and helps. While the Samaritan didn’t receive any award or reward for his actions,

he did receive the satisfaction of knowing that he helped someone in need. Those of you who have given service to others in times of need have felt the same satisfaction.

I hope you don’t think that I’m belittling the hero awards or recognition that the postal service gives for acts of service. I’m simply trying to point out that the real recognition that matters most when we help others with selfless acts of service, comes from within through the good feeling we get. If we are paying attention, we’ll find many opportunities to look outside ourselves and be able to give service, in varying degrees, to those around us.

***It is not the strongest or the most intelligent who will survive but those who can best manage change.***

*Anon*



# IDRLCA Secretary/Treasurer’s Report

IDRLCA Secretary-Treasurer Lori Bennett

## FEHB Open Season

As I sit and contemplate writing this article, I take a moment and reflect upon the changing of the seasons.

Summer is quickly fading, and fall will soon be upon us. Whether I am ready or not, no matter how swiftly life is moving, autumn will come and go, then winter, spring and back to summer. Another season which is approaching is the Federal Employee Health Benefits (FEHB) open season. It’s the annual period when you can enroll, or if already enrolled, make changes to your benefit enrollment. Unless you have a Qualifying Life Event (QLE) during the remainder of the year, this is your once-a-year opportunity to make any changes to your benefits.

Each year, open season runs from the Monday of the second full workweek in November through the Monday of the second full workweek in December. For 2017 that will be November 13 thru December 11. The FEHB open season will give regular carriers, RCAs and retirees the opportunity to review the 2018 rates and benefits and change your health care coverage if you wish. The upcoming open season will also give employees and retirees the chance to select supplemental dental and/or vision coverage. In addition, federal employees can elect to participate in a tax-deferred Flexible Spending Account (FSA) for health care and/or dependent care.

Established in 1960, the FEHB program is the largest employer sponsored health benefits program in the United States. On average, the government pays about 70 percent of the health benefit premiums. Approximately 85 percent of all federal employees participate in the Program. For rural

carriers, the bi-weekly employer contribution for self only, self plus one, and self plus family plans is adjusted to an amount equal to 75% in 2017, 74% in 2018, and 73% in 2019, which is a higher percentage than the average federal employee. What this means is that the postal service will pay 74% of the total insurance premium and the employee will pay the other 26% in 2018 (a benefit negotiated on your behalf by the NRLCA).

It is never too soon to educate yourself on the options available so you will be prepared to

make these decisions. Take the time to utilize LiteBlue, OPM.gov and NRLCA.org for helpful tools to determine which plan is right for you. I encourage the regular

carriers to compare the Rural Carrier Benefit Plan (RCBP) benefits and coverages to the other federal health plans, then compare the premium rates. The best choice is the educated choice.

Relief carriers also have the opportunity to enroll in or increase their coverage in the USPS Health Benefits Plan. If you did not enroll within 60 days of when you were hired or newly eligible, or within 60 days of a qualifying life event, this will be your only opportunity to enroll for another year.

“The FEHB program is an important benefit for federal employees to provide quality health care for themselves and their families,” said OPM Acting Director Beth Cobert. “I urge federal employees, and annuitants to use this open season opportunity to carefully review their health care needs and to choose wisely among the plans and enrollment options available to them.”

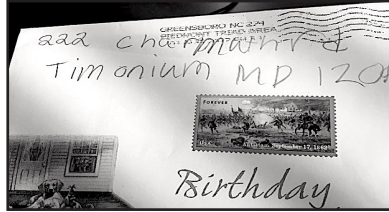
***I encourage the regular carriers to compare the RCBP benefits and coverages to the other federal health plans. The best choice is the educated choice.***

***Financial statements can be found on Page 22***

# Overheard at Convention

## 2017 NRLCA National Convention Tidbits

- *"Here is an envelope my granddaughter sent to me. It had no name, the stamp was in the middle of the envelope and the zip code was transposed. In spite of all that it was delivered and on time for my birthday. Thank you for your commitment (to your jobs) and for your fine detective skills."*



David McGlone, Deputy Secretary, Maryland Dept. of Labor, Licensing and Regulation

- *"I believe it is our duty to look after one another."*

Lynda Alewine, Hero of the Year, Area Two

- *"When you think of a hero, you think about police, firefighter or soldier not about the pregnant rural carrier with aqua hair."*

Toni Staples, Hero of the Year, Area Three

- *"We believe that it is our job (as rural carriers) to look out for our customers."*

Jerome Spilde, Overall Hero of the Year

- *"I'm giving him this Buckeye football not only because he is a Buckeye and big football fan but because he needs to get ready to rumble on our upcoming round of contract negotiations."*

Jeanette Dwyer NRLCA President speaking on a gift for Douglas Tulino

- *"Any gray hair on my head is because of two rounds of negotiations with her!"*

Douglas Tulino, Vice President, Labor Relations, USPS speaking about Jeanette Dwyer after receiving the gift

- *"I would argue that the Postal Service was the first social network."*

- *"We talk about the need for down time, but down time is now typically screen time."*

- *"Data is the new bacon."*

Megan Brennan USPS Postmaster General

- *"We have a layer of managers who do not want to do the right thing."*

David Heather NRLCA Director of Steward Operations

- *"We need to show the USPS that we are willing to fund the upcoming fight."*

David Heather speaking on the 1.3% increase in dues and the impending contract negotiations.

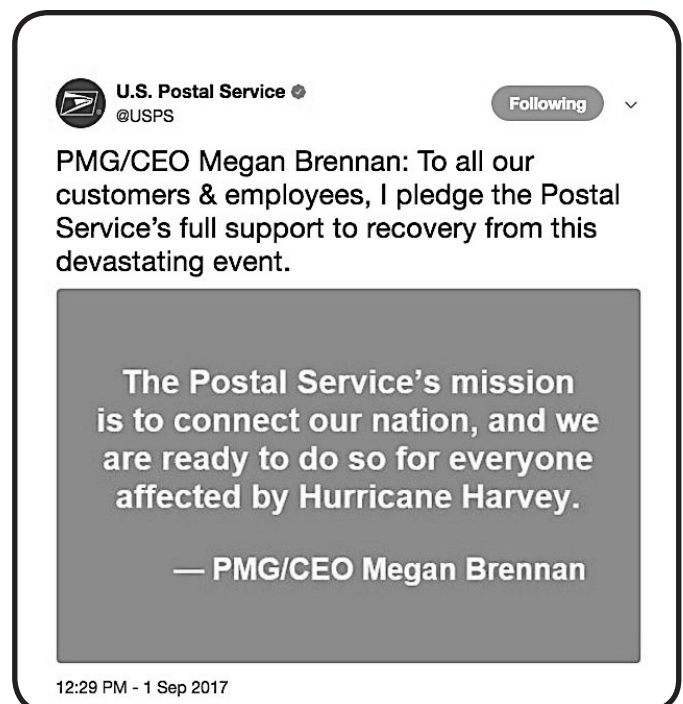
- *"In setting up the rural database we found three things; rural carriers don't stop at stop signs, they don't run their line of travel, and they don't scan at the door."*

- *"We've been talking about this engineered time study like it's all rainbows and unicorns."*

Joey Johnson NRLCA Director of Labor Relations

- *"Next year, I am going back to deliver my own route because I would not have supported anything that I was not willing to do myself."*

Jeanette Dwyer



Seen on Twitter



Your 2017 NRLCA National Board. l-r President, Jeanette Dwyer; Vice President, Ronnie Stutts; Secretary-Treasurer, Clifford Dailing; Director of Labor Relations, Joey Johnson; Director of Steward Operations, David Heather; Four Year Committeemen, Susan Knapp, Shirley Baffa, Donald Maston and Johnny Miller

## 2017 National Convention

### Opening Session

*Reported by Patti Upton*



If I had to choose a day, the opening ceremony of the NRLCA National Convention would have to be my favorite. While some might view this day as trivial because of the similarities year after year, I find it to be inspiring and profoundly touching. As the American flag makes its way past us, quietness comes over the convention hall. Delegates respectfully cover their hearts with their hands to show reverence and gratitude.

