

WI RLCA News

January 2008

WISCONSIN

RURAL LETTER CARRIERS ASSOCIATION



A New Year— A New Perspective

Happy New Year! I trust you had a Great Christmas and a safe Holiday Season. Wow! What a flurry of activity at the close of the year. As promised by our National Officers, we received an Arbitrator's award prior to Christmas.

I was optimistic going into arbitration that we would come away with some improvements over the tentative agreement that was rejected last January. With the other three Unions having settled their contracts, I was hopeful that the Arbitrator would treat us fairly based on those settlements. As I read through the transcript, it became apparent that Arbitrator Fishgold had decided early on that due to the previous settlements and because we narrowly rejected the tentative agreement that he wasn't looking to make any major changes to the original language. This led to disappointment and frustration on both sides, especially to our National Board who had exhausted many resources in preparing for arguments on our behalf. I trust by now most of you should have had an opportunity to read through the Arbitrator's award and have your own perspective on it. I do feel there are some positive aspects over the previous contract and we can now move forward.

In a another long awaited arbitration decision, National Arbitrator, Dana Eischen denied the Association's class action grievance on "fletters" (those letters that are sorted in with the flats). As a result of the denial, we will continue to receive fletters in with the flats and we will receive credit for them as letters as long as they are 6 1/8" or less in height, as it has been since the Well's decision in February of 2002.

The carrier pick up issue was also resolved. During the upcoming mail count, a route will be credited 90 seconds for each carrier pickup request completed and 9 seconds for each carrier pickup item received (express mail, priority mail, or international mail). Prepaid ordinary and insured parcels accepted or letters and flats collected in con-



President Strobel

junction with the carrier pickup items will continue to receive the appropriate credit as outlined in Section 535.12n and 535.12.o of the P.O. 603.

There have also been some changes in COA credit as well as bundle mark up which will affect the next mail count scheduled for February 23-March 7. The Lakeland District has already said that all routes will be counted. I'm not sure about the Northland District at this time. Count trainings are scheduled and because of all the changes that can affect your count, I suggest you make every effort to attend to insure that you get a fair and accurate count.

In regard to mail counts, the Post Office and Association have reached an agreement on a remedy for the 2002 Mail Count Grievance. As you recall, on May 15, 2006, Arbitrator Eischen's award rebuked the Postal Services conduct before and during the 2002 National Mail Count.. The remedy, however, would affect rural carrier's serving on only 21% of all rural routes. The Postal Service and Association sought clarification of several remedial issues and as a result considered alternative remedies. A mutually acceptable settlement was reached that gives 100% of the bargaining unit rural letter carriers compensation for the Postal Services improper mail count conduct, provided they were on the rolls during the National mail counts held from 2002-2006. Retirees and those who have left the craft are still eligible for settlement payments provided they were on the rolls on any or all of the five dates which correspond to the effective date of the National Mail Counts in each of those 5 years. The settlement will cost the Postal Service \$60 million. Rural carriers should begin seeing settlement payments in their regular paychecks in January 2008. All pending Nationally filed mail count grievances are withdrawn.

Look for more information on all the above issues in this magazine as well as the National magazine and the National website.

Finally, the State Board will meet January 20 & 21 to do board training as well as to discuss the Mid States Conference May 2, 3, & 4 in Brookfield and the State Convention June 20, 21, & 22 in Racine.

Dan Strobel



Linda Vanden Plas

New Contract

The Rural Carriers have a new contract. A few changes have occurred and I would like to focus on the Special Leave Replacement Provisions. This new language will be under Article 5 Compensation, Salaries and Wages. The new language states;” A newly appointed leave replacement rural carrier craft employee will be paid the higher of the actual hours worked or the evaluation of the route (up to 40 hours) for the first five (5) pay periods of employment.” In simple terms this new provision allows the newly appointed leave replacement to be paid at either the evaluation of the route or actual time it takes to run the route, whichever is greater for the first five pay periods of employment.

Another addition to this Article states: “A leave replacement utilized on a route he/she has not served in the past 12 months will be paid the greater of actual worked or the evaluation of the route for up to 40 hours.” This new provision will pay the leave replacement the evaluated time or actual time it takes to run the route whichever is greater when the carrier has not served the route within the past twelve months.

It is my hope that any regular carriers that will be getting new subs will make sure management knows this new provision and subs are paid accordingly. Hopefully with this new pay scale, the newly hired replacement will not be so frustrated and quit so fast.

Arbitration Award

The 2002 mail count grievance was filed and this went to arbitration. Arbitrator Eischen decided in NRLCA’s favor. A supplemental award was issued. This award stated that either party could negotiate and agree upon any alternative remedies, which they find acceptable. Both the NRLCA and the USPS agreed upon this cash settlement.

Each career (regular and PTF) rural carrier on the rolls as of May 4, 2002 will be paid \$300.

Each non-career (substitute, rural carrier relief, aux-

iliary rural carrier and rural carrier associate) bargaining unit rural carrier on the rolls as of May 4, 2002 will be paid \$75.

