

The GARDEN STATE LETTER CARRIER



"125 Years Serving Letter Carriers"

Official Publication of the New Jersey State Association of Letter Carriers

Volume LXX, No. 3

WWW.NJSALC.COM

Issue #3 2019

President's Report

Richard P. O'Connell, Jr., President



It has been a very busy year for letter carriers across, our state, and our country. NALC President Fred Rolando, and the Executive Council have been hard at work attempting to negotiate a National Agreement. It is vital to have a well structured contract to be able to enforce and protect letter carriers. As a state, our main focus continues to be, and will always be, the legislative

battle for Postal reform. The best contract, either ratified or arbitrated, will not protect any letter carrier, newly hired, active, or retired, from dangerous adverse action taken by Congress or the White House. We continue to need and strive for bipartisan support in Congress.

Letter carriers have been contacting their Congressional Representatives in an effort to achieve 290 cosponsors for the USPS Fairness Act, H.R. 2382. This piece of legislation would repeal the mandate that the USPS prefunded decades of health benefits for its future retirees, which was passed under the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act of 2006. Currently, H.R. 2382 has over that number of cosponsors and has reached the "House Consensus Calendar," which means the bill can be placed in the queue for a House floor vote. I thank every New Jersey member and the Letter Carrier Congressional Liaisons, who contacted their Congressional

Representatives and asked them to cosponsor H.R. 2382. All twelve New Jersey House Representatives have cosponsored the bill.

Early in December, a similar bill, USPS Fairness Act, S. 2965, was introduced in the Senate. The bill is identical to the H.R. 2382. The Senate bill was introduced in an effort to repeal the mandate to prefund postal retiree health benefits. Currently, there is only one cosponsor on this bill. Once information is released from NALC headquarters, I am positive letter carriers across the country will contact their Senators in an attempt to gain bipartisan support.

I would like to congratulate the Officers and Executive Board of the New Jersey State Association of Letter Carriers on their recent election. I also want to thank you for your continued support in our legislative battles and wish every member a joyous holiday season, and a safe, healthy, and prosperous New Year! 🇺🇸



2019 - 2021 NJSALC Officers and Executive Board

THE GARDEN STATE LETTER CARRIER
 Published by the N.J. State Association of Letter Carriers
 Four times a year
 Jeffry M. Fox, Editor
 Richard P. O'Connell, Jr., President
 -Affiliates-

National Association of Letter Carriers—AFL-CIO
 The opinions expressed in these columns are not necessarily
 the views of the Editor, State Association or its members.
 Advertising rates will be sent upon request.

Non-Profit postage paid at Lakewood, NJ 08701
 NJSALC circulation office:
 91 Mansfield Avenue, Manchester, NJ 08759
 The Garden State Letter Carrier is paid for through membership dues
 ISSN-0745-1970



VIEWPOINT

Jeff Fox, Editor

In my last article this past summer, I was complaining about Postmaster General (PMG) Megan Brennan's changing position on her employees and their pay and benefits. I didn't think I was that harsh; but, a short time later, she announced her retirement effective January 2020. PMG Brennan has been a good PMG, all things considered; she was a welcome relief after PMG Donahoe.

The grapevine has it that the search is on for the next PMG and that search is not taking place within the Post Office; I hear they are looking outside the Post Office for the next PMG. The Board of Governors of the United States Postal Service appoints the PMG and the deputy PMG who then become members of the board. President Trump's appointees now control the board of governors so it would not be a stretch to say the next PMG will be a unique individual. Our biggest fear should be a PMG who is focused on privatizing the Service. President Trump is the first president who has actually verbalized that the USPS should be privatized, so there is that.

As far as the board picking an outsider to run the USPS, which employs the largest federal workforce besides the military, well that's a mixed bag and you never know what you'll get. For instance, in my memory, Marvin Runyon who was appointed PMG in 1992 was the last PMG who did not work for the USPS and he came to the USPS with the nickname "Carvin' Marvin". That's because of the extraordinary amount of people he laid off at the Tennessee Valley Authority, which was America's largest power producer at that time.

We were anxious when he took over; but, when he took the reins of the USPS in 1992, he eliminated 23,000 management jobs, hired more letter carriers and clerks, while embarking on automating the Postal Service to speed mail delivery. So, I guess you could blame him for your DPS and FSS but he knew where to cut the fat, that's for sure. It's hard to imagine who President Trump will appoint and I will reserve my judgment until he does.