State presidents then begin, one by one, each carrying proudly, the flag of their states. This procession continues until each state has proudly placed their flag in its place on center stage.

As we then recognize our veterans I am reminded why I appreciate the very freedoms they have fought for and for our right to be in this union. With all things combined it brings a sense of joy, pride, and even sorrow for those who fought and have given the ultimate sacrifice for our country. Through the teary eyes of this carrier, it is a beautiful reminder of how fortunate we all are.

Linda Malone Vice President, Capital Metro Area Operations, USPS addressed the body stating that she was inspired and moved by the service, and by the integrity that rural carriers have and what they do for the Postal Service.

NALC President Fred Rolando thanked rural carriers for supporting the annual food drive. He affirms, "Working together for the future of the Postal Service will bring solidarity and hope for all crafts. We must maintain the vision of growing the business."

APWU President Mike Diamondstein has tirelessly fought the privatization of the Postal Service. He maintains that, "We can never rest because privatizers never rest. We have tremendous challenges ahead. The four unions have remained united, not divided, so that we can move forward with progress."

NPMHU President Paul Hogrogian recognized NRLCA President Jeanette Dwyer for allowing all four presidents to share the same stage. He expressed that, "Standing together is the only way to move forward with the Postal Service. Our common goal is to find legislation that works for all postal employees. We must prepare for what is to come."

PMG Megan Brennan's arrival was met with a standing ovation. She notes that informed visibility ends and begins with service. She is proud to be the largest employer of veterans as well as the efforts behind growing the business. She confirms "We must continue to adapt to the ever changing e-commerce. This is the future of the business." She thanked rural carriers for representing the postal service day in and day out.

In NRLCA Executive Committeeman Dennis Conley's response to the convention goes, he reminded us that parcels have always been an issue. This dates back over 100 years and he shares that history has a way of repeating itself. He reminded us that the NRLCA has a strong presence on capitol hill. The key to moving forward is legislation and postal reform. He is proud of the NRLCA for the combined effort to bring the PMG and have representation of each union to this convention. He states, "This is the very first time that the PMG and all four unions have addressed a convention body at the same time."

***"This is the very first time that the PMG and all four unions have addressed a convention body at the same time."***

It shouldn't go unnoticed what President Jeanette Dwyer has accomplished in the time that she has served this Association. She continues to work closely

with the other union leaders and the PMG Megan Brennan to affect change which bridges the communication gap with postal headquarters. While we will not always agree with each other, it is positively refreshing to know that respect has been earned by all who are involved.

Another portion of Tuesday's opening day ceremony reminds me of a time when I felt so incredibly honored and blessed. It is a time when we recognize and applaud the efforts of one individual from each state. This year was no different. The auxiliary members and outstanding members of the year were recognized. Idaho's District Two President, Russ Hutchison, was nominated and then awarded this year's Member of the Year award. While Russ was not in attendance his name was announced and his picture shown to the entire convention floor. We thank you for your service to our union, Russ, and congratulate you for this well-deserved award. While opening day has become a bit traditional, preceding the business of our association, I still find it to be relevant and deeply moving.

# 2017 National Convention

## Political Action Committee

Reported by Bret Helle



Hi fellow Rural Letter Carriers of Idaho! This is Bret Helle, your Political Action Committee (PAC) Representative for the IDRLCA. As a delegate to the National Rural Letter Carriers Association annual convention in National Harbor, Maryland, I have been tasked to report on the PAC seminar as one of my assignments this year. Prior to the start of the PAC

seminar, I attended the Legislative seminar which you will see the included report in this issue. Many of the hot topics of that seminar were directly related to the PAC seminar, but in a more condensed version.

As PAC chairman for Idaho, I was invited to a PAC luncheon where the national PAC invited the PAC chairs from every state to participate in a meet and greet type setting where you joined together at a large table and shared great food and conversation with other PAC chairs from across this great nation. Unfortunately I did not write down their names, but their faces are etched in my memory and I look forward to seeing them at our next convention in Grand Rapids, Michigan next year. We exchanged ideas and thoughts on how to increase PAC contributions for the upcoming year. I was amazed at how much our little state contributed compared to some of the larger member states. I feel I can always do a better job representing Idaho and giving all I have to give to help this state contribute to the never ending cause of educating our politicians in Washington, D. C.

After the luncheon, the National Director of Governmental Affairs, Paul Swartz started the PAC seminar with the explanation of the PAC pins. This year, there was a change in the PAC pin structure. \$100-\$499.99 gets you a Contributor Pin. \$500-\$999.99 is a Ruby Pin. \$1000-\$1499.99 is a Diamond pin. \$1500-\$1999.99 gets you an emerald Pin. \$2000-\$2999.99 is Sapphire. \$3000-\$5000 gets a Capitol Sapphire pin. Sustaining donors get a pin for signing up for electronic funds transfer or withholding. \$100 contribution at National Convention gets you a Convention Pin. Those who donated \$250 or more at national convention received a choice of a yeti mug or yeti can holder/stash. The Convention pin is one I will cherish as it has the Lincoln Memorial and the

Washington Monument on the face of it.

This year, we had a contest among PAC chairs. States were divided into seven groups by membership. Idaho was in group II with 500-999 members. Posting 820 members at the end of the year, we raised \$12241.86 which put Idaho in first place for aggregate and first place in per capita at \$14.93 per member average. Thank you IDAHO!!!

Next on Swartz's agenda was an explanation of PAC. It is a lobbying tool. PAC collects voluntary contributions from NRLCA members. PAC pools together small contributions from its members into a central account so that larger contributions can be made to candidates for congress who support issues of importance to NRLCA members and retirees. Swartz covers the cost of campaigning, mailings, postage etc. All of which require donations to get the most visibility for their campaign. In 2017, approximately 4720

*I was amazed at how much our little state contributed compared to some of the larger member states.*

members contributed to NRLCA-PAC. That's about 4.1%. The average amount members contributed is about \$152.67. NRLCA-PAC compared to NALC and

UPS is almost one sixth the amount of contributions, but still over \$110,000 per year.

A large portion of the remaining seminar pertained to record keeping and funds processing. We shared thoughts on fundraising ideas to get more donations to PAC. There was a lot of emphasis on promoting withholding and electronic funds transfer as easy ways to donate to PAC without the hassle. Not only does this make it simple to donate, it also allows the national PAC office to predict some of the funding so that they can allot a certain amount for pre-dedicated donations. You can have as little taken out of your pay check as you wish, or set up a monthly withdrawal from your checking account. PAC is like an insurance plan to help combat the negative influence of others who not only want to harm the livelihood of rural carriers, but the postal service as a whole and all we stand for. The service we provide daily to our ever growing rural community is paramount to the longevity and consistency of the bond between the postal service and our customers. Thank you for supporting PAC and please donate to help insure the future of the rural letter carrier.

### DID YOU KNOW?

**USPS is 241 years old**  
**Congress is 115 years old**  
**NRLCA is 113 years old**

# 2017 National Convention

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## PMG Brennan

*Reported by Sharon Atkins*

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The 2017 NRLCA National Convention was the Twenty-Third national convention that I have attended. A lot has changed over those years in my life, and in the postal service. I retired last September and started what we all aspire to do one day -enjoy life and bask in whatever comes our way on no particular schedule.

The Postal Service has come a long way. LLVs are more the norm for us now. Scanners, forever stamps, DPS, the matrix, ARCs and package growth are just the tip of an iceberg that is still too deep to be seen. There is a struggle for the postal service to stay relevant in today's technological world. All of these changes point toward how we should value our union and its role in our lives. Whether you are actively involved or just paying your dues, the union is where you will find out what is relevant to you when you walk in the door of your postal facility.

