

*John Grace Branch 825 of the NALC*  
*Representing over 100 merged cities in*  
*North, Central, & Western Illinois*  
**BRANCH 825 NEWSLETTER**

Volume 2 Issue 1

First Quarter 2024

## What's happening around the Branch?

Retirement Seminars are held on the first Thursday of each month at the Branch office. Just call to reserve a space!



It was a packed house when Mike Kern hosted 2 different retirement seminars in February. One for members close to retirement and another for members who want to start getting prepared for retirement. It's never too early to start preparing!

The LaGrange retirees meet once a month for breakfast



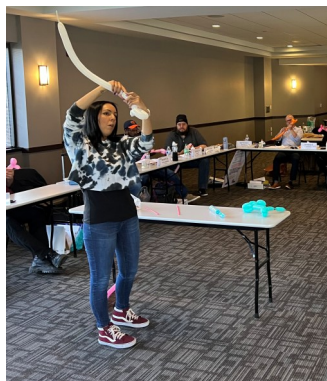
The Crystal Lake retirees meeting for their monthly breakfast



President Scott Jacaway hosts a steward meeting before every branch meeting



Congressmen Bill Foster & Sean Casten joined us at a branch meeting



Villa Park members Sarah Cuello and Jacqueline Lastovich presenting their teaching projects at the Region 3 Leadership Academy





This job is a Marathon  
- *not a race*  
Scott Jacaway  
President

## What is your legacy?

Bumper stickers are sometimes interesting to me. Back in the day many more cars had them. Not so much anymore. Funny cartoons, jokes, catchy sayings. Some had me scratching my head thinking... seriously??? Why did you deface your car with that nonsense? Some really can hit home though and can stir something within you. What are some of the ones that you can remember?

Have you ever seen the bumper sticker that says something like "He who dies with the most toys wins?" I don't really see it anymore but it's one of my most memorable ones, going back to the 1980s, I think. It is an eight-word commentary, or at least a provoking question that can make one reflect on how they live life. I used to laugh when I read it, but also felt a little uncomfortable at times. It stirred some self-reflection within me, of the importance of things I hold and value in my life.

In my role as President, I have become the chief steward of this Branch. I am tasked with making sure we provide our members, among other things, the representation they may and will need. There is quite a workload to be sure, and it takes a significant number of stewards, staff etc. to get the work done. Unfortunately, we have seen a growing shortage of people who are willing to step up to help in that role.

I researched the word legacy the other day after talking to a letter carrier who was considering becoming a steward in the office where he works. He has good character, plenty of life experience, he would be a tremendous asset to others in the help he could provide. He declined in the end. Didn't want to get involved, yet I found myself hoping for more. He just wanted to keep to himself, mind his own business. He must feel comfortable in where he is at.

I don't find any fault in my friend. I realize that the role of a steward may not be everyone's cup of tea. But I wonder as I grow older if my generation is doing enough to help those that come behind. I am not saying this in the sense that one must be a union steward to share what they

have in knowledge, talent and treasure. This next generation of postal workers is starving for leadership and my concern for their direction grows each year that goes along.

I came across a quote the other day from a Mr. Albert Price that says "what we have done for ourselves alone dies with us, what we have done for others and the world remains..." This thinking does not necessarily apply solely to the postal service story that I just conveyed. I believe it can apply to almost every reader of this article if they have an open mind.

It's interesting to me that this philosophy can be practiced in our homes, with our families, with our neighbors, etc., enabling others to succeed now and after we are gone. Many of you have found your own way of giving back to others or paying forward as the saying goes.

I think the world around us would be a much better place if we make giving to others, rather than getting, a common practice as we journey together in life. Consider an alternate phrase that would say - "He who dies with the most efforts to help others wins"?

Susan Bosak of the Legacy Project asks the question of where do you think it's best to plant a young tree: in an old growth forest or an open field? Ecologists tell us that a young tree grows better when it's planted in an area with older trees. The reason it seems, is that the roots of the young tree are able to follow the pathways created by former trees and thus implant themselves more deeply. Over time the roots of many trees may actually graft themselves to one another, creating an intricate, interdependent foundation hidden under the ground. In this way, stronger trees share resources with weaker ones so that the whole forest then becomes healthier. That's legacy: an interconnection across time, with the need of those who come before us and a responsibility to those who come after us.