Each career (regular and PTF) rural carrier on the rolls as of April 19, 2003 will be paid \$120.

Each non-career (substitute, rural carrier relief, auxiliary rural carrier and rural carrier associate) bargaining unit rural carrier on the rolls as of April 19, 2003 will be paid \$30.

Each career (regular and PTF) rural carrier on the rolls as of April 17, 2004 will be paid \$120.

Each non-career (substitute, rural carrier relief, auxiliary rural carrier and rural carrier associate) bargaining unit rural carrier on the rolls as of April 17, 2004 will be paid \$30.

Each career (regular and PTF) rural carrier on the rolls as of April 16, 2005 will be paid \$120.

Each non-career (substitute, rural carrier relief, auxiliary rural carrier and rural carrier associate) bargaining unit rural carrier on the rolls as of April 16, 2005 will be paid \$30.

Each career (regular and PTF) rural carrier on the rolls as of April 15, 2006 will be paid \$120.

Each non-career (substitute, rural carrier relief, auxiliary rural carrier and rural carrier associate) bargaining unit rural carrier on the rolls as of April 15, 2006 will be paid \$30.

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Fall Conference Board Meeting – Oct. 26th & 27th 2007
Best Western Midway Motel, Wausau WI

Meeting called to order by President Strobel at 10:10 a.m. All Board members and state steward were present.

Linda made a motion to accept the Aug 9, 2007 board meeting minutes (with corrections). Motion passed.

The Fall Conference schedule, speakers and hospitality scavenger hunt were reviewed.

Karen gave the financial report which included the budget and renewal of the certificates of deposit. Lisa made a motion to reissue check #3856 in the amount of \$369 as soon as the request letter is properly signed. Motion passed. Linda made motion to upgrade to the 2008 version of Quick Books. Motion passed.

The membership report shows that WI has 3900 members as of Oct 25th and 668 non-members. Lois, editor of Newsletter, wants to know of any county that obtains 100% membership.

Newsletter articles by non-board members and board members were discussed. Stewards should be sending the state steward a copy of their article before it is published and article subjects should be coordinated with other steward articles. Non-board members are not required to submit articles but President Dan will contact various association members to ask them for article contributions. Deadline for next issue is Dec 20th. Lisa made a motion that our editor work with Waupaca Publishing Co. for the printing of our next issue. The Newsletter editor should also work with the 'Editor Committee' regarding future issues. Motion passed. Lisa also made a motion to add an Advertising Policy to our Board policies. Motion passed to create such a policy the next time we review our board policies.

The 2007 State Convention Minutes were reviewed. Board went into executive session which resulted in setting up a meeting with the convention recording secretary.

The newly revised 2007-2008 Constitution and By Laws were reviewed and will be made available upon request and will also be posted on the web site.

There were 7 first time delegates to the 2007 National Convention in Grand Rapids MI. The board, on Sunday, will present each of these delegates with a WI green bag as a token of recognition and appreciation. Recipients are: Sue Becker, Ron Berg, Diane Chambers, Luci Dobbe, Vicki Galgowski, Chuck Groth and Nori Samb.

A letter of thank you and appreciation along with a 2008 pocket calendar will be given to all local stewards, county presidents, county secretaries, academy trainers and facilitators present at Sundays' session. Those not present will receive theirs by mail. Due to budget constraints no other appreciation gifts will be bought this year.

Equipment inventory was reviewed. Louan made a motion that a lap top computer is assigned to PAC representation Dennis Nelson and that Chuck be assigned one of the LCD projectors. Motion passed. The purchase of a sound system for state conventions and conferences was discussed. Karen and Tom will get information and quotes for systems that are used by other state associations. The need for new flag stands was made. Linda made a motion that we order 3 new stands at \$24 each from the flag company in Hayward. Chuck will order and pick up. Motion passed.

Webmaster Lisa reported that the web site has now been updated. Suggestions for additions and deletions to the site were made. Any other ideas should be emailed to Lisa.

The last Lakeland District leadership meeting was held in Kenosha (at the same hotel that will be used for our 2008 state convention). Both President Dan and State Steward Tom attended the meeting. Subjects addressed were CDS routes, RCA retention, 204Bs, and upside down DPS. The Northland District has established a Safety committee. Dennis Nelson will represent our state on this committee.

Mid-States' Co-chairs Lisa and Mary gave an update on the event. Saturday night banquet entertainment possibilities were presented. Lisa and Karen will contact Mid-States' Treasurer Pete Harrington of IL for suggestions regarding financial records.

2008 State Convention updates were made. Lisa gave an update on the 2008 National Convention WI Breakfast, which will be in Lexington KY, at the Radisson Hotel. Lisa had menu choices for us to review. The cost of the guest meals was discussed.

State Steward Activities report was given. Tom requested to attend the FIW training in November. Motion was made by Chuck to have Tom attend. Motion passed. Tom is setting up local steward training for January and February. Possible count training sites will be arranged in case there is a contract settlement for a 2008 count. Lisa made a motion for Tom to get more information regarding training for assistant state stewards at the Madison School for Workers. Motion passed.