Jeanette Dwyer, our national president, announced a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) about handling SPMs. In the MOU it states that payments will begin starting September 2nd. The agreement reached will be effective until the date that the next mail count goes into effect. A copy of this will be distributed not only by the union but also through management. (Be sure to follow instructions so that you are properly compensated.) No base hour change was agreed to avoid tipping the scales for high option and 46K routes.

Yes, the national officers are very aware of the parcel issues that are taking place. There is not an easy fix when you have to consider vehicle demands and schedule issues. They will do the best they can until the right fix is in place. Workplace environment is a top issue also. A meeting was held with Postmaster General Megan Brennan to address some serious circumstances. An MOU is in the talking stages to help with this.

Speaking of Megan Brennan, she came to speak to us and stayed to answer some questions. She wanted us to relay that she appreciates our service in the rural craft. She saluted veterans as we just had a moving presentation honoring them. The Postal Service is the largest employer of veterans. The Rural Reach program has brought in 32.4 million dollars to the coffers of the postal service. There are many challenges at the

moment with a needy infrastructure. We have a labor-intensive product which is price capped by congress. Social media is providing a changing marketplace. Total mail volume has dropped 29% the last ten years and we are seeing more competition in the last mile of delivery. E-commerce is on the rise five-fold which is outpacing brick and mortar stores. Catalogs are driving the need for package delivery. She shared a picture of our future, larger mailboxes which are already available. They are big and would enable much larger items to fit into the mailbox therefore easing delivery. Scanners are making it much easier for customers to track delivery, enabling a world class experience that we can be proud of.

Rural Carrier academies are changing to meet the needs of new hires. (We still need to improve their experience once they hit the office – by both the carriers and management.) She stated, “We need engaged employees, we have enough detractors on the outside.” “America deserves a financially solvent postal service.” “Our financial obligations are serious but solvable.” “We can pay employees and suppliers.” “We need the unions to work together to achieve the goal.” She also stated, “Service is foundational and is the key to growth.”

Questions from the members centered on: Problems with supervisors; needing RCAs; possible priority delivery on Sunday; filtering information to the lowest supervisor; and getting respect from the district level. As usual, it is interesting to listen to perspectives that you might not hear otherwise. It was an interesting convention to say the least.

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## Ken Mericle/Time Study

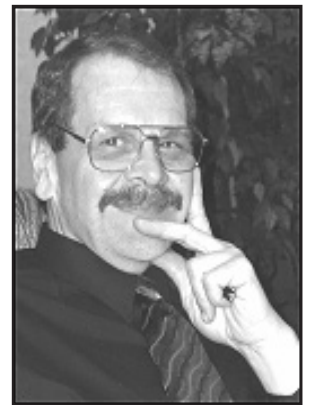
*Reported by Brian Draper*

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Dr. Mericle is one of the three-person panel that has been working on the new evaluated system for the last three years. Dr. Mericle is the NRLCA representative engineer on the panel. The USPS has a representative engineer and both of these have selected a neutral engineer to be the chairman.

During the Monday afternoon's state of the union address, some of the time was devoted to receiving DR. Mericle's update on the study. His key points were that the study is almost complete and the panel has almost all the data it needs to complete the study. Some important dates were given. The first being that the panel will give their findings and suggestions to



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# 2017 National Convention

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the USPS and the NRLCA on October 31, 2017. The parties will then review it and give suggestions back to the panel by November 30, 2017. After that the panel will give its final version of the new evaluated system on February 28, 2018. These dates reveal that there will be a March 2018 mail count. How that count will be conducted is to be determined by the report and what the parties agree too.

The most important part of what DR. Mericle said, was the proper scanning and reporting of the data. The panel was seeing many cases of carriers failing to scan properly and that is effecting the percentages. It is vital that every rural carrier scan at the point of delivery. This study has been long awaited, and there is pressure to get it completed, but the panel is making sure that the final product is right and a system that will work for us all.

## First Time Delegate

*Reported by Mikea Hargrove*



I was so excited to be a delegate for the state of Idaho. This is my third national convention and this was the first time I got to be a delegate. The past two national conventions I attended I was a non-delegate. This meant I was able to attend the convention meetings and seminars however, I was not able to speak to the body without asking for permission to speak and also, I was not able to vote. This was kind of a bummer for me because I really wanted to

vote on topics that pertained to me and things that were relevant to my fellow RCAs. But this year was the year and I became a voting machine.

How the process works is if you have a suggestion on a change you would like to see happen, you first submit it to your district at their annual election meeting as a resolution. Then, if it passed, that resolution would be submitted at the state convention to be voted on by the state delegates. If it is passed at the state level, it would then be submitted to the national convention to be voted on by the national delegates. Anyone who is a union member in good standing can submit a resolution if they follow this process.

This year was also different because I am no longer an RCA but I still have the mindset of one. Many of the resolutions, if implemented, will help RCAs. It was nice to hear how grateful regular carriers were to have RCAs and that they want more for them. I am so grateful to be a part of our union and I am also thankful to have a say in what I was elected to do. Being a national delegate is something I have wanted to do for years and thank you to all that voted for me to have this opportunity to represent you in our nation's capital this year.

**The NRLCA National Board designates the third week of October as "National Steward Recognition Week." We use this week—and month—to say, "THANK YOU!" to the stewards who serve our union so faithfully.**

## Inner Working of the Convention

*Reported by Lori Bennett*

"Pay no attention to that man behind the curtain." I would venture to say that nearly all can identify this quote from The Wizard of Oz. It is human nature to desire to know what goes on behind the curtain. Think of the national convention as a big show with a lot of behind the scenes activities. It takes a great deal of people, plus a lot of hours to pull off this huge event. Preparations take place as much as five years prior.



I have been lucky enough to serve on the credentials/mileage and per diem committee at the national convention for the past several years. It never ceases to amaze me the amount of work that goes into preparing for, and serving on this committee. This one committee ensures that the duly elected delegates are accounted for and may exercise one of the basic privileges of a union member; the right to participate.

The Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRDA) establishes certain rights for union members and contains provisions to insure union democracy. In particular, title IV of the LMRDA sets forth basic democratic procedures which unions must follow when conducting their officer and delegate elections. The Department of Labor's mission is to protect the rights of union members. Their right to nominate candidates, their right to vote for candidates, their right to attend and vote at meetings, their right to vote on dues, their right to legal action and their right to disciplinary due process.

As established by the LMRDA and the NRLCA Constitution, nominations and elections must adhere to certain rules and regulations. It all starts with each individual union member. The first step in the election process for delegates to the national convention, is the nomination process. Every member in good standing has the right to nominate or be nominated. Next comes the ballot by mail. Again, every member in good standing has the right to vote for candidates. Once the votes are tabulated, in accordance with the NRLCA Constitution each state is entitled to a certain number of delegates; one for every 100 members. Those duly elected delegates represent their state in voting on not only candidates for national office, but on all the business that comes before

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# 2017 National Convention

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the assembly at national convention. These votes steer our national board in the direction of the majority.

The role of the credentials/mileage and per diem committee is to validate the elected delegates by matching the annual report credentials with each individual. With nearly 1200 delegates to credential it is quite the task. Once the delegate's identification has been verified, the next step is to check them into the electronic membership database. During this process, there are instances where the originally elected delegate is unable to attend and an alternate must be upgraded to the status of regular delegate. This takes the state secretary to modify the annual delegate report to downgrade, then upgrade individuals so their total number of delegates remains correct. Once the change in individual delegates has been properly made, the adjustments also must be made in the membership database.

Another duty of the committee is to identify those delegates who have been designated as the delegate-at-large for their state. These delegates are generally utilized on the various committees throughout the convention. The committee is then tasked to compute their mileage and per diem payments.