If you are an active postal employee or retired, I encourage you to ask the question - what is the legacy story you are currently weaving and what will you leave behind. If you haven't considered a legacy yet, I encourage you to take steps in that direction. In your homes and within our union, there is opportunity to be that strong older tree. Mentor someone(s), pass along your wisdom it's a valuable benefit to us all.

Scott







## **Spraying to all fields: HIPP, Scans & Contract Updates**

**Melissa Rakestraw**  
**Executive Vice President**

It's that time of year again when the Post Office is supposed to conduct the Heat Illness Prevention Program (HIPP). Their own guidelines require them to conduct the training before April 1st. Last year we saw widespread falsification of the training, carriers had the training entered into their HERO profiles on Lite Blue even though they had never received the training. We had a carrier collapse from heat stroke and spend numerous days in the hospital in one of the offices in our branch where the training was falsified. Management gives safety lip service but far too many managers seem to care very little about the carriers who have to work in oppressively hot conditions.

Part of the HIPP training involves watching a video that has questions and answers. This video is designed to be viewed by a few people at a time with the questions actually being asked and answered by everyone. We can't allow management to just go through the motions so they can check a box that the training was done. It should be taken seriously by everyone as it could keep people from losing their lives. OSHA has a great application you can download called "Heat Index" that provides detailed information that I would encourage everyone to use when it starts getting hot out again.

Hopefully management is having people swipe to training time so we can document who took the training and when. In some offices of late they've been telling people to swipe to training time for all standup talks. If they've been doing this in your office, ask your steward to file a grievance. Standup talks are to be a part of your general office time. I'm also hearing that people are being instructed to swipe to parcel post or collection time when they're picking up outgoing mail on their routes. This is an improper instruction and again, your steward should be informed so it can be grieved. When you swipe to an improper code it corrupts the time date for your route. Now that they're doing route adjustments based on the scanner data, the integrity of all the scans matter. It's also why people should be scanning outgoing parcel barcodes when they receive the packages from customers.

As we see the focus of our deliveries being centered more and more on parcels, we want to make sure we are also scanning all parcels using the "Load Truck" feature. If your manager has told you to only scan a few and get going, then let your steward know so that can be grieved as well. And if supervisors are telling you that you can only have a limited amount of time, say 22 minutes to load your truck and leave the Post Office, know that is 100% false. There are no set time standards for any street function even though management would love to convince us otherwise. They also would have you believe you only have 5 or 10 minutes to swipe off the clock once you return to the office at the end of the day. Again, 100% false. Most Local Memorandums of Understanding (LMOU) allow for a 5-minute wash-up time after you've unloaded your vehicle and swiped back to the office. In addition to the wash-up time, people have to disperse their outgoing mail, put mail in the 3M case, and separate out the undeliverable mail due to forwards or markups. Do not do any of this off the clock, you're only asking for them to add onto your route. Now that everything is being documented on the scanner, we need to make sure we are taking the time needed to do things properly, every day.

Finally, I want to update folks on the state of contract negotiations. The parties have selected an arbitrator to hear the case. Arbitrator Dennis R. Nolan is tagged to serve as the neutral chair of the panel, with USPS and the NALC both selecting representatives to serve and represent their respective positions. There has been a lot of talk across the country from members upset that they aren't being given better and more frequent updates from national. At our February branch meeting Branch 825 passed an "Open Bargaining and Contract Campaign Resolution." It calls on the national NALC to:

- Organize an active, vibrant contract campaign that involves and mobilizes members and the public, in stations and in the street, throughout the country to help us achieve the strongest possible contract at the bargaining table.
- Hold rallies involving every branch leading up to the formal start of negotiations highlighting our main demands, and throughout a contract campaign when necessary, activating the membership at certain key points in negotiations.
- Post frequent side-by-side bargaining updates of contract negotiations on the website and in NALC bulletins.

