



WI RLCA

Winter 2002-2003

Happy Holidays

This issue should reach you in the middle of December, a very busy time for all rural carriers. I urge you to read it and not put it aside for later because it has some very useful information that I hope will be timely. Both the Northland and Lakeland Districts will be conducting *joint* mail count training this year. This is a major improvement from last years situation where the Postal Service trained

their managers at separate meetings sometimes without any impute or participation from the union. There were sessions in the Lakeland district this year in early December that may have occurred prior the your receipt of this newsletter. To make up for this we have scheduled a meeting in Madison at the Holiday Inn on Feb. 2. Management has been invited to this meeting as it is the last one scheduled prior to the count. As you know you will have until Dec. 20 to sign an opt out form for this count. If management agrees you will not have to count. Many carriers seem to want to exercise this option and it appears that management in most cases will be more than willing to agree not to count. I urge you to carefully weigh the pros and cons before you make that decision.

the Voyageur Hotel because we were having a problem with affordable rates for sleeping rooms for the members in the Dells. (Too many water-parks?) Please call early for your reservation because we were only able to block a limited number of rooms due to some events at the hotel that weekend.. I don't know yet who the National Officer will be yet but I'll let everyone know in the next newsletter.

to our state web page, wirlca.org.

Lots of interesting events are planed for the national convention and I'm sure it will be special. One that has my interest is the GMAC insurance will be giving away a new Corvette to some lucky carrier. Come to your Spring county meeting to buy a ticket from the Auxiliary. The Auxiliary will also have information about scholarships for those who have children or grandchildren going on to post secondary education. There will be more information about these in the next issue. Have a safe Holiday Season and I'll see you all at a union meeting.

Next issue will also have information about the State Convention in Rhinelander. Speaking of conventions those interested in running as a delegate to this years NRLCA centennial convention in Chicago may submit a short, 50 words or less, announcement of their candacy to run in the next issue of the newsletter. Email preferred. As a Microsoft-word document attachment. They can be sent

Bill Jarzombek
President WI RLCA

Inside this issue:

Northland District Count Training	3
PAC Report	7
New Members	10
Calendar Classified Ads	11
Stewards Page	13
Lakeland District Count Training	6

NEWS & VIEWS

Depression

Anyone, regardless of age, who experiences any five of the following symptoms for two or more weeks should consult a mental health professional:

- Feeling of sadness and/or irritability
- Loss of interest or pleasure in activities once enjoyed.
- Changes in weight and appetite.
- Changes in sleep patterns.
- Feeling guilty, hopeless or worthless.
- Inability to concentrate, remember things or make decisions
- Fatigue or loss of energy.
- Restlessness or decreased activity noticed by others.
- Thoughts of death or suicide.

Submitted by State Chaplain Ruth Moody

THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN NEWS

Investors in the Thrift Savings Plan will get another opportunity to increase the amount they can invest each biweekly pay period during the TSP Open Season that runs from Oct. 15 to Dec. 31, 2002. This will be the first open season conducted on the TSP's revised schedule, which also will change the annual spring open season to run April 15 to June 30; until now, the open seasons started and ended a month later. During the upcoming open season investors under the FERS program will be able to contribute up to 13 percent of salary biweekly and those under CSRS up to 8 percent. Subject to a dollar cap set up the IRS tax code. For calendar 2003 that dollar cap is increasing by \$1,000 to \$12,000. Investment elections during the open season can be effective as early as the first pay period on or after December 1, 2002.

Reprinted from the
Washington Rural Carrier

In accordance with WI RLCA policy the State Board will accept resumes from any member interested in the position of State Steward. Applicants should contact President Bill Jarzombeck prior to June 1st, 2003 for more information.

The Illinois Rural Letter Carriers are working on a special project for this years celebration of the 100th anniversary of the founding of the NRLCA. They would like photographs of rural carriers from the past 100 years. They can be color or black & white. They can be photocopied so you can keep the original print. If you can scan them you can send them via email to Emily Anderson at tater99Emily@netscape.net or mail to 1840 Wayne Rd., Galatia, IL 62935.

There will be a special Centennial Chorus that will perform at the 2003 National Convention. Each state will have members in this chorus. Those chosen should be those who plan to attend the convention either as a delegate or non-delegate as there will be no additional compensation for their participation in the chorus. Wisconsin will submit four names to a national committee that will make the final selection. If you are interested please plan on attending the Spring Booster Meeting in Reedsburg for more information about the selection process and a possible audition.