Various reports in the data management system are used to track the attendance of elected delegates, whether they serve on a committee and if they are to be reimbursed by the NRLCA. The biggest challenge this year, was operating under a brand new electronic database system. It had not yet been tested in this capacity. There were a few anxious moments when we realized that not all the reporting features of the system were working properly. With a good system of checks and balances, the committee was able to create or fix the necessary reports and could verify their accuracy. Many hours were spent hand counting and verifying paper documentation against the electronic reports.

Our days began around 7:30a.m. and depending on the specific day, would not end until sometimes 6:30p.m. The biggest downside to serving on this committee is that while we are working, the convention is beginning. We missed the opening spectacle of the military presentation and the parade of states. We also missed the state of the union address on Monday. I have no regrets in serving on the credentials/mileage and per diem committee, I consider it a privilege to serve our great association. Once our core duties were completed, we were able to fulfill our delegate duties. No votes were missed, and we could participate as elected.

There are several committees meeting before and during the national convention. The appeals, constitution, finance, media, resolutions, tellers and sergeant-at-arms committees are all a vital part of a successful meeting. The individuals tasked with these assignments are dedicated, hard-working union members.

It is with the unshakeable belief that each member has the right to participate, that I encourage all to become more involved in the process. No matter if it is solely by voting and mailing in that ballot, or by attending meetings, or serving in an elected position. We all have a place in the union.

## National Auxiliary Report

*Reported by Jeff Marler*

### Highlights of YOUR Auxiliary at the 2017 NRLCA National Convention

The 91st National Auxiliary Convention opened on Monday with the Delegate Workshop which included the introduction of the Officers, roll call of the Delegates, committee assignments and meetings, workshops for the State Presidents, Vice Presidents and Secretary/Treasurers among several other agenda items that were presented.

The day was capped off later that evening with the Junior's Talent Show and the auction to benefit the Past National Officers (PNO) Scholarship. Tuesday started with attending the NRLCA joint session which is truly a spectacular show of pomp and circumstance with the advancement of colors, national anthem, military presentation and the parade of states, followed by a multitude of speakers which included Megan Brennan, postmaster general and the union presidents of the NRLCA, NALC, APWU and NPMU.

The national auxiliary officers were introduced and Auxiliary President Sheila Reardon-Gilman addressed the attendees. The afternoon was a busy one with the opening of our auxiliary convention and getting down to the business of why we were there. The remainder of the week's agenda consisted of many items including committee reports, constitution changes and resolutions, recognition of regular carrier spouses, retirees' spouses, widows and widowers, past national officers and spouses and first-time attendees. This was the largest showing of first-time attendees which was great to see and an indication that our auxiliary is growing. At various times, we had the privilege of listening to the following invited guest speakers: Jeanette Dwyer, president NRLCA; Ronnie Stutts, VP NRLCA; Don DeCinque and board members, Atlanta Postal Credit Union; Linda Foran, National General insurance; Cameron Deml, NRLCA insurance programs; Paul Swartz, NRLCA Director of Gov't Affairs; Susan Robinson president provident guild; and Savannah Miller, president NRLCA Junior Auxiliary. We also had a joint session with all the juniors and awarded the many scholarships to the winners. The end of the week saw the nomination of officers, presentation of candidates, final committee reports and election



# 2017 National Convention

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of auxiliary officers and then their installation.

The highlight of the week for me was the Presentation of the 2017-2018 auxiliary program by our new Auxiliary President Julie Houston entitled “A Program of Courage, Honor and Sacrifice” with the following items:

- Humanitarian Project: Folds of Honor (Their mission is to provide educational scholarships to spouses and children of America’s fallen and disabled service members)
- Motto: Honor Their Sacrifice
- Symbol: Folded Flag W/Mail
- Americanism: Be A Donor (Blood or Organ)
- Safety: Be Aware of Your Surroundings
- Songs: “What a Wonderful World”, “Lean on Me” and “God Bless America”
- Flower: Pink English Rose
- Inspiration: “Live your life in such a way, that if someone spoke badly of you, no one would believe it” (Anon)

All in all, it was great learning and networking and I was proud to be the representative of the State Auxiliary of the IDRLCA. I also cannot stress enough that there are many college scholarships that are available at the state and national levels that any college student up to age 21 can qualify for as long as they are a child or grandchild of any rural carrier or auxiliary member. Everyone who is a spouse of a rural carrier or retired rural carrier is automatically an auxiliary member.

**On a final note, if you are a spouse of a carrier and have an interest in becoming involved with our state auxiliary, please contact any of our 2017-2018 state auxiliary officers:**

President Robin Carver: [rtpcarver@hotmail.com](mailto:rtpcarver@hotmail.com)

Vice President Wayne Vaughan: [wvaughan701@gmail.com](mailto:wvaughan701@gmail.com)

Secretary/Treasurer Jeff Marler: [vette\\_090@yahoo.com](mailto:vette_090@yahoo.com)

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## Wednesday Session

*Reported by Brett Parkinson*

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President Dwyer called the convention body to order at 8:30 a.m. NRLCA National Chaplain Doug Byrum mentioned several people on the prayer list, offered the invocation and gave a message about sharing the Word of God. Following a video about rural carrier heroes, USPS Vice President of Labor Relations, Doug Tulino, spoke to the convention body and stated that the USPS will be able to overcome all obstacles because of its employees.

He then joined President Dwyer in presenting the NRLCA Hero of the Year awards. Before the awards were presented, each of the four National Executive Committeeman read a short description of the actions taken by the respective carriers from around the country that earned them the nomination as an NRLCA Hero of the Year. Idaho’s own Mara Ralls from the Marsing office won the Western Area Hero of the Year award. Sadly, she



was not present to accept her award. The overall winner of the hero award went to Jerome R. Spilde of North Dakota who acted to save two people from a serious auto accident. All of the award recipients had the opportunity to speak and all basically said that they just did what anyone else would have done in their position.

Deputy Secretary of the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, David McGlone, spoke about the ability of rural carriers to get the mail delivered when faced with many challenges.

Following Mr. McGlone, Provident Guild President, Susan Robinson and her Vice President, Susan Tiffany, presented a short skit highlighting the advantages of membership in the Provident Guild. They also announced the top three states that had recruited new members this past year. President Dwyer then presented exceptional service awards and an honorary lifetime membership to retired Atlanta Postal Credit Union CEOs, Don DeCinque and Moses Spence, for their service over the years to NRLCA members. This was followed by a distinguished service award presented by President Dwyer to Doug Byrum for his many years of service as a chaplain at the county, state and national levels. Byrum has served as chaplain at national conventions for several years. He graciously accepted this award and reminded everyone that “love is no good until you give it away”. The convention body then took a 15-minute break while each state delegate at large picked up the resolutions committee report for each of the delegates.

NRLCA Legal Counsel, Michael Gan, welcomed delegates to the NRLCA’s “home turf”. After paying

# 2017 National Convention

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tribute to his wife and two sons for their support over his years of employment with the NRLCA, he recognized his colleagues and staff. He discussed increased parcel volumes and upcoming collective bargaining, as our current contract will be expiring in May of 2018. He also compared the growth in rural craft numbers versus the loss of 5,000 clerks in the last six years. He addressed the progress of the engineered time study and the postal service's lack of policy on heat abatement. Gan concluded with a slide show of the national convention bicycle ride to Mt. Vernon which took place on Sunday preceding the convention. Mileage and Per Diem Committee Chair Tommy Turner then presented their report. Idaho State Secretary/Treasurer, Lori Bennett, served on this committee.

The rest of the morning session was taken up with nominations for National Office. The incumbent officers were the only ones placed in nomination for the offices of NRLCA President, Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer, and Director of Labor Relations. There were two individuals nominated for the Director of Steward Operations and three for Four-Year Executive Committeeman. The convention body broke for lunch at 12:15p.m. following announcements.

