



THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION
OF LETTER CARRIERS—N.A.L.C.

REPRESENTING LETTER CARRIERS IN NEW YORK STATE
AND PUERTO RICO

WINTER2023

GEORGE T. MANGOLD, PRESIDENT

GM-61



George Mangold

'Tis the Season?...

Hope everyone had a peaceful and happy Thanksgiving. Now, the Holiday delivery season begins... The Contract seems to be headed to arbitration. Legislation remains at a standstill as the House has recessed and the Senate will likely follow. HR 82 the Social Security Fairness Act has 302 cosponsors, 24

of 26 from New York (only Tenney and Jeffries are not on- *Jeffries supports, but as Minority Leader does not cosponsor bills) HR 5995 the Federal Retirement Fairness Act has 13 NY Reps on board... *9 Republicans... I would like to believe that their cosponsorship represents support for our issues; however, I would really like to see how many would actually vote for this bill (One, I believe that most know this bill will never get a vote under this leadership, and Two, many are in Toss-Up spots and will

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need our support and \$\$\$). I hope HQ decides to engage our locals in the selection and support for each of those toss-up seats, as New York can definitely have an impact on the Speakership of the House..

I do want to THANK President Renfroe and the Legislative Department, for following through on the transparency issue as per our meeting. We are receiving the documentation of all LCPF disbursements on a monthly basis, and I will share that info with any NYSALC Branch that desires it.

The Special Election to Replace Rep. Santos CD 3 NY will be held on Feb.13, 2024, as per Governor Hochul... **We will promote the new early vote by mail option!!! We also will endorse Tom Suozzi, Past Rep. CD 3 for the position..**

****On Behalf of the Executive Board and Officers of the New York State Association of Letter Carriers, I would like to wish you and yours, a VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS, HAPPY HOLIDAYS, and a PROSPEROUS and PEACEFUL NEW YEAR!!!**

DATES TO REMEMBER..

DC LOBBYING TRIP....

4/17-19 2024

HYATT-REGENCY-\$325-S/D

RECEPTION 4/17 5-7 PM HAMILTONS (UPSTAIRS)

NYSALC 66TH BIENNIAL CONVENTION

6/22-24 2025 Marriott Syracuse Downtown
\$179 S/D



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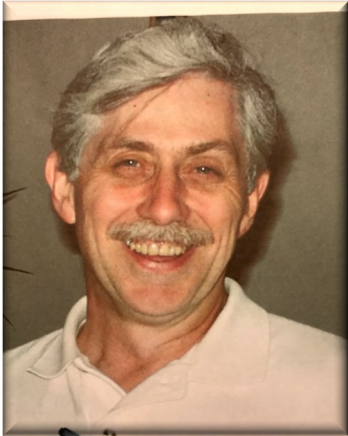
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New York State Board of Officers being sworn in at the recent NY State Convention in Brooklyn, NY

NY State Association of Letter Carriers



Bruce Didriksen
National Business Agent
Region 15

Years ago, when I was an Area Representative in New Jersey, I had a policy that I followed whenever I knew that a new employee had successfully completed his/her probationary period. I would say, “Be honest, is this job easier or harder than you expected it to be?” Almost without exception, the answer I received was “I never dreamed that the job would be so difficult”. On the rare occasion when someone would tell me that the difficulty of Letter Carrier work was what was expected, those employees invariably were related to a Letter Carrier in some fashion and had been given advance warning of what they were in for. The point is that most of the general public has no clue about the complexity of Letter Carrier work or the endurance required to make a career of it. That is just one reason for the problem of retaining new employees when they are hired.

In just the last few years, being a Letter Carrier has taken on some dramatic burdens that were never part of the job before. First, we had the COVID-19 pandemic that exposed our members to a deadly virus on a daily basis, while a large percentage of other American workers were exercising the option to work from home. Many of our members decided that retiring earlier than originally planned was a more beneficial decision than facing the prospect of being infected by a disease that killed more than a million Americans. The percentage of City Carriers with only limited time in the USPS rose as a result. Then there was the exposure of Carrier craft employees to more instances of extreme weather, as hurricanes, flooding, wildfires and extreme heat became incidental to the work. As we have all become far too familiar with, many managers when faced with a decision to curtail services in the face of a weather emergency will give priority to their “numbers” over the safety of their employees. Over the course of the last year, we have learned that mandatory Heat Illness Prevention training has not been administered as required, while managers have simultaneously recorded that their employees did receive the training in official records. Inasmuch as this training will be mandated again next Spring, local Branches must be diligent in monitoring compliance and reporting non-compliance when it is discovered.