It's long past time for the NALC to organize our greatest asset, our members, to fight for and win a better deal.

Solidarity,

Melissa Rakestraw, Executive Vice President



## Lucy Eldine Gonzalez Parsons

**Frank Sladek**  
**Vice President**

With May Day (May 1<sup>st</sup>) just around the corner, I thought I would focus my efforts on recognizing a woman who made a great impact on the labor movement around the world and specifically in the Chicago area. When doing some research, I stumbled upon this individual and was impressed with her determination and fiery nature. I didn't hear of Lucy Parsons until recently and thought this would be an appropriate time to honor her and share this information with you. The information presented here has to cover a long period of time with many achievements along the way, so bear with me as I try to squeeze a lot of information into a short news article.

Lucy Eldine Gonzalez Parsons was born in Texas around the year 1853. The exact date is not known, but history supports the year. She was born to parents of Black American, Native American and Mexican ancestry. It is thought that she was born into slavery.

In 1871, Lucy was married to Albert Parsons. Albert, and seven other anarchists, were eventually imprisoned or hung by the State of Illinois for their beliefs. Albert was in the latter group. The Haymarket Riot was the catalyst that was Albert's demise. Lucy was a powerful orator and activist and achieved international fame in defending the Haymarket martyrs.

Along with defending her and her husband's beliefs, Lucy exercised unbending commitment against social injustice and was primarily involved with the labor movement. Lucy gave fiery speeches and led tens of thousands of workers in mass protests. The Chicago Police Department dubbed her as "more dangerous than a thousand rioters". During a time of extreme racism and gender oppression she was viewed as an early civil rights pioneer and a prominent feminist. Lucy's speeches were an enormous draw and hearing her speak sparked a passion for rebellion in poor and working people across the country.

Lucy made her living as a dress maker. When not plying her trade, she championed social justice causes and had many accomplishments during her life. In 1883, she helped found the International Working People's Association. In 1892, she published *Freedom: A Revolutionary Anarchist-Communist Monthly*. (It was alleged she was a member of the Communist Party but this was never

proven.) In 1905, Lucy helped found the Industrial Workers of the World. In 1915, she organized the Chicago Hunger Demonstrations. In 1925, Lucy began working with the International Labor Defense.

During her busy life, Lucy Parsons continued to give fiery speeches until she was well into her 80's. Her last major appearance was at International Harvester in February 1941. Lucy was thought to be 89 years old when she died in a house fire on March 7, 1942. She is buried near her husband at Waldheim Cemetery (now Forest Home Cemetery) near the Haymarket Monument in Forest Park, Illinois.

Lucy lived in the Chicago area for most of her life and there are many landmarks in Chicago that reflect the contributions she made to society. On February 18, 1997, the Haymarket Martyrs Monument was placed as a National Historic Landmark and also listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In 2004, the City of Chicago named a park after her. The Lucy Ella Gonzales Parsons Park located at 4712 W. Belmont Avenue is in a fitting location in that it is flanked by factories. (In 1886, Lucy and her husband Albert led a parade of tens of thousands of worker along Michigan Avenue in an effort to reduce the grueling 10-12 hour workday to 8 hours.)

Since her arrival in Chicago in 1873, Lucy's dedication to improving the lives of minorities, women and working people made a major impact on every American. She was frequently targeted by police and was arrested on many occasions. At times, she was arrested on her way to the podium as she attempted to speak and ignite emotions in workers in her efforts to make a better workplace for future generations. We should all acknowledge her accomplishments and reflect upon the sacrifices she made for the all working people.

To learn more about Lucy, check out Carol Asbaugh's book "Lucy Parsons: An American Revolutionary."

Have a great summer! I hope to see you at one of our branch meetings or branch functions.

In Solidarity,  
Frank



## **Wash, Rinse, Repeat**

**Melissa Aschom  
Vice President**

Today's article will address a common issue that many advocates of the union face at every level of the grievance process...DOCUMENTATION.