JOINT MAIL COUNT TRAINING

The Northland QWL/EI DJSC has helped to set up the dates and times for joint training for the mail count of 2003. The places that have been picked that are in or close to WI are:

1/07/02	F & M Bank 1001 S Superior Tomah WI	1:30 and 6:00pm
1/08/02	LaCrosse Post Office--Courtroom 425 State St LaCrosse WI	1:30 and 6:00pm
1/09/02	Rochester Main Post Office 1445 Valleyhigh Dr NW Rochester MN	1:30 and 6:00pm
1/14/02	Comfort Suites 15586 County Road B Hayward WI	1:30 and 6:00 pm
1/15/02	WITC Conference Center 1900 College Dr Rice Lake WI	1:30 and 6:00pm
1/16/02	Fill-Inn-Station 104 W Columbia Chippewa Falls WI	1:30 and 6:00pm
!/07/02 1/23/02 1/28/02	PEDC-St Paul Post Office 180 E Kellogg St St Paul MN	1:00 and 5:00pm
1/16/02	Duluth	

I can't express how important it is that every rural carrier attend a count training session. BE INFORMED! It is your paycheck that is on the line.

**Sue Heiderscheidt
Northland DJSC Co-Chair**

Happy Holidays!

Tis the season where it is better to give than receives. Some rural carriers have been taking this sentiment a bit too far. Working off the clock has become an issue that can no longer be ignored. This practice harms all rural carriers, since all time worked off the clock, regardless of the amount, hinders our craft's ability to bargain for additional time and/or compensation. Who am I exactly talking about? Well, a carrier who is allowed to report early but doesn't record the correct time on the 4240. A carrier who delivers parcels on his or her way home after having signed out for the day. Carriers who come into the office on a holiday to case mail and no time is recorded for the work performed. Carriers who come into the office on Sunday to case mail and no times are recorded for the work performed. All hours that a carrier works, regardless of when they are worked, should be accurately recorded on the 4240 and carriers should be compensated for all hours actually worked. Failure to record the correct times on a carrier's time sheet (4240) is falsification of a government document and is grounds for possible removal.

Another issue that carriers should be made aware of is recording correct information in your edit book. Most of us are recording when new deliveries come on our routes but don't forget to record a "V" in the delivery type column when an address is vacant over 90 days. Seasons Greetings! Don't forget to sign up for Flexible Spending by December 22. The deadline for the Thrift Savings Plan and the Long Term Care is December 31, 2002. Our leave year ends January 10, 2003 and rural carriers can carry over 55 days of annual leave. Finally, did you know that the Postal Service does not use their own system, the Form 3575 change of address, to update postal employees' address? The only way to update your address with the Postal Service is to fill out Form 1216, Employee's Current Mailing Address, and mail it to Personnel in your district. I also need your correct address to mail you your state paper,

meeting notices, and this year the delegate ballot envelopes will be printed off of the address that the state has in our database, so send me any address changes you may have also.

Happy New Year! I can't express how important it is that every rural carrier, regular or sub that will be counting this February should attend a count training session. It is your paycheck that is on the line.

Karen Schauer, Secretary/Treasurer and
Assistant State Steward

Louise Continued from page 9

- 3) form 4003 (current route description)
- 4) route map (current)
- 5) form 1564-B (special orders)
- 6) Handbook PO--603, carrier duties and responsibilities.

The Edit Book should also be at the carrier case and is to be maintained by the carrier.

When the Edit book is submitted to district for changes, a form 4003 should go with it.

The Form 4003 drives our pay changes, not the Edit Book.

Have you asked to review your personnel file recently? You are entitled to go through the file. Make an appointment with postmaster to see the file. Know what is in the file. Any letters of warning over a year old (or whatever time span was determined in a grievance) are to be removed.

RCAs desiring leave are to submit a 3971 (request for leave form) and give to postmaster or supervisor. The regular carrier should be given for review and signature to concur. It is about accountability.

Wishing everyone a bright and wonderful winter.

Louise Gonia Executive Committeeman

YOU CAN MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

Martha 'Marty' Schmidt

Your input will make your employer—the USPS—a better company for all. By being a member of the National Rural Letter Carrier Association (NRLCA), you can become a member of Quality of Worklife/Employee Involvement (QWL/EI). Having a team in your office gives you the opportunity to help your office operate efficiently and smoothly. If there are problems in your office, you can meet with your manager to solve them. You and the manager meet as equal partners to jointly discuss and solve pertinent issues.

You have a special invitation! Every Rural Carrier in the Lakeland District has received an invitation to participate in the QWL/EI process. The District Facilitators recently worked on this project. They will come to **your** office and help **you** start **your** team in 2003. If you have not sent your reply card yet, please do so soon.

You can use meeting time to brainstorm and think outside the box. Some examples of helpful ideas that came from local QWL/EI teams are the strobe lights for our cars, the orange stamp order envelopes, right hand drive cars, and parcel left notices. These are some unique ideas that were accomplished by Union and management working together. Ideas for projects can be submitted to facilitators or the District Joint Steering Committee (DJSC). District Task Teams are assigned to work on the proposals.

The best part of having QWL/EI meetings is keeping open communication within the office. This encourages a climate in which people respect one another and treat each other fairly. Also, being on a workteam is rewarded monetarily. The team can meet for up to 20 minutes a week or use 40 minutes every other week. Together you can decide which works best for your team. Oh, by the way, when regular carriers accumulate 8 hours of time, they can have a day off work with pay. RCA's are paid on a 1314A.

