

WI RLCA

Winter 2003

Happy Holidays!

This issue of the WI RLCA contains a lot of information concerning the national mail count. We hope that all members who count this year will attend at least one of the mail count seminars that the union will be sponsoring. It is your paycheck and the information given at these seminars may help you to get everything you are entitled to.

Because of space limitations there is no message

Inside this issue:

Local Steward Training	2
Welcome to Platteville	3
New Members	10
Calendar Classified Ads	11
Stewards Page	13
Auxiliary News	12
Retirement tips	17

from either the state chaplain or PAC chairman in this issue. Both will return in the next newsletter.

As of press time I do not know which national officer will be assigned to our Spring Conference. The conference will be shortly after the conclusion of the mail count so be sure to bring all your questions there.

We are continuing our membership drive with letters being sent out to all non-members. The next issue of the newsletter will be sent to non-members also, so please do your part by encouraging non-members in your office to join.

Best Wishes for a safe & prosperous new year.

Bill Jarzombek
President

COUNT TRAINING

January 11, 2004	9:00-2:00
Menomonie	Country Inn and Suites
320 Oak Avenue	
Wausau	10:00-2:00
Park Inn	2101 N Mountain Drive
January 18, 2004	9:00-2:00
Fond Du Lac	Ramada Plaza Hotel
One North Main Street	

You must be a Union member or join the Union to attend the above training. Dues withholding forms will be available.

USPS COUNT TRAINING

January 6, 2004	8:00-11:00	11:30-2:30
	6:00-9:00	Green Bay Annex
January 14, 2004	8:00-11:00	11:30-2:30
	6:00-9:00	Oshkosh Post Office
January 15, 2004	8:00-11:00	11:30-2:30
	6:00-9:00	Wausau Post Office

I need a count of everyone who will be attending our training or the USPS training. This is needed for materials and space needed. Please contact me by phone (920-845-5663) or e-mail (cbouche@aol.com) at least two weeks before the training.

I also need all local stewards and office contacts to e-mail me. Many of you have a new e-mail address and I cannot send information to you.

NEWS & VIEWS

Kathy Johnson retires after 34 years

We are losing an icon. Kathy Johnson is retiring 34 years 3 offices, countless managers and 2 positions later. She's pulling the magnets and flashing light off her car.

Kathy started her career as a clerk in Sheboygan and after 21/2 years she saw the light and came over to the rural craft. Shortly after that she transferred to Port Washington for 10 years before her final move to Grafton. Kathy retired as a designation 73 one of few left in Wi. and the only one that belongs to the Union she also had participated in QWL.

Thanks for all the years Kathy, we miss you at work.

Your friends at Grafton

LOCAL STEWARD TRAINING

February 8, 2004 9:00-3:00
Green Bay Best Western Midway Hotel
780 Packer Drive

February 22, 2004 9:00-3:00
Chippewa Falls Park Inn
1009 West Park Avenue

February 29, 2004 9:00-3:00
West Allis Tanner Paull
6922 W Orchard Street

March 7, 2004 9:00-3:00
Reedsburg Voyager Inn
200 Viking Drive

All local stewards will receive additional information on the training. This is for your information so you can plan on what date works for you. Remember you must attend the local steward training unless you have a very good excuse.

Document, Document, Document!!

Yep, it's count time again and it's time to get yourself prepared. The past several years have shown a significant increase in the number of grievances filed on count related issues. In order for these grievances to have any chance of success, you need to understand what evidence and documentation your Union Steward will need to argue your position. I'm going to show you some of the information that will give your grievance a smoother ride.

1. Take notes during the Pre-Count Conference. Any procedural agreements that are made at this time should be put in writing and signed by the carriers and management. Make sure to date it.

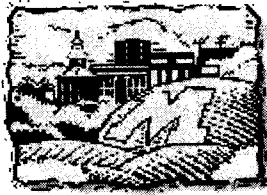
2. During the count:

a. If you disagree with how you are to be credited with a mailpiece, get it documented. Make a written description of the mail pieces in question. Include who it was from, any endorsements on the piece (i.e. Do Not Bend etc.), the height, width and thickness of the item and the number of pieces in question. Do NOT make a photocopy of the items. This can only be done legally by Postal Inspectors. Instead, get a sample of the mailing from a friend or relative or from your own mail. Do not pull it out of UBBM. Again, date your information.

b. If you disagree with a time value or distance measurement, have management measure it anyway and put it in writing. This may not be put on your count form but it could be your only proof that it was in fact checked by management and if it turns out that you were improperly credited, it will be easier to make the adjustment.

3. You do not have to wait until after the count to file a count related grievance. Go ahead and get it going if you are certain that management will not change their position.

4. After the count. If you don't agree with the results of the count, do not sign the forms. Put your disagreements in writing and give them to your supervisor or Postmaster. They must respond to your concerns within a reasonable time. If they don't agree



PLATTEVILLE IS EAGER TO WELCOME

2004 CONVENTIONEERS

Platteville is a picturesque community nestled among unglaciated rolling hills of southwestern Wisconsin. Thousands of years ago, Ice Age glaciers encircled the area but left it virtually untouched. The result is a unique and fertile landscape – a dramatic surprise for many of Platteville’s visitors.

Platteville began as Platte River Diggings in 1827. Once home to the Winnebago tribe, Platteville was settled in the mid 1820s by European miners who were attracted by the rich lead deposits.

Exploring Platteville

One of Platteville’s unique claims to fame is the World’s Largest “M”. The original design was based on the monogram of the School of Mines of 1936. It can be seen as far as 28 miles away. Test your fitness by climbing the stairs and rest at the top while taking in the phenomenal view of 3 states.

Platteville has many city parks and the Family Aquatic Center – home to a 12,000 square-foot pool with a 140-foot waterslide, geysers and diving boards. A new biking/hiking trail is also a source of pride to the community.

Downtown Platteville...Where Tradition and Progress Meet. Visit the historic Main Street with many businesses from antique malls to unique gift shops, restaurants and much, much more.