The afternoon session was called to order at 1:30 p.m. by President Dwyer. Constitution Committee Chair, Monte Hartshorn from Washington, began presentation of the proposed constitutional changes. Of the fifteen proposed changes in the report only nine were debated and voted on all afternoon. The first two, from the national board, dealt with local steward elections in large offices and the appeals process. The first passed and the second was deferred back to the committee. The third amendment came from the finance committee and proposed an increase in national dues to help alleviate the deficit spending by the national office. When it was all debated, amended and voted on, regular dues were increased by .1% from 1.2% to 1.3% of the annual salary of a 40-hour step one from USPS table two. RCA dues were increased .025% from .425% to .45%, and retiree dues were increased from \$54 to \$56 annually. These changes are expected to increase revenue by \$2,695,104 per year. The other six amendments, debated and voted on, dealt with retired members having voting rights at national convention, discipline of NSS Employees, terms of service for national officers,

increase in COLAs for national officers, benefits of national officers and the mailing of national delegate ballots. These six amendments failed to be adopted. The afternoon session adjourned at 4:00 p.m. to allow hotel staff to make changes in the convention hall to accommodate the banquet at 6:00 p.m.

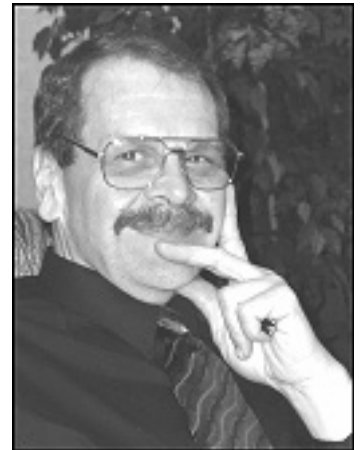
## Thursday Session

*Reported by DR Brian Draper*

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The day was devoted entirely to finishing the constitution committee report and then starting on the resolution committee report. As with every morning, the convention is started with an invocation by Chaplin Doug Byrum. He also reported a long list of injured or hurting rural carriers in need of our thoughts and prayers. The constitution committee chair, Monte Hartshorn, continued the report from Wednesday. There were eight remaining constitutional amendments up for debate and needing to be voted on by the delegates. Constitution changes take a two-thirds majority to pass. Six of the constitutional change proposals failed. They all dealt, to one degree or another, with delegate/committee nomination selection/compensation. One constitutional change that passed dealt with the National Steward System (NSS) to discontinue making the full-time stewards (DRs and ADRs) use annual leave to attend the national convention. Another one that passed was a clarification to the appeals process and an oversight of not informing the charged party.



Following a mid-morning break, Resolutions Committee Chairman Delores Driskell began their report. The committee reported out 16 binding and 279 non-binding resolutions. To be a binding resolution, it must be fully and wholly attainable by the NRLCA alone. If it requires the approval or action from another party, ie the USPS, then it is non-binding.

The binding resolutions included two that were

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# 2017 National Convention

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forwarded by the Constitution committee. Three passed with the gavel strike, three more passed after debate and three were moved to non-binding.

On the non-binding resolutions, a motion to suspend the rules was made and 80 resolutions, dealing with RCAs, were passed as a block with one vote. Then 81 resolutions were passed with the strike of the gavel after no objections were made. One of those that passed was from the Idaho State Convention requiring the USPS to place backup cameras in all current vehicles.

This left 98 non-binding resolutions to be debated and voted on. Nine of these were passed after debate and the session ended at 4:30pm, leaving 89 non-binding resolutions to be discussed on Friday.

## Caucus Night

*Reported by Patti Upton*



Did you know that the NRLCA membership is split up into four groups that are divided geographically? Together they make up the Eastern States, the Southwest States, the Midwest States and the Western States Conferences. Typically, after a very long business session (8-9 hours), we

are mentally exhausted. There is no rest for the delegates though. An elected IDRLCA delegate to the National Convention is required to attend Caucus night. Without hesitation we are off to our next assignment. Thursday nights, during the convention, are always reserved for Caucus night.

So, what is caucus night all about and why is it so important? A caucus is an organized meeting when each candidate running for national office is allowed to speak to the membership. They might share their passion and reason for running. They talk about the future of the union. They speak about their platform and a vision of what they hope to accomplish. If seeking re-election, they may share their achievements to date. Some candidates simply open it up to a question and answer session. Whatever the case may be, each candidate is allowed only 15 minutes.

Caucus night often takes two to three hours and topics range considerably. This year was no different as we heard opinions on the steward system and the rising cost of grievance activity. Also, the engineered study and making sure our edit books reflect the correct information. We heard views on safety and scanning frustrations. There was also talk about new LLVs coming in 2020.

My favorite thought for the night came from Jeanette Dwyer, she asserts "Management needs to recognize that we all have the right to be treated with respect and dignity."

Nominations for the national board can be taken up until Friday morning of the convention. Like any election, delegates may nominate any member for a position on the national board. Each year the President, Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer, Director of Labor Relations, and Director of Steward Operations must be elected. Executive Committeemen are elected for a term of four years in alternating years. If an executive committeeman is elected to another position on the board, the position will then become vacant. This will prompt another election for the remainder of the term that is left vacated.

Exhaustion sets in after a late night of caucusing on Thursday. However, we prevail because we have been allowed to be a part of the election process. Caucus night gives you a clear picture of what each person running for office stands for. Having had the opportunity to hear the candidates and their views, Thursday night's caucus once again helps make Friday's election day choices easier.

**The Postal Service's  
unmatched ability to reach  
every household and business  
in America six days a week  
is a vital part of the nation's  
infrastructure.**

Joe Baca, Former U.S. Representative, CA

# 2017 National Convention

## Final Session

*Reported by Lori Bennett*



The Friday morning session of the 2017 National Convention opened with the election of officers. Jeanette Dwyer was the only candidate to be placed in nomination for the office of NRLCA President, therefore she was declared elected in accordance with Article V.3.D. Additionally, Ronnie Stutts was declared elected as

NRLCA Vice President, Clifford Dailing declared NRLCA Secretary-Treasurer and Director of Labor Relations, Joey Johnson was declared elected.

There were two candidates for Director of Steward Operations; David Heather-incumbent, and Delbert Hutchisson. Patrick Pitts received a nomination from the floor which he declined to accept. David Heather won by a vote of 729 to 438. This was a hotly contested campaign with several months of politicking prior to the election.

During the elections process, the Resolutions were presented for debate while the Teller's Committee was tabulating the vote. After a caution from President Dwyer that someone was seen videotaping the proceedings, there was a lively debate on standing rule number 3 which states: "There shall be no use of personal electronic voice amplification devices or talking on cell phones, unless expressly authorized. Unauthorized videotaping, recording, or transmission of the Convention proceedings is prohibited. Cell phones shall be turned off or to vibrate." A motion was made to amend standing rule number 3 to deem anyone violating the rule to be no longer considered a member in good standing. After much debate and amendments to the proposed language, the rule change was defeated.

The elections continued with three candidates for the office of four-year Executive Committeeman, Dennis Conley-incumbent, Johnny Miller, and Nicky Phillips. The vote was extremely close; Conley 451, Miller 454, and Phillips 267. Mr. Phillips requested his name be taken off the ballot and a run-off election was held. Johnny Miller won by a vote of 650 to 520.

During the election for Executive Committeeman, there was a question about illegal ballots, so to avoid

the appearance of impropriety, the votes were re-cast. Mr. McDonald from Georgia requested the right to observe the voting and tabulation, which was granted by President Dwyer. Mr. Harpe of North Carolina and Mr. Hunter of Alabama then requested the right to observe. The three gentlemen were escorted by the Sergeant-of-Arms and were reminded they were only to observe, they were not to interfere in any way. The LMRDA Section 401(c) provides that: Adequate safeguards to insure a fair election shall be provided, including the right of any candidate to have an observer at the polls and at the counting of the ballots.