(continue on page 4)

(continued from page 3)

Tom submitted the names of two individuals for appointments as Assistant steward and an Area steward. The board went into executive session which resulted in the approval of both nominees. The Area steward position will be effective Jan 1, 2008 and the Assistant state steward will be effective upon completion and the passing of the National Steward training.

Meeting adjourned at 6:10 pm and reconvened at 8 am on Saturday morning.

The board met with the Secretary/Treasurer Committee. The committee requested that the board members provide them with other duties that they see as one time assignments for the secretary/treasurer. The committee is putting together a list, with the help of the current sec/treasurer, of daily and monthly duties.

The Financial Review Committee met with the board. Debra Downen is the newest member and replaces Tammy Lucht who has completed her 3 year term. The committee requested 2 copies of the inventory list; a copy of the previous list and a copy of the most updated report. They also request that expense vouchers have explanations on how the individual figures their cost (phone bills). The committee will meet again in May at the Spring Conf/Mid-States and request financial records from Oct thru Feb.

The board met with the State Convention Recording Secretary regarding several concerns and issues with the state convention minutes. Committeemen Lois will meet again with the recording secretary and try to resolve and complete the minutes. Upon state board approval the minutes will be posted on the web and will also be available by contacting our State Sec/Treasurer.

The Auxiliary Board met with the board. They explained some of their changes for this coming year. Due to budget restraints they will not be attending all the county meetings. National Project items and scholarship application forms as well as Wisconsin scholarship forms will be available to download from the WI RLCA web site as well as from auxiliary board members. The auxiliary board members will be present at the Fall Conference and Spring and Mid-States Conference and will have project items and scholarship forms available as well as raffles to raise money for the WI scholarship fund.

The next board meeting will be January 20th and 21st, 2008. Lisa will set up the meeting place which will be centrally located for all board members. Meeting will begin at 10:30 am and will include a review of the

NRLCA State Officers Training/Resource Manual.

Linda made motion to adjourn at 12:30 pm. Passed. Meeting adjourned

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Schauer Secretary/Treasurer

News for the Retirees:

You may be retired, but rural carrier annuitants care about the postal service and the future of the mail. If you have computer access the postal service now has a place to go to keep up with the latest information on all things postal. Keeping-Posted.org

The new website gives postal retirees quick, easy access to industry news, current events, annuitant resources, the Postal Service's position on the important issues of the day and special offers which up to now were available only to current employees.

At KeepingPosted.org, retirees can:

Read current and archived editions of *USPS News Link*

Keep an eye on the future with the *Strategic Transformation Plan*

Get access to special discounts with postal partners

Download the latest postal speeches, congressional testimony and official news releases

Find out about new stamp issues and upcoming dedication events

Stay current with industry news with *MailPro*, the bimonthly publication for mailing professionals

Check out our performance in copies of the *Annual Report* and the *Comprehensive Statement*

Retirees don't need to register or have a password to access the website. Additional links will be added as they're identified. Retirees can even submit comments or ask questions through the website. The Postal Service will make KeepingPosted.org a one-stop website that connects all USPS retirees to the information they need.

**Next Issue News Articles Due
March 1, 2008**

I – C – E and more
Secretary/Treasurer Karen
Schauer



Membership:

As of December 19, 2007
we have a total of 3871
members:

Regulars	1631
PTFs	4
Retired	946
Retired Assoc	1
Regular Assoc	16
RCA/RCRs	1264
Recent retirees	9

At this time we also have 671 non-members:

Regulars	189
RCR	4
RCA	431
RCA on Aux. Route	47

Do you know if any of these non-members work in
your office? If so, please try recruiting them to our
union. Help them help themselves.

LM Forms:

Thank you to all the county secretaries. Every
county unit completed their LM Form and sent
them to me for filing. I'm so proud of you all. The
state LM Report along with the IRS 990 report has
been completed and filed and can be accessed by
any member at the Department of Labor Web site.

State Constitution and By Laws:

These are available by contacting the State Secre-
tary/Treasurer or be accessing our state web site:
wirlca.org

State Convention Minutes from Hayward 2007:

Copies are available by contacting the State Secre-
tary/Treasurer and will also be available at the
Spring Conference.

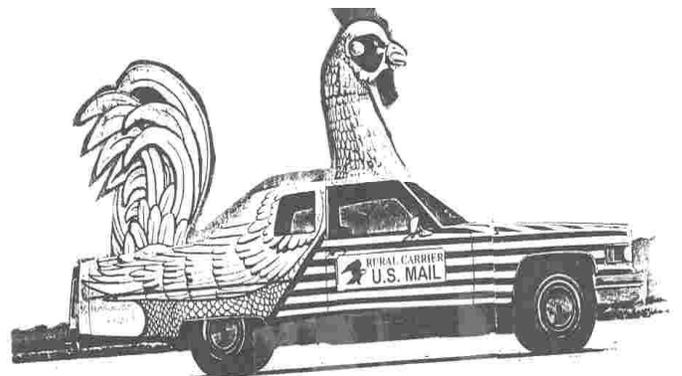
In Case of Emergency (I – C – E):

This is international designation emergency medical
technicians and emergency responders will look for
on your personal cell phone if you are injured and

unable to speak or respond to questions as a result
of any type of accident or debilitating illness. Take
a few minutes to make the ICE entry into your cell
phone for yourself. After keying the word ICE list
the person's name and phone number whom you
would have emergency care workers call and notify
in case you are found injured or unconscious. This
is great insurance for you as you carry your route
and personally for you and your family.