Of all the changes to their work that today’s Letter Carriers face, perhaps the most daunting is the unprecedented increase to Letter Carrier assaults that are reported on an almost daily basis. In the past, the occasional physical attack against an employee was a random act that could be attributed to the perpetrator being mentally unhinged. Current attacks are more likely to be premeditated efforts to obtain the Arrow Key that is carried by our members. Access to the mail stream is the motivation for the assaults, with an ultimate goal of stealing revenue using personal information found in the mail. Trauma experienced by a Letter Carrier threatened with a weapon can be physical and/or psychological, and the resulting incapacitation can be life-changing. As a result, on-the-job security has become a priority for consideration both at the bargaining table and in individual Post Offices across the nation. It is likely that the future will see elimination of the current metal keys, and the adoption of technology that will serve the same purpose while also enhancing employee safety. Delivering America’s mail has always been an essential part of the country’s economic welfare and part of the foundation for communications sometimes taken for granted in preserving our democratic principles of government. As new and different challenges arise, it will be essential to recognize the importance of the Letter Carrier occupation and to take remedial steps to ensure that the caliber of individuals employed by the USPS is not diminished by factors that make the job less attractive and an obstacle to retaining qualified individuals.



Mark Camilli
National Business
Agent
Region 11

Region 11 WINTER 2023

First and foremost, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your loved ones a very happy and safe holiday season. We all know how stressful this time of year can be, especially in our line of work, but please take pride in what you do each day. The service you provide to the American public ensures that the holiday season will be special for millions of our customers! It's hard to believe we are about to close the chapter of 2023 and start anew in 2024. As I look back on 2023, I'm amazed once again with all that we have been through and what we have been able to accomplish together as a Region. Let's review some of the challenges and accomplishments of 2023.

Challenges - 2023 started with some of the winter weather we typically see in Upstate NY and Ohio. We had lake effect snowstorms, Nor'easters along with some record warmth (I guess you take the good with the bad!). In early February, there was a horrific train derailment in East Palestine, Ohio. Several rail cars caught on fire that contained hazardous chemicals. Mail delivery was suspended in the area and Letter Carriers had to report to a different location. The fear of the unknown weighed heavy on all. I was very appreciative of National Director of Safety and Health, Manny Peralta as he assisted in helping our members and he also gave me the opportunity to attend a National AFL-CIO safety meeting where I was able to voice my concerns on what happened to our members in the area. This info helped them create a comprehensive plan to lobby congress and seek assistance with OSHA to not only address residents' concerns but also how to assist those that must work in disaster effected areas. Also in February, we had our first S&DC go live in Utica, NY. The location was not close to being ready for the additional carriers to move in due to construction work, but the USPS in its infinite wisdom decided to force the event. Thankfully, they provided an outdoor port-a-potty trailer system to be able to accommodate the increase in employees! Several months in, construction (for the most part) has been completed and the three existing branches have come together to address LMOU issues. The effectiveness of these S&DC sites remains to be seen.

Once spring broke and early summer arrived, many of us in Region 11 experienced something we haven't had experience with – air quality issues caused by wildfires in Canada. We learned quickly what air quality indexes (AQI's) were, how to apply them for our safety and the importance of N95 masks. As summer took hold, heat illness prevention was magnified with the tragic loss of Dallas, Texas Letter Carrier Eugene Gates who died of heat-related illness. Reports were received throughout the Region and across the country that Heat Illness Prevention Training records were falsified. Carrier training records indicated that they received the training, when in fact they did not. To this day, we continue the fight on this subject through the grievance/arbitration procedure.



**Mark Camilli
National Business
Agent
Region 11**

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Many USPS employees were affected by the Liteblue “hack” where employees used a fraudulent link from the web to access their Liteblue accounts. The hackers were then able to access the sign-in information of these users and diverted payroll to other bank accounts. The NALC initiated a national level grievance on this issue, and we hope to have a resolve soon.

Another discerning issue that rose to prominence in Region 11 and throughout the country is crime against letter carriers. This is not an easy issue to fix, but the NALC has held rallies across the country (including Cincinnati, Ohio) to bring this issue to the forefront. It’s going to take a multi-pronged approach of getting the involvement of local law enforcement, legislators, the courts, the community, and investment into USPS equipment. We are now starting to see a positive trend of more arrests and sentencing for those that commit these heinous crimes. The NALC Legislative Department is working closely with representatives to draft comprehensive legislation to deal with the crime issue. Stay tuned as NALC will put out a “call of action” to garner support and hopefully quick passage of this much needed legislation.