Built in 1837 by the Reverend Samuel Mitchell, Stone Cottage, this “gem like

no other in Wisconsin,” stands today as it did 150 years ago.

Step back into the turn of the century and take a walk through time at the Rollo Jamison / Mining Museum. Take a guided tour and see displays of farm equipment, musical instruments, carriages (rural mail wagon) and much more. Take a tour down into a 1845 lead mine and take a train ride around the museum grounds in ore cars pulled by a 1931 mine locomotive.

Experience the Warmth of Platteville

Sights to See Outside Platteville

Belmont (about 6 miles east of Platteville) First Capital State Historic Site

Dickeyville (about 8 miles southwest of Platteville) The Grotto; religious and patriotic shrines and gardens. You have to see it to believe it!

Mineral Point (about 18 miles northeast of Platteville) Pendarvis; a restored Cornish miners’ colony is a must see.

Dubuque, Iowa (about 30 minutes from Platteville) Diamond Jo Casino. Dubuque Greyhound Park and Casino. National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium; a fantastic and exciting multi-venue interactive river campus with a beautiful river walkway.

Galena, Illinois (about 40 minutes from Platteville) A historical architectural gem and fantastic shopping destination. Bed – and – breakfast capital of the Midwest.

Fall Conference Board Meeting October 17, & 18,
2003 Holiday Inn Steven Point

All Board members were present. President Bill J called the meeting to order at 10:15 am.

Board went into executive session. Chris Bouche, State Steward joined us at 11:30. A discussion of the steward system followed. Chris, Tom & Bill F will be a task team/committee for local steward training. Every two weeks assistant state stewards will update the state steward on their steward activities. This report can be sent by e-mail and copied to all other assistant state stewards. Individual stewards gave their updated activity reports at this time.

Karen gave an up to date report on this year financial budget. The expense voucher and per diem were explained. Membership drive was discussed. New members joining now until February will receive a mail count guide and perhaps a blue mail count Gauge. Karen will look into purchasing more gauges to be available also at the count trainings.

Chris and Karen presented letters and items for local stewards and county secretary appreciation. A Holiday letter with a pocket calendar will be sent. Bill J made a motion to spend an additional \$16-\$20 for another item to be given to local stewards/county secretaries at the Spring meetings. Nancy made a second to the motion. Carried.

The State Association will put on three count trainings in January. Karen and Chris will contact meeting sites in Menomonie and Fond du Lac. Bill F will contact a meeting site in Merrill. Possible dates will be Jan 11th and 18th. Bill and Tom will help Chris set up training material. They will also help with the local steward training material. Karen and Chris will set up the local steward trainings in Chippewa Falls, Reedsburg, Milwaukee and Green Bay. Possible dates will be Feb. 8th, 22nd, 29th and March 7.

Deadline for the next Newsletter will be Nov. 20th

and articles for this paper should address count issues. Jan. 20th is the deadline for the Feb Newsletter which will be sent to all members and Non-members. This issue is intended to recruit new members. Tom showed the board a booklet copy of the State Convention Minutes that was done on an auto duplex printer. A proposal to purchase such a printer was tabled.

The Saturday afternoon steward training was discussed. On Sunday a collection will be taken for a retirement gift to be presented to retiring National President Gus Baffa. Vilas Smith Jr has agreed to present such gift at Gus's retirement party on behalf of the WI RLCA.

Meeting adjourn at 6:15 pm Meeting reconvened on Saturday morning at 8:15. All Board members, State Steward and National Committeeman Jeannette Dwyer were present.

HCR routes were discussed. Seasonal Box policies were also discussed. Bill J, Bill F, and Chris will attend a labor/management meeting for the Northland District on Oct 28th. Karen will make room reservations at the Hudson House.

National's decision to only send a National Board representative to two state meetings was discussed. Bill J will write National a letter in regards to our opinions on such a decision. The Regional steward seminar will be in Grand Rapids MI on Nov 7-10. Karen will e-mail flight and room reservation confirmation numbers to everyone. Assistant State Stewards are reminded to save all expense receipts for reimbursements. Karen made a motion to apply for a credit card with APCU to be used for union purposes. The Sec/Treasurer and the President would be the only authorized people on the card. Tom seconded the motion. Approved.

The Lakeland Dist QWL received an Award for the Voice of Business at the recent Area Co Chairs Meeting. The Northland District QWL is lacking attendance from the management people. A Big Thank you goes to Sue Heiderscheidt for

Continued from page 4

her three-year commitment to the process on the Northland team.

The board discussed executive sessions and decided to have one on a regular basis at the beginning of each board meeting. The Spring Board meeting will have a one hour session for this purpose. Rural management sessions in the Lakeland Dist were also talked about.

The Auxiliary joined the meeting at 11:00a.m. They will take care of the Saturday night Hospitality Room at the Fall Conferences and the Board will make arrangements at the Spring Conference. The Board requested a list of the County Auxiliary Secretaries and the deadline of Nov 20th for the next Newsletter was discussed.

The Audit Committee met with us at 11:45. A copy of the board policies was requested. The 'no receipt' 'no pay' policy was emphasized along with separate receipts for union expenses and personal expenses. Lois Graper is the new 3 year member to the committee. Lisa W holds the one year term and Vilas Smith Jr. has the 2 year term. The W-4 file and the Equipment file were requested along with the usual reports for the Spring Meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

Addendum to meeting: Board met immediately after the Fall Conference. Marty made a motion second by Tom to purchase a duplex for Karen's printer and an auto duplex laser printer for Bill F. Total costs of both items are not to exceed \$600. Motion Passed.

Respectfully submitted by
Karen E Schauer Secretary/Treasurer

Special Board Meeting:
Sunday November 09, 2003 Amway Grand Plaza
Hotel, Grand Rapids MI
Meeting called to order by President at 6:15 p.m.

Present: President Bill Jarzombeck, VP Marty Schmidt, Sec/Treas Karen Schauer, State Steward Chris Bouche, Sr. Asst. State Steward Bill Foley, Assistant State Stewards Tom Bittner, Linda Vanden Plas, Nancy Hainstock, and Don Wyman.

