

News and Views



Official Publication of Central Kentucky Bluegrass Branch 361, NALC

2022 Issue 6

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President's Page - Denise Preston

Looks like the warmer weather is finally here. Don't forget to stay well hydrated and to check on your co-workers. Remember some medicines will make you become dehydrated more quickly, so be vigilant with your medicines and adjust your fluid intake as needed. By the time this article is out the food drive will be over I hope we have a great food drive. Zed has worked very hard on the food drive this year. With Covid and the change with restrictions on schools and day-care's when children get sick and parents having to stay home more because their children were sick. More people then ever are needing to use the food banks to feed their families. The food banks have had a really rough time the last couple of years because of covid due to the fact we could not have our food drive. Every year we do the food drive it makes me proud of our customers who donate food and all the carriers that help with picking up food. To see the trucks pull out of the stations full of food that all of the carriers pick up it amazing! Zed should have the pounds of food that we picked up and will be in the next news letter. I am looking forward to seeing those numbers. I hope we will have had a better food drive than we ever had in the past. I just want to say thank you to each and every carrier that helped by picking up food. I would also like to thank anyone that donated food as well. Last but not least the volunteers that are retired and came out and helped with the food drive. We have some that come every year to help.

While the Covid numbers appear to be staying down here in Lexington, it is partly because of a decline in testing. Some people are not even aware they are positive, because they are asymptomatic and never get tested. While the numbers, even if questionable, are reason enough to be hopeful, it is not the time to let your common sense fly out the window. Avoid crowded indoor gatherings, wash your hands, and if you haven't gotten vaccinated, keep in mind vaccinated individuals are more likely to have a milder case of Covid than non-vaccinated individuals. Stay safe on your routes and at home. Hope to see you at the hall or via Zoom for the Tuesday June 7th monthly Meeting.

Denise

With covid cases decreasing in central Kentucky the June 7th meeting will be both in person at the hall and by Zoom. How ever cases in several states are increasing again and if the past is prolog, we will likely see an increase in covid cases in central Kentucky as well, which may affect future meetings

Vice-President - Zed Waltz

The necessity for members of Branch 361 to stand up and step forward has never been more imperative. It is crucial for members to begin active participation and stop the practice of scapegoating. The members, who I have come to know and would consider family are on the cusp of determining how we will move forward as a Branch. We as a Union, on the local level, will have to decide whether we will sit idly by and allow management to destroy what so many have built before us or reinforce what is already agreed upon.

This job, of the Letter Carrier, is a great job, but it will only continue to be as great, as we make it. The rights agreed to in the National Agreement will not simply enforce themselves nor will management just follow the contract, these rights must be enforced. The reason I say these things is not to place blame on any members, but to convey the urgent need for others to be involved and help protect the rights of all Letter Carriers. I know from my personal relationships with many of you that we have the qualified people needed to be successful. The Union needs active participation from all members at every stage of their career, (City Carrier Assistants, Letter Carriers, and Retirees) please consider this as your open invitation to attend the next monthly meeting on June 7, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. and I eagerly anticipate, with your help, the future of Branch 361.

Branch 361 for the month of April filed 38 grievances. This number is just a reminder that we will continue to work relentlessly for all members of Branch 361. Please feel free to contact me anytime at (859)-779-4079 with any questions or concerns.

I would like to thank all of the volunteers of Branch 361 for their hard work to help make this year's food drive possible.

Zed

Trustee Report - Jim Smith

It is your old retired letter carrier once again. I would like to talk with you today about taking of your route or if you happen to have a hold down on someone else route. I will do some comparison with you and your route. You try to take care of yourself by going to the Doctor when ailing. You have yearly checkups. Some of you even go to the gym once a week. Many do some walking and others like running. So, in line why not take care of your route or the route you have a hold down on. You get 2 ten-minute break and 30 minutes for lunch. Be sure to not skip them. Take them all for they were hard fought for. It is true management does not care one way or the other. You might even have had them to tell you that you could skip them. It will mess you up when it comes to a route inspection. Also, once you start doing that management will expect you to keep doing it. I hope that you are using the dog cards for other carriers that might carry a pivot on your route. If for your own good they should be used. I could go on about other reminders but you are the captain of your route. Carry it the same each day if possible.