Accomplishments – Training has been a priority of mine throughout 2023. We started the year off with our Regional Rap session in Syracuse, NY. We offered training in many topics. A highlight of that event was a mock arbitration hearing. Also, throughout the year, we held three “Shop Steward School” classes that now put us over 200 trained shop stewards across the Region! We also held several retirement seminars, training for route adjustment/TIAREAP process, new arbitration advocate training, and with the help of RWCA Dave Barbuzzi, we held a very comprehensive OWCP for branch representative training. We will continue all these initiatives and more into 2024. In the grievance arena, we have met on and resolved well over 700 cases at the pre-arbitration level, heard over 80 cases in arbitration and are maintaining a win rate of just under 70%. This is in addition to the many branch meetings, installation of officers, retiree, and MDA events that I and/or the RAAs were able to attend.

As you can see, 2023 was quite challenging but we were able to meet those challenges – together. Many thanks go out to all our branch presidents, officers, stewards and the entire membership. United we stand, divided we fall! On behalf of RAA’s Dave Kennedy and Mike Brim, RGA Anna Mudd, RWCA Dave Barbuzzi, LPO Marc Ashmon and Field Secretary Darla Gerace, we wish you and yours a very festive and safe holiday season and all the best in 2024!



**VICE-PRESIDENT
KENNY MONTGOMERY**

As the year comes to a close, I would like to review our efforts on the legislative front in Western NY. Starting with H.R. 82 the Social Security Fairness Act, every congressional rep in New York state is a co-sponsor but for Hakeem Jefferies (D) due to his leadership role (historically leaders do not co-sponsor bills) and Claudia Tenney (R). Congresswoman Tenney serves on the Committee on Ways and Means and has expressed to me her interest in supporting this bill, however the committee has also expressed concerns over the cost of the bill to Social Security and that concern has her hesitating in signing on as a co-sponsor. When the bill was before the 117th congress she did co-sponsor the bill as she was not on the Ways and Means committee then. Currently we have 300 co-sponsors in the house and a related bill S. 597 in the Senate with 49 Co-Sponsors.

Next, we can look at H.R. 5995 Retirement Fairness Act. Congressional reps in Western NY are signed up except for Brian Higgins (D) in Buffalo and Brandon Williams (R) in the Syracuse region. As a reminder H.R. 5995 is the bill that would allow TE's and CCA's to buy back their non-career service time and have it credited toward retirement. There are currently a total of 46 co-sponsors in the house. As someone who assists our members to retire, I can assure you that time is crucial. I have recently assisted several carriers in retirement who had TE time in the 1990's and a few that had CCA time beginning in 2013. Once they retire, they can no longer buy back the time so passage as quickly as possible would help our members that are coming of the age of retirement.

Our state association and our headquarters legislative staff needs to do a push to get these bills passed before this congress ends at the end of next year, so we don't have to start again.

I would close with the hope the NALC comes to an agreement with the Postal Service on a new contract and should not have to be subjected to the whims of a 3rd party arbitrator. Letter Carriers have earned and deserve a substantial pay raise and an improvement in working conditions. Listening to a Fox News story the other night, the commentators were relishing in the amazing success of Amazon and how they are now the most successful shipping company in the U.S. unless you compare it to the Postal Service who is by far larger. Our carriers carry the load of our customers and the load of Amazon. The success of Amazon is only due to the hard work of letter carriers, and it is time the Postal Service acknowledges that effort with proper compensation.

Merry Christmas to every one of our members in New York State and I look forward to a prosperous and healthy New Year.

**DIRECTOR OF RETIREES
JOHN WALSH**

I just represented the NALC health plan at our postal health fair in the plant... at Albany New York. A lot of activity was at the booth of the American Postal Workers Union. They have two things in their favor, 1. The fair is held in the plant where most of the clerk craft employees work. 2. The Postal Service pays 95% of the health cost premium. It makes it hard to compete against that plan. Also, the clerks would have to pay our Union dues on top of their premiums. The NALC health plan was started by letter carriers for letter carriers and the plan has different choices to select from. I would highly recommend retirees to look at the NALC Medicare plan partnered with AETNA. I took that plan last year and I am very happy with it. I have had a lot of health issues this year and have not had to pay anything out of pocket. Most people coming to the fair were 90% active employees. Only a couple of retirees showed up. I feel that next open season will have a lot of retirees asking questions if the Postal Service has a health fair again at the plant.