I cannot stress enough the importance of documentation to any case file in the grievance process. It is imperative that employees retain a copy of any and every document they submit to the Postal Service. Whether it be Human Resources, (OWCP) Office of Workers Comp/Department of Labor (DOL), the Local Manager, or any department of the USPS. You must retain copies of every document you submit.

To give a few examples:

If you write a statement for any purpose, make a copy. If you utilize the USPS Call In Line or eLRA to report an absence, record the confirmation number and/or take a screenshot of the confirmation of request. If you submit one of the many Postal Service (PS) Forms you should make a copy for your records upon submission. Many of the PS Forms require the employer to respond within certain parameters and provide the employee with a copy. Some of the more commonly utilized PS Forms are: 3996 (Carrier Auxiliary Control (better known as Overtime Notification)), PS 1767 (Report of Hazard or Unsafe Condition or Practice), PS 3971 (Request for or Notification of Absence), PS 1571 (Undelivered Mail Report), and PS 4565 (Vehicle Repair Tag).

To elaborate on the importance of documentation I will explain its necessity.

If an employee states they submitted a PS Form 3971 requesting leave and doesn't receive a response from the employer, either approving or disapproving the leave, they may want to file a grievance. Some Local Memorandums of Understanding (LMOU) require the employer to respond within a certain time frame. To prove our case, we need a copy of the 3971 that was submitted. It is true the Union can submit a written request for the 3971 form however, if the employer states they never received it, and we have no record of the form, we would be hard pressed to prove our case.

Another example is when an employee makes a request for leave via the call-in system, either by phone or online, and requests a particular type of leave (for this example Sick Leave) but the employer

records their absence as Leave without Pay (LWOP). To strengthen the case for a grievance we would utilize the record of the request for the specific leave type to argue you weren't paid your requested leave type.

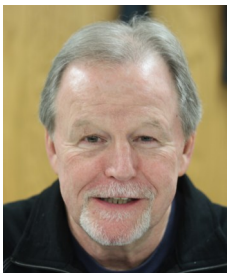
Additionally, and equally important, is the PS Form 3971 (Request for or Notification of Absence) which goes hand in hand with the above call-in request. Upon return to duty, you must complete a 3971 form. It has been observed by various union representatives that the local manager will often print the 3971 form from the USPS system and hand it to the employee to sign. You should not sign the form the manager completed. You should complete this form. Oftentimes the employer will include various inaccuracies in the comments section of the form such as, Not IOD (injured on duty), Not FMLA (Family Medical Leave Act) and various other acronyms.

Employees must complete the following boxes: Number of Hours Requested, From and Thru Dates of Leave Request, Type of Absence, Remarks and Employee Signature upon return to work. You should also complete your name, EIN number, Date submitted, Installation and scheduled reporting time if necessary. You have the right to notify the employer of what type of leave you are requesting and any additional information in the Remarks Box that you feel may be relative to the absence, not the manager. Another portion of the 3971 form that is often neglected is the backside of the form. You will see various boxes that can be utilized to add further specifics to your leave request. Several examples are: On the Job Injury, Pregnancy, and FMLA leave. Upon submission of this form to the manager you should request that they sign the box that states, "Signature of Supervisor and Date Notified" and you should then be provided with a copy of the form. If they do not provide you a copy, request one or make one yourself. If they refuse to sign and acknowledge receipt of the request, ask your steward or a witness to verify their refusal. This signature is an acknowledgement by the manager to the receipt of the form and creates a record of when the form was submitted by the employee and received by the manager.

Please... Protect yourselves and aid your Union in better representing you by retaining records of any and all documents you utilize throughout your USPS career.

In Solidarity.

Melissa Aschom



**Mike Kern**  
**OWCP/HBR/Retirement REP**

## **BENEFITS BRIEFING**

**Retirement seminars** are held on the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month [except July which will be held on the 11th] at the branch office and on zoom. Call the office to sign up. The Federal Employee's Retirement System [FERS anybody hired after Jan. 1, 1984] have more options to consider about retirement and ways to enhance it. The sooner you have all the information and put it to use the better your retirement years will be. Get your name on the TSP millionaire list. It takes early planning.