Winter is upon us and so is the winter weather. I want to remind everyone to work safely and not take unnecessary risks. Take your time and stop rushing because that is a sure way to get injured or have a motor vehicle accident. I want to wish our entire membership a wonderful holiday season. ☺

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When will they learn?

Larry Cirelli, NBA Region 15



Well, some genius over at USPS Headquarters is at it again. Instead of fixing the many things that are wrong with the Postal Service, they have decided to introduce a new “innovated” idea. They could be fixing DOIS, mail sorting machines (they can’t even stop even stop us from receiving mail upside down), earlier start times and the most important, the climate

on the workroom floor. No, they are introducing Consolidated Casing.

I won’t go into great detail. For that you can go to the Director of City Delivery Chris Jackson’s articles in the Postal Record. Suffice to say it is a joke. Basically, it is a carrier “casing” five or six assignments while the other carriers, who originally cased and delivered the assignments, just deliver it. They do not case mail at all. They will be on the street delivering the mail for at least seven hours and forty-five minutes. The contractual violations are staggering. They have even tried this before, and it has failed miserably.

The USPS chose to do this right at the time that we have opened negotiations on a new contract. What could more show their disregard to working together? They call this a test but they are rolling out new sites every week. A test should only be in a few offices, not new add-ons every week. In my opinion, this is a rollout, not a test. The hardship they are imposing on our brothers and sisters is disgraceful. The “Casers” have to come in at 5:00 or

5:30am to start throwing up the mail. The carriers who deliver, start in two waves, 8 and 9 in the morning.

Do they care we have family, friends and a life outside of the post office when they force us to work overtime long into the night? Do they care when they intentionally violate the contract to our face and tell us it’s a test so grieve it? Do they care that they constantly demean and belittle us when they try to tell us how to do our jobs and then change those very jobs improperly?

The answer is no, they don’t. This is how we are repaid for all the work we do - bad treatment, an unreasonable contract offer and consolidated casing. This is not a surprise, just a sad commentary on the USPS decision makers. What amazes me is do they think we are going to take it? Don’t they know us by now?

Besides filing a National Level Grievance, we had a lawsuit in Federal Court for an injunction to stop this insanity. Unfortunately, we lost the injunction. The court reasoned that a preliminary injunction halting an employer action pending arbitration is only warranted when the employer’s action would render the arbitration “meaningless.” However, this is not going to stop us. The National Grievance hearing started on November 22nd. We will fight their “tests.” We will fight their attitude and conduct. Every time management at the local or headquarters level breaks the contract, we will grieve it and fight it. Our shop stewards and carriers will demand their rights and the respect that they have earned. We are not going to be contracted out, we will not stand for programs that abuse or belittle us. We will each get involved and protect ourselves and our fellow brothers and sisters. We will fight all these injustices and we will prevail. ☑

The New Jersey State Association of Letter Carriers

Congressional Conference

March 11, 12, and 13, 2020
Capitol Hill Hyatt Regency
Washington, DC



2020 Richard P O'Connell, Sr. Scholarship

Christine Strasser, Director of Education



The Richard O'Connell Sr. Scholarship is awarded annually to a dependent child of a NALC member within the New Jersey State Association of Letter Carriers. The applicant must be a high school senior when completing the application. The recipient receives a one thousand dollar deposit, to the college which they plan to attend

during their freshman year.

The scholarship process begins with the submission of an application to the scholarship chairperson. The application is in this issue of the Garden State Letter

Carrier, and is available online at NJSALC.com. The application must be returned by February 14, 2020. The applicants will receive a scholarship packet. The applicants are requested to submit SAT scores, class rank, honors, clubs, achievements, and an essay to compete for the scholarship. The scholarship packet must be postmarked by April 17, 2020.

All the submitted scholarship packets are mailed to a professor, who reviews each packet. The professor makes the final determination from the applicants packets. The recipient of the scholarship is recognized at the member's monthly branch meeting in the spring. It is an excellent opportunity for high school seniors to help reduce the escalating cost of college. ☐

Are You Registered to Vote?

Chuck Goushian, Executive Board Member



Are you registered to vote? Are you signed up to vote by mail? Now is the time to register, if you haven't already. I voted by mailing in my ballot for the previous state elections. I like voting by mail for a couple reasons. First and foremost, it's business for our employer, which means more work for us. Secondly, there's a paper trail. I

like the idea of being able to prove what a vote actually is, if it ever comes down to that.