Next year's open season will be a big change for everyone. "The new Postal Service Health Benefits Program" will be a separate program within the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program. Next year's open season will be from November 11, 2024, to December 9, 2024. The reason I am writing about this so far in advance is because it will be a major change from what we have done in the past. Most retirees, including myself, do not like change.

With this new change retirees who did not join Medicare Part B when they were 65 and would like to do so will now be able to, without any penalty. That is a big change. In the past you would be penalized 10% a year, for each year after age 65. So, if you did not opt for Medicare B at retirement (when turning 65) and would like to opt for this next season you can do so without a penalty.

I have been told that those who did not opt for Medicare B at retirement may be able to participate in the special enrollment period starting APRIL 1, 2024. I also have been told that it is likely that eligibility letters will be sent out to retirees and eligible family members. If you want to join Medicare B and not pay the late fee, please watch for your letter from OPM or PSHP or FEHB prior to April 1, 2024. If do not receive a letter, contact your branch officers or the NALC health plan.

I wish all brothers and sisters and your families a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

John P Walsh
Director of Retired Members

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Director of Legislation, William B. Cook

2023 New York State Legislation and Appeals Court Wrap Up

Preparing for 2024

Legislation & Elections 2024

Since the passage of A07632A and S07394-A, Early Vote By Mail, much has changed. First Congressman George Santos, NY CD-3, was removed as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, followed by an announcement from Governor Hochul that there will be a special election on February 13, 2024 (yes a day before Valentine's Day) to fill the now vacant seat. Within hours two candidates have emerged to vie for the seat; former Congressman Thomas Suozzi (D) and Melessa Mazi Pilip (R).

Based on prior special elections which tend to generate turnout from energized voters of the parties' bases, this election may well turn on those who are voting early by mail. There are 570,700 registered voters in this congressional district. This district will be a hotly contested race with upwards of \$20 million spent on this one race. Both parties know that the results of this race will be a test of whether or not the Republicans retain control of the House of Representatives in 2025. So why is vote by mail important? Data shows that in special elections, races can be tight and the path to electoral victory is found through vote by mail.

The Republican and Conservative parties have filed suit in the New York State Supreme Court based in Albany. There is no indication that the lawsuit will proceed and be decided on before the voters in CD3 go to the polls. So, what do we do? Well, the New York State Assoc. of Letter Carriers with their branches with members in CD-3 will be engaging member contact to get out the vote. Additionally, the NYSALC will be engaging with the Vote At Home Institute to encourage all our members to vote by mail regardless of who they vote for. The state board of elections will have an online application portal as of 1/1/2024 and will have paper applications as of 1/1/2024 as well. The website will also be updated on 1/1/2024.

New York State Court of Appeals 2024 Election Impact

The NYS Court of Appeals, the highest court in New York State has ruled that the State Supreme Court's ruling to redistrict the congressional district of using a special master to redraw the congressional district lines was unconstitutional. The voters codified in the NYS constitution that in Independent Redistricting Commission was to draw the congressional district lines and if the Commission cannot agree then the New York State legislature is tasked with drawing the district lines.

The result is that the U.S. Congressional district lines will be redrawn for the 2024 congressional race in time for the primaries and general election.

(Article from NALC Bulletin updating the RAP session addressing current crimes amongst letter carriers)

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

Renfroe then talked about the increase in robberies and assaults targeting letter carriers, which have risen exponentially over the past three years, with more than 2,000 such assaults in that period. Of those, only 14 per cent have resulted in an arrest and federal prosecution. "Unfortunately, there is no simple, quick solution to this," he said. "This is something that's going to take time. But we are beginning to make progress." Texarkana, TX Branch 569 President Sanjera Johnson asks a question during the rap session.

The Postal Service has made both public and private commitments to replace all of the Arrow Locks in the field and has tested a number of electronic solutions to devalue the Arrow Keys, which have been a primary target of thieves. Renfroe said that increasing federal prosecution rates is another important component. The Postal Service is funding about a dozen prosecutors in U.S. attorneys' offices to spend a majority of their time prosecuting these crimes. But more is needed, and that is why NALC has been holding "Enough is enough" rallies.