Bill J informed us of a rural carrier receiving the Diversity Award at a Banquet in Madison on Nov. 15th. Linda V, representing our union, will be presenting the award. Marty S made a motion, second by Tom to pay mileage only to Linda. Motion passed.

Bill J has written a letter to National President Dale Holton regarding national visits to the State. We would like a representative at both the Spring and Fall Conferences plus the State Convention. If National wants to limit these visits then we choose not to have them at the State Convention. Also, the board wishes to inform the National Office that we are not interested in the National Ballot counting machines.

The board is requesting a Labor Management meeting with the Lakeland District Manger for sometime in December. Agenda items are to be sent to Bill J as soon as possible. Only board members in the Lakeland District will attend this meeting. The Lakeland District Manger will also be invited to our 100th Anniversary State Convention.

November 20th is the deadline for the next newsletter. Chris had a sign up list for board members to write articles about Count. Don will write an article introducing himself.

A Christmas letter for local stewards and county secretaries was signed by all board members.

Count training dates and places have been set. Chris will do all except Wausau. Bill F and Tom will conduct the Jan 11 training in Wausau. Other board members selected sites that they will help with. Chris will invite someone from management also to attend. Chris will check on the cost of the new count training books and Karen will order bout 100 of them.

Chris talked about the Rural Training for Managers. If management agrees to allow a steward (State or Assistant) to attend, Chris will appoint. Spring Conference agenda was discussed. One suggestion was for the newly appointed Constitution and By Laws and Resolution committees to put on a

Now that count is rapidly approaching,

Feb. 15 – March 6, there are a few issues that I would like to discuss with the rural carriers that will be going thru a count.

Under column J “Mark-Ups” the carriers get credit for one mark-up for each BUNDLE of the following:

- CFS Machineable/Non-Machineable
- Insufficient Address
- Unendorsed Bulk Business Mail (UBBM)
- Otherwise Undeliverable Bulk Business Mail (OUBBM)
- Excess Boxholders
- Street addressed PO Box or caller service mail
- Forward Expired

Credit one mark-up for each PIECE endorsed.

- Attempted Not Known
- No Such Number
- No Record Mail
- No Mail Receptacle
- Vacant (does not include OUBBM)
- Refused (includes parcels)
- Hold For Order
- Credit one piece of mail for Deceased customers.

Under column Q “Load Vehicle” loading time is the actual time used to transfer mail from the carriers work area to the vehicle and the time to place the mail in the vehicle. This also includes time to return equipment to it’s designated location. Loading time could include mail placed on the floor then to be placed in a hamper. This should only be used if sufficient equipment is not provided. Loading time could include double trips with more than one hamper. Carriers that do not have withdrawal will receive time under column Q for pulling hot case mail.

Another big issue is Column R “Other Suitable Allowances”

- Some common occurrences that will be recorded
- One safety talk per week – actual time.
- Time to walk to and from throwback case which may be done in conjunction with loading.
- Saturday afternoon duties when office personnel are not on duty (not to include counting of mail or com-

pleting forms), This time includes, if appropriate: Setting alarms, taking down the flag, emptying collection box, locking front/lobby doors. If hold mail is not kept at case, actual time to and from the hold rack. No time for sorting. Actual time required to place the CFS mail in the designated location

Edit book entries – actual time above and beyond what they previously recorded on the 4240. This would be time for cell size & 1621 code.

Keykeepers – actual time to open box.

Moving vehicle – actual time if the carriers cannot park close enough to load from the dock.

Actual time to dump and cull collection mail when more than two separations are required. This only includes separating the different categories of mail, it does not include sorting mail piece by piece.

Riffle mail – No time if marker or separator cards are used. Actual time, which should be minimal per tray.

When collecting mail from collection boxes, time is credited from the time the key enters the lock to open the box until the box is locked and the key removed. The time it takes the carrier to leave and return to their vehicle is covered by the dismount & distance recorded.

Scans and scanners time allowances.

Credit 6 minutes PER WEEK for retrieving, setting up, and returning the scanner to the cradle. If your office is using the computerized version, this will automatically be entered on days 6,12,18 and 24. Non – computerized offices will enter one minute per day for this.

Credit 18 seconds for each Delivery Conformation piece.

Something new this year is the Reasonable Distance Rule. This rule states that if the distance exceeds 50ft. round trip for the following:

- Retrieving parcel hamper

- Returning items to the accountable cage at the end of the day.

- One trip to retrieve DPS mail.

Continued from Page 6 Linda

This will be credited by multiplying the distance over 50ft. by .00284 and entering in column R.

Every office is different and you may have other items in column R. This is not meant to be all inclusive. If you have any questions call your state board or your state steward.

Good Luck

Linda Vanden Plas Committeeman.

Attention Juniors

Hello fellow juniors. It's time to play ketchup. At the State convention in June at Rhinelander the new officers were elected as stated: President – Daphne Koch, Sr. Vice President – Michael Rasmussen, Jr. Vice President – Angie Graper, Secretary – Katie Volz, Treasurer – Allison DuLac, and Chaplin – Kevin Luback.

At the National convention in Chicago, Ill., Wisconsin dominated in the poster and essays. In the 9-11 yr old category Shawna Kreuger took 1st place. In the 12-14 yr old category, 1st place was Brittany Krombos, and 3rd place was Taylor Pfeiffer. In the 15-17 yr old category was Whitney Pfeiffer, 1st place and in the 18-20 yr old category, 1st place was Linda Rasmussen. Keep up the good work juniors.

Next year's state convention will be held in Platteville, June 18-20, 2004. We are already planning some wild and crazy adventures. Possible adventures are mini golf, doing a few educational tours, a little hiking up a hill, and a bowling pizza party. These are some possible adventures we might be taking. For our shirts, we will have tie-dyed T-shirts. Some will be made up ahead of time, and if you arrive early, you may do your own. Hope to see ya'all in Platteville.

For pictures and other info, check out the WIRLCA site at www.wirlca.org, and click on Juniors.

Continued from page 5 Karen

Workshop on 'How to write Resolutions and Constitution & By Law changes'.

