

# WI RLCA

Fall 2002

NRCA  
Convention



### The end of summer?

It's hard to believe that it is almost time for school to begin again. This past year the Wisconsin Legislature passed a bill mandating the public schools not open until after Labor Day. This later start will of course mean that most schools will still be in session when the State Convention is traditionally held. I appointed a committee to study the format, days of the week & dates for future conventions. The committee has recommended a later mid June

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convention and also a change to a Friday through Sunday format. These changes cannot be made for the 2003 convention but will be in place for 2004. I want to thank the members of the committee, Dan Strobel, Judy Pederson, Barb Schmidtbauer, Roger Schewe and Barbara Weber for their work.

The Delegates to the state convention this year passed a change in the Audit Committee procedure. This committee will now serve year round and rotate with three year terms. The initial appointments to this committee are; Vilas Smith Jr., Lisa Wojnarowski, & Linda Vanden Plas. Thanks for accepting this task.

On Sunday, September 15 the Lakeland District will hold it's fifth Multicultural Event at the Milwaukee Public Museum, 800 North Wells St. This is a family event with free admission from 9-5 for postal employee families. Bring your postal ID for admission. "Hero of the Year" awards will be presented to both community & postal employees and there will be a special "Heroes Stamp" cancellation ceremony. If you are

close to Milwaukee I would encourage you to take part in this event.

Elsewhere in this issue you will find articles about the national convention written by both board members and other delegates who volunteered to do so. I will try not to repeat what they have written. In my opinion the most significant issue was the one that the majority of delegates did not want to think about. That is the future of our long cherished evaluated compensation system. The results of the last national mail count seemed to be viewed by most as an aberration caused not by a trend of decreasing mail volumes over a long term but rather because of management "misconduct" in the counting process. Most believe, ( or want to believe), that everything is going to be alright next time around. Resolutions were defeated that would go no further than ask our national board to investigate the possibility of an alternative method of compensation. I hope that they are right.

The Fall Conference will take place October 5-6 at the

Holiday Inn, Stevens Point. We are going to try something different this time because of the survey the board did last spring and a resolution that was passed at state convention. The Saturday afternoon session when we would normally have a guest speaker will be devoted to steward training. This training will be open to all members, steward and non steward. At press time I do not know who the National Board member will be for Sunday. When I find out I will have Tom post it on the web page, so look for it there. Space limitations have caused me to limit the number for national convention photos that I can run in this issue, but as always thanks to our unofficial photographer Tom Balza for providing me with a nice selection.

**See you at a union meeting.**

Bill Jarzombeck

# NEWS & VIEWS

## 2002 Auxiliary Member of the Year

Wisconsin's 2002 Auxiliary Member of the Year is Elmira (Mike) Masanz. Mike became involved in the auxiliary when Dale became a rural letter carrier, first as a member and then by becoming an officer at the county level. She is a past-president of the RLCA-Marathon County. She continued to stay involved by being elected to the State Board starting as a committee person and continuing on to become our president. Mike was a state officer for 10 years. Mike and Dale were co-chairs for the banquet decorating committee for the National Convention held in Madison in 2000. Mike has attended county and booster meetings for approximately 25 years and has attended national conventions for the past 13 years.

She has been married to Dale for 36 years and have two children and three grandchildren. She has been involved in church organizations and a member of the Jaycees. Mike is deserving of this honor and Wisconsin was proud to see her honored at the State and National Conventions. Please join us in congratulating Mike!



## News From Washington

Postal reform is dead. Rep. John McHugh, R-N.Y. worked seven years on a reform bill that was never advanced by the House Postal Service subcommittee. So now what? With the Postal Service languishing in the red and eighty five billion in unfunded pension benefits on the horizon, what are the options? Nobody in an elected position wants to be responsible for voting to change the Postal Service. We have many critics, but most of them are in appointed positions like the Board of Governors.

Robert McLean, executive director of the Mailers Council, a mailing industry advocate based in Arlington, VA says, "a presidential commission to study the future course of the Postal Service is the best vehicle available for ensuring that it doesn't reach the financial calamity that I think is inevitable without it." Mr. McLean gave a PowerPoint presentation on this subject at our recently completed national convention in Portland, Maine. He went on to say that, "the Postal Service cannot get by with the way things stand. It will reach its {\$1 5 billion} statutory borrowing limit within two years."

Pressure is building for something to be done. Surveys have shown that the American taxpayer wants universal service, six days a week. Congress can't make any decisions because of the politics. A presidential commission seems to be the only logical choice. A presidential commission was formed by Richard Nixon in the 60's and we went from being called the Post Office Department to our new present moniker, the Postal Service!.

Jim Polk Vice President

## **Greetings!!**

Finally, it has cooled a bit. We thought we had taken the heat wave with us when we attended national convention in Portland, Maine. One tends to think upper New England would be cool - HAH! Convention was of consequence. I was expecting lots of hot debate. We did have some good debates on a variety of issues. The banquet was fantastic. We had lobster served chuck wagon style. The logistics of serving about 1,000 people in a very short time was fascinating. I thank all who voted for me to be a delegate. I appreciate your confidence.