Did you also know that the emergency number world-
wide for cell phones is 112? If you find yourself out
of the coverage area of your cell network and there is
an emergency, dial 112 and the cell will search any
existing network to establish the emergency number
for you and interestingly this number 112 can be di-
aled even if the keypad is locked. And if your cell
battery is very low, to activate, press the keys *3370#
Your cell will restart with this reserve and the instru-
ment will show a 50% increase in battery. This re-
serve will get charged when you charge your cell next
time.

Finally, **stay charged in 2008!** Read your State
Newsletter, your National magazine, **attend** count
training, **attend** your county meeting, **attend** the
Mid-States Conference and the State Convention in
Racine. **Be Informed. Knowledge is Power.**
Happy New Year!



Looking to buy a new route car?

Check out the MOU #8 in our new contract. The
postal service will pay a lump sum payment of
\$1000 to rural carriers who purchase new RHD vehi-
cles for use on rural routes. It also provides \$500 to
rural carriers who purchase used RHD vehicles or
convert their LHD vehicles to RHD for use on rural
routes. The incentive applies to regular rural carriers
and bargaining unit leave replacements.



PAC Chair
Dennis Nelson

DILEMMA?

What, on earth, are we going to do with all that extra money? Finding a suitable home for over a years' worth of retroactive contractual wage increase (plus the \$686 one time cash payment) and the monetary award from the 2002 mail count arbitration may prove to be

a difficult task.

While it will be easy to figure out a way to spend the additional Equipment Maintenance Allowance the revenue sources, mentioned above, could cause sleepless nights for...wait, I have an idea! (Please try to bear with me here 'cause *ideas* come to me less often than extra funds).

Yeah, that's it; we could make a contribution to the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association Political Action Committee. Problem solved! - In more ways, than one.

As evidenced by the recent arbitration decision, we have seen ever-increasing efforts to undermine our benefits. The 4% decrease in the Postal Services' contribution, toward our health benefit premium, is an example of this trend. Our health and retirement benefits are also vulnerable to changes through Federal legislation. At least, in the contract negotiation process, we have something to say about...wait! (Two *ideas* on the same day – don't look for much more out of me in 2008).

We *do* have something to say in the legislative process, as well. That is, if, we are able to maintain a working relationship with our Congressmen and Senators. We need to keep them informed, on the issues that affect us, and we also need to help to fund their political campaigns. Another problem solved!

Well, the problem won't really be solved unless *you* actually make that contribution to PAC. You can't count on me to continue to come up with all these swell ideas and you can't trust others to always do things that are in *your* best interest - *you* need to become involved, to protect *yourself*.

- Communicate with your elected Representative.
- Contribute to their Campaign (if you agree with their position, on the issues that are important to you – obviously).

I know, it's easy for me to make these statements and much more difficult for all of us to keep track of pending legislation and research the voting record/positions of all of our Political Leaders. One of the advantages of being a member of the NRLCA is that the Association Officers and employees, at our National Office, *do* work closely with our

Legislators and *are* able to determine how our PAC Funds can be most effectively used—for the benefit of all Active and Retired Rural Letter Carriers.

You can solve *this* dilemma (I can't help you find that sock that disappeared in the dryer) by writing a check, payable to **NRLCA PAC**

and mailing it to: **DENNIS R. NELSON**

1002 55TH ST

AMERY WI 54001-3013

With a PAC contribution of \$26, or more, your name will appear in the National Rural Letter Carriers' magazine. I have been listing the Wisconsin members, who contribute \$50 or more, on our States' web site <wirlca.org>. Santa Claus won't confirm, or deny, the accusation that he uses these sources to determine whether a person is deemed to be "naughty or nice". So, to protect your benefits and next years' "gift getting potential" you will want to make that PAC contribution.

PAC contributions are not tax deductible.

BE THANKFUL

Be thankful that you don't already have everything you desire.

If you did, what would there be to look forward to?

Be thankful when you don't know something, for it gives you the opportunity to learn.

Be thankful for the difficult times.

During those times you grow.

Be thankful for your limitations,

because they give you opportunities for improvement.

Be thankful for each new challenge,

because it will build your strength and character.

Be thankful for your mistakes.

They will teach you valuable lessons.

Be thankful when you're tired and weary,

because it means you've made a difference.

It's easy to be thankful for the good things.

A life of rich fulfillment comes to those who are also thankful for the setbacks.

Gratitude can turn a negative into a positive.