Possible guest speakers for the State Convention were discussed. Bill J will invite Bob West from Headquarters and an invitation to District Managers from both Lakeland and Northland will be sent.

A recruitment letter will be sent to all non-member the first of the year. Karen will send a draft letter to all board members for their input. Count training books will be given to those signing up for D/W and also stamp-stock starter kits and free State Convention banquet tickets will be awarded.

Bill F made a motion, seconded by Tom to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen E Schauer, Secretary/Treasurer

Continued from page 2 Don

with your arguments, then it's time to file a grievance if you haven't already.

This list is not complete but is intended to give you some idea of what you need to do. Bottom line is that if you don't agree with management on a count issue, don't try to shout it out with them. Document the problem and move on with the count. It may be that the only recourse open to you in the end is to file a grievance and get a decision that way. So, document, document, document. And make sure the documents are dated. It will help you and your Stewards to get the evaluation you are entitled to. Last year the carriers that kept track of AOL disks were given parcel credit after the count. Those that didn't keep track got nothing.

Yours in Brotherhood,
Don Wyman
Assistant State Steward

To All Rural Carriers

From Rural Academy Instructors

Go on. Enjoy your K day, have a weeks vacation. Sick or injured? Relax, not to worry. your route is being delivered by a competent fully trained and prepared substitute. OR IS IT?

Will you return to work to find undeliverable mail, delivered mail that should have been forwarded, per turbed customers, an upset postmaster/supervisor and a sub that QUIT?

We all deserve and are entitled to our time off and one sub per route. We need to be able to take our time off and not be concerned whether our route will be in capable hands or not.

Our customers deserve to have the best possible mail service every day. no matter who is the carrier of the day.

So what should a carrier do to ensure that a new relief carrier would want to stay? Remember this important fact — the new relief still gets a minimum of 24 hours on the job instruction. Make sure the relief carrier gets the training on the assigned route. The OJT' instructor is you, the regular carrier. You know your route better than anyone does. If you do not feel comfortable doing all the instruction, ask for assistance from your local steward, manager or postmaster or another qualified person in your office. There are always options.

Because the new relief carrier is still in training they should not be allowed on the route without you.

The intensive training they received in the Rural Academy covers much more information than anyone could possibly

remember, so you will need to reinforce the instruction they received.

Answer all the relief's questions, and advise them of the things they won't think of asking.

Keep the 4003~ edit book, route map case labels and other records up to date.

Training time is a good opportunity to review the P0-603 with the new relief.

The postmaster/supervisor will review with you the On-the-Job Training Guide and the Training Evaluation Checklist you will be using with the new relief

Try to remember back when you started. Did the person who trained you do a good job? Were they friendly and helpful? If not, you should try to be a better trainer than the person who trained you. Ultimately, you will be responsible for the quality of service on your route.

Remember - the success or failure of your new relief person could be decided by the quality of the on-the-job training you provide.

Interim Adjustments

Over the past several months I have gotten several phone calls asking the following questions. When do I get compensation for all my new boxes, dismounts, or route extensions? I am going to make an attempt to try to explain how and when this adjustment takes place.

First of all let me state that you need to have an understanding of our evaluated system, which I believe most of us do. Article 9.2.c.10 states: when a substantial service change occurs which amounts to an increase or decrease of one full hour which could possibly initiate a base change, the employer shall promptly adjust the route evaluation and shall make a adjustment in compensation.

On your rural route evaluation form, 4241-A, you will have all the information pertaining to your time standards presently being used on your route. It will notate your box count and your route mileage. Time allotted per box for curb delivery on non-L routes is 2 minutes. Time allotted per box on L routes is 1.82 minutes. Time allotted for NDCBU centralized boxes, is 1 minute. On your 4241-A line 4, you will see a section headed box factor. You will need this box factor to calculate how much time you have gained towards your interim adjustment. For example your box factor is 3 minutes per box and you have curb delivery, which allocates you an additional 2 minutes for a total of 5 minutes per box. Therefore 12 new boxes times 5 minutes per box equates to 60 minutes plus any dismounts or route extensions. We are given 12 minutes per mile on route extensions assuming you have a 1 mile extension this would jump your evaluation an addition 12 minutes for a total of 72 minutes. On your 4241-A, on the very bottom of the page there is a large space just above the area headed note. In this area will be identified any bank time you might have accrued since your last count. This bank time should be added to the mileage and the new boxes you have gotten since your last count. For this exercise we will assume you have 10 minutes of banked time, this will bring your total to 82 minutes. In your handbook EL-902, union agreement, page 26, Article 9.2.c.6 you will find a table of evaluated hours for regular rural carriers. Assuming you were a J route with a current evaluation of 45.15

hours you would add 1 hour and 22 minutes to your evaluation, which would bring this up to 46 hours, 37 minutes. This would bring you from a 41 J to a 44 J route.

To process your adjustment, the postmaster must send in a 4003 official rural route description with the any new mileage total, and new box totals to the delivery and collection manager in your area. This will trigger an interim adjustment and generate a new PS form 4341-A In approximately 3 to 4 weeks you will receive an updated PS form 4241-A. It is very important to verify the new totals on the updated PS form 4241-A. Keying errors can and do happen. Differences must be resolved immediately. I am also going to mention that dismounts distances, which have been added since the evaluation will also be credited.

Rural Route Evaluation Form 4241-A

Verification.

During our last mail count, and previous mail counts we have run into problems whereas keying errors were made when entering some of our final count totals including active boxes. Please remember to verify your box count, etc. using your PS form 4241, rural delivery statistics report, for accuracy.