I understand these little elections aren't as exciting as a national election, let alone a presidential election. But it's our state, county and local elections that are the breeding grounds for future national elections. Politicians usually

start their careers at the local level. Sometimes it's on a school board, or as a committee person or mayor. They move on to other political arenas like county and state offices. It's important to get involved locally as well as nationally. Educating these local politicians also helps educate our communities, which brings more people on our side when it comes time to public support for our issues. These local politicians also get to know you too. It's like the old adage of getting in on the ground floor.

All elections are important and it's important we vote in all elections. Your single vote matters. Too many of us are disengaged and it shows in the low voter turnout. Please make sure you vote; maybe you could consider signing up to vote by mail. Also, encourage your family to vote as well. Make it a family event. Remember, the family that votes together, usually drives to the polling place together...or something like that. ☐



Veterans, You are America.

**“Guardians of Peace, Heroes of War ...
You Are the Strength in America’s Heart,
You are the Few Who Defend the Many,
The Selfless Soldiers Who Keep Us Free,
You are the Vets ... The Best,
We Shall Always Be Grateful**

2020 Richard P. O'Connell Scholarship Program

The New Jersey State Association of Letter Carriers (NJSALC) is now accepting applications for the 2020 Richard P. O'Connell Scholarship Program. All requests for applications must be sent to the scholarship committee chair by February 14, 2020. The Chair will send scholarship packets to all applicants. Completed packets must be returned to the Chair by April 17, 2020. The scholarships are available to the dependent children of members of NALC Branches within the state of New Jersey. Applicant's parent/guardian must be a member in good standing of the NALC for at least one (1) year prior to making application. Applicants must be a high school senior when completing the application. **ALL** requested information must be received by the scholarship chair by dates indicated above. O'Connell Scholarship Awards are issued in the year of high school graduation only.

Christine Strasser – O'Connell Scholarship Chair

9 Weamaconk Drive
Englishtown, NJ 07726

O'Connell Scholarship Application (Please Print)

Applicant's Name _____

NALC Member Name _____

Home Address _____

City / State / ZIP _____

Home Telephone _____ Cell _____

Email Address _____

Applicant's Signature _____

NALC Member Signature _____

Relationship to Applicant _____

Local NALC Branch Officer Signature required for verification of member in good standing:

Branch Officer Signature _____ Title _____

Branch Officer Printed Name _____

Branch Number _____ Branch City _____ Date _____

Safety and Job Protection - Perfect Together

Nelson Gaskill, First Vice-President



Driving Rules: Handbook M-41 Section 812.2 requires letter carriers to observe all traffic regulations prescribed by law, no exceptions. No speeding, illegal parking in Fire Zones or yellow curbs –find a proper parking space in strip malls, etc., no parking on the wrong side of the road. You can be issued a ticket by the police if you have parked illegally and/or caused an accident.

Skipping blocked mailboxes: Postal Operations Manual Section 632.14 states:

Where the approach to the mail receptacle is temporarily blocked by a parked vehicle during normal hours for the area, or snow or ice hampers the approach to the mailbox, the carrier normally dismounts to make delivery. If the carrier continually experiences a problem servicing curbside boxes and where the customer is able to control on-street parking in front of his

or her mailbox but does not take prompt corrective action after being properly notified, the postmaster may, with the approval of the district manager, withdraw delivery service.

The POM is clear, a carrier must dismount if the box is blocked by a car, trash can or even snow!

Not attempting parcels: With the huge increase in parcels some carriers are *pressured* to save time by leaving them at the door (or apartment manager's office) without attempting to deliver them first, sometimes called "knock and drop".

Handbook M-41 Section 321.4 states in part, "determine if someone is available at the address by ringing the doorbell or knocking on the door". **Handbook M-41 Section 322.311.a:** Parcels *must* not be left in an unprotected location such as a porch *unless* the mailer participates in the Carrier Release Program "Carrier-Leave if no response" or the addressee has given *written* directions for an alternate delivery location, but only after attempting delivery at the customer's door.

Making mounted deliveries with the vehicle in gear: Postal regulations require that carriers take the vehicle out of gear and place the transmission in either park or neutral when making a curbside delivery. **M-0094, a National Level Step 4 agreement provides:** employees performing curbside delivery, shall follow the procedures of (1) on level streets and roads, placing the vehicle in neutral (N), placing the foot firmly on the brake pedal while collecting or placing mail in the mailbox. (2) On hills, placing the vehicle in park (P), placing the foot firmly on the brake pedal while collecting or placing mail in the mailbox.