## **GMAC**

In 2003, we celebrate one hundred years as an association. The first national convention was held in Chicago in 1903. It is quite appropriate the 2003 convention should also be in Chicago. GMAC will celebrate fifty years affiliation with Rural Letter Carrier Association at the same time. Corvette will also celebrate fifty years of production. What does Corvette have to do with Rural Letter Carrier Association and GMAC insurance? Well, GMAC is proposing to donate a Corvette at next year's national convention to a member of the Association.

There is a hook. GMAC needs to sell seven thousand (7,000) policies nation wide to rural letter carriers (this includes the friends and family program). That would mean GMAC has fifty thousand (50,000) active policies for rural carriers. Wisconsin rural carriers currently have 415 policies (about 15% of our state membership). Of course, we can improve that number. I would invite you to call GMAC for a quote. 1-800-VIP-AUTO

What does GMAC insurance offer our Association? Each year, GMAC gives a thousand dollar scholarship offered through the Auxillary. This year, GMAC donated a S-10 pickup which was won by someone in Indiana. (It is getting closer to Wisconsin - next year should be our year - one lucky Wisconsin carrier could drive a Corvette home after convention) Each year GMAC gives dollars back to the state organizations. Wisconsin received over \$12,000. If we have more active policies, it means a greater rebate to the state. At county and state meetings, the state officers are responsible for advertising GMAC insurance. The money we receive pays for officer expenditure and for door prizes which are offered at conferences and conventions.

What about the insurance?

GMAC provides the same coverage as other companies which means liability, collision, comprehensive, uninsured and underinsured motorist coverage. Where the company differs is the RLC plan covers a rental car if

you need to rent due to accident or occurrence., pays medical bills resulting from injury to you, family or passengers while in your car and covers medical bills should you or family members be passengers in another's vehicle following an accident or if you are a pedestrian. GMAC reimburses towing for route vehicles and covers up to one hour roadside service. GMAC provides up to \$50 locksmith service, \$100/day up to \$500 for emergency expense allowance and a theft reward program.

Tort Claims Act: GMAC knows how to deal with the Postal Service should a carrier cause an accident while in duty status. That is a big deal for a rural carrier. The Postal Service is to pay the expenses of the "other" guy should the rural carrier cause the accident during duty. Your insurance company would pay your expenses. If you have had an OWCP claim, you know how difficult it is to have the claim paid. It would be no different following an auto accident.

Plus following an auto incident, the carrier and postmaster are involved with an accident review board which is not fun. Should that happen, remember you are entitled to union representation at the accident review board.

Back to GMAC - phone numbers:

questions, quotes or to purchase a policy:

call 1-800-847-2886 (1-800-VIP-AUTO)

Hours: M-F 7:30 AM to 7:00 PM CST

Sat 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM CST

Customer Service: 1-800-325-1190

24 hour emergency claims:

1-800-325-1088. There are 80 offices nationwide with over 4,000 adjusters.

Glass claim 1-800-414-8844 (They come to you).

At national convention, Shirley Corno, director of branch dealing with rural carriers, invited all rural carriers to call and to obtain a quote.

## **PROVIDENT GUILD:**

Provident Guild is a fraternal death benefit policy for rural carriers and rural carrier spouses. Enrollees choose which category of coverage they wish to have - depending on age - and the premium is from \$10 to \$50 annually. The premium does not change as one ages. The benefit categories range from \$1000 to \$5000, with one-third payable immediately and two-thirds payable after the next national convention. Provident Guild is a low cost benefit for rural carriers.

## **FALL CONFERENCE:**

Fall Conference is 5 and 6 October at the Stevens Point Holidome. See Marty's column for information. Plan to attend.

There is much good information at the conferences. See You there!

Louise Gonja, Executive Committeeman

ACCEPTING THE AWARD FOR WISCONSIN.  
Secretary/Treasurer, Karen Schauer.

Wisconsin ended the membership year, June 30<sup>th</sup> by achieving 3262 members. Our National office gives special recognition for highest increase in percent of total membership. The states are divided into groups based upon the number of routes. Wisconsin has 1691 routes and is in Category IV (1201-1800 routes) This past year we had a 3.05% increase in membership and were #1 in our group. At the National Convention in Portland ME I accepted this special award for our state. Thank you to everyone, county secretaries, academy trainers, board members and fellow carriers, for your dedication in the recruitment and maintenance of our membership.

Last year we had 32 delegates representing Wisconsin but with our membership increase this year we were able to seat 34 Delegates. This meant more voices expressing the views of Wisconsin carriers and issues that affect Wisconsin carriers. Now that convention is over and a new membership year has begun we need to continue to recruit and increase our membership more. One area that we need to look at is our RCAs. Currently we have only 714 relief members. Regular carriers please ask your subs to join and bring them to a fall meeting. If you are an RCA member then ask your fellow RCAs to join. The future of the post office is changing daily and if regulars or RCAs want a future in the post office then you need to be informed and united.

One thing that Regular carriers sometimes ask is why should I join. Well, the Rural Carrier Health Insurance Plan is only available to members and it is the best health insurance plan. It provides coverage for podiatrists and chiropractors and access to a NurseLine service 24/7/365 for help with treatment for minor illnesses and injuries, preparation before a doctor appointment, questions on prescriptions and other valuable health related topics. And even though the dental benefit is meager, the RCBP is one of the few plans in the FEHB Program that still provides some dental

care benefits. They have a routine eye exam benefit and finally it has the BEST cancer coverage there is. The RCBP pays 100% for their cancer treatments and even allows last-ditch efforts of bone marrow, as well as encourages 2<sup>nd</sup> opinions. Open Season for Health Care starts in November so check out the Rural Carrier Benefit Plan for yourself and you will be sold.