Bill Foley

**PLEASE CHECK THE
WISCONSIN RURAL
LETTER CARRIERS'
WEBSITE
WWW.WIRLCA.ORG
FOR THE LATEST
INFORMATION ABOUT
COUNT & STEWARD
TRAINING SESSIONS AND
OTHER COUNT
INFORMATION**

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

New Members:

Laurette Hatfield
Naime Schmit
Lori Bixby
Dawn Gault
Kimberly Kowalik
Tammy Lofberg
Nicholas Meseberg
Jacki Olander
Gerald Derr
Lori Hindman
Mary Lehman
Sharon Orlick
Jessica Kreis
Linda Fochs
Shawn Justice
Kimberly Kafka
Teresa Patoka
Pam Trumbull
Jeffrey Stevens
Judi Winkler-McCue
Randy Eller
Jody Mitchell
Marybeth Uran
Kevin Bauman
Jean Wick
Andrew Cameron
Jamie Condon
Daniel Jacobson
Donita Nordvall
Richard Koepke
Peter Geidans
Susan Blarek
Christine Cracraft
Daryl Gorden
Terri Jo Froehlich
Linda L. Halverson
Linda G. Halverson
Melody Johnson
Lawrence Kennedy
Tammy Moll
Lois Volkman
Helen Casper
Scott Connor
Jon Fessler
Alvera Jensen

Robert Leystra
Valerie Nytes
Cheryl Peterson-Degreer
Debbie Van Dalen
James Boudreau
Cynthia Castillo
Ranay Hanrahan
Jason Hart
Mark Stuntebeck
Sue Franke
Susan Moder
Harold Pfister
Giselle Vlies
Alva Woods

WI RLCA Membership as of Nov 20, 2003

Regular Carriers	1492
PTFs	2
Sub of Record	1
Retired Carriers	1014
RCAs	889
RCRs	3
Associates	5

Total Members 3306

NON-Members

Regular Carrier	205
PTFs	2
Sub of Record	1
RCAs	784
RCRs	9

Total NON-Members 1001

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 2004

Christmas Overtime Period Dec 6– Dec.26, 2003

Jan 11	Union Mail Count Training	Menomine & Wausau
Jan 18	Union Mail Count Training	Fond du lac
National Mail Count	Feb 14-March 6	
Feb 16	Dane County Meeting	Madison Labor Temple
March 13-14	Spring Conference	Voyager Reedsburg
March 24	Grant-Iowa County Mtg.	
April 3	La Fayette-Green County Mtg.	
April 18	Crawford County Mtg.	
June 18-20	State Convention	Park Inn Platteville

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE JANUARY 20

Rural Free Classifieds

Mutual Transfer:

Madison to within 25 miles of Richland Center, High growth area, LLV, 44K 608 647-8143

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

National Rural Route Statistics as reported by the USPS 4th quarter 2003

<u>Designation code</u>	<u>number of employees</u>
70/0 TRC-Temporary Relief Carrier	7,365
70/1 TRC-annuitant	152
71 Regular Carrier	61,379
72 Substitute serving over 90 days on vacant route	1
73 Substitute Carrier serving without time limitation	60
74 RCA serving vacant route over 90 days or reg. absent	1,145
75 RCR-Rural Carrier Relief	352
76 PTF-Part Time Flexible	350
77 Auxiliary Carrier	34
78 RCA-Rural Carrier Associate	41,669
79 RCA assigned to auxiliary route over 90 days	6,295

Regular Routes 61,354 Leave Replacements 49,906

<u>Auxiliary Officer</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Assignments</u>
Judy Pederson President	1794 Mc Kinley Road Eau Claire, WI 54703-1334	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, Rock-Walworth
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, Jefferson
June Strobel Executive Board Chairman	N4431 Daley Road Hustisford, WI	920 349-3782	Dane, Dodge, Marquette-Adams Washington
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Karen Rasmussen Junior Auxiliary Sponsor	N55W31185 HWY K Hartland, WI 53029-9305	262-367-2330	

Please Join Us

in congratulating Auxiliary President Judy Pederson who is Wisconsin Auxiliary Member of the year for 2003. Judy has actively served her county and state auxiliary for many years. She was honored at a ceremony at National Convention in Chicago in August with the candidates from other states. We are proud to honor Judy's contributions of time and talent to help make Wisconsin's Auxiliary and Juniors a group to be enjoyed by all Rural Carrier families.



STEWARDS PAGE

There were six grievances that were settled on March 19, 2003 before they went to national arbitration. The grievance on registered and certified accepted was settled with the agreement a rural route will be provided two minutes credit under Column P provided the rural carrier completes any one of the following items: (1) The rural carrier weighs, rates and affixes postage to the article which may involve assistance from a clerk. If the carrier accepts payment for the service from the customer and presents the article to a clerk, who weighs, rates and affixes postage; the carrier is still entitled to credit under Column P. (2) The rural carrier postmarks the receipt, which may involve assistance from a clerk. (3) The rural carrier endorses and issues a receipt via Form 3800 or 3896, which may involve assistance from a clerk. The parties agree that if the rural carrier does not complete item 1, 2 or 3 a rural route will be provided credit under Column N (Letters and Flats Collected) or O (Ordinary and Insured Parcels Accepted). The grievance on markup credit for each piece of mail that is addressed to a street address when the customer actually receives mail by caller service or from a post office box was settled with the agreement that mail received by a rural carrier addressed to a customer's street address will receive a bundle markup for all mail intended for local post office boxes and caller services. This is mail that the carrier does not deliver to the customer because the customer has no mail receptacle. This does not mean that the endorsement of no mail receptacle has ended. You may receive mail on your route that an endorsement of no mail receptacle would be appropriate. The grievance on additional credit during the mail count to retrieve DPS mail and returning articles to the accountable cage was settled with the agreement that if DPS mail and/or the accountable cage are not located within 50 feet (round trip) from the carrier's case the route will be provided additional credit under Column R for only the distance beyond the 50 feet. Measurement will be from the closest edge (wing) on the front side of the carrier's case. The distance beyond 50 feet will be credited at .00284 minutes per foot. The grievance on additional time for the retrieval of parcel hampers was settled with the same credit as

above if the round trip was more than 50 feet. While management may have the issues settled for the count they should not be allowed to increase the distance after the count. If this happens a grievance should be filed. The grievance on address orientation was settled with the agreement that for the mail count the width of the mail piece will be defined as the dimension perpendicular to the address label. Therefore, a mail piece measuring 5 ½ inches by 7 inches would be recorded as a flat if the label or address on the mail were placed parallel to the 5 ½ dimension. The grievance on address cards received by rural carriers during the mail count was settled with the agreement that address cards received during the mail count are not recorded as part of the mail count. The sequencing of address cards does not warrant additional compensation. The parties also signed an MOU on the Use of End of Run Report. The parties agreed that the end of run report for DPS letters would be used to record volume during the mail count. Either the carrier or management may verify the piece count from the report by counting the mail, however no additional compensation will be provided for the time involved.