In addition to solving problems, you could discuss safety issues, marketing campaigns, or even philatelic sales. The teams could study the PO603, M38, postal bulletins, or share newsletters. The ideas are decided by consensus.

Rewards of QWL/EI participation include:

- Being challenged
- Learning new things
- Working with a great team
- Being creative
- Working toward goals
- Recognition by peers and management
- Doing the impossible

The QWL/EI process is based on mutual trust and respect between rural carriers and managers. We should all have the opportunity to communicate ideas.

On another thought—be sure to attend *Mail Count Training* in your area. We all need to be informed **before** the 2003 count.

Enjoy the holidays with family and friends...

TENTATIVE PLANS

WIRLCA SPRING CONFERENCE

April 26-27, 2003

Voyageur Conference Center
Reedsburg, WI
608-524-6431

(Rooms are limited, but call for special WIRLCA rates! Other nearby rooms are also available.)

▶ **Saturday, April 26th**

**1 to 4 PM - Informational
Speakers**

7 to 9 PM - Hospitality Room

▶ **Sunday, April 27th**

9 AM to 3 PM

**National Officer Report
State Officers Report**

Lakeland District Mail Count Training

The following are the dates for mail count training.

January 7, Green Bay Annex 9:00-12:00
1:30-4:30 5:00-8:00

January 8, Rhinelander Post Office
9:00-12:00
January 8 Wausau Post Office 1:30-4:30
6:00-9:00

January 9, Marshfield 9:00-12:00
January 9, Milwaukee Post Office
Room 274 8:00-11:30 12:00-3:00
January 9, Oconomowoc Post Office
6:00-8:30

January 10, 2003 Milwaukee Post Office
Room 274 9:00-11:30 12:00-3:30

January 14, 2003 Oshkosh Post Office
9:00-12:00 1:30-4:30 5:00-8:00

February 2, 2003 Madison Holiday Inn
3841 E Washington Avenue 10:00-2:00

Fall Conference Board Meeting. Oct 5, 2002
Holiday Inn, Stevens Point WI

President Bill Jarzombeck called meeting to order at 8:05 AM. Board members present: Bill Jarzombeck, Marty Schmidt, Bill Foley, Tome Bittner, and Louise Gonia. State steward Chris Bouche was present. Members absent: Jim Polk, Karen Schauer.

Fall special mail count: Bill Foley counted since his route is seasonal. He said his route lost one hour. Chris reported that Bob West and Jeanette Dwyer (NRLCA) met and discussed the arbitration regarding seasonal routes and determined these routes

could be counted annually. Chris also reported that CSA Sherri Wagner, 544-545, believes that management will opt in for the count in February.

National convention bid for 2008: Bill J received letters from the Milwaukee and Madison convention bureaus discussing convention in 2008. The national board sent inquiries to the convention bureaus. Milwaukee indicated non-availability. According to the By-law changes enacted at 2002 national convention, the Mid-west region will have the bid for 2008 convention. The potential sites are to submit bids now. Bill will poll the membership at the Sunday session as to their desire to host another convention (possibly in Madison).

Mail count training: Count training has been scheduled for the 544-545 areas. Bob Bartlett will schedule joint training sessions for Milwaukee-Madison areas soon. If there are no joint training sessions in the Northland District, Chris will, with Karen's assistance, set up sessions for rural carriers. DJSC is proposing pay for office steward to attend training sessions.

Southern Badger meeting: discussion of possible disbanding.

Mail count: Bill will place the count disagreement form in the Newsletter for those carriers who disagree with the count. It will include carrier and management responsibilities.

Officer reports were given.

Budget review: tabled to Stewards' conference in November.

Old equipment: it was decided to raffle off the equipment and donate proceeds to PAC.

Executive session: board went into executive session briefly.

Audit committee: Bill Foley presented the charter and standards for auditing the association books. He is presenting the information to the committee later Saturday or on Sunday.

Chris handed out 2003 pocket calendars. Bill Foley moved, Tom Bittner seconded the motion to send county secretaries and office stewards a pocket calendar and card at Christmas. Motion carried.

Escorting Dale Holton: Supper - Bill Foley
Breakfast - Bill Jarzombeck Lunch - Louise Gonia.

Afternoon session: Chris outlined the activities he had planned for the members at session beginning at 1 PM.

THE 3 - 2s

WIRLCA members fit into one of three categories. They are; Regular Carrier, Leave Replacement, and Retiree. Needless to say, the people in each of these groups perform totally different functions and have their own expectations of our Union. Your State and National Officers understand these differences and attempt to satisfy the needs of each separate group. It's not always easy but they make their best effort.

As Wisconsin's PAC Chairman I believe that our membership can be divided into three other categories, which have nothing to do with whether they are active employees, or are retired. These are the 3 - 2s. (1) Want 2s. (2) Me 2s. (3) Do I have 2s. Like your Union Officers I also try to direct my efforts to the varied concerns of members in each of these groups. Let me explain.