The TSP Open Season will begin in November also. What do you plan to do with what's left of your retirement nest egg? Most financial planners will tell us that a lot depends on our age (how long until we start spending our TSP account money) and our risk tolerance. If we have years to go before we tap our retirement savings account then this may be a buying opportunity. Buy low sell high begins with buying low they say. It's easy to buy when the market is climbing. We just jump aboard and watch it go up. But when the market slips, we have a tendency to bail out. And look for a safer investment. I read an article by Mike Causey, Senior Editor for FEDweek and his general message seems to be "Act not in haste". What we should do, if anything should be based on the so-called Sleep At Night Rule. If you can't sleep because you are worrying about your investments, you are in the wrong investments. Everyone needs to know themselves and their goals and how much risk they can tolerate. Mr. Causey says that as investors go, government workers are in relatively good shape. Their TSP is world class and checked and double-checked by all sorts of watchdogs. The G fund is the best of the best super-safe investments. And federal workers get annuities that are indexed to inflation (compared to private sector workers who don't) so they are less dependent on investments in the first place. So whether you shift money from the G or F fund into the depressed C fund is your call. The main thing is to continue to invest-via the tax-deferred TSP—to the maximum. It isn't much fun now, but it could be a source of great joy down the road.

Northland District. It was the best of times; it was the worst of times – wait that was a in a novel and this is real life. Our district is making MPOO territory changes. 546 offices are now reporting to a Terry Meyer in Rochester, 540 offices report to Bob Kunowski, domiciled in St Paul and Tracy Franseen is

# **YOUR WIRLCA FALL CONFERENCE**

- Saturday, October 5, 2002 -- 1 PM to 4:00 PM
- Saturday, October 5, 2002 -- 7 PM to 10:00 PM
- Sunday, October 6, 2002 -- 9 AM to 3:00 PM

Holiday Inn Convention Center  
1501 North Point Drive

(Business 51 and North Point Drive)  
Stevens Point, WI

- Mark ***YOUR*** calendar
- Make ***YOUR*** reservation
- Attend ***YOUR*** conference

**Saturday afternoon – training for local stewards  
(Everyone is welcome to attend.)**

**Saturday evening – hospitality room with light snacks & beverages**

**Sunday -- A national officer will address the conference and  
answer our questions.**

- Come and meet ***YOUR*** State Board
- Come and talk to ***YOUR*** national officer
- Come and learn about ***YOUR*** association
- Bring ***YOUR*** family
- Bring another rural carrier
- Bring a smile

## **ROOM RESERVATIONS AND RATES**

- A block of rooms has been reserved with special WIRLCA rates
- Rooms must be reserved by September 4, 2002
- Rates: \$62.00 single; \$82.00 double (plus taxes)
- Phone: 715-341-1340 or 800-922-7880

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## DEATH, TAXES,

and the Wisconsin Rural Letter Carriers who attended the National Convention in Portland Maine. Yup, these are the things that you can count on.

This year our delegates and non-delegates contributed nearly \$5,000 to our Political Action Committee fund. Each and every year this group of carriers show their commitment to ensuring a bright future for our craft. The really beautiful thing, from my perspective, is that I don't even have to ask them to contribute. They are anxious to participate because they are well informed and understand the vital role that our PAC plays, in helping us to remain politically involved.

I can't begin to thank them enough. During the Convention, Wisconsin carriers contributed the fourth highest amount to PAC (among all of the States). This is quite an accomplishment and everyone who participated should be very proud of their efforts.

Pride is sort of a tricky thing. We have all felt a sense of pride when we have done something extraordinary. We can recognize and appreciate the efforts of others, and be proud of them, but in order to achieve a feeling of pride we need to actually be *involved* in helping to attain the goal.

Consider your reaction to this article. If you choose to acknowledge the fact that our delegation showed such a high level of commitment to PAC by saying to yourself "that's nice" you are not thinking of yourself as being a *part of the group*. If your first thought, when you learned about how well our State performed, was "yeah baby!" then you are *the group* and are proud of yourself and your State. If you thought "what is this guy talking about?" - read on.

I wrote about several legislative issues, that potentially affect the nations' Rural Letter Carriers, in our last newsletter so I won't cover them again but our Association and it's members need to remain vigilant. We must keep our elected representatives informed about how a potential piece of legislation will impact our members. The fact is - we don't. Be honest with yourself, how often do you phone or write to your Congressman? Complaining about politicians at the local diner or pub won't help. You have to let them know what you want.

We have a responsibility to cast an informed vote in the upcoming elections. Please educate yourselves on the issues that are important to you and research your representative's voting record. Political party affiliation may be the most important criteria for some voters but individual candidates do not necessarily always follow "the party line". You may request position papers from a candidate's campaign headquarters which will explain their views on an issue. Odds are that their campaign speeches will include statements like "I want to build a better America". Well, who can be against that? If he wants to build it himself that would be fine but you should know if he wants *you* to build it *for free* or pay to have someone in Taiwan build it. (This is obviously a ridiculous example - but you get the point).