For new carriers, there are a couple of manuals one should learn backwards and forward, the M39 and M41. They will enlighten you for what carrying mail is all about. You have a bible that you use when you go to church so these are your bible of the Post Office. Know these manuals and you will be smarter than management. Also, you have someone you can rely on and that is the steward in your office, If he does not know the answer he knows where to find it. Just a few more words for all you new Carriers thank you for joining the union. Now that you have join remember it is now your union. So, get involved with what is going on. Come to the meetings. If you do not have a steward in your building think about stepping up and becoming one. You should become an active member. Do not let someone else do it for. For the ones that have done so thank you very much. The more you learn the more you know. Take care and stay safe. It depends on all of you working together.

Smitty

Financial Secretart/Treasurer - Cindi Lindsay

I have been a City Letter Carrier for nearly 18 years. . From the very beginning of my on the job training, I was taught that you must always have your seatbelt on (both lap and shoulder) unless you were delivering curbside boxes. If you are doing curbside delivery, you were allowed to remove the shoulder strap in order to reach the mailbox. This is the way I have done curbside delivery since 2004. Through all the route checks (3999) , street observations and the "Safety Blitz" that occurred a few years ago, I have never been sited as delivering the mail incorrectly or in an unsafe manner. Now, however, there is a new interpretation of the seatbelt rules the curbside letter carriers must keep both parts of the seatbelt on at all times while the vehicle is in motion. You are only to remove the shoulder strap if you can not reach the mailbox. I don't know about everyone else, but that is basically every box I pull up to. When I questioned this at our Plan 5, I was told that if that's the case then I was to remove the shoulder strap at every box and to put it back on in between every box. When I said that this will add more time on the street, I got a shrug as a response. When I stated that the majority of the routes have not been evaluated with these new regulations, I was told that the Postal Service will be conducting 3999's in the near future now that Covid restrictions have been lifted.

I for one really hate this new rule. I have complied with this new regulation and site it often on my 3996. I have been denied some of the time I requested because of my "past performance " on the route. I argued that there is no "past performance" because I had not previously done the route in this way. Management did not appreciate my logic. Bottom line is that as of now these are our instructions and whether we as letter carriers agree with it or not, it is our job to comply. If it takes longer, it takes longer. If the new 3999's are done with this new seatbelt rule, maybe we will get some new routes out of it. Just from my experience from the last few weeks, I don't see how the routes can stay the same as they are now. I can't even calculate how much time I spend trying to adjust and untwist the seatbelt! Or maybe it's just me.

Stay safe out there,

Cindi



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Director of Retirees - Mike Holbrook

The questions I hear most often from Branch 361 members are somewhere along the line of; when can I retire and what will my benefits be or when is the earliest I can retire regardless of the benefits. Most Carriers know it has something to do with minimum retirement age (MRA) but some have a little uncertainty beyond that. For Immediate Voluntary Retirement the requirements are 30 years of service at MRA 56 - 57 (based on birth year) 20 years of service at age sixty and 5 years of service at age sixty two. While unused sick leave will add to your years of service it can **not** be used to achieve the years of service requirement at each age. Military time can count, but only if you have bought back the time. If you are a new hire, do this in the first two years after being hired to avoid interest. Delaying can result in you paying much more if several years have passed. To answer the part of the question of what will the benefits be: The basic FERS annuity is figured at 1% times years of service plus unused sick leave times your high three average salary. If age sixty two and at least 20 years of service the amount multiplied is 1.1% times years of service plus unused sick leave times high 3. For those at MRA or age Sixty with the minimum service requirements there is an additional FERS supplement that supplements your income until you are eligible to apply for social security benefits at age sixty two. It is approximately equal to (years of service divided by forty) times the reduced social security benefit that you would receive at age sixty two. The supplement ends at age sixty two even if you do not apply for social security. The amount that TSP money can provide in retirement can vary greatly depending on how diligently you increased your contributions with every increase in salary.

Now for those who aren't as concerned with the benefits as with getting out of there. You can select Early Retirement with Reduced Benefits once you reach MRA and have at least 10 years of service. Your retirement annuity will be figured at the same 1% times years of service times high 3. That amount is then permanently reduced by 5% for each year you are younger than age sixty two. For example if you reach MRA at fifty seven and have 20 years of service your calculated monthly annuity of \$1,125.00 (from the May Postal Record) would be permanently reduced by 25% for the five years you are short of age sixty two to \$843.00 and you would not be eligible for the Supplement. Any withdraws from TSP before age 59.5 would be subject to the 10% penalty for early withdrawal.