**Postal Service Health Benefit Plan [PSHB]** – Information will be sent out in the fall for open season. When we receive the info, I will be able to offer more guidance.

**Silver Scripts-** Enrollee's should have received a letter from Health Equity/Wage Works on how to file for their \$600 a year refund. It is not automatic; you must apply for it.

2 new videos were added to our website-[www.branch825.org](http://www.branch825.org) and the Branch 825 Facebook page. The videos are:

**-How to file a workers compensation claim** for an on-the-job injury- click on OWCP tab.

**-Welcome to the United States Post Office career position-** click on new member tab. Upon conversion to career position, you have 60 days to sign up for benefits. When you receive your booklet from Human Resources call the branch office. You are allowed time on the clock to complete these forms and one of our representatives will assist you.

Be Safe

Mike Kern Benefits Rep.

## **WE NEED UNIFORMS FOR THE UNIFORM CLOSET!!**

**Our closet is nearly empty. Please help!**

**Any carriers that have extra uniform supplies (new or gently used) can drop the uniforms at the office, bring to a Branch monthly meeting, or call the office and make arrangements for us to get them from you.**



**Let's help the new carriers look like professional Letter Carriers.**

**New employees who are in need of uniforms should call the office to make arrangements to come take a look!**



# MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Branches 825 & 2076 Annual  
Letter Carrier Family Picnic  
Sunday, August 18, 2024  
11:00 AM  
Bemis Woods Grove 5

294 to Ogden. East to Bemis Woods.  
Entrance is on the North, proceed to  
Grove 5. First grove on the right.

FEATURING:  
TACOS,  
HOT DOGS  
BURGERS,  
KIDS GAMES  
PRIZES  
BINGO  
BAGS  
TOURNEMENT  
FACE PAINTING  
RAFFLE TICKETS  
BOUNCE HOUSES

Come be part of the FUN! B.Y.O.B.  
PLEASE BRING A DISH TO SHARE



# CALLING ALL RETIREES!

*Retirees are Cordially Invited to:*

## ***The National Association of Letter Carriers Branch 825 Annual Rich Treonis Memorial Retirees Breakfast***



***Thursday April 18, 2024  
9:00 am  
Glendale Lakes Golf Club  
1550 President Street  
Glendale Heights Il***



**Please join your fellow retirees and officers to share a meal & some memories.**



**1550 President Street, west of Bloomingdale Road in between  
North Avenue & Fullerton Avenue in Glendale Heights IL.**

**Please RSVP by April 15<sup>th</sup> (630) 571-4167**





# BRANCH 825 TRIVIA CONTEST



**Winner for last month was Lionel Gonzalez from the  
Carol Stream Post Office!  
Enjoy your donuts!**

You have until **May 20,2024** to submit to the branch office the correct answers to the questions below and we'll send \$30 to buy donuts for the winning office.

## **This Month's Trivia Questions**

1. Harriet Tubman & Harriet Jacobs are on a set of stamps that celebrate what?
2. A guitar, fiddle, banjo and mandolin are all featured on stamps celebrating what unique American genre of music?
3. What is the denomination of the 2024 stamp called "The Pillars of Creation"?
4. Who is the Nobel Prize winning author of "The Adventures of Auggie March" who wears a jaunty cap on a 2024 stamp?
5. Who painted the Ruth Bader Ginsburg stamp?

**Thanks to Retiree Gary Poulos for supplying this months trivia questions.  
If anyone wants to submit questions,  
call Cheryl at 708-856-2427**

## **LAST NEWSLETTER ANSWERS**

1. In what sport are Barani, Rudolph & Randolph all techniques?  
**Trampoline/Gymnastics**
2. Deglutition is the scientific term for what common bodily function?  
**Swallowing**
3. What does SMS stand for in the context of cellular communications?  
**Short Message Service**
4. What is the world's most expensive spice by weight? **Saffron**
5. What is a "Dakimakura"? **Body Pillow**

## Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF)

As NALC's PAC, the Letter Carrier Political Fund helps elect candidates who support letter carriers. By strengthening NALC's voice in Congress, the Letter Carrier Political Fund protects your rights and the future of the Postal Service. President Brian Renfroe encourages every active member to donate at least \$5 per pay period, and for every retired member to donate at least \$5 per month.