Back to resolutions; the delegation voted to combine several resolutions dealing with RCAs together. This included one submitted by Idaho to ensure that all relief carriers be paid the higher pay schedule. This group of resolutions passed. Idaho's other submitted resolution, that all postal vehicles assigned to rural routes have a back-up camera installed, passed as well. Most of the day was spent with further debate on proposed resolutions; one of which was referred back to the committee to be considered next year.

Once the resolutions were completed, the newly elected auxiliary officers and junior officers were presented. The junior auxiliary passed the bag for donations earlier to benefit the Past National Officers (PNO) Scholarship fund. They announced that \$3942 has been raised. All past national officers were recognized, as well as retired carriers, Non-Delegates in attendance and first-timers.

Mike Swain, chair of the appeals committee presented their report. There was only one appeal this year filed by Charles Brown of Oregon, which the committee found was without merit. The decision of the committee was upheld by a vote of the delegation.

As the business of the convention was winding down, the PAC co-chairs announced that \$103,000 had been raised so far at convention, and proceeded to auction off some items. They also said that 119 new sustaining donors signed up during the convention. After the fund-raising, the final total raised at convention was \$112,191.40.

A delegate motioned to revisit NRLCA Constitution Article 3.6.C to raise the national portion of retired member dues from \$56 to \$75, which failed. Several more constitution and resolution proposals were made under New Business, which the delegates voted NOT to consider at this time. A motion to close the New Business part of the program did pass.

The final order of business conducted was the Installation of the National Officers which was performed by Steve Smith, Past NRLCA President.

# 2017 National Convention

## Provident Guild

*Reported by Robin Carver*



The Provident Guild meeting began with the pledge and roll call. It was voted on by the members to forego the minutes from the last meeting in 2016. Election of officers were voted on and they are: President, Susan Robinson who will be serving her 7th year; Vice President, Susan Tiffany. James Tucker who has served for 11 years declined the

nomination due to health issues; Secretary-Treasurer, Diane Hosfield was voted in and has served for 10 years; Auxiliary Executive Council, Sharon Swain; Association Executive Council, Nadine Chapman.

The new members awards were given to the representatives for each new member signed and awards for first, second and third for the nation awards were given. Outstanding Service member awards were also given. A sign-up sheet to assist at the Provident Guild table was passed around.

The financial reports were given to the representatives of each state and Hosfield spent time going through the items in the packets. ARCs were included as eligible members this year. All unclaimed funds are returned to the Atlanta Postal Credit Union Account.

Notification of the passing of a member must be done within 60 days. The original Death Certificate is required and will be returned upon request. The secretary-treasurer of each state notifies the provident guild of the passing of the carrier.

The Provident Guild was established in 1931 for its members. There were 102 members who passed during the last year and 159 new members joined. There were also 149 delinquent members on the books. Books close on June 30th each year.

There was time given for questions and answers and there were none. There was no unfinished business. New business was next and there was discussion about new ideas for new members. The new VP Susan Tiffany performed a skit she uses to attract new members. There was more discussion about the table set up at National and the promotional incentives used. Hosfield explained that the payout from the Provident Guild is never less than \$300 and maximum payout is \$5000 per members family. With no further business the meeting was adjourned.

## OCTOBER 2017

| Sunday | Monday            | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--------|-------------------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|
| 1      | 2                 | 3       | 4         | 5        | 6      | 7        |
| 8      | 9<br>Columbus Day | 10      | 11        | 12       | 13     | 14       |
| 15     | 16                | 17      | 18        | 19       | 20     | 21       |
| 22     | 23                | 24      | 25        | 26       | 27     | 28       |
| 29     | 30                | 31      |           |          |        |          |

## NOVEMBER 2017

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday                  | Friday                           | Saturday           |
|--------|--------|---------|-----------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|
|        |        |         | 1         | 2                         | 3                                | 4                  |
| 5      | 6      | 7       | 8         | 9                         | 10<br>Veterans Day<br>(observed) | 11<br>Veterans Day |
| 12     | 13     | 14      | 15        | 16                        | 17                               | 18                 |
| 19     | 20     | 21      | 22        | 23<br>Thanksgiving<br>Day | 24                               | 25                 |
| 26     | 27     | 28      | 29        | 30                        |                                  |                    |

## National General

*Reported by Mikea Hargrove*

The National General Auto Insurance breakfast seminar was a very informative meeting, and it seems like every year I learn something new about National General. As many of you know they are the only insurance company that is indorsed by the NRLCA and it's because they understand rural carriers. National General has been looking after rural carries since 1953 and they know how and what coverage you need to be protected. If you are driving a privately-owned vehicle (POV) and do not have National General insurance, you may not be covered in the event of an on route accident. Many insurance companies do not know how to properly cover POVs and if you do not have the right coverage you can end up unprotected and/or not covered. As I sat in this meeting I began to think about how many of us drive POVs so if you have a POV, I urge you to find out if you are adequately covered. The Director of the NRLCA



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# 2017 National Convention

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Insurance Market Place, Linda Foran, is very passionate about insurance. She speaks from the heart and it shows. I really enjoyed mingling with representatives from other states and conversing about our POVs. Oh, and if you have an LLV you can still use National General insurance. There is a special insurance program just for you so check them out.

## Legislative Seminar

*Reported by Bret Helle*



The legislative seminar was presented by NRLCA Director of Governmental Affairs, Paul Swartz along with NRLCA Manager of Health Insurance Programs, Cameron Deml. Cameron elaborated on the effects of the postal reform act of 2017 (H.R. 756), if it were to be passed. H.R.

756 was introduced by representatives Chaffetz of Utah, Meadows of North Carolina, Cummings of Maryland, Connolly of Virginia, and Lynch of Massachusetts. Although voted out of committee in March 2017, the resolution would require full Medicare integration from Federal Employees Health Benefit Plan (FEHBP). It would require USPS to cover the decreasing portion of Part B for retirees transitioning into Medicare over a four-year period. Postal retirees and annuitants must have all 3 parts of Medicare to continue FEHB coverage. Mostly this integration would mean “Coordination of Benefits” which would be an incentive for having Medicare Parts A, B and FEHB coverage as well as reduced paperwork and billing. Because of the triple coverage, many out of pocket costs would be covered or waived. There is a comparison chart that explains the difference of individual coverages versus integrated coverages and the greatest advantages stem in the integrated version. Coordinated benefits is \$0 Deductible vs. \$1,316 for Medicare Part A; \$0 vs \$183 for Part B; and \$0 vs. variable fees per month for Part D. With Rural Carriers’ Benefit Plan (RCBP) \$0 vs. \$350/\$700. \$0 copays vs. up to \$658 for part A, \$0 vs. 20% for part B; \$0 vs. variable for part D

and; \$0 vs. \$20 Dr. visit. 93% of RCBP retirees and annuitants already have Medicare Part A, B and RCBP. Now that said, there would be prefunding requirements of USPS to cover 100% of the cost of the liability within 40 years. HR 756 would require the US Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to calculate liabilities using postal specific assumptions and any surplus would be amortized over 30 years. It would also allow for a 2.15% rate increase which adds up to one cent. It would require the Postal Regulatory Commission to complete a review of the market dominant rate system by January 1, 2018. HR 756 would address mandatory conversions of business addresses to CBU type delivery through 2022 as well as conversion to CBUs of residential addresses identified by USPS where 40% of the residents consent. It would also reduce the board of governors to five members with seven-year term limits.