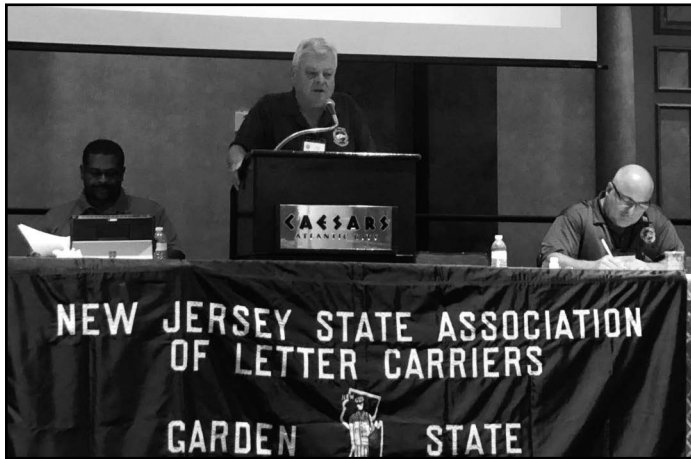
Many carriers are not aware of this requirement. That's not surprising, because in most places the Postal Service does not even teach it, even though the *USPS Standard Training Program for City Letter Carriers* instructs: "When delivering curbside boxes, place vehicle in neutral on level ground or in park when on a hill". The reason is to prevent injury should the vehicle accidentally move while a carrier's arm is extended into the mailbox.

Stewards and carriers should require managers to abide by their own regulations and cease from instructing carriers to violate them. They may try to claim that there's a past practice of doing otherwise, but a past practice does not override the clear and unambiguous language of the regulations.

We all know managers are, on a daily basis, pushing carriers to work faster and faster but if something goes wrong they are very quick to blame the carrier. In most offices they talk safety but if it takes longer then they want you to take shortcuts. What happens if you leave or just toss a package up on a porch and it gets stolen? Who's going to have to answer for that? What happens if you fail to put the vehicle in neutral and it rips your arm up? We hope you realize your family's future depends on you keeping your job and staying healthy. Work safely and protect your future by working by the rules. ☑



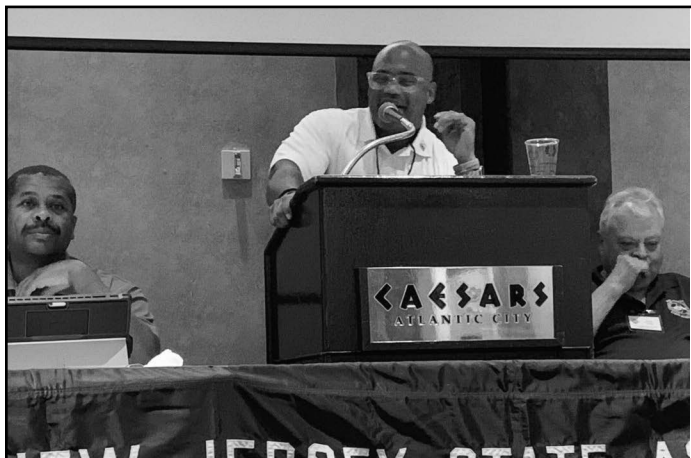
107th Biennial NJSALC Convention Atlantic City, NJ



President O'Connell kicks off the convention



National Director of City Delivery Chris Jackson



Legislative Political Organizer (LPO) Marc Ashmon



Delegates to the Convention



Region 15 NBA Cirelli conducting training



Region 15 NBA Napadano conducting training



Garden State Letter Carrier

c/o NJSALC

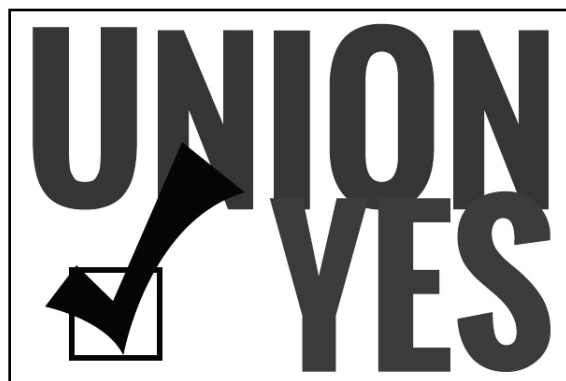
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