

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

Volume 2 Issue 3

Third Quarter 2024

## What's happening around the Branch?



(R-L) Brian DuPuis and Tom Anderson received their 50 year Gold Card & pin at a recent branch meeting. James Ptak was honored for his 50 years of postal service

Jackie Lastovich & Sarah Cuello graduated from the Region 3 Leadership



Chuck Feeney was awarded the Kenneth Christy Award at our State Convention. This award is given to a member who has been politically active for many years. Well deserved Chuck!



We've had quite a number of new retirees around the branch! Congratulations to all of our retirees!!



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

## SPRING CLEANING

As I write today's article, I am able to sit outside on my front porch again. It is Springtime and life is budding anew. The long cold spell we have endured for the last season has faded. The warmer weather feels comforting. It feels fresh ...better days are coming ahead.

I think it's a given that we have all heard of the phrase 'spring cleaning'. It is a common term yet can be applied in different ways. Some understand it to be the process we go through where we purge ourselves of things we no longer need in our homes or in our lives. Things that become old, maybe dirty, worn out, no longer useful. It could also be the literal act of cleaning or fixing things, like the act of ritual maintenance. Philosophical metaphors abound here that may be applicable as you read this phrase, but not going deep into that now. Something significant happened this spring, for you all to hear and know.

I think it was last year that I wrote an article about the importance of us coming together in a concerted way to address any chronic managerial misbehavior an office may have. I talked about the process, how we were successful in removing a bad supervisor from my home office of Oak Brook. The process I described is still important to this day. News alert! The Postal Service still employs managers who are bullies, jerks, A-holes and thugs to terrorize us. We've learned decency is not a qualifying criteria for the job.

The Barrington story has to be told. Our brothers and sisters there have had to endure years of oppression in the workplace at the hands of a bad apple Postmaster and her supervisors there. Many incidents of management misbehavior. Countless grievances. Ninety plus carrier resignations, transfers, early retirements as result of the 'titled' EAS terrorists there. It was a dark place for many... and for a very long time.

The Service was deaf to our complaints of employee abuse going on there, and by default, approving of it. We had to take matters into our own hands to secure relief. Using the same tactics I wrote about for Oak Brook, dozens of carrier statements were gathered over time to

describe repetitive incidents, stories descriptive with detail. As I mentioned before, a chorus of voices carries more weight than a soloist. We collected over fifty voices from the past and present to go into a case file that we constructed to take before an arbitrator this last spring.

While I played a part in assembling the file, I also had a front row seat at the event as I was the one who presented our case at arbitration. It was thrilling to be able to employ my experience and tactics in a hearing I was personally invested in. This is one my offices damn it! I wanted to get in on the fight. I was just one of a team of many though. My main role was to be the orchestra leader for the voices of Barrington - the fifty plus who spoke up with written statements in the case file and the 14 who testified.

It was an 8-hour fight on hearing day. The disturbing news you need to know is the Service did all they could to protect their own EAS terrorists. They challenged our witnesses on cross-exam, tried to shift the blame onto them. They downplayed the statements. What this demonstrated was that the PS doesn't care about us, the complaints, the letters, the surveys, the welfare of the working-class letter carrier. Their people can do no wrong.... and they spend thousands of dollars to defend them. Sad ...so sad.

So, the part you been waiting to hear is the Arbitrator agreed with our position. He was persuaded by our collective voices and wrote an award confirming a toxic work environment in Barrington exists. Hostile working conditions were created and practiced there by the EAS for a loooong time. The Postmaster and the lead supervisor were "serial offenders." They repeatedly violated all the Postal policies and manuals that us carriers are held accountable to, such as the "zero tolerance policy" "workplace harassment policy", the "Joint Statement on Violence and Behavior in the Workplace" document, and so on. He ordered the PM and the lead supervisor to be removed from their positions immediately! They may not supervise, directly or indirectly anywhere in Illinois for two years!! They both were permanently barred from working in the Barrington Post Office in any capacity!!!

So if you happen to perform your own version of a 'spring cleaning' this year, remember this story and your brothers and sisters in Barrington. Their house cleaning is monumental to them. Let us all celebrate the change of their season. The cold, dark days there have come to an end. Better days are ahead.

Scott







## **An Injury to One is an Injury to All**

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

As of May 31, 2024 the memos that the NALC signed with USPS headquarters to adjust routes jointly using only scanner data, the TIAREAP process, expired. There were many offices where the live week of the route count had been done but the actual adjustments had yet to be completed. The NALC president chose to let the memos expire but he didn't stop the process to eliminate routes. He has inexplicably allowed USPS to move forward. The NALC is still sending in representatives to adjust and eliminate routes, meanwhile, we have numerous offices where adjustments were implemented and mandatory reviews were never completed. Why is the NALC allowing USPS to slash more routes before all reviews have been completed?

Branch 825 has pulled our members off of route adjustment teams in offices where they are trying to eliminate routes. Region 3 Business Agent, Mike Caref has asked that NALC members on these teams go back to their assignments and stop assisting USPS in eliminating routes and jobs. The only problem is that NALC headquarters is sending in members from outside our Region to help USPS cut routes. It's baffling that our National president wants to continue to help USPS eliminate our jobs. If other regions and locals want to continue this process then that's their choice but we don't need them carpetbagging into Region 3.