Find a way to be thankful for your troubles,

and they can become your blessings.

~~Author Unknown~~

Be thankful we have Christ, who gave us

All these wonderful choices in life,

And the freedom to celebrate His

Life. Have a very Blessed and

Joyous CHRISTMAS

God Bless you all, be safe, be HAPPY

And believe. Love you all

Chris Weber State Chaplain

New Year, New Contract, New Bid Process



Chuck Groth

Greetings everyone and a Happy New Year to all. Well, by the time this goes to press I'm sure everyone will have had time to fully digest Arbitrator Fishgold's decision and the impact on our contract. One of his decisions was to merge issues before him and some of the language of the contract that was negotiated in 2006. Of the terms of that document were changes to Article 12-***Principles of Seniority, Posting, and Reassignment***. The most notable to me is that of the local bid process.

On May 11, 2006 the USPS and NRLCA signed an MOU which initiated a pilot project in the Northland District regarding changes to the local, in-office bid process for route vacancies. The purpose of this project was to improve, standardize and automate the bidding process for regular rural routes. Employees in large mail processing facilities have enjoyed the convenience of automated/computerized and telephone bidding. This will soon be available to rural carriers as the Postal Service finalizes its changes and the migration of Human Resources to Shared Services.

The posting notice of a vacant regular rural route will be an invitation for eligible rural carriers to bid on **any** regular route in an office that might become available. In addition to the information for the vacant route, all routes in the office will also be listed. Some things to pay attention to are; routes will be listed by the *official position identification number* OPIN (not the route number), and your employee ID number will be used rather than the social security number.

The language of Art.12 has not changed much, except to address the inclusion of PS Form 1717-A *Preferred Assignment Multiple Bid Card*. In contrast to past practices of bidding for vacant routes and accepting or declining for a more desirable route, which was a result of the initial vacancy. PS Form 1717-A addresses the preferences of the possible subsequent vacancies in an office. For now the changes will not apply to District wide bidding. PS Form 1717-A is available on the Postal Services "Blue" page , www.nrlca.org and should be

provided at the time of the posting. You must list, by the OPIN, in the order of preference that will be accepted if the route(s) becomes available as a result of filling the initial vacant route. The vacant position/route should only be listed as a choice if the regular carrier desires AND will accept that route. You will not be able to decline the position/route, if listed, after the close of the 10 day posting period-choose wisely. MOU .7 remains in effect regarding holding a route in abeyance. Neatness counts, as these forms will be reviewed, read and sorted at your District's Human Resource Office. Print clearly, in ink, making sure your numbers are readable i.e. 4's don't look like 7's, 6's don't look like 8. Sign and date the bottom of the form with the actual date that you are submitting your bid. There will no longer be the need to wait until the last day of the posting to make your choices, in fact, the sooner the better so as to give yourself some time if you want to amend your choices.

PTF and RCA's will only need to fill out PS Form 1717-A when there are multiple vacant routes or a particular route would be accepted if the route becomes available. If for any reason a Regular, PTF or RCA that has indicated their preference, decides to withdraw or change their order of preference, then you must either edit your original 1717-A or submit a revised one prior to the closing date of the posting. As this process evolves, management should be presenting stand-up talks as to changes in the Job Bid Management system.

For further information, consult the NRLCA website under "Revisions to the National Contract-Art. 12".

Respectfully submitted,
Chuck

Mark May 2nd, 3rd and 4th,
2008 on your calendars!
Wisconsin is hosting the 2008
Mid-States Conference

Wisconsin Rural Letter Carriers' Association
Statement of Activities
July 1 through December 19, 2007

Jul 1 - Dec 19, 07

Income		
4000000 · GMAC Insurance		5,660.53
4100000 · Interest / Dividends		3,105.52
4200000 · Membership Dues		193,332.10
4400000 · Reimbursements		3,675.67
4500000 · Sales		1,100.00
4600000 · Steward Training Dues		12,576.00
Total Income		<u>219,449.82</u>
Expense		
5000000 · Accounting Fees		1,522.23
5100000 · Awards & Recognition		281.25
5300000 · Employee Benefits		12,669.01
5400000 · Equipment Purchases - Admin		340.81
5600000 · Lodging - Admin		1,541.17
5610000 · Lodging - Steward		442.84
5700000 · National Convention		29,677.64
5800000 · Office Expense - Admin		869.61
5810000 · Office Expense - Steward		664.15
5900000 · Payroll Taxes		4,965.11
6000000 · Per Capita Dues		39,951.12
6100000 · Postage - Admin		905.26
6110000 · Postage - Steward		567.09
6500000 · Repairs / Maintenance - Admin		70.69
6600000 · Salaries - Admin		4,502.00
6610000 · Salaries - Steward		30,793.81
6620000 · Sub-Hire/ DROP-LWOP - Admin		19,379.37
6630000 · Sub-Hire/ DROP-LWOP Steward		8,402.71
6700000 · State Meetings		3,220.77
6701000 · State Paper-NEWSLETTER		5,531.22
6800000 · Steward Training		2,782.42
6900000 · Telephone/Internet - Admin		1,510.22
6910000 · Telephone/Internet - Steward		1,389.79
7000000 · Travel - Admin		5,805.15
7100000 · Travel - Steward		5,418.15
Total Expense		<u>183,203.59</u>
Net Income		<u><u>36,246.23</u></u>