We should also show our support, for our favorite candidates, by helping to fund their campaigns. Keeping your legislator informed and researching their positions on every issue can be very time consuming and difficult but helping to fund the campaigns, of quality candidates, is extremely easy! All you have to do is write out a check, payable to: **NRLCA PAC** and mail it to:

**DENNIS R. NELSON**  
**1002 55<sup>TH</sup> ST**  
**AMERY WI 54001**

I will send your contribution to our National office and our Vice President of Government Relations will take care of the details. He is involved with Congressmen, on a daily basis, and knows where our funds can be put to their best use. The alternative, to having Rural Carriers and Retirees helping to fund political campaigns, is allowing United Parcel Service and our other competitors to fund campaigns for candidates who may favor eliminating the US Postal Service.

None of your dues money is going into the Political Action Committee fund. We rely on voluntary contributions from our members who want to continue to enjoy the same, or better, level of benefits which are directly controlled by Federal law. Contributions of any amount are welcomed but I would ask you to consider writing out a check for at least \$26. There isn't anything magic about that number other than your name will appear in our National magazine. I will mail a PAC pin to you and any contributor, of over \$50, will have their name posted on the wirlca.org web site. Your contribution is not tax deductible. Thank you, very much!

## *It's that time of year*

### *again*

It's hard to believe that summer is almost over, soon enough however the weather will turn cooler and leaves will start to change colors and begin to fall. For rural carriers, it is also the time of year when we get to make some decisions regarding our pay. This year the "guarantee year" ends Nov. 1<sup>st</sup> and the new one begins on Nov. 2<sup>nd</sup>.

During the last two weeks of the guarantee year your supervisor should be posting a new "relief day work list". Carriers who sign the RDWL are agreeing to work their scheduled relief day if there are not enough relief carriers available that day to cover the routes of regular carriers who are scheduled off. If you sign the list and you need to be sure that you have your relief day off, the only way you can be sure that you will not be scheduled to work, is if you take either the preceding or following day off as annual leave.

Carriers that are in a six or eight hour leave category may also be able to choose the "high" option. Any rural carrier whose route may be classified in more than one evaluated classification may elect the higher classification if certain requirements are met. To elect the higher hour category:

1. It must be demonstrated that the rural carrier's total actual work hours will not exceed 2080 during the guarantee period. Such determination should be based on, but not limited to, the rural carrier's performance during the previous year;
2. The rural carrier agrees in writing, to use sufficient annual leave to assure that the total actual hours worked will not exceed the 2080 annual guarantee;
3. The rural carrier must be in a 6 or 8 hour (20 or 26 day) leave category.

Due to the way our salary schedule works and a provision in our contract (article 10.4.b) that allows a carrier to take leave without pay on Saturday if a leave replacement is available at the carriers option in many cases a carrier can increase their income without working any additional days by choosing the high option and taking the additional Saturday as LWOP.

For example – a carrier at step 12 with the option of either a 40K or a 44J would have a salary of \$41,284 with the low option. If they were to take the high option their salary would be \$47,479. For each day of LWOP they use they will lose \$166.01 for a total of \$4316.26 after 26 days. Therefore they would be paid \$43162.73 or \$1878.73 more than if they had taken they low option and worked the same amount of days. You need to keep in mind that after using the equivalent of one full pay period worth of LWOP you will lose a pay period worth of annual and sick leave, in other words if you are in an eight hour leave earning category you would lose 2 days of annual leave and one day of sick leave after using 26 days of LWOP. If you subtract those three days from the additional pay you receive you would still be \$1380.70 ahead. If you e-mail me with the options you have and what step you are currently at, I'd be happy to run the numbers for your route. My e-mail is [tombittner@wirlca.org](mailto:tombittner@wirlca.org).

There are a few other things that you might want to consider before you choose the low option. When you retire your "high three" is figured using the evaluation of your route, not how much you were actually paid so LWOP doesn't affect it. If you are on a J or H route and take a full week of vacation, you will be able to take advantage of "free Saturday's". Last but not least, if you should change your mind you can always go from the high to the low option but once you choose the low option, you are stuck with it until either the next national mail count or the end of the guarantee period.

Tom Bittner – Executive Committeeman

## **PERSONAL NOTES**

Hi, again. Well this convention was considerably more exciting than the last one in New Jersey. I am going to attempt to review the issues I feel were most pertinent to us.

### **GUEST SPEAKERS**

**Jon M Steel**

**Vice President Northeast Area Operations**

I am not going to dabble much in what Mr. Steel had said, but he did mention that first class mail was in decline. He also made a statement that the old adage of take business for granted is over and that we had to make significant strides in marketing and sales. He also mentioned we wouldn't be able to make these strides without more flexibility in marketing and pricing.

Mr. Steel acknowledged our efforts as other officers have in the past and I am not going to waste any more space on this, but I will mention that our delegates did not receive him in the usual manner, with applause.

At his introduction there was very little and very sparse applause and at the conclusion of his speech there was almost none to be heard. This more or less set the tone of the entire convention.

**Hon. Susan M. Collins**

**United States Senate**

Susan complimented us on our efforts during our most recent confrontation in regards to terrorism, anthrax contamination, pipe bombs, etc. Susan implied that the entire country is proud of our efforts and this only substantiates our worth and dedication to our customers and our craft. Susan then went in to economics of the Postal System. Last year we lost 200 million and this year we are projected to lose 1.68 billion dollars. A good deal of that money will be spent on equipment used for security and the decontamination mail.