The rallies boost media awareness of the issue and generate robust news coverage, which in turn prioritizes the issue for residents and U.S. attorneys, thereby helping raise prosecution rates. (For more on the rallies, see the December Postal Record.)

In addition to the rallies, NALC has been working with members of Congress on crafting and introducing legislation to help combat the issue. Renfroe said that the bill would be NALC's primary legislative priority and that he will call for a day of action to quickly grow the support of co-sponsors and public awareness.

"For the longest time, most of us in this room carried mail and nobody ever messed with us," he said. "There was a thought, if you mess with a letter carrier, that's a federal employee, you're going to jail. We have to make that a reality. That's ultimately what deters these crimes."



**EDITOR
MONIQUE MATE**

[Announced in May 2023](#), Project Safe Delivery is a USPS initiative to combat the recent rise in threats and attacks on letter carriers and mail theft incidents by protecting Postal employees and the security of the nation's mail and packages.

Project Safe Delivery Progress To Date

Since the launch of Project Safe Delivery in May 2023, the Postal Service and Inspection Service have taken the following actions to address postal crime nationwide:

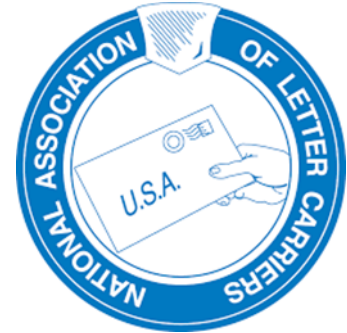
- **Law Enforcement Surges Completed In Chicago, San Francisco, Ohio; More than 600 Individuals Arrested for Postal Crimes.**
- **10,000 High-Security Blue Collection Boxes Installed Nationwide**
- **Ongoing Replacement of Antiquated Arrow Locks with 49,000 Electronic Locks**
- **99.3% Reduction In Fraudulent Change of Address Submissions After Implementation of Electronic- and In-Person Authentication Procedures.**
- **50% Reduction in Counterfeit Package Postage In Postal Network Due to Increased Controls and Enforcement.**
- **50% Reduction in Counterfeit Package Postage In Postal Network Due to Increased Controls and Enforcement.**

In addition, the NALC is in talks with congress in addressing and creating a bill that would not only keep the letter carriers safe but ensure better conviction rates against those who either attempt or actually harm a letter carrier.

Postmaster General Louis DeJoy said in a statement that it's important to protect the "sanctity of the nation's mail" but that his top priority is the safety of those delivering it. I agree with his statement and now we need to hold him to it. It's unacceptable the amount of crime and violence that is happening amongst our letter carriers.



Marc T. Ashmon
Asst. to the President For
Legislative & Political Organizing



One of the hardest things to do is to ask someone to donate their money. Unfortunately in order for us to be successful on bills and laws being passed that effect everyone of us, including retirees it is essential. Though it's hard to ask, what we are finding out as leaders in the NALC is most of our carriers do not give because they were simply never asked. As a member of the NALC, there are several easy ways to give to the Letter Carrier Political Fund:

1. **Payroll deduction:** Contribute automatically, using PostalEase (either [online](#) or by [phone](#)) to set up an allotment deduction from your USPS paycheck.
2. **Direct bank withdrawal:** You can authorize the fund to withdraw a monthly electronic contribution directly from your personal checking account
3. **Annuity deduction:** Retired letter carriers can elect to give monthly via an automatic deduction from your monthly annuity.
4. **Family Member Contribution:** How immediate family members of NALC members contribute to the Letter Carrier Political Fund using Electronic Fund Transfer or by making a One-Time contribution
5. **One-Time Letter Carrier Political Fund Contributions:** This form should be used to identify names and members making one-time contributions.

Lets remind our carriers that as the NALC we encourage all members to be engaged in a wide range of political activities to advance the letter carrier agenda.

But...it is crucial to remember that all active letter carriers, career and non-career alike, are federal employees, and your political activities are governed by the Hatch Act—including online activities that involve social media (for example, Facebook and Twitter) as well as e-mail.

In general: Be off the clock, out of uniform (and government vehicles) and away from the workplace whenever you engage in any partisan political activity, and make sure that the activity is in a permissible category.

If you have questions or concerns that are not covered here, do not hesitate to first contact the Office of Special Counsel [by e-mail at hatchact@osc.gov](mailto:hatchact@osc.gov) or by phone at [800-85-HATCH](tel:800-85-HATCH).