If your desire to get away from the Postal Service has a medical or health component and you think you might qualify for disability retirement, I refer you to National Director Retired Members **Dan Toth's** article on Disability Retirement in the May Postal Record. I plan to have another retirement seminar later in the year, or you can ask me your questions at the June 7th Monthly Meeting or call me at 859-248-2401. Stay Safe

Mike

Branch 361 invitation to the June Zoom meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting

Topic: Branch 361 Apr. Monthly Meeting Time: June 7, 2022 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Meeting ID: 378 690 4822

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3786904822>

One tap mobile: +16465588656,,5325217930#,,,,,0#,,794941# US (New York)
+13017158592,,5325217930#,,,,,0#,,794941# US (Germantown)

Dial by your location;

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+1 301 715 8592 US (Germantown)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

Meeting ID: 378 690 4822

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3786904822>

DUE TO SECURITY ISSUES, PLEASE REQUEST A NEW LINK. PRIOR LINKS WILL NOT WORK

Heath Benefits - Mark Whitcomb

Hello everyone, I know that you all remember that back when you were given your Covid-19 vaccine from your provider you were given a small white card to show documentation that you had received the vaccine and later the booster. Little did we know this little card would become essential to getting us into some concerts and conventions. The CDC and the state health department advise that new, replacement COVID-19 vaccine cards no longer be given to vaccine recipients who have lost or misplaced their original vaccine cards. Instead, providers who administered the COVID-19 vaccine are asked to provide replacement proof of COVID vaccination by accessing a new feature in the Kentucky Immunization Registry.

In the event someone who has been vaccinated for COVID-19 loses or destroys their small white CDC COVID-19 vaccine card, they can get a KYIR COVID-19 vaccine report by doing the following: If the person received their vaccine through LFCHD, they can phone our COVID-19 Call Center at 859-899-222 or send an email to covidcardreplacement@lfchd.org indicating they are in need of replacement proof of vaccination.

If the person received a vaccine from a provider other than LFCHD, the provider can generate a COVID-19 report at: <https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/dehp/idb/kyirtrain/printcertificateandrecord.pdf> Anyone who has been vaccinated in Kentucky can contact the KYIR Help Desk at 502-564-0038 or email kyirhelpdesk@ky.gov.

If you lost your card I hope this helps, you to get a new one. Hope to see you at the Monthly meetings 1st Tuesday of every month 7pm (unless it follows a Holiday, then it is the 2nd Tuesday) at the NALC Branch 361 Union Hall 1101 Red Mile Road.

Mark

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Steward Report - Kaitline Armstrong

You can't know what you don't know. The best way to learn something new is to immerse yourself. That is certainly true of the labyrinthian rules governing the postal service. If you have any interest in becoming a steward in your zone, there is a place for you.

The rules ensure everyone is treated fairly and with the same standards. As you may well know, that is not how it seems in practice. Ideally each zone would have a steward to be involved with the daily struggle. The union is strongest when we are united. Involvement can take many shapes; as little as knowing your rights, attending a monthly zoom meeting, serving on a committee or even becoming a steward! Everyone gets comfortable in their routine, particularly management, but then some learn to take shortcuts and management is willing to play favorites to the detriment of others, the contract, and our own interest in the long run.

I learn and grow as a steward each day. I was intimidated to become involved, but was warmly welcomed and guided through the process. There is a learning curve, but remaining open and honest about what I do not know leaves room for growth.

As a steward, I have become more confident saying NO to management and speaking up for others. Intimidation is used by management to assert power over the carriers, but learning and following the contract is a much more powerful tool that will win out every time. Let's learn more together!

Kaitline

MayDoor Prize Winner

Steve Winburn \$50.00 donated to MDA

May MDA 50/50 Winner

Joey Castill \$38.00 donated to MDA

Robert's Ramblings - Bob McNulty

As Summer waits for Bluegrass Branch #361 Letter Carriers, the Covid-19 virus and its variants may try to "crash your picnic." NALC and our union health plan with all its info has been consistently clear. The best way to protect yourself and your loved ones is still to get vaccinated and boosted. This scribe has had 2 shots of the Pfizer vaccine, and the two booster shots, plus a flu shot for good measure, with no problems. If you are unsure of the risk in any setting then mask up and distance.

The Branch is poised to accommodate camaraderie and fellowship. While the business of our union is to educate and defend our members, while making the job safe and efficient as possible, communication with our members outside the workplace is vital. Your Branch leadership is planning an Outdoor Fall Fest, in Late September or early October. Our Stamp Out Hunger NALC Food Drive was both fun and a way to give back to with food insecurity in the community. So look for some time and energy you can give to being a Letter Carrier union member. The officers and stewards run voluntarily.