Wisconsin Rural Letter Carriers' Association
Statement of Financial Position
As of December 19, 2007

ASSETS	Dec 19, 07
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
1000000 · APCU - CHECKING	15,603.45
1100000 · APCU - SAVINGS 01	239,305.24
1200000 · APCU - SAVINGS 05 -WI Brea...	4,219.60
1300000 · APCU - Savings 06-Accural L...	4,680.44
1400000 · APCU - Certificate Account	109,646.95
Total Checking/Savings	<u>373,455.68</u>
Total Current Assets	<u>373,455.68</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>373,455.68</u>
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Other Current Liabilities	
2100000 · Payroll Liabilities	5,927.92
Total Other Current Liabilities	<u>5,927.92</u>
Total Current Liabilities	<u>5,927.92</u>
Total Liabilities	5,927.92
Equity	
3900000 · Net Assets	331,281.53
Net Income	36,246.23
Total Equity	<u>367,527.76</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u>373,455.68</u>

Welcome New Members 8/26/-7—12/14/07

Mary Luer	Amery	Kari Matalas	Merrillan
De Armond Green	Appleton	Toby Cleasby	Mondovi
Sandra Paulson	Appleton	Kenneth Wedrall	Mosinee
Michael St Clair	Appleton	Penny Wehman	Necedah
Desiree Schlafer	Arkdale	Katie Stock	New Richmond
Cathy Bishop	Arlington	Kimberly Bubert	North Freedom
Laura Nolan	Arpin	Bryan King	Osceola
Denise Manecke	Athens	Cheryl Daye-Rasnick	Oxford
Michele Roesler	Athens	Richard Nelson	Pardeeville
Breanne Mahoney	Baldwin	Linda Kanapka	Pewaukee
Perry Paulus	Belgium	Thomas Klimowicz	Pewaukee
Michelle Gunther	Black River Falls	Jenny Roeglin	Pewaukee
Candy Utter	Black River Falls	Jennifer Johnson	Phillips
Leslie Dilley Sr	Boscobel	Joseph Kaiser	Prescott
Steven Vandlen	Brodhead	Shannon Cairns	Rice Lake
Tina Beske	Burnett	Melissa Thuss	Seymour
Dana Crohn	Camp Douglas	Dorothy Block	Sheboygan Falls
Lisa Carey	Campbellsport	Denise Lahner	Stanley
Leanne Richter	Centuria	Gary Radtke	Stanley
Larry Calkins	Colfax	Andy Agamaite	Superior
Rosemary Read	Conrath	Michael Day	Sussex
Thomas Blochwitz	De Forest	Todd Hinz	Waldo
Randall Spalding	De Pere	Diana Wolfe	Waunakee
Randy Ladd	Dodgeville	Luke Olson	Waupaca
Paul McDonough	Durand	Lisa Drew	Whitewater
Shannon Bradshaw	Eau Claire	Christine Ertl	Withee
Laureen Lautenbach	Egg Harbor		
Michelle Lunsmann	Elkhorn		
Suzi Roller	Fontana		
Anthony Greco	Fort Atkinson		
Laura Hollenberger	Fort Atkinson		
Samekia Slaughter	Germantown		
Nicole Grant	Glenwood City		
Nicole Wagner	Grafton		
John Hendricks	Green Bay		
Mark Paque	Green Bay		
Jill Theys	Greenville		
Marlon Opelt	Hartford		
Karrie Pochinski	Hartland		
Terry Wendland	Hayward		
Brian Caley	Hazel Green		
Jodi Noethe	Hazel Green		
Kadie Krings	Holmen		
Sally Uhl	Holmen		
Amanda Meng	Hudson		
Roger Nehls	Ixonia		
Margaret Czecholinski	Kansasville		
Laura Nagan	Kaukauna		
Anthony Espinosa	Kenosha		
David Droste	Kiel		
Vernon Thiry Jr	Luxemburg		
Marjorie Reed	Madison		
Susan Novak	Maribel		
Greg Seyfferth	Mazomanie		
Shelley Jacobson	Menomonie		

Convention 2008

The Racine-Kenosha Rural Letter Carrier Association invites you to attend the 2008 State Convention in Racine at the Marriot Hotel on June 20, 21, & 22.

We are thrilled to have you visiting our corner of the state for the first time. Work has been progressing on making this the best convention ever!

Come early and see what our area has to offer. Beautiful beaches, interesting museums, a zoo, several golf courses, two outlet malls, and the only greyhound racing in Wisconsin.

Harborfest will be happening this weekend in downtown Racine. This is a music festival with over 25 bands covering numerous genres as well as food and the usual festival stuff.