The M-38 gives management the responsibility for reviewing all Forms 4241 for accuracy, completeness and compliance with instructions. This allows District management to make corrections of errors in math computations on the 4241 and to disallowing entries in Other Suitable Allowances, which appear to be unreasonable or are insufficiently explained the comments section. In addition, District personnel are to verify that the mileage is correct and the loading entries are reasonable in relation to the volume of mail. This is what is called redlining. While the M-38 gives the authority to management to make corrections and changes to the 4241 it is only to a very limited degree. Most of the data on the 4241 consist of an actual count of mail pieces. The determination of the accuracy of a piece count can only be made at the location and time the pieces were actually counted. If there is a disagreement on piece count the carrier will not sign the form certified to be correct. If both management and carrier sign the 4241 certified to be correct the District personnel should not be allowed to redline piece count items. If the District has redlined a portion of the 4241 they must notify the postmaster. The District

Continued page 14

Rural Route Inspections

A rural route inspection is the physical observation of the official line of travel, identification of safety hazards, condition of the boxes served, adequacy and quality of service to the rural public, and the character and performance of the carrier. The inspection is to be made by the postmaster or a designee while accompanying the carrier on the route. An inspection must be conducted either during or immediately prior to a National or Special Mail Count. The purpose of this inspection is to obtain current and correct data, including route and delivery conditions, number and types of boxes served, time and frequency of authorized dismounts, and the distance (in feet) required at each dismount. Any additional hazardous conditions, situations, and locations must be examined and appropriate action taken to eliminate or reduce the potential for an accident.

Rural carriers must travel their route and deliver mail precisely as they do the rest of the year. You must inform postmaster of any boxes that have remained vacant more than 90 days.

If the carrier's normal vehicle will not accommodate the examiner, you may be requested, but not required, to supply an appropriate vehicle. Management is responsible for the safety of both the carrier and himself, so make sure examiner also wears his or her seatbelt at all times.

BOX COUNT: All boxes currently being served and temporarily vacant dwellings, apartments, and places of business with a box erected, or served via a dismount, which have been vacant less than 90 days, are counted as boxes. DO NOT count abandoned boxes, permanently vacant buildings and dwellings, apartments vacant more than 90 days, buildings under construction, or dwellings and businesses receiving delivery solely through general delivery or a post office box. Do not count compartments located in NDCBU's as boxes served.

DISMOUNTS: The total number of authorized dismounts are recorded on a daily basis. When determining the dismount distance, all entries must be made on the basis of the number of trips required by the carrier each day. The dismount may require more than one trip. When a carrier dismounts to provide other services, such as delivery and/or pick up of accountables, COD, Express Mail, etc., no dismount credit is credited.

Carriers should make sure the length of travel is correct. A good measuring device is used for dismounts, postmaster is aware of safety concerns, the conditions of mailboxes, roads that may need repair. Compare the Rural Route Inspection Report with your Form 4003, make sure they match. Count your boxes on your sorting case, do they match? Check mileage on the route, compare with postmaster's number, if different from postmaster maybe you should remeasure. Inspect the condition of all mail receptacles during the route inspection for irregularities. Have your Form 4056 (Your Mailbox Needs Attention) with it is designed to notify customers of mailbox irregularities. Note any road conditions, shoulder conditions, or any area in disrepair that could obstruct delivery of mail, cause undue wear or damage to the vehicle, or present a safety hazard. Management is responsible for completing PS Form 4024 (Request to Repair Roads).

Most important always remember to use safe driving habits everyday on the route....

Safe Travels and Good Luck on the Count.
Committeeman, Nancy Hainstock

Continued from page 13

must clearly mark the corrections and return a copy of the 4241 to the postmaster. The postmaster will correct his copy and promptly give one copy to the rural carrier. On receiving the corrected copy from the postmaster the carrier may wish to challenge the action of the District by filing a grievance. You should note that the instructions do not allow redlining or markups.

It is the first day of the mail count and you have 13 flats that are stamped DO NOT BEND. You call your postmaster over and tell him/her that these should be counted as parcels. The postmaster refuses to count them as parcels what should you do? You should document what the size of the items were and how many you had. Make a drawing of the article. Some carriers have made copies of the mail piece. You should be cautious of this action and if the postmaster agrees have them make the copy for future reference. You have two options you can file a grievance immediately on his/her action within 14

Highway Contract Routes

Box Delivery Highway Contract Route's (HCR's) are similar to Rural Routes in that they can be required to perform most of the same duties that a rural carrier would delivering mail. The difference is that rather than the work being done by an employee of the Postal Service, it is contracted out to a private party who is only provided with a case to sort mail into and room in the Post office from which they deliver out of. The HCR Contract specifies what duties the supplier is required to perform and what equipment they will be required to provide. The route could either be operated by the supplier (owner-operator) or by employees hired by the supplier. If hired employees are used on a regular basis the contract includes a wage determination that specifies what wages and benefits are required to be paid by the supplier.

There has been a misunderstanding that management would be trying to convert existing rural routes to HCR's because they are less expensive. The only time that a regular rural route can be converted to a Highway contract route is if there is less than one family/ per mile on the route and the route is vacant. Although Wisconsin has had HCR routes for years in less populated areas, mainly in the Northern area of the state, putting them into high-density areas is something new to Wisconsin. Recently I've gotten quite a few calls from the Southern part of the state regarding HCR's. It appeared that managers were being told that any new territory with more than twenty-five deliveries would be considered for HCR delivery. The intent of this would be to create a route out of several small pockets of delivery. This would create a condition known as "commingling of services". The NRLCA has been successful in preventing this type of route in other areas of the country. Current National policy requires that if an HCR route is to be established, there must be enough deliveries expected in one contiguous area to provide a full day of work.