(1) **Want 2s** (to). These are the members who contribute to our PAC fund, every year. They don't need to be asked, to contribute, because they are well-informed and understand the importance of the Political Action Committee. You will find the "Want 2s" hanging out at our State meetings, the National Convention, or reading their State and National newsletters. Some people want to be "Want 2s" (they fit into the next category).

(2) **Me 2s** (too). The "Me 2" just needs to be reminded that they should make a PAC contribution. We all have busy lives and can't be expected to remember whether, or not, we have made a contribution to PAC. If you fit into the "Me 2" category you will want to stop reading and write out a check for PAC. If you just want to quit reading - you may fit into the last category.

(3) **Do I have 2s** (to). Some folks need convincing. That's my job, as your PAC Chairman. The typical "Do I have 2" wants to know exactly why they should be involved. That's a fair question. Here's a fair (not great) answer. Because the "Want 2s" and the "Me 2s" can't do it alone. The "Do I have 2s" have to, too (whew).

Okay, you're on to me, I'm hitting you up for some of your hard earned money. That's what I do. I would ultimately like to have every member join the "Want 2" group so I wouldn't have to keep try-

ing to convince the "Do I have 2s" that it is in their best interest to help maintain a viable PAC fund.

It's especially difficult for me to make a convincing argument, to increase our political contributions, after we have all witnessed a particularly ugly campaign season. But, campaigns are extremely expensive and someone needs to help finance them. If not us - who? Our competitors? Will they support the candidates that care about the Postal Service and its' employees and retirees?

Most citizens don't seem to care about how much is being spent on political campaigns but they really care about *how* it is being spent. Issue ads, negative attacks, endless mailings (these are particularly annoying when they are not included in a mail count), etc. Campaign finance reform will take affect, with the next National elections, and should alleviate some of the abuses but running for Congress will still be extremely costly. It is very possible that contributions to an individual candidates' campaign, from groups with a common interest (such as the NRLCA), may become even more crucial to the success of a potential Congressman or Senator.

So, which "2" are you? Give that question some thought. If you made a contribution to PAC, this year, you are "2" be commended. If this newsletter article has managed to motivate you to make a contribution then I'm happy to have gotten through "2" you. Most of all, remember, it's never "2" late.

These are very difficult times for Federal workers. It has become acceptable to view contractual rights as an inconvenience. The latest assault to Union members is the prospect that services, that federal employees used to perform, will be subject to the bidding process in the private sector. As I write this article the fight continues over the Civil Service rights, of employees in the new Department of Homeland Security, verses allowing the President "flexibility in employment matters".

Help to maintain our Associations' influence in Washington DC. Write out a \$22.22 check, payable to:

NRLCA PAC

Mail it to:

**DENNIS R. NELSON
1002 55TH ST
AMERY WI 54001**

Contributions are not tax deductible. I will mail a PAC pin to you. Thanks!

Board meeting Continued from page 6

The Auxiliary came in to discuss items: PAC – Auxiliary will collect for PAC at both spring and fall county meetings from now on. Asked about membership year. 2003 convention – dates are 8-10 June in Rhineland. Requested space in Newsletters. Discussed scholarships and due dates. 2004 State convention in Platteville is scheduled for 18-20 June (our 100th anniversary).

Spring conference: Marty reported she has discussions with Antiqua Bay (Howard Johnson) in the Dells. By consensus, the dates selected for spring conference, if hotel available, would be 25-27 April with second choice 21-23 March. Board discussed trying other convention sites for spring conference.

Steward's conference is end of March. Chris indicted either Bill Foley or Tom Bittner could attend with him. Don Wyman, area steward, came into discuss his experiences. He volunteered to help with the afternoon session.

Board discussed ordering 300 copies of the new contract. Discussion included sending to academies and new members.

QWL/EI: facilitators sent letters in Lakeland District seeking information. The companion letter from M. Weatherall was outdated. The board members on DJSC discussed how the program has deteriorated recently. Marty Schmidt and Joey Fasbender (Wausau PM) attended the joint CJSC meeting recently.

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 PM. The steward session began at 1 PM in the Expo room. The Sunday meeting would convene at 9 AM in the Expo room.

Louise Gonia, acting recorder.

SPECIAL BOARD MEETING –
Sunday, November 03, 2002
St Louis MO – Four Points Sheraton Hotel

Meeting called to order by President Jarzombeck at 6:15 pm. All board members and the State Steward were present.

Minutes from the Fall Conference – Stevens Point – board meeting were reviewed. Corrections were made and minutes were approved with corrections.

The Audit Committee Charter was reviewed. It was decided that Bill Foley, Bill Jarzombeck and Karen Schauer would have a special meeting on Monday night and revise the Charter and bring it back to the board for adoption on Tues morning before the Stewards meeting. Bill F made a motion, seconded by Jim P that members of the audit committee be paid \$75 a day for up to 3 meetings a year and that the meeting should correspond with the Spring and Fall Conferences and the State Convention. This motion passed and will be effective starting Spring 2003. Jim P made a motion, seconded by Bill F that for the special audit committee meeting with Secretary/Treasurer Karen, the committee be paid mileage and \$150 for the day. Motion passed. Meeting will be Nov 9th, 2002 at Karen's residence. It was also decided not to join the Institute of Internal Auditors at this time.