She also mentioned that our maximum borrowing limit is 15 billion dollars.

Susan also indicated that other factors such as higher health care costs and mail volume are down in general. First class mail volume has declined for the last 4 years and now represents only 48% of the total volume. She stated that computer email, faxes and telecommunication technology has shrunk our market share.

Susan also stated that we need a strong universal postal system going into the next century. She said that we deliver 200 billion pieces of mail each year, which represents 40% of the world's volume. 7 million people each day visit the post office.

Susan also brought up the possibility of privatization of the USPS and she felt very strongly that if this were considered, that rural America would end up paying more for mail delivery service.

Susan also discussed the Transformation Plan and the fact that it was defeated. Her intention now is to present a bill "Topic Postal Commission Act of 2002" and to open dialog with congress, the White House and present senate bill 860 and is honored to have our NRLCA endorsement.

Susan was well received by delegates. Applause from all.

**Ken Parmelee**

**NRLCA Vice President of Government Affairs**

Ken was introduced with a warm reception and was noted that he has 40 years in politics and is an asset to our team. The gist of Ken's speech pertained to the Postal Reform Bill. Ken indicated that UPS and the Teamsters lobbied heavily against us and distorted and lied about the Transformation Plan. The result of the committee votes were 6 yes, 20 no and 9 not present.

He said that our EMA proposal will be attached to another bill for legislative approval.

Ken also mentioned that USPS represent 9% of the gross national product and affects directly and indirectly, 9 million peoples' livelihood. Anything that is done that adversely affects the postal system, will affect our economy.

**Wally Olihovik**

**President of the Nation Association of Postmasters of the United States**

Wally appeared to be well received, especially after his speech. I think his speech was very poignant and I am running out of space, but I will say that his feelings about managements' philosophy fell almost in line with our own. I found his final comment rather gratifying, whereas he indicated that the UPS is a unregulated monopoly, which has 74% of the total parcel market, and they should think twice about accusing us of controlling market share.

**Michael Gan**

**NRLCA Legal Counsel**

It was announced that Bill Peer has retired and is no longer our legal counsel. Michael J Gan has assumed his responsibilities. Michael was previously Mr. Peers associate. Michael indicated that union - management relations are very strained and there is very little trust between us.

Most of this trust was lost during our most recent mail count. He mentioned that the USPS changed our mail count guidelines, without our input. He mentioned that the grievance battle has just begun. He said that we have more cases in arbitration that we have ever had. He mentioned that we must be committed to our contract and defend it. He said we must be one minded and stick together. I am not going to comment any further as results will judge Mr. Gan's efforts in regards to our legal representation. I wish him much success as we all do.

### Constitution Changes

#### Article 3 – Membership – Section 1

Our delegates have elected to exclude those who are now working in management positions from the membership roles.

#### By Laws

There were several attempts and much debate to add language to restrict the publication of our National Convention minutes in our National Rural Letter Carrier magazine. The intent was to censor some of the information available to those who would use this against our betterment. This by law amendment failed.

The gist here, was that censorship would gain nothing, as those wanting the information would get access to it one way or another.

There were other amendments pertaining to limiting those who are currently authorized to sign documents to limit them to elected officers only. This also failed.

I should also point out that an amendment was made to reduce our National Officers salaries by 11% to reflect the reduction in pay of the March mail count. This failed. Your delegation voted this amendment down.

#### Amendment 17 – Representation

An effort was made to limit retiree delegate representation stating that no one could serve as a delegate who has been retired longer than 5 years. This was also voted down.

There was an amendment made as to the establishment of an elected board for the purpose of hiring a professional team to be used for the 2004 contract between the NRLCA and the USPS. There was a lot of debate and this amendment was also voted down.

Also there was much discussion in regards to somehow coding our NRLCA web site to prevent access by unauthorized personnel, someone other than members.

### Resolutions

All together we covered 210 binding and non-binding resolutions. Needless to say I am not going to review all of them. I will say that the majority passed and I am sure they will be outlined in our next issue of the NRLCA magazine. There was much debate and several of the issues required a standing vote. Some were even counted. This is also true for the constitution and by laws proposed changes.

### Elections

Of the nine national offices, 6 were up for re-election. All incumbents were re-elected with the exception of executive committeeman, Brady H Porth, Jr., chair of the executive committee, who lost to Jeanette Dwyer.

Jeanette has been a past State Steward, Asst State Steward, Sr Asst State Steward, Local Steward, District President, DJSC/Mid-Carolina District, Eastern Area JSC, Steward Task Force II, NRLCA Appeals Committee – 2000 and Chairman of the Appeals Committee – 2001. I might add that during the caucus I found Jeanette to be very knowledgeable about our craft and our union contract and I support her whole-heartedly and wish her much success in her new capacity as Executive Committee person.

### Summary

It is not difficult comparing this convention to the previous one. There was quite a sense of purpose to this past convention. Comments were made, prior to debate, by individuals pertaining to the way in which we were treated during the last mail count. Words were used such as appalling treatment, intimidations, harassment, and deplorable behavior on the part of management. The wall of animosity and mistrust, which stands between us now for just a few pennies, they have gained. Sometimes I wonder who is at the helm, Mr. Potter or corporate America.

I kept track of these references and gave up after the 18<sup>th</sup>. I was very pleased to hear our national board stand up individually and express their displeasure with the way the mail count was handled.