In new areas of new development where there is no established delivery, management must do a cost analysis to determine what would be the most cost effective method of delivery. Generally the most efficient and cost effective method of delivery will be used for the new territory. The cost analysis must be realistic and achievable within 6 to 12 months, if for

example a new development is projected to have 500 deliveries within 5 years, the cost analysis should not be based on the full 500 deliveries but only on how many could reasonably be expected to be active within the first 6 to 12 months. In some areas the Postal Service has attempted to extend this time by having managers deliver mail into new territory. Article 1.6 prohibits managers from doing bargaining unit work except in specific circumstances. Another tactic that is being used to extend the time frame is to offer new customers in the new areas free PO boxes until enough deliveries exist to make an HCR route more competitive. If you notice houses going up in a new development contact the assistant steward assigned to your area to make sure that management is doing things by the book.

The best chance we have at stopping the establishment of an HCR is for carriers to get in contact with their steward as soon as they hear about the possibility of one going in in their area.

Tom Bittner - executive committeeman

***Your State Board Cordially
Invites you***

WIRLCA Spring Conference

*Voyager Inn & Conference Center
200 Viking Dr. Reedsburg, WI 53959*

- Saturday March 13th
- Sunday March 14th

Informational meetings Saturday and Sunday
Get your count questions answered

Hospitality room Saturday evening

*A block of rooms has been reserved at a
special WIRLCA rate of \$49 for up to two
people.*

*Reserve your room before February 20th by calling
(608)524-6431*

PRE COUNT

Martha 'Marty' Schmidt

A mail count is intended to be a true reflection of the route under normal conditions. Mail counts are used to assemble data that provides the basis for route evaluations. These route statistics indicate: volume of mail handled, amount of office and route time used by the carrier, adequacy of service of rural customers, and the efficiency and performance of the carrier.

One of the first steps in the mail count procedure is pre-count conference. A pre-count conference is to discuss count procedures and instructions per *Chapter 5 of the PO-603*.

Regardless of the type of mail count, a joint conference including the postmaster, supervisors, and the rural carriers involved must be held at least 15 days prior to the beginning of the count period. This is a requirement and there should be no exceptions.

The pre-count conference is a very important event because it is management's last opportunity to introduce administrative changes in carrier procedure. Once the conference is completed, procedures are locked in throughout the count and by extension, the remainder of the year unless corresponding changes are made in salary for additional functions.

It is important to discuss count procedures so that any potential areas of disagreement can be identified and hopefully resolved prior to the actual count. Many topics that affect our pay will be discussed: dates of count – how to use template – how mail will be counted – carrier schedules – overview of PO603 chapter 5 – all columns on form – review form 4239 – proper credit for mail collected – dismounts – loading procedures – safety talks – Saturday closeout – mark-ups Rural carriers are well advised to take a pre-count conference checklist with them to the local conference and make notes.

Any carrier on leave prior to the beginning of the count must be conferred with before going on leave or immediately upon return. If operational changes are planned while the carrier is on leave, the conference must be held upon the carrier's return to duty, when all changes must be explained.

Let's review the topics and purpose of the Pre-Count Conference:

- **Review instructions for the count period**
- **Review standard operating procedures to be maintained during the count.**
- **Discuss any changes in procedures that are to be implemented.**
- **Discuss mail count procedures.**

It is the responsibility of rural carriers and local stewards along with managers to ensure mail counts are properly conducted and data is accurately reported. All rural carriers are encouraged to keep abreast of mail count instructions. This is the first step to ensure proper credit for the hard work we do.

Be sure to note the time and place of mail count training in your area. Your State Steward will be there to give you up-to-date information. Time will be available for your questions. Being informed can make a difference in your paycheck. Knowledge will add dollars to your paycheck. We look forward to serving you at the mail count training. You can read other articles in this newsletter for times and places for mail count training.

Until then...**drive safely and Happy Holidays** to all.

10 SMART Things You Can Do As You Approach Retirement...

1. Begin your retirement planning at least a year before you actually retire.
2. Attend a pre-retirement seminar the first time you are eligible. This will give you a basic framework on which to determine what type retirement you want, when you want it, and how you will pay for it.
3. Keep your retirement plans confidential. This allows you to change your mind if retirement plans change.
4. Discuss your decision and plans with your spouse. Be sure that the interests of both will be preserved in your new lifestyle.
5. Be aware of the various retirement options. Discuss those options with the retirement counselor in your agency. Base your decision on facts, not on the advice of a friend who may have an entirely different situation.
6. Review your life and health insurance needs and figure the costs as you decide which policies to take with you into retirement.
7. If you decide to move, visit potential retirement sites and decide which are most likely to meet your emotional, financial and social needs. Try a year or more of renting in the new area before "burning your bridges" back home.
8. Take advantage of the various "thrift" plans available to you. Save the maximum you can even if you will only be in the program for a year or less.
9. Take a financial inventory. Verify all income sources available to you in retirement. See if you qualify for Social Security or other benefits. Review your investments for the highest possible return with the least risks. Budget for the unexpected expenses such as increasing college tuition for your children or medical care for a dependent parent.
10. Read and review all retirement information provided by your agency and OPM. Be aware of help and advice available from retiree groups and organizations. Take advantage of that help.

ONE YEAR or MORE BEFORE RETIREMENT:

1. Determine when you will meet the age and service requirements and choose a retirement date.
2. Make an appointment with a retirement counselor in your personnel office to review your OPF.
3. Together, review your OPF, complete the SF-2801-1 to assure official documentation of the following:
 - a. A record of each of the periods of service you had.
 - b. The beginning and ending dates for each period of service.
 - c. Effective dates for pay changes during any Federal Service for which retirement deductions were not withheld from your salary or service that might fall into your high-3 average salary period.
4. Ask for information from the Social Security Administration about your future eligibility for benefits, and an estimate of the amount.
5. Determine if the Social Security Windfall Elimination Penalty or the Public Pension Offset affects any Social Security benefits expected.
6. Request estimated annuity computations.
7. Decide whether to waive military retired pay, if applicable.
8. Decide when and how to receive your Thrift Savings Plan funds.
9. Request information about any pension from non-civil service employment for which you might be eligible.
10. If you receive OWCP benefits, request information about their impact on your annuity.
11. Clear up any financial indebtedness to your agency.
12. Inform your supervisor of your proposed retirement date.