Rural Management Training for the Lakeland District was discussed. Chris shared with us the dates and times for the up coming meetings and Chris will be attending all the meetings. Board members from the Lakeland District will try to attend one of the meetings that are held in their area.

Karen requested that we close the John O'Melby Checking account. The WI RLCA has a checking account and savings account with the Atlantic Postal Credit Union and there is no need to have two bank accounts. There are three counties that have not cashed their dues withholding checks that were written on the John O'Melby account. These checks were written in 2000 and 2001 and the present and former county secretaries have informed Karen that the checks are lost. Louise made a motion, seconded by Marty, that the John O'Melby account be closed and that the county checks be reissued. Motion carried.

A refresher course on how to fill out the expense voucher was given by our Treasurer. An explanation of what documentation is needed was also given. Expenses without receipts will not be paid. Our State Steward will contact Assistant and Area stewards that

GMAC

Vehicle insurance for rural carriers: 1-800-VIP-AUTO (1-800-847-2886, ext 68) for quotes. Remember GMAC (National General Insurance Company) RLC program has towing and roadside service as standard feature of the RLC policies. The state of Wisconsin does not require residents to have auto insurance unless the vehicle is mortgaged. What to do? It is wisest to have at least minimum coverage. The Federal Torts Claims Act covers the carrier liability IF the carrier causes an accident while on the route. The carrier is not reimbursed for damages to his/her vehicle by the Postal Service. The other party is covered. If the carrier has no insurance, the cost of repair comes directly from the carrier's pocket. If the carrier has a fairly new vehicle, the repair costs can be many thousand dollars. That is painful. The aggravation that follows an automotive mishap adds to the pain.

You have an accident on the route - What should the carrier do? (if able, of course)

1) arrange immediately for someone to call the postmaster, police and emergency services, if necessary. Most of us have cell phones today - we can call unless we are incapacitated.

2) if able, see to welfare of any other persons who might be injured before the authorities arrive.

3) find the accident report kit each carrier has been given and follow directions.

4) discuss accident with police only. Do not admit fault.

5) if there are witnesses, ask for their names, addresses, phone numbers

6) call insurance company as soon as possible (GMAC - 1-800-325-1088).

Call within 48 hours, although the sooner, the better.

7) protect your property from further damage.

Calling the insurance company promptly allows the claims personnel to help with the needs and questions. The claims personnel will make arrangements to help you and can reduce personal expenses incurred. Now what? You have survived the accident. You will probably receive a letter of Warning or removal. Be sure to call the union. The letter is grievance material. You and the postmaster will also be asked to appear before an accident review board. You can ask a union representative to be present at the review board.. Some of the accidents have resulted in removals. The NRLCA has been successful in returning most carriers to work. However, the carrier is off work for about a year in many instances and when returned to work, it has been without back pay. Now, that is costly and painful. The carrier, in many cases, has been returned to work with seniority intact, but again -- NO back pay. The key, then, is avoid accidents. Be doubly alert and cautious on the route. If feeling tired, get out of vehicle - walk around a minute or so. The change in activity helps renew one's vigor and awareness. We sit most of the day - even though there is movement during actual mail delivery, it is often not enough to maintain maximal alertness. Results of studies have indicated that warm, sunny days are the most dangerous for our well-being.

Being a rural carrier is a good job, but it can be pounding and punishing physically. Take extra good care of yourself. Pay attention to the road. It is easy to be distracted while driving along familiar roads. We catch ourselves day-dreaming. That is when mishaps occur. Have I mentioned - if your insurance company is other than GMAC, have you told them what you are doing for a living? What you are doing with the car they insure? Might be a good idea. Granted, the company might raise the rates, but an insurance cancellation following an accident is an insult.

The Rural Rout Book - this the is notebook (binder) which is at the carrier case. It should contain

1) the current 4240

2) form 4241A (current route evaluation)

Welcome New Members!

Board meeting Continued from page 8

LONA S WINDEN
CHARLES J GRAFF
MICHELLE I BADHAM
MARY A SCHIMKE
TERRY L HECK
TAMMY L HOYT
SUSAN E WYMORE
JESSI M JONES
THOMAS J MANGELSEN
JANICE M BECKER
NICOLE L MANSKE
WALTER W SCHENK
JAMES P ALI
LARRY D OLSON
ANTHONY J PLICKA
BRIAN J STAUFF
EFREM A ABRAHA
SHERRY L SMITH
LAURA L SOCOLICK
JOHN H MONFILS
DOREEN K HENNIG
CARL A SWANSON
CHRISTINE M CUDNOHOWSKI

KAREN E KERNER
LORI A KLINGER
REBECCA L KUKLA
AUDRA K ROBOTKA
JEFFREY J SANDERS
DEBORAH L SCHULTZ
DONALD H SCHULTZ
JAMES O HARLEY
LYNN A WAGNER

RUSSELL E SKIBBE
VIRGINIA S WOLTER
NANCY M BUBEL
LORI A JACOBITZ
DALE C BERG
TIMOTHY W LEFEBER

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.

are behind in filing their expense vouchers.