This is a fundamental issue of philosophy, should we have local control of our union or should our National president ignore our wishes and conspire with USPS to remove routes? Branch 825 leadership and Region 3 NBA Mike Caref think we know what's best for our offices and want to defend our jobs, sadly NALC headquarters doesn't have our backs. NALC headquarters has sent in route adjustment team members from West Virginia, Michigan and Missouri to eliminate routes in Illinois, this is unacceptable. I personally have asked a representative from outside our region to step away from the process in one of our offices. He told me, "well, somebody's going to do it so I'm going to try to keep the damage to a minimum." But is somebody else going to do it, if you don't? Let's start stepping away, one-by-one. I asked him if he thinks he knows what's best for our members better than we do in Region 3. He couldn't give me an answer. I have no doubt he's well intentioned but ultimately, it's a question of Solidarity. Whose side are you on? In this instance you aren't on our side if you're assisting management in eliminating routes. We are asking NALC members from outside our region to stand in Solidarity with us. I'm not going to go into another region and eliminate jobs in their offices and I don't want them doing it here. I try to always operate from the standpoint, that "an injury to one is an injury to all." I'm not going to sit back and let anyone injure my union siblings without a fight and I'm sure as hell not going to conspire with management to eliminate jobs.

If NALC members were to stand in Solidarity with what we are asking in Region 3, management couldn't continue this process and if they did we would certainly have grounds to grieve their actions. The expired memos call for a "joint" process so if management moved forward without NALC complicity they'd be outside that process. I listened to members across the country implore the National president to end this process at rap sessions and a Committee of Presidents' (COP) meeting, he would repeatedly defend the process and management's shady practices within it. Now that he's finally caved to the pressure from local branches to let the memos expire, he's still letting management walk all over us. Scan the QR code to see the video that Region 3 NBA Mike Caref made with me outside the Schaumburg Post Office.



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It's with great sadness that I share the passing of Libertyville Carrier Kyle Schrader. Kyle passed away outside of work unexpectedly on Monday, July 8 at the age of 31. Kyle's mom, Jeanne is a carrier in the Libertyville office as well. I want to extend my deepest sympathies to Jeanne, her husband Jamie, Kyle's entire family, his friends, and co-workers. To say his loss is devastating is an understatement. I was out in Libertyville the morning after his passing to speak with members, along with the Postmaster and an EAP representative. The Employee Assistance Program (EAP 1-800-327-4968) is one of the best resources that USPS workers have access to. It's confidential and you can schedule multiple sessions on the clock. No matter what you may be struggling with, please reach out and talk to someone.



## Hurting Ourselves - Working off the clock

Lionel Gonzalez  
Vice President

When visiting offices, it seems I often find a couple carriers working off the clock. These carriers will tell you that they do it because they are instructed by management that their routes are eight hours, and they need to be done in eight. The fact they must work off the clock to be done in eight hours shows their routes are over eight hours. When we do this, this hurts ourselves and the other routes in our office. Having been on the Technology Integrated Alternate Route Evaluation Adjustment Process (TIAREAP) detail, I've seen firsthand what happens when all the work we do is not properly captured in our route's office and street time. Working off the clock today sets you up in the future to have additions made to your route and the abolishment of routes in your office. Abolishment of routes leads to fewer full-time assignments. How much work off the clock are you willing to do once your route is given additional deliveries and your office now has fewer full-time carriers and auxiliary assistance to perform carrier craft work?

We are the experts in how long it's going to take us to deliver our routes on any given day given the amount of mail for that day and any other circumstance we encounter (vehicle issues identified during inspection, late arriving mail or parcels, etc.). Instead of working off the clock, we need to ensure we request PS Form 3996, Carrier-Auxiliary Control, from management and state our reasons for needing overtime or auxiliary assistance on our route. If management denies it, then attempt your best to deliver your route while performing all your required duties correctly and safely. If you see that you are still not going to be able to finish your route in eight hours, then follow your local policy for reporting back to management and follow their instructions. Those instructions should be to either deliver the mail, bring it back to the office, or maybe even that they will send auxiliary assistance to your location with instructions on what mail to take off. If we're told to bring it back, we need to ensure we are requesting a PS Form 1571, Undelivered Mail Report, to record our undelivered mail so we have a record showing that mail was authorized to be brought back by management. Failure to do so may result in management coming after us for delaying mail.

It can be tough for some carriers when management instructs us to bring the mail back and we know that delivery is not going to be attempted on the mail. First and foremost, we're public servants and we want to maintain our customers' trust that they'll receive all their mail every day. In addition, we don't want that mail to sit at our case overnight and create an endless loop of us having to either work off the clock, take shortcuts at the expense of performing all our duties correctly and safely, or bring mail back every day. To these carriers I'd remind them that working off the clock will never solve staffing issues, nor will it make management more likely to approve overtime and properly utilize the carriers on the Overtime Desired List. And did you know that in some offices, management isn't even reporting that mail was delayed? Do you think upper levels of management are going to work to solve problems hidden by your office's management? Of course not! That's why it's important we get that PS Form 1571 signed by management. Not only does it protect us from a charge of delaying mail, it's critical proof we need to start investigating if management is even reporting the delayed mail. If they aren't, that gives us another avenue to try and correct the underlying issues in your office making you think you have to work off the clock.