TWO MONTHS BEFORE RETIREMENT

- 1 Complete and sign the retirement application and all related forms.
 - a. FERS Forms:
 - i. SF3107 Application for Immediate Retirement
 - ii. SF3107-2 Spouse's Consent to Survivor Election
 - iii. SF2818 Continuation of Life Insurance Coverage
 - iv. SF2817 Cancellation of Life Insurance Coverage
 - v. TSP-7 Election of Benefits & other forms for your TSP disbursements.
 - b. CSFS Forms:
 - i. SF2801 Application for Immediate Retirement
 - ii. SF2801-2 Spouse's Consent to Survivor Election
 - iii. SF2801-3 Election of Former Spouse Annuity
 - iv. SF2818 Continuation of Life Insurance Coverage
 - v. TSP-7 Election of Benefits & other forms for TSP disbursements
- 2 Submit all forms and required documents to your supervisor/personnel office
- 3 Review and sign SF3107-1 or SF2801-1, Certified Summary of Federal Service, that the personnel office has prepared.
- 4 Complete all customary agency exit procedures.
- 5 Send you initial Thrift Savings Plan forms directly to the TSP office.

From the latest FEDweek Weekly Newsletter:

Those retired under the CSRS retirement system, who make up the large majority of federal retirees, will get a 2.1 percent increase in their annuities, paid in their January payments, following the final compilation of the inflation index used to set those adjustments. The 2.1 percent COLA also will apply to Social Security and military retirement benefits.

Those retired under the FERS system and who are eligible for COLAs – in most cases, FERS doesn't pay COLAs until age 62 – will get 2 percent on the portion of the benefit attributable to FERS service and 2.1 percent on the CSRS portion. COLAs are prorated for those who have retired, or still will retire, this year.

2004 Rate Information for Rural Carrier Health Benefit Plan

Career Postal Service Employees – Bi-Weekly Premium

	USPS	Employee	Change
Self	\$143.32	\$56.62	\$5.67
Family	\$327.12	\$79.70	\$7.80

Leave Replacements Bi-Weekly – if they qualify:

Self \$199.94

Family \$406.82

Retiree and Surviving Spouses – Monthly Rate

	Government	Retiree monthly
Self	\$263.03	\$170.17
Family	\$600.36	\$281.08

Health insurance coverage will take effect on January 1, 2004 for retired carriers and surviving spouses and on January 10, 2004 for regular, PTF and eligible leave replacement rural carriers.

Column L Delivery Point Sequence (DPS) Letters

Enter in this column all mail 6 1/8 inches in width that is processed on **Postal Service** automated equipment as DPS mail. Mail that is presented to you in delivery order by a mailer is **not** DPS mail. If fewer than 2,400 pieces of DPS mail are averaged per week during the entire count period and/or the route was not validated before the count as meeting the 98% quality threshold, mail processed as DPS will be cased and recorded as sector segment in column B on PS Form 4241.

The end of run report piece count from the automated equipment used to process a zone's DPS letter mail will be utilized when recording volume, during a mail count.-3/19/03 MOU. These end of run reports must be kept on file, until the next rural mail count, in the delivery office and rural carriers have a right to inspect these reports to determine if there has been a significant decline in the quantity of DPS received.

If during the mail count DPS mail is not within 50 feet (round trip) of the carrier case the carrier is entitled for credit under column R for the distance above than 50 feet at .00284/foot.- Pre-arbitration agreement 3/19/03 D95R-4D-C.

Casing of DPS mail will not change mail count procedures or time standards applied to DPS or other mail. For mail to be DPS it must be in **perfect** delivery order. Any mail that is not in perfect order is not DPS this includes mail for customers who are on hold or have moved or mail that is missorted to the route is counted twice, once as DPS and a second time as raw letters in column A. The fact that the carrier may elect to case this mail during the count does not change the recording procedure.

If multiple runs of DPS are received on any day, only one run may be counted as DPS. Management will determine which run is DPS. Other runs may be counted as sector segment if they qualify.

A rigid article received in DPS will be counted and recorded under column D as a parcel if the rigid article exceeds any one of the dimensions in Part 535.12.d(1) of the PO 603.

Separator Cards

If separator cards for your DPS mail have not been authorized and used you are entitled to appropriate fingering and riffling time to be reasonably assured that your DPS mail is accurately sorted. This is column R time. Also, if during the process of riffling DPS a carrier notices that a hand-full of good DPS mail is out of sequence in their tray, the carrier extracts the hand full and places it in the appropriate location. Time to make these types of minor corrections would be included in the riffling time under column R.

Bill Jarzombeck President

Continued from page 14 Chris

days or you can wait until you receive the decision from the District on your disagreement. Your local postmaster has the authority to settle your grievance at Step 1. You must write a statement on why you disagreed to sign the 4241 certified to be correct. If you do not write a statement on your disagreement nothing will happen. The above scenario on the DO NOT BEND was an example of a disagreement you may have with local management. You must document any disagreements you have with management on piece count or time. There are forms that can be used to document your disagreement. You should also document your disagreement on the 4239 the day the infraction happens. You should initial or sign your name on the 4239 in the column where the disagreement occurred and the number of items or time in question. You can ask local management to do the same. They are not required to sign. You should note that management did not agree to initial or sign. If your postmaster disagrees with your grievance at Step 1 you should immediately send the grievance to the Assistant or State Steward assigned to your county with all the documentation and a statement from you on the details of your grievance. If you have any questions please call or talk to you Local, Assistant or State Steward. The main issue in any grievance you may file is to have **documentation**. This may also include signed statements from other carriers or management. Remember do your duties during the mail count as you would do them the rest of the year.