You will need to reserve your room early. At \$99 room they will be going fast. The phone number is (262)886-6100 or toll free at (800) 228-9290. Tell them you are with the rural carriers to get this special rate.

PHONE PROTOCOL

If you have a problem and you do not have a local steward in your office, contact the appropriate steward for your area, either area or assistant. The State Steward can be called anytime if you have trouble reaching your assigned steward.

Area Steward Post Office Assignments

Steven Sowle Home PO Tomah

Hm 608-372-5221 wk 608-372-5611

Arcadia, Bangor, Black River Falls, Camp Douglas, Cash-ton, Desoto, Fountain City, Galesville, Hillsboro, Holmen, La Farge, Melrose, Necedah, Onalaska, Sparta, Trem-pealeau, Viroqua, West Salem, Westby.

John Phillips Home PO Madison

Hm 608-437-6718 wk 608 848-6879 cell 608-212-4556

Email auggie2@MHTC.net

Arena, Barneveld, Black Earth, Blanchardville, Blue Mounds, Cross Plains, Dane, Darlington, Dodgeville, Hol-landale, Madison, (all branches), Mazomanie, Mineral Point, Mt.Horeb, Prairie Du Sac, Ridgeway, Sauk city, Waunakee.

Al Muench Home PO West Bend

Hm 920-994-4436 wk 262-334-3677

Kewaskum, Wauzeka, Jackson, Waupun, Beaver Dam, Jun-eau, Freedomia, Random Lake, Campbellsport, Sheboygan Falls, Sheboygan, Saukville, Allenton, Hubertus, Slinger, Lomira.

Fred Resch Home PO Antigo

Hm 715-449-3026 wk 715-627-4812

Neopit, Gresham, Birnamwood, Gleason, Wittenburg, Eland, Bowler, Pelican Lake, Summit Lake Aaiwa, Hatley, Ringo,Elco, Merrill

Sue Heiderscheidt Home PO Centuria

Hm 715-646-9366 wk 715-646-2121

Webster, Federic, Prescott, Cumberland, Balsom Lake, Barron, St Croix Falls, Dresser, Eau Claire, Bloomer, New Auburn, Chetek, Osceola, Grantsburg.

Barbara Bergsma Home PO Avoca

Hm 608-582-6007 wk 608-532-6880 cell 608-604-4715

Benton, Blue River, Boscobel, Fennimore, Hazel Green, Lancaster, Linden, Lone Rock, Montfort, Muscodia, Plain, Potosi, Prairie Du Chein, Spring Green, Stitzer, Mount Hope.

Michael Wiczorek Home PO Peshtigo

Hm 906-864-4465 wk 715-735-7342

Pestigo, Coleman, Crivitz, Oconto, Oconto Falls,

Louan Friend Home PO Pardeeville

Hm 608-587-2053 wk 608-429-2782 cell 608-697-8113

Email jklmf@hotmail.com

De Forest, Reedsburg, Portage, Columbus, Endeavor, Poynette, Montello, Packwaukee, Westfield, Randolph

Lois Graper Home PO Marion

Hm 715-754-4904 wk 715-754-5831

Amherst, Amherst Junction, Clintonville, Iola, Manawa, Neillsville, Ogdensburg, Rosholt Scandinavia, Schofield, Shawano, Tigerton

Marilyn Laporte Home PO Spooner

Hm 715-635-2560 wk 715-635-6919

Birchwood, Cameron, Minong, Rice Lake, Sarona, Shell Lake, Springbrook, Trego

Debra Downen Home PO Omro

Hm 920-361-1764 wk 920-685-5199

Berlin, Coloma, Fremont, Green Lake, Hancock, Menasha, Neenah, Neshkoro, Oshkosh, Pine River, Plainfield, Redgranite, Ripon, Rosendale, Van Dyne, Wautoma, Wild Rose

State and Assistant State Steward Assignments by Area

Tom Bittner -- State Steward

Phone 920-273-0760

Email: tombittner@wirlca.org

541,542,543,549,545,544

Roger Schewe

Phone 608-835-3789

Email: rschewe@charter.net

First 3 digit zip code areas

537,535,538,546

Charles Groth

Phone 715-634-3938

Email: chuckgroth@wirlca.org

First 3 digit zip code areas 547,548,540

Lisa Wojnarowski

Phone 414-810-4860

wojnarowski@wi.rr.com

532,534,530,531,539

Anyone wishing to receive the State Stewards' electronic newsletter should send their request to: tombittner@wirlca.org with 'electronic newsletter' in the subject line.



The Glitch that Stole Christmas

On the last payday before Christmas nearly 14000 rural carriers across the Nation did not receive any pay. Postal policy provides for “advances “ of up to 65 % of an employees gross salary when their paycheck doesn’t arrive not including EMA. For most postal employees this works fine since 65% of their gross pay is fairly close to what they would have taken home anyhow. Rural carriers that provide a vehicle for their route found themselves less than two weeks before Christmas with hundreds of dollars less than they were expecting. A carrier on a “K” route would have been short a minimum of \$204, a carrier on a route similar to mine (44J 79 miles) would have found their check close to \$450 short, more than enough to put a damper on many carriers holiday plans. I have been informed by the National Office that there will be no grievance filed on this since the policy has been in effect for decades. It appears that the only possibility of a change to this policy is through negotiations, look for a resolution to be presented at our State convention to include EMA in any “advance.” (I find it hard to refer to a carrier being given a partial payment for what they have earned and *should have been paid* referred to as an advance.)