I would like to thank all of you who elected our delegation to represent you at the convention. We worked hard at making the best possible choices for us and I believe you will see this was the case, when you read your national magazine.

Your Committeeman, **Bill Foley**

# Welcome New Members!

JULIA MAGESKE  
PAULA M POCZEKAJ  
KRIS T ANDERSON  
DAWN M FRITZ  
LORRAINE MICHEL  
MARY T MURRAY  
STEVE L MULDOON  
DAVID C GNAT  
DAN H ZIEGLER  
KATHRYN L SCHROEDER  
MICHAEL A HEISER  
JEANNE L SALZWEDEL  
DONNAMAE MATOH  
JILL P OBERMEIER  
KATHLEEN F BAKER  
JUDITH A BARDENWERPER  
DIANA K TYCZYNSKI  
PENNY J CHRISTENSON  
VICTORIA M LUTZ  
LYNN M NIELSEN  
SHIRLEY K FINLEY  
THOMAS D LAWRENCE  
DAVID T PLISS



*Continued from page 4 Karen*

now handling offices in the 547 and 548 areas. The district is also implementing three new programs: DPARS (Delivery Performance Achievement and Recognition System, RDMATS/BUDGET (Rural Delivery Management and Tracking System) and Rural Route Personnel Management and Record Keeping. Each of these is a separate entity but some use some of the same information sources. Bob Byers, MN RLCA Steward, the DJSC and I are all researching these programs and the effects that they will have on the rural carriers in our district.

Finally, Remember – you are important as a rural carrier, but most importantly as a role model to those around you.

GOD BLESS AMERICA  
"America the beautiful"...  
May it always stay that way...  
But to keep 'told Glory" flying  
There's a price that we must pay...  
For everything worth having  
Demands work and sacrifice,  
and Freedom is a gift from God  
That commands the highest price...  
For all our wealth and progress  
Are as worthless as can be  
Without the Faith that made us great  
And kept our country free...  
Nor can our nation hope to live  
Unto itself alone,  
For the problems of our neighbors  
Must today become our own...  
And while it's hard to understand  
The complexities of war,  
Each one of us must realize  
That we are fighting for  
The principles of freedom  
And the decency of man,  
And as a Christian Nation  
We're committed to God's Plan...  
And as the land of liberty  
And a great God-fearing nation  
We must protect our honor  
And fulfill our obligation...

Author Helen Steiner Rice  
Submitted by Ruth Moody State Chaplain

## COA

If you have a change of address-Please cut the label off of your *NEWSLETTER* and send it to Karen Schauer, State Secretary-Treasurer, 5857 Prill Rd., Eau Claire, WI 54701-8215 Please include your telephone number.

## Rural Calendar 2002

September 14	Rusk Co. Mtg. Iron Horse	Holcombe
September 18	Polk-Burnett Co. Mtg.	Balsam Lake
September 21	Clark, Marathon & Price-Taylor Co Mtgs	Medford
September 25	Grant Iowa Co. Mtg. Arthur Haus	Arthur
September 26	Rock/Walworth Co. Mtg.	Darian 6:30
October 5-6	Fall Conference Holiday Inn	Stevens Point
October 13	Jefferson Co. Mtg.	Jefferson 11:30
October 19	Monroe Co. Mtg	
October 23	Washington Co. Mtg.	Heidles 7:00
October 26	Racine/Kenosha Co. Mtg.	Silver Lake 5:30
October 29	Cal-Man-She County Meeting	
June 8-10	State Convention	Rhindlander

**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE IS NOVEMBER 20**

### A FIRST TIME DELEGATE'S IMPRESSION OF NATIONAL CONVENTION

By Barbara Weber

Thank you for your vote of confidence in sending me to National Convention to represent us. I had an absolutely wonderful time! My biggest impression was just how hard some carriers work to take care of us. Their diligence in not only knowing the issues that affect carriers, knowing USPS policy, knowing labor law and keeping our national officers accountable left me in awe. I can't say enough about how helpful everyone around me was. One major technique or trick, if you will, that I learned was how to vote on a proposed amendment to our bylaws that I did not want to pass. The delegates around me voted for amending the amendment but then voted against the amended amendment. This puzzled me. They told me the amendment to our bylaws was made better by being amended and they voted for that just in case the amendment passed. (It did fail.) That was an "A-Ha" moment. I owe a big debt of gratitude to my "partners in crime" who showed me the ropes Lisa "Wojo" Wojnarowski and our mentor Mary O'Herron who, with her national reputation, introduced us to carriers from all across the United States. Once again I can't emphasize enough just how hard our delegates work at convention. And now, I'm going to catch up on my sleep

## Rural Free Classifieds

### **Mutual Transfer:**

None this issue

**For Sale:** The WI RLCA State Board will be disposing of surplus computer equipment at the Fall Conference October 6 in Stevens Point. For details contact Karen Schauer

Advertising in this column is available to WI RLCA members in good standing for transfers or vehicle related sales only. Ads are free and run as they are received, space permitting.

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At the state convention in Wisconsin Dells we had 63 juniors registered which is great. I hope everyone had a lot of fun at the state convention. Your new state officers are Chaplin-Katie Volz, Treasurer- Alison DuLac, Secretary-Katie Friend, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Pres.-Justin Landry, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Pres.- Michael Rasmussen, and President-Daphne Koch.