Later this Summer, your elected delegates will journey to Chicago in early August to attend our NALC National Convention. Despite all the challenges in this world, our carriers have a contract, and one of the few jobs anywhere with a COLA in these inflationary times! See you soon at the Union Hall on Red Mile Road.

Mac

Financial Report for April 2022

Deposits	\$13,309.51
Checks	\$ 7,204.07

Balances

Checking	\$79,840.59
Savings	\$76,265.84
Building Fund	\$13,043.69
Retiree Fund	\$15,359.11
Hall Rental Fund	\$11,985.33
Convention Fund	\$18,004.60

Share Your Views!

The deadline for submissions to News and Views is the 1st of each month. Interested parties are encouraged to submit articles to be printed subject to space available and approval of the President. To submit an article to News & Views please send it to;

President Denise Preston P O Box 911203 Lexington, KY 40591 or electronically to; ilovejosph95@icloud.com	Editor Mike Holbrook PO Box 371 Richmond, KY 40476 mhkynalcde@aol.com
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All articles must be typed in Ariel 11 font and signed by the author, or submitted on electronic media.

The articles in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor or the local Branch. The Editor reserves the right to edit, delete, or reject any article in the interest of the good of the Branch.

In the interest of benefitting the goals of the NALC, permission is hereby granted to other parties to use any part of this newsletter as long as credit is given.

As covid infections in central Kentucky counties have decreased the June 7th monthly meeting will be both in person and by Zoom . Contact below to reserve your seat or to receive the clickable link to join the meeting via Zoom.

Denise 859-221-2854	ilovejosph95@icloud.com
Crystal 859-396-8648	crystalsmithsecretarybr361@gmail.com

DUE TO SECURITY ISSUES, YOU MUST REQUEST A NEW LINK. PRIOR LINKS WILL NOT

New Members

Please welcome the following new members, whose applications were approved at the May 3rd Monthly Meeting.

Zachary West

Megan Nelson

Leon Simmons

Justin Riley.

Our Deepest sympathy is extended to the Friends and Family of Gold Card Member William K. LaFrana, known to all of us as “Frenchy”, who passed on May 5th, 2022.

Frenchy was the first Editor of this News and Views newsletter. He also served the Branch as a Steward, Convention Delegate, Trustee and Health Benefit Representative. He was the Union Facilitator with the Employee Involvement Program which ran from the mid 1980s to the early 1990s.

Convention Delegates, remember you are required to attend 80% of meetings from the time of nomination to receive Branch funds to attend State and National Conventions. Attendance by Zoom counts but be sure to turn your video on, it is required. If you do not have video capability you must contact Denise or Crystal prior to the meetings.

Central Kentucky Congressional Delegation

	Local Phone #	D.C. Phone #
Rand Paul, Senator	1-270-782-8303	1-202-224-4343
Mitch McConnell, Senator	1-859-224-8286	1-202-224-2541
Bret Guthrie, 2nd District Rep.	1-270-842-9896	1-202-225-3501
Thomas Massie, 4th District Rep	1-859-426-0080	1-202-225-3465
Hal Rogers, 5th District Rep	1-606-679-8346	1-202-225-4601
Andy Barr, 6th District Rep	1-859-219-1366	1-202-225-4706

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NEWS AND VIEWS

Grievance Report April 2022

OFFICE	FILED	SETTLED	OPEN
Beaumont	21	1	0
Berea	0	0	0
Bluegrass	5	1	4
Brentwood	11	1	10
Danville	0	0	0
Frankfort	5	2	3
Gardenside	9	2	7
Georgetown	0	0	0
Harrodsburg	0	0	0
Lancaster	0	0	0
Liberty	2	0	2
Nicholasville	2	1	1
Paris	0	0	0
Richmond	2	1	1
Stanford	0	0	0
Versailles	0	0	0
Wilmore	1	1	0
Winchester	0	0	0

Upcoming Events

We will resume some type of light meal provided by the e-board from different franchise fast food restaurants for the remainder of 2022. We will reassess returning to zone prepared meals in the months leading up to 2023.

Uncertainty from fluctuating Covid data delayed the planning for this year's Picnic. The members present at the May 3rd meeting voted to combine this year's Picnic Funds with the Fall Festival Funds and not have the Picnic due to an insufficient planning window for the Picnic. A date in mid to late September or early October should be announced in the next issue of News and Views