REVISIONS TO THE USPS/NRLCA NATIONAL AGREEMENT

➤ Article 7.D Temporary Relief Carriers

Allows hiring TRC employees in any office provided the Area’s TRC complement does not exceed 15% of its total regular rural routes. The previous calculation involving the number of bargaining unit leave replacements compared to regular routes in each district and the 80% limitation no longer applies.

This reduces the number of TRC’s that the postal service can employ in each area. This is offset by the change to “Area” complement vs. “District.” The Lakeland District is at +95% RCA’s vs. regular routes and the Northland District is at +89%. Under the old contract the Lakeland District could have had up to 537 TRC’a and the Northland District could

have had 648. The Lakeland district is one of eight districts with rural carriers in the Great Lakes Area and Northland is one of fourteen. The new language substantially reduces the number of TRC’s that the Postal Service can employ. At this time under the new provision the Great Lakes Area has 656 TRC’s out of a possible 1337 and the Western Area has 974 out of a possible 1785 TRC’s. **As always the emphasis needs to be on hiring in general. ALL regular routes including “H” routes have the right to require that a leave replacement be assigned to their route. (article 30.2.A.2)**

➤ Article 8.5 Relief Day Worked

Allows all regular rural carriers regardless of route classification, to sign the Relief Day Work List twice a year. There is a two week period prior to the beginning of the guarantee period and again two weeks prior to the beginning of the first full pay period in May. Each list supersedes the previous list.

Prior to this carriers had only one chance to sign the relief day work list at the beginning of the guarantee year. This will allow carriers who had been on an “H” route and gained enough time during the National mail count to sign up for the list. It will also allow carriers who take their name off the list the opportunity to get back on. Once you are on the list you can still take your name off at any time. (If you are scheduled to work at the time you take your name off the list you would still be obligated to work that day).

➤ Article 9.1.A Basic Annual Salary

Salary increases as follows:

- November 25, 2006 – 1.2%
- November 24, 2007 – 1.5%
- November 22, 2008 – 1.5%
- November 21, 2009 – 1.5%

All carriers including RCA’s will receive pay increases of 1.2% retroactive to November of 2006 and 15.% retroactive to November of 2007. The fact that we will be receiving larger increases the last three years of the contract than we were offered in the tentative contract will be offset by the fact that our first COLA is received as a lump sum rather than rolled into our salary. RCA’s will receive the last two increases at the same time as regular carriers. You should receive your check for the retroactive amount

sometime in January. If you are retired make sure that your old PO knows your current address since these checks, as well as those for the 2002 mail-count, award. will be sent there.

➤ **Article 9.1.B One-Time Cash Payment**

Regular rural carriers will receive a cash payment of \$686. PTF rural carriers will receive a cash payment prorated based on the number of hours worked.

This amount is equal to what a full-time regular carrier would have received as a COLA adjustment for the first year of the contract. This is lump sum payment and will not be rolled into a carriers base salary as a normal COLA would be.

➤ **Article 9.1.F Cost-of-Living Adjustment**

COLA adjustments will continue every 6 months compared to the May 2007 CPI. An amount equal to the COLA will be rolled into RCA/RCR hourly rates in February 2011.

RCA's will not receive COLA increases until February of 2011. The amount rolled in at that time will be equal in percentage to what a regular carrier earned in COLA increases over the life of the contract.

➤ **Article 9.2.C.3 Mail Counts**

There will be three national mail counts. All vacant routes, auxiliary routes and other routes opted in by the carrier or Employer will be counted on the following dates:

- 2008 – 12 day count (2/23 – 3/7)
- 2009 – 24 day count (2/14 – 3/14)
- 2010 – 12 day count (2/27 – 3/12)

The tentative agreement called for a 24 day count in 2007, since it wasn't ratified we did not have that count. Due to some substantial changes and the fact that most routes will be counting we will be holding eight mail count trainings throughout the state in addition to any the Post Office will be sponsoring. Since this will be the last newsletter prior to the mail count you will need to check the website for any additional information. I strongly suggest you attend a training session, your knowledge of the changes could make a significant difference in how you fare in the upcoming count

➤ **Article 9.2.J EMA**

Quarterly adjustments based on CPI-W will continue. The EMA base rate will be increased and effective in the carriers' pay checks as follows:

- 3 cents per mile – January 2008
- 2 cents per mile – October 2008
- 2.5 cents per mile – October 2009

At the end of the contract we will be receiving 2 cents/mile additional EMA over what was offered in the tentative contract, this will be offset by the increase not being retroactive to January 2007. Effective January 5, 2008 ERMA will increase to 57