I'm proud to report some good news from the National convention in Portland, Maine. At Portland, we had 25 Wisconsin juniors registered, which are the most since I've been going to nationals. Another thing that I'm proud to report is that we had two contest winners from the state of Wisconsin. In the 6-8 age group, Paul Krombos placed 3<sup>rd</sup> with his poster. In the 12-14 age group, his sister Brittany Krombos placed 1<sup>st</sup> with her poster. For scholarships, Daphne Koch was the alternate for the Marie Mutchmore scholarship, which is judged on junior participation at state and national level; Drew Williams of Georgia was the recipient. -Daphne Koch, Junior President



## STEWARDS PAGE

I hope everyone had a very enjoyable summer. It is nearly gone. I missed the National Convention for the first time since 1992. I just had too many commitments at home to go this year. The distance from Wisconsin also was a factor. Hopefully I will be able to go next year in Chicago. I appreciate and thank everyone who voted for me as a national delegate.

Usually the end of summer meant that mail count was just around the corner. Because of the arbitration decision there are only a few routes counting in September. There are only fifty routes or less that will be counted in the Lakeland District. I do not have the numbers for the Northland District. Because of the few routes counting in the Lakeland District, there will not be any count training. The Lakeland DJSC is working on improving the mail count guide and it should be finished for use in January when we will have count training. Management and the Union have agreed to conduct this training together. The only routes counting in September will be those routes that had a 240-minute change from the spring count. There also may be some routes counting if they qualify for L-Route status and any aux routes over 39 hours. This change had to be in effect by the end of PP-17. The Pre-Count Conference must be completed by August 31. The special count will begin Tuesday, September 17 and end Monday, September 30. Route inspections should also be completed by this date. You will have two days to go over the completed count forms.

Many of you by now probably had a service talk on working off the clock. Management should have received a letter that was sent from USPS. The letter states that it is imperative that managers not allow rural carriers to work off the clock. The Union also sent a letter several months ago stating that while in the past we may have looked the other way at carriers working off the clock, this practice can no longer be tolerated. The arbitrator used the "bump" against us in the arbitration decision. Some of the hours carriers work under their evaluation comes from carriers working off of the clock. I can probably truthfully say there are very few car-

riers who have never worked off the clock. This practice has to stop. You are required by the PO-603 to record daily in hours and minutes on the 4240 the exact time of reporting, leaving, returning to the office and completion of duties. Managers are required to review the carrier's entries to ensure that the entries are complete and accurate. You could be given discipline if you are not accurately recording your proper times. You could also be charged with falsifying records. This is a hard case for us to argue in the grievance procedure since you are writing in the entries. Don't leave yourself open to discipline or possible removal. If you are **PERMITTED** to report early or are permitted to make a second trip on the route it is important that the record shows the time on the clock. Your office may have permitted you to report off the clock for years. This practice should be stopped. Management, the State Board, local stewards and rural carriers should all be involved to ensure that no one is working off the clock. Do not blame any of the above if you have been warned about the consequences of working off the clock and receive some type of discipline. You only have yourself to blame.

The State Board and myself have been receiving many questions on the Free Saturday. While I am not going to go through each scenario I will try the basics. You must have fill out PS Form 3971 requesting leave. There are five days of annual or sick leave within the period. There are more than 4 days of annual or sick leave plus a holiday within the period. The Saturday must be coded as (A) for annual leave, even though the system will not charge Saturday to annual leave. You can use O and X days and receive the Free Saturday. However the Saturday must be coded (A) for annual leave. Leave taken for the Free Saturday does not have to be in the same pay period. The pay system will calculate the Free Saturday when it overlaps into another pay period. Ronnie Stutts, State Steward from Tennessee has a question and answer page on Free Saturdays on the Tennessee web page. Rather than rewriting the questions and answers please take time to visit their site. I will try to get the questions and answers on our web site.

Chris Bouche State Steward

August 17, 2002

Report on the National Convention held in Portland, ME by Tom Balza, Richard Pfeifer and Dan Wiedenhoef.

Another national convention has come to an end. Tom says, "After seven rolls of film and more pens than I need, it's time to head home and get back to the route." This was the second longest convention; it ended at 5:30 P.M. on Friday. The longest convention was held in Portland, OR. It is hard to believe it is two years since we held the national convention in Madison.

One of the fringe benefits of conventions is all of the friends you make. During our years of attendance (Tom is the longest at 21 years) you meet old friends and make new friends each year. We met a couple, first time conventioners from PA, who appreciated talking to us about convention procedures. We were happy to help them as much as we could. At the time of departure they bid us farewell and said they are looking forward to next year's convention. Tom met Bill from South Carolina (the only other rural carrier selected to attend the 1999 Rose Bowl to work on the Post Office float).

The convention started with the beautiful and touching opening ceremony. Pride overwhelmed us as the color guard presented our US flag and patriotic music is being played. The president of each state followed carrying in their state flag and placed it on the platform in front of the convention next to the US flag.

A total of 2,575 carriers, auxiliary and juniors were present at the convention this year. There were 1,061 delegates present to vote on meeting issues.

The convention business consisted of 22 constitution and by-law changes submitted with four changes being passed. There were 530 resolutions submitted to the resolutions com-

mittee. After two days of diligent work by the resolutions committee, 209 resolutions were submitted for action to the convention members. During the convention Gus Baffa, Association President, lead the membership through a review of the resolutions and then the resolutions are passed or rejected. There were 68 resolutions passed.