As Paul Swartz continued the presentation, HR 760 would address the investment of the prefunding of our future retirees health benefits so as we could capitalize on better returns on our investments. As it is we are limited to three or four percent with the set rate of growth. If we were able to invest in the L2040 fund, the end result would be, without any annual prefunding payment, an additional 10 billion dollars gained in investments. The chart shown in the presentation had the rate of growth in the traditional fund almost tied with the L2040 fund in 2012, but it grew exponentially from 2013 through 2015. An article in National Association of Retired Federal Employees (NARFE) magazine April 2017, the questions were asked, why not allow USPS to raise postage rates? The supposed results would be a decrease in mailing that would outweigh the profit of the increase. Shipping alcohol and providing banking services were also discussed, but with negative feedback.

With the administration’s fiscal year 2018 budget proposal, the USPS would be affected as follows: Allow postal service to reduce mail delivery frequency; allow postal service to shift to centralized and curbside delivery; allow the postal service greater price flexibility; and allow OPM to use postal specific assumptions when calculating liabilities. For federal and postal employees, it would require federal employees to contribute an additional 1% to FERS for the next 6 years with no increase in benefits, base postal retirees’ retirement

# 2017 National Convention

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benefits on a high-five average, eliminate COLAs for current and future retirees under FERS, cut CSRS retirees COLAs by .5% and eliminate the supplemental payments for employees who retire before they are eligible to receive Social Security.

In closing, Paul Swartz recommended legislation to watch. The Page Act which essentially allows an employee to be removed for good, bad, or no reason at all. HR-396 which says an employee can be fired for tax delinquency. HR-1364 addresses official time spent in union business or political activity and excludes this time from being eligible service under CSRS and FERS. The STOP Act (HR-1057 and SR-372) addresses amending the tariff act of 1930 to ensure that the US Customs and Border Protection (BCS) be able to review anything arriving through the mail as well as having advanced electronic information on shipments of mail to US. Congress faces several deadlines this fall which will make it unlikely to address everything proposed thus far.

On a positive note: HR-15 presses 6 day mail delivery with 232 co-sponsors and HR-28, which ensures door to door delivery, has 240 co-sponsors. HR-31, with 197 co-sponsors, expresses that the postal service should take every measure to restore service standards in effect as of July 1, 2012. Schwartz stresses; as August is a recess and our representatives are out doing town hall meetings and traveling their districts, make an appointment or attend these meetings to get your voices heard! Let them know that partnerships with Amazon, Hallmark, Valassis, Parcel Shippers Association, and postal unions all work together. We are profitable without the pre-funding of our retirees health care benefits and we DO NOT receive monies from Tax Payers!

## Insurance Seminar

*Reported by Brett Parkinson*

The insurance seminar was presented by Cameron Deml, Manager of Insurance Programs, NRLCA. While Cameron gave an overview of the many Federal Employee Health Benefit Plans (FEHBP) available to rural carriers, his focus was on the Rural Carrier Benefit Plan (RCBP). Currently there are around 55,000 rural carriers, retirees and spouses of deceased retirees who are enjoying the excellent health coverage provided



through the RCBP.

Obviously not all rural carriers are enrolled in the RCBP. However open season (Nov.13 - Dec.11) is coming up and you will have an opportunity to view the many plans available and compare to see if your current plan meets your needs as far as benefits and out of pocket costs. I

personally switched several years ago from another plan into the RCBP due to the smaller amount I would have to pay out of my paycheck each pay period. I have been quite pleased as the coverage and service on any claims that I've had since I switched has been comparable if not better than my old plan. One thing to make note of, is that the RCBP pays 100% if you are diagnosed with cancer. Those of you who are currently enrolled in the RCBP know that Aetna is the insurance provider. Cameron shared a few RCBP related statistics with the seminar attendees.

10% increase in membership between 2015 - 2016.

Aetna processed over 1.2 million claims for plan members in 2016.

Aetna paid out over \$219 million in plan member medical expenses in 2016.

Aetna answered over 130,000 phone calls from plan members in 2016.

The RCBP is also partnered with CVS Health to provide prescription drug benefits to plan members. In 2016 RCBP paid more than \$126 million for drugs. 990,059 prescriptions were filled by CVS Health for plan in 2016.

Cameron stressed the importance of using generic drugs wherever possible due to the following:

Average cost of Generic Rx – \$25

Average cost of Brand Rx – \$593

Average cost of Specialty Rx – \$6,037

Using generic drugs helps keep the plan costs down. If there is not a CVS/pharmacy store in your area, your doctor can call your prescriptions into CVS and they will be sent to you in the mail, usually in 90 day supplies for ongoing needed medications. Prescriptions filled through CVS are normally covered by RCBP with only a very small co-pay each time your prescription is refilled. With

# 2017 National Convention

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added benefits for 2017 and new ones in store for 2018, it's certainly worth a look during open season. To check out and compare health plans during open season (Nov. 13 - Dec. 11) go to [liteblue.usps.gov/openseason2](http://liteblue.usps.gov/openseason2) and see if the RCBP fills your health insurance needs and add a little take home pay to your check.

Unfortunately, the RCBP as well as a few supplemental federal plans e.g. FEDVIP - Dental and Vision Insurance, FEGLI - Life Insurance, and FLTCIP - Long-term Care are only open to full time/career carriers at this time. Also, there are supplemental NRLCA Plans available including: Life Insurance, Disability Insurance, and a Dental & Vision Plan. These supplemental plans are available as a benefit of NRLCA membership and are administered by Greater Insurance Services. For more information visit [www.rc-benefits.com](http://www.rc-benefits.com) or call 800-747-4472.

There is also an NRLCA sponsored Discount Dental & Vision plan administered by Carington International which is not insurance, but provides discounts based on a fee schedule so you know what each service costs. This plan provides discounts on orthodontia, cosmetic dentistry and dentures. This plan has cheaper monthly or annual fees which run approx. \$100-\$150 annually

The above-mentioned NRLCA sponsored supplemental plans are available to RCAs as well. Since RCAs aren't eligible to enroll in the Federal Employee Health Benefit Plans (FEHBP) or the RCBP a USPS sponsored health plan is available for RCAs. The FEHBP information and enrollment is available through LiteBlue and PostalEase and HRSSC. Upon enrollment, the postal service contributes \$125 per pay period which leaves the following bi-weekly, pre-tax direct payment out of each paycheck: Self: \$40; Self Plus One: \$205; and Self and Family: \$370.

In summary, if you have any questions about health plans you can access much information by going to the postal service web sites [liteblue](http://liteblue) or [postalease](http://postalease) or the NRLCA's web site: [nrlca.org](http://nrlca.org).

## IDRLCA Statement of Financial Position *As of September 12, 2017*

| <b>ASSETS</b>                         |                   |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Current Assets                        |                   |
| Checking/Savings                      |                   |
| APCU-CHECKING                         | 7,397.67          |
| APCU-SAVINGS                          | 24,638.10         |
| CD-APCU 70 APRIL 4                    | 27,052.16         |
| CD-APCU 71 OCT 23                     | 26,485.54         |
| CD-APCU 72 JULY 20                    | 21,288.08         |
| CD-APCU 73 JAN 18                     | 26,114.98         |
| Total Checking/Savings                | 132,976.53        |
| Total Current Assets                  | 132,976.53        |
| <b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>                   | <b>132,976.53</b> |
| <b>LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>       |                   |
| Liabilities                           |                   |
| Current Liabilities                   |                   |
| Other Current Liabilities             |                   |
| Payroll Liabilities                   | 349.89            |
| Total Other Current Liabilities       | 349.89            |
| Total Current Liabilities             | 349.89            |
| Total Liabilities                     | 349.89            |
| Equity                                |                   |
| Net Assets                            | 136,103.16        |
| Net Income                            | -3,476.52         |
| Total Equity                          | 132,626.64        |
| <b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b> | <b>132,976.53</b> |