Mail count training for the next count was discussed. The Lakeland District will be doing joint count training. Chris is working with the CSAs to obtain all the dates and time information and will provide the details in our next Newsletter. The Northland District will decide at the November 7th meeting for labor/management whether or not they will hold joint training classes. If they decide not to offer joint classes then we will set up night training for our members. Information on dates and times of these meetings will also be in the next Newsletter. Plant inspections will again be done this year and Chris will work up an SOP for this and the board will have a special board meeting on January 19, 2003 to go over the details and to discuss other count issues.

A possible Labor/Management meeting for the Lakeland District was discussed. Bill J will send a letter to request such a meeting, preferably before the next count. Members are to send Bill agenda items they would like discussed at such a meeting.

Our Spring Conference will be held in Reedsburg at the Voyageur Inn & Conference Center. The room rate will be \$49.95. The Wisconsin Dells Hotels did not have available rooms or meeting rooms for the dates of our conference. The Spring Conference will be April 26th and 27th. Marty will work with the Inn to finalize the arrangements.

President Bill shared with us a letter that he received from an Association member regarding possible charges against our steward system. The board discussed the letter and the reply letter that was sent. The appeals procedure outlined in Art 10

Rural Calendar 2003

Rural Free Classifieds

Mutual Transfer:

Pickett-One route office, great working environment, 44H after 1st DPS count last year. Growth seeking route closer to home. Waushara, Marquette, Adams or Portage Counties. Call Tom 715 228-2812 or tkc@uniontel.net

For Sale: Nothing this issue

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.

Mutual Transfer Ads do not necessarily reflect the policy or rules of the Postal Service or contractual language

Feb. 15-March 15 National Mail Count

February 17	Dane County Mtg. VFW	Madison
February 17	Southern Badger Mtg VFW	Madison
March 12	Grant-Iowa County Mtg.	
April 8	Marathon County	Edgar
April 12	Rusk County @ Iron Horse	Holcombe
April 26	Monroe County	Kendall
April 26-27	Spring Conference-Voyageur	Reedsburg
April 28	Sauk-Richland County Mtg.	
June 8-10	State Convention	Rhineland
August 5-8	National Convention	Chicago

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE JANUARY 20

Continued from page 10

of our state constitution was reviewed and will be followed.

Karen requested the purchase of bank bags with the National logo on to give to new members, and also to use as appreciation gifts for the county secretaries and local stewards. Marty made a motion to buy 500 of such bags. Tom seconded the motion. Carried. Bill J made a motion, Tom seconded, to authorize \$100 for a shredder. Karen will also order 300 contracts. Local stewards will be given a contract at no charge but other members will be able to purchase them from board members at county meetings or Spring Conference for \$1. Otherwise, members can request, from either Chris or Karen, to have one mailed to them at a cost of \$2.50.

Jim P will write an article regarding the Centennial Choir at the 2003 National convention in Chicago. Auditions will be held at the Spring Conference. He will also write an article requesting items for a historical booth from Wisconsin.

We are updating our files and board members are to send Karen serial numbers and model numbers of any union equipment purchased in the last few years. Any board member with a copy of our board policies is to send it to Karen also.

The Milwaukee-Waukesha County sent the board a letter regarding our policy of monitoring the flow of mail prior to, during and after mail count. President Bill will send a reply.

The board wishes Bill DeNucci, Assistant State Steward, a speedy recovery. Bill could not make the Stewards Conference because of health issues regarding his eye.

Karen made a motion to adjourn. Bill Foley made a second. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 10:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Schauer, Secretary/Treasurer

<u>Auxiliary Officer</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Assignments</u>
Judy Pederson President	3635 River Drive Eau Claire, WI 54703-2231	715-834-1424	Barron-Washburn, Buffalo-Trempealeau Chippewa-Eau Claire, Clark, Lake Superior District, Dunn, Jackson, LaCrosse, Lincoln- Langlade, Marathon, Monroe, Pierce-Pepin, Polk-Burnett, Price-Taylor, Rusk, Sawyer, St. Croix, Tri County, Vernon
Dianne Koch Vice-President	115 W. Main ST. Waupun, WI 53963-1909	920-324-5083	Fond du Lac-Green Lake, Waushara Winnebago, Outagamie
Caroline Sonnenburg Secretary	2417 Elm Road Manitowoc, WI 54220-9570	920-682-5363 carlarso@lakefield.net	Brown, Door-Kewaunee, Cal-Man-She Marinette, Oconto, Shawano
Bea Bengtson Treasurer	226 South high St. Markesan, WI 53946-7188	920-398-3872	Juneau, Lafayette-Green Sauk-Richland, Waupaca, Wood-Portage
Sue Polk Executive Board Chairman	N3820 Betschler Rd. Helenville, WI 53137-9790	262-593-8587	Columbia, Jefferson, Racine-Kenosha, Rock-Walworth, Washington
June Strobel Executive Board Secretary	N4431 Daley Road Hustisford, WI 53034-9742	920-349-3782	Dane, Dodge, Marquette-Adams
Sue Becker Executive Board	W335N7027 Stonebank Rd. Oconomowoc, WI 53066-1405	262-966-3344	Crawford, Grant-Iowa, Ozaukee, Milwaukee-Waukesha
Karen Rasmussen Junior Auxiliary	N55W31185 HWY K Hartland, WI 53029-9305	262-367-2330	