We had a different style of a banquet this year. Portland transported 1800 people to a football field where we ate under a very large tent. We enjoyed a New England meal complete with lobster. We were entertained by walking along the seashore and later with fireworks.

Thursday evening was the night we listened to all candidates running for national office and to states wanting to hold a national convention. This is called "caucus night" and can last as late as 11:00- Midnight.

Election of officers is held on Friday. All officers were reelected with the exception of Jeanette Dwyer who won the election over Brady Porth as committee person.

There was a lengthy discussion of our current pay scale (evaluated pay) vs paid on the clock. Several of the resolutions pertained to a study on this issue.

As you can tell from above this has to be the fastest week of the year. The Juniors held a talent show on Monday evening, the banquet is held on Wednesday evening and the caucus is held on Thursday evening and all the meetings during the day, and lastly the election of officers make the week pass by quickly! And just think—only 11 months and 4 weeks until Chicago and the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary!

The carriers from Wisconsin can be proud of the great turnout each year at the National convention.

We were proud to represent Wisconsin this year at Portland, ME. We voted on the issues keeping in mind at all times that we were representing all rural letter carriers. We appreciate your vote of confidence in our abilities, knowledge and judgment to represent you at the National Convention. Thank you for your support.

## National Convention 2002

I would like to share some of my experiences as a delegate to the National Convention in Portland Maine, to begin I should take you back to where it all starts. In order for someone to become a delegate to the convention you must be nominated, the nomination process begins in February when the nomination ballot is published in the National Rural Letter Carrier Magazine, it is published again in March, April, and May. Someone may nominate you by sending in the ballot or you may nominate yourself by sending it in. All members then receive a ballot in late April or early May with all the names of those who were nominated. Ballots that are returned are then counted at the state convention. The total number of members as of June 30 determines the number of delegates that are sent to national.

This year I was one of 34 elected delegates, I believe the people chosen are a very diverse group, representing all parts of the state. The delegation includes carriers who are carrying routes everyday, to carriers who have been retired just recently and those who have been retired for several years. Some who have attended conventions for over 20 years others who have been to national before but will be a delegate for the first time. This will be my fourth national convention as a delegate. My wife and daughter are also involved this year. Kathy will be a state auxiliary delegate and Monica will join the juniors for several tours.

Although the convention actually begins on Tuesday the 6th, activities begin Saturday the 3rd with registration which will continue through Friday and pre-convention tours. Sunday includes an hour of devotion, a seminar for state editors, a dinner for the editors, and then a get acquainted reception and entertainment in the evening for all. Monday is a day that begins with many breakfasts and seminars, from the retired carriers breakfast to the state officers and state stewards' breakfasts. The day is filled with meetings and seminars, from a convention orientation seminar to a seminar on OWCP.

Tuesday morning 7:00am, it's time for the annual Wisconsin breakfast. This is a chance for all to hear from the candidates for national office, to recognize special guests and welcome those who are attending their first convention. When breakfast is complete it's nearly time for the opening ceremony. First there is a memorial service held for all those members who have passed away in the last year. Then the parade of states is held. The president of each state association carries their flag to the front. It is quite a special event. Next up is an array of speakers beginning with the Mayor of Portland, Post

master of Portland a response from the association and the auxiliary. This is followed by the introduction of the Co-chairs of this year's convention. The morning continues with the presentation of the gavel to National President Gus Baffa. Gus then introduces the National officers; this is followed by the keynote address by Senator Susan M. Collins (R-ME). Several more speakers are heard and committee appointments are made. Then the session is closed out by announcements. The afternoon begins with the committee reports, followed by questions. The day ends with the presentation of various awards. After a long day in sessions, you have the choice of attending several seminars, or an evening on your own.

Wednesday begins with reports from various committees, several speakers and then the nomination of states for the 2007 convention and nominations for national office. The afternoon is when the work begins on Constitution and Bylaws and Resolutions. We have over 200 resolutions to consider this year; it can be a very tedious process but I feel this is when I learn the most. The debate on resolutions is a very useful tool in deciding how to vote on an issue.

Much business must be done this week; still there is time for some fun. From the junior talent show on Monday night to the annual banquet, which is held on Wednesday night. This year's banquet was much different from the past, by including the whole family, and our guests. We were treated to a Maine style lobster and clambake outside under tents. Picture for a moment a couple thousand people wrestling with a whole lobster on their plate. It was great. This was followed by a fantastic fireworks show, and it was awesome according to my daughter Monica who is six.

Thursday the work continues on Constitution & Bylaws and resolutions. Thursday evening is for caucuses. This is the time for the delegates to ask questions of the candidates. Although it is usually 10:30 or 11:00 before we are done, I feel it helps me to make a decision on who to support.

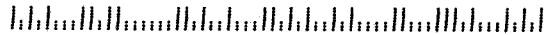
Friday begins with elections. Between elections, work continues on resolutions. We continue without a break for lunch in hopes of finishing all the business early. But it is 5:30 before the convention is adjourned. I hope I have related some of what goes on at a National Convention, but I believe one needs to experience it to be able to appreciate all the work that goes into it.

Respectfully submitted,  
Bob Lueck

Editor: William Jarzombeck, 929 Katie Lane, Oregon WI 53575-3249

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