Call the branch office for help signing up.

630-571-4167

Help protect letter carrier interests by contributing today!



## IPALC

The Illinois Politically Active Letter Carrier fund is a non-partisan political action committee (PAC) established for the purpose of electing qualified candidates in Illinois who support letter carriers and who are committed to maintaining a strong and innovative U.S. Postal Service.



Since union dues can't be used to support candidates for political office, the Illinois State Association of Letter Carriers relies 100% on member contributions to IPALC which in turn helps us support those in Illinois who defend the issues that matter most to us. Our PAC brings together in Illinois strong letter carrier advocates – from all political parties – who are dedicated to helping to defend a strong USPS that provides universal, innovative and affordable service.

Fill out the coupon below and mail it and a check to the address on the coupon.

☐ \$10   ☐ \$25   ☐ \$50  
☐ \$100   ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to:  
**IPALC**  
**P.O. Box 2713**  
**Des Plaines, IL**



Check # \_\_\_\_\_  
M.O. \_\_\_\_\_  
Cash \_\_\_\_\_



Here is my IPALC contribution to help insure our victory in upcoming elections.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Branch # \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_



**WEDNESDAY APRIL 10, 2024**

**CCA/PTF NIGHT**  
6:00PM-8:00PM




**REGION 3 OFFICE**

**JOIN US TO NETWORK WITH YOUR UNION BROTHERS & SISTERS**  
**GAIN VALUABLE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES ABOUT YOUR CRAFT**

**\*PIZZA AND SNACKS PROVIDED ALL WE NEED IS YOU**

**4979 INDIANA AVENUE**  
**LISLE ILLINOIS 60532**

**SCAN ME TO RSVP**  
Open your Camera app and point it steadily for 2-3 seconds towards the QR Code you want to scan. Whenever scanning is enabled, a notification will appear. If nothing happens, you may have to go to your Settings app and enable QR Code scanning.



**Check out these Opportunities!!**



**Rollin' With ISA for MDA**  
**Sunday April 28, 2024**  
4:30pm-6:30pm  
Doors Open @ 4:15pm

**On Time Arrival Strongly Suggested**

**Fleetwood Rink**  
7231 W. Archer Ave. Summit, IL 60521

**Adults \$25.00 Children Under 12 \$15.00**

**Wear Your Best 1970s Themed Attire**  
Groovy Disco Party  
Solo Skate Competition  
Cash Bar & Snack Bar  
Raffles

**For Tickets Contact:**  
isa4mda@gmail.com  
(708)477-5948

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## **OFFICERS**

**Scott Jacaway—President**

**Melissa Rakestraw—Exec. Vice President**

**Frank Sladek—Vice President**

**Melissa Ashcom—Vice President**

**Ken Rus—Treasurer**

**Mark Dowdle—Secretary**

**Mike Kern - Health Benefits/OWCP/Retirement Rep**

**Diana Hani-Taylor - Trustee**

**Renee Lomax - Trustee**

**Bill Hahn - Trustee**

**Marvin Billips - Sgt. At Arms**

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **April 18, 2024**

Executive Board Meeting - 7:00 Branch Hall

### **April 25, 2024**

Branch Meeting - Addison VFW

446 W. Lake St.

6:00 Steward Meeting

6:30 Dinner - 7:30 Meeting

### **May 23, 2024**

Executive Board Meeting - 7:00 Branch Hall

### **May 30, 2024**

Branch Meeting - Addison VFW

446 W. Lake St.

6:00 Steward Meeting

6:30 Dinner - 7:30 Meeting

### **June 14-15, 2023**

Executive Board Meeting - 7:00 Branch Hall

### **June 20, 2024**

Executive Board Meeting - 7:00 Branch Hall

### **June 27, 2024**

Branch Meeting - Addison VFW

446 W. Lake St.

6:00 Steward Meeting

6:30 Dinner - 7:30 Meeting