## IDRLCA Statement of Activities *July 1, 2016 through September 12, 2017*

| <b>INCOME</b>                   |                  |
|---------------------------------|------------------|
| Incentive Program               | 120.00           |
| Interest / Dividends            | 22.51            |
| Membership Dues                 | 29,340.62        |
| Miscellaneous                   | 0.00             |
| National General Insurance      | 1,448.96         |
| Reimbursements                  | 0.00             |
| Sales                           | 28.00            |
| Total Income                    | 30,960.09        |
| <b>EXPENSES</b>                 |                  |
| Accounting Fees                 | 565.00           |
| Awards & Recognition            | 286.97           |
| Education & Training            | 0.00             |
| Equipment Maintenance           | 0.00             |
| Equipment Purchases             | 1,344.66         |
| National Convention             | 21,369.00        |
| Office Expense                  | 607.87           |
| Payroll Taxes                   | 290.03           |
| Per Capita Dues                 | 1,300.00         |
| Postage                         | 421.34           |
| Printing                        | 1,098.08         |
| Rent                            | 360.00           |
| Salaries and Wages              | 3,484.80         |
| State Meetings                  | 683.54           |
| State Paper                     | 605.00           |
| Telephone & Internet            | 492.92           |
| Travel                          | 1,527.40         |
| Western States Conference       | 0.00             |
| Worker's Compensation Insurance | 0.00             |
| Total Expense                   | 34,436.61        |
| <b>NET INCOME</b>               | <b>-3,476.52</b> |

# 2017 National Convention

## Emotional Week

Reported by Glenda Sanders



Arriving at the NRLCA National Convention is a mixed bag of emotions. Excitement to see my union brothers and sisters that I only get to see once per year; anticipation of the enlightenment that I will gain through lectures and seminars; and trepidation that I may miss my return flight because the business session went too long. This gamete of emotions fade and enhance as the week goes on. I spotted my first friend as soon as I entered the Gaylord National

Resort & Convention Center, a co-academy instructor and past secretary-treasurer of Utah RLCA, Michelle Tait. She hurried up to me to give me a hug and said she was happy to see me. This warm greeting is played out time and time again, as the days unravel. After checking in, my husband, ID Auxiliary Secretary-Treasurer, Jeff Marler, and I head upstairs to set up home away from home. We settle in then plan our one day of sightseeing before our work begins on Monday morning. This plan had to include an Uber trip to the grocery store to stock up on food and drink as the hotel prices are outrageous and we refuse to pay five dollars for a bottle of water.

Jeff and I spent Sunday visiting Washington DC. The Lincoln Memorial, Washington Memorial, the Smithsonian Museum of Air and Space and the Smithsonian Postal Museum topped our list of what we had to experience. We were not disappointed, and walked over 16,000 steps. I believe 4,000 of those were spent chasing down a street vender for an ice-cold Gatorade. The crowds, the heat

and the history combined forces to create lasting, glorious memories of our nation's capital. We had to put our top ten list on hold until our last day as we needed to visit Safeway and get our munchie situation in order.

The week was spent attending sessions, seminars, workshops and the caucus. Typical days were 8:30a.m. till 9:00p.m. soaking up information and taking notes on pertinent information that will be shared with the IDRLCA membership that sent us here. Each NRLCA Delegate is tasked with writing a report or two that will be printed in the October issue of the Pony Express. It is vital to our Idaho association that the knowledge shared at convention is trickled down to you the member. After all, you are the ones who voted for us to represent you at this annual event that affects all of us. Within these pages, you will find pertinent and relevant information that you can use to carry your routes with confidence and success. I invite you to read, highlight and ask questions about everything in these pages. Questions and feedback can always be held for your local district meetings, but an email to one of your IDRLCA board members is quick and easy. Their contact information can be found on page two.

As the week languishes on, it gets harder to focus as we are all sleep deprived and the excitement has been replaced by junk-food-gut-rot and information overload. The business session, on Friday, is the toughest day to endure. It is also the most exciting as we debate resolutions, new business and appeals that have been presented for the body to decide. Yea or nay is the question of the day. Work winds down and delegates get riled up as the national officers try to keep 2,000 plus people on task. This Convention closed right around 4:00p.m. and I shot directly up to my room, for vital sustenance and celebratory hugs from my wonderful husband.

The next day, Saturday, we slept in, finished our "must see in DC" list (White House, Capitol, shopping etc.) and packed up to head home on Sunday. Seeing fellow carriers from

across the nation rolling out with their carry-ons is bittersweet, as we don't say goodbye but "I'll see you next year!" The Western State Conference members are the people I have gotten to know most, as that is the conference into which Idaho is slotted. These people, I see twice per year when I make the time, in April, to attend that annual conference. I would invite any one of you rural carriers, regular and relief, to become more involved with these special people. Becoming involved at the national level starts with attending local meetings. It's the warm people, deep knowledge, and heartfelt encouragement I'd received locally, that kept me coming back for more. I have traveled to five national conventions and have enjoyed every exhausting second of them. Not to mention the sights that I have seen in and around St Louis, Dallas, Reno and Nashville. Next year the national convention will be held in Grand Rapids, MI, and I'm already compiling my one-day must-see list.

fig. a.

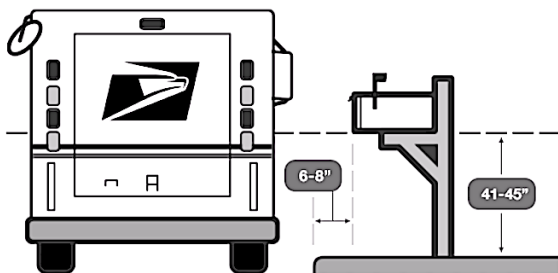
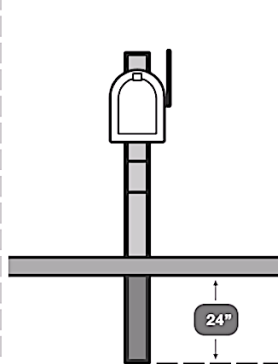


fig. b.



## History of an Envelope

The first known envelope was nothing like the paper envelope we know of today. It can be dated back to around 3500 to 3200 BC in the ancient Middle East. Hollow, clay spheres were molded around financial tokens and used in private transactions. The two people who discovered these first envelopes were Jacques de Morgan, in 1901, and Roland de Mecquenem, in 1907.

Paper envelopes were developed in China, where paper was invented by 2nd century BC. Paper envelopes, known as chih poh, were used to store gifts of money. In the Southern Song dynasty, the Chinese imperial court used paper envelopes to distribute monetary gifts to government officials.

Prior to 1845, hand-made envelopes were all that were available for use, both commercial and domestic. In 1845, Edwin Hill and Warren De La Rue were granted a British patent for the first envelope-making machine.

The "envelopes" produced by the Hill/De La Rue machine were not as we know them today. They were flat diamond, lozenge (or rhombus)-shaped sheets or "blanks" which had been pre-cut to shape before being fed to the machine for creasing and made ready for folding to form a rectangular enclosure. The edges of the overlapping flaps treated with a paste or adhesive and the method of securing the envelope or wrapper was a user choice. The symmetrical flap arrangement meant that it could be held together with a single wax seal at the apex of the topmost flap. (That the flaps of an envelope can be held together by applying a seal at a single point is a classic design feature of an envelope.)

Nearly 50 years passed before a commercially successful machine for producing pre-gummed envelopes effectively as we know them today appeared.

Wikipedia

Go to the IDRLCA  
Website, [idrlca.org](http://idrlca.org), for  
the latest information  
and events

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

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## Coming Events

**IDRLCA  
State Board Meeting**  
September 30, 2017  
Candlewood Suites  
Meridian, ID  
*IDRLCA Members Invited*

**NRLCA Steward  
Appreciation Week**  
October 16-22, 2017  
Let's thank all the local  
stewards who handle front  
line issues on a daily basis!

**NRLCA  
Western States Conference**  
April 19-21, 2018  
Little America  
Cheyenne, WY  
*IDRLCA Members Invited*