Ultimately, if you see carriers working off the clock, you need to notify your shop steward. We can work with management to end that practice and/or file grievances to get those carriers paid out of schedule premium for the work management is allowing them to do. If you're instructed to bring back mail because management isn't approving overtime or auxiliary assistance, make sure you are requesting a PS Form 1571 and informing your shop steward. If management is failing to report delayed mail, I'm sure the Office of Inspector General (OIG) would love to hear about it.

In Solidarity,  
Lionel



# It's Picnic Time!!



**This year we will be hosting 2 picnics!**

**July 28, 2024 - 11:00 AM**

**Forest Glen Country Preserve**

**Edgewood Center**

**20301 E. N Rd. Westville, IL**



**August 18, 2024 - 11:00 AM**

**Bemis Woods Grove 5**

**Western Springs, IL**

## **FOOD DRIVE**

The 2024 Food Drive concluded with Branch 825 collecting over 212,000 lbs. of food for their local pantries. Even though our numbers were down 20% from 2023, this food drive is extremely important. Many of these pantries get a majority of their donations during the fall and winter. Your efforts help these pantries sustain their clients during the summer. Congratulations on a job well done!



**MDA**



Branch 825 received an award at the State Convention for raising \$19,124 for MDA in 2023. Thanks to all who contributed in making this possible. Mike Montes raised over \$2,400 in the Muscle Walk. We will be having our **Annual Columbus Day Golf Outing on Oct. 14** at Renwood Golf Course. Call the office to sign up. We will also be having our **yearly MDA Raffle for \$10/ticket. Drawing will be on November 21.** Get tickets from your steward, at a branch meeting or by contacting Diane Hani-Taylor at 708-715-0766



# The Rich Treonis Memorial Retirees Breakfast



Many retirees from our Branch 825 offices meet regularly for breakfast or lunch. Please contact me at [c.mayda@comcast.net](mailto:c.mayda@comcast.net) to let me know when you meet!!

## La Grange Retirees

First Thursday of the Month  
Panera Bread - Willowbrook  
7165 Kingery Hwy  
9:30am



## Schaumburg, Hoffman & Roselle Retirees

Second Wednesday of the Month  
(Sept. location TBD)  
Culver's - Schaumburg 1800 Wise Rd.  
1:00pm



## Crystal Lake Retirees

Meet ups are held at different locations each month.  
Please contact Mike Montes for information.





# BRANCH 825 TRIVIA CONTEST



**Winner from last newsletter was Jerry Cramer from the Schaumburg Post Office!  
Enjoy your donuts!**

You have until **Sept. 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.

(There will be a drawing of all winning answers to determine a winning office)



## This Month's Trivia Questions



1. The unicorn is the national animal of which country?
2. What is the only food that can never go bad?
3. Who is Barbie's sister?
4. What is the dot over a lowercase "i" and "j" called?
5. Where is the worlds largest Starbucks?

**ENJOY RETIREMENT Vice President Frank Sladek!!**



Frank began his postal career in 1978 and immediately joined the union. It wasn't long after that he took on the job of Shop Steward in his home office of Berwyn. Frank's work was respected by the Postmaster, so much so that he was given an office in the building because when the carriers saw him in the swing room they would stop to talk - it just generated more grievances. Frank didn't yell and scream to get the job done. He maintained his composure and carried a workman-like approach to his representation of the membership. Frank later worked on Branch wide projects and various committees then served our Branch as a Trustee, Sargent at Arms, Treasurer, Branch Secretary and lastly as Vice President. Frank used his knowledge, thoroughness, and determination to get the best for the membership. Frank was a true asset to all the Letter Carriers he represented within Branch 825.



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## **OFFICERS**

**Scott Jacaway—President**

**Melissa Rakestraw—Exec. Vice President**

**Melissa Aschom—Vice President**

**Lionel Gonzalez—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**

### **August 1, 2024**

Retirement Seminar—Branch Hall  
6:30-9:00pm (Call to RSVP)

### **August 5-9, 2024**

National Convention—Boston

### **August 18, 2024**

Branch Picnic—Bemis Woods

### **August 22, 2024**

Executive Board Meeting - 7:00 Branch Hall

### **August 29, 2024**

Branch Meeting - Gurnee American Legion  
749 Milwaukee

6:00 Steward Meeting

6:30 Dinner - 7:30 Meeting

### **September 5, 2024**

Retirement Seminar—Branch Hall  
6:30-9:00pm (Call to RSVP)

### **September 19, 2024**

Executive Board Meeting - 7:00 Branch Hall

### **September 26, 2024**

Branch Meeting - Addison VFW  
446 W. Lake St.

6:00 Steward Meeting

6:30 Dinner - 7:30 Meeting