A Christmas Prayer
 Loving Father, help us remember
 The birth of Jesus, that we may
 Share in the song of the angels,
 The gladness of the shepherds
 And the wisdom of the wise men.

 Close the door of hate and open
 The door of love all over the world.

 Let kindness come with every gift
 And good desires with every greeting.

*Deliver us from evil by the blessing
 Which Christ brings, and teach us to
 Be merry with clean hearts.*

*May the Christmas morning make us
 Happy to be Thy Children, and our
 Beds with grateful thoughts,
 Forgiving and forgiven,
 For Jesus' sake. Amen*

Robert Louis Stevenson
(1850-1894)



STEWARDS PAGE

I did a rough count about a month ago on offices that did not have any bank time. There were 134 offices in the Lakeland District that did not have any bank time. This means that since the February count routes in these offices did not add or subtract a box. It is hard to believe that this is the situation in these offices. One of the offices has 17 routes and has not added a box. When boxes are added or subtracted from your edit book PS Form 4003 must be updated and sent in. This is management's responsibility. This is the only form that will adjust your pay. Adding boxes to your edit book and having it sent in to be updated will not reflect new boxes added to the route. You could add 100 boxes to your edit book and if a new 4003 is not sent in your pay would not increase. It is management's responsibility to make sure the 4003's are sent in on a timely basis. You should receive a new PS Form 4241-A that would state how much time you have banked. This also lets you know that management has sent in the 4003 to be updated. You now only need one-hour change before it is added to your evaluation. It is your paycheck and you have to take some responsibility to make sure the boxes are correctly added to your route. I have written this same article in the past year but it still seems that there is a problem.

I am sure many of you will have your new ID badges by the time you receive this article. I was at a meeting in October and there was a long discussion on the new badges. You are required to wear the badge on the workroom floor. You will also need your badge to get into the post office. You are not required to wear it when you are on the route. When you are wearing the ID badge it must be displayed so it can clearly be seen. This seems to many just another stupid rule the postal service wants us to follow. Why would we need an ID badge in an office with just a few carriers where everyone knows each other? Because of September 11 this is a serious matter that the postal service will enforce. We were told at the

meeting that if an employee failed to wear the ID badge a job discussion would be held with that employee. If the employee still refused to wear the ID discipline may be given. You will be charged a small fee to replace the badge if you lose it. While it may seem like a hassle security in the postal service is a top priority.

If you are placed on emergency suspension you should file a grievance on this action. Usually the postal service uses article 16.5 to place you in this category when they want you off your route because of actions they believe could harm other carriers. This is usually followed by a Notice of Removal. You would file a grievance on the emergency suspension and would then also file a grievance on the Notice of Removal. The filing of a grievance on the emergency suspension would allow us to try and get you paid for the time you were not allowed to work. Remember it is advised that you file a grievance on any discipline that you receive. A job discussion is not considered disciplinary action.

The national mail count will be conducted February 15 and ending March 15, 2003. We will be having joint count training in Wisconsin. This means that management and the union will be conducting the training together. The dates and times of the training will be printed in another section of the magazine. This year the carrier has the option to opt out of the count from November 23-December 20, 2002. If you want to opt out of the count you **MUST** request a copy of the opt out form and returned to the manager no later than December 20, 2002. Once the form is submitted by the regular carrier, management will review each request and annotate their agreement or disagreement with the carrier's election. Upon the completion of the form, the original should be placed in the route file and a copy will be provided to the carrier. Management must make their decision no later than January 3, 2003. Only those routes that management agrees to option out will be excluded from the national mail count. If the regular carrier

does not submit a signed option out form by December 20, 2002, then there is no mutual agreement for an option out election and the mail count will be conducted. All vacant an auxiliary routes will be counted. I have talked to the District and as of this time they do not have any intention of having all rural routes count. They will leave that decision up to local management. I also talked to them about the seasonal routes that will have a 4-hour change. If a route has a 4-hour change the route will be scheduled for a special count the last two weeks of September. The District at this time has no intention of having seasonal routes count in February unless the regular carrier does not sign the opt out form. Please make your decision wisely. This is a 4-week count with a holiday. We also took the hit in the last count from the new letter standards.

December 1-7 is national steward recognition week. Now is the time to take a moment and say thank you to the stewards in your local office. Many times rural carriers become upset over actions by management and take out their frustrations out on the steward. Being a steward is a tough job and I have had a few in the last year that have quit because of abuse from the carriers, not from management. Every year we provide the local steward with a small token of the states appreciation when we have the local steward training in spring. We will be following the same policy this year. I have had more carriers putting up the election form. While I will not be conducting any training until spring I will make sure you get the information and can be certified as a local steward. Please consider becoming a local steward. The election form is on our web site or contact me.

Finally I want to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. It seems that we think about good will to all at this time of the year but sometimes may forget about it the other 11 months.

Chris Bouche, State Steward

In the last issue of our newsletter we relayed news from our nations capitol about the poor financial condition of the Postal Service due to unfunded pension funds, increased costs due to 9/11 and the inability of Congress to make decisions. How quickly things can change!

Current news out of Washington says the Postal Service could finish the current fiscal year with a **\$3.5 billion**, yes that's billion as in 3,500 million in the black! This astounding about-face in finances is the result of a discovery by the Office of Personnel Management that the Postal Service has made significant overpayments into the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) fund. In 1987 the CSRS was dropped for new employees and replaced by the Federal Employees Retirement System.

I had reported that the Postal Service thought it had a \$32 billion obligation to its 248,000 employees that are still covered under the CSRS pension fund. The Office of Personnel Management discovered that the Postal Service had actually been overpaying into the fund and that the deficit was actually \$5 billion rather than the \$32 billion!

This news is both encouraging and discouraging. It is good in that it assures us that the Postal Service is currently very fiscally sound, but discouraging in the fact that during our recent contract arbitration and settlement, the fiscal woes of the Postal Service weighed heavily in the outcome. Page 19 of arbitrator John Calhoun Wells' decision clearly states that "employees should share in any needed concessions to enable that employer to survive and ultimately thrive." The fact is, the Postal Service was never in the dire financial condition we and the arbitrator were led to believe! I'm hoping this revelation will come to bear in not only our next negotiations, but also in our 4 national arbitration's relating to the last mail count.

Jim Polk, Vice-President

The Matrix Revisited

With the end of the nice weather and most regular carriers taking less annual leave another one of the consequences of the arbitration decision is becoming more apparent. Because the changes in the standards caused the majority of routes to drop to "J" and "H" status many leave replacements aren't getting as many days of work as they had in the past. Since subs aren't getting as many hours on their primary assigned routes when extra hours become available in many cases more than one person would like the opportunity to work them. The 1995-1999 National agreement provided a means of determining what order relief carriers would be offered extra hours. It provided rules to be used in designing a list to determine the order in which relief carriers should be called in, commonly referred to as "the matrix".

Managers should create a list of all substitutes, RCA's and RCR's along with all routes that they are qualified on starting with the person having the longest period of continuous service in the office and continuing down in order of seniority. Qualified on a route is defined as either having received training or been utilized on the route. A matrix is a grid 4 columns wide with a sufficient number of rows to list all regular routes in the office. In the first column all *regular* routes should be listed, auxiliary routes are not part of the matrix. The name of primary leave replacement assigned to each route should be placed in the second column. Once this is done the rest of the matrix can be filled in, the manager should begin by contacting the person at the top of the seniority list and asking them to place their name in the secondary position of the matrix on two routes which they are qualified on other than the one where they are assigned as the primary replacement. This process should be continued on down the list with each subsequent relief carrier choosing two routes and placing their name in the secondary position if available or the third position. If a leave replacement declines to make a selection management has the authority to place the persons name as a

replacement for routes on which he/she is qualified on if vacant. Each persons name should appear on the matrix no more than three times including their primary assignment. It should be noted that TRC's may only be listed on the matrix as primary leave replacements.

Once the matrix has been established the primary relief carrier should be contacted first when a leave replacement is needed. If the primary relief carrier is not available management should contact the person in the secondary position on the matrix and then the person in the third position. If none of the relief carriers listed for that route on the matrix are available management should determine if there is another qualified substitute, RCA, RCR, or TRC available in the office. If there is a choice between an RCA and an RCR the person with the longest continuous service in the office should be scheduled. If there are no other *qualified* leave replacements in the office management may choose to require another leave replacement from *within* the office to carry the route.

Should a blank occur on the matrix and there is another qualified substitute, RCA or RCR that is not currently designated for three routes on the matrix, that employee may be designated to serve as the second or third leave replacement where there is none listed. A person who has accepted a six day auxiliary route assignment will not appear on the matrix, however if they choose to give up the six day assignment to fill a subsequent leave replacement vacancy, they will appear as the primary leave replacement for that route and if there are openings elsewhere in the second and third positions on the matrix for which they are qualified they may be designated to fill them. Under no circumstances will there be any "bumping" on the matrix, once the matrix has been established management will review the list to determine whether movement of qualified leave replacements or cross training would be required. If management decides that some movement amongst assignments is necessary, only those qualified leave replacements desiring to change assignments would be affected.

Tom Bittner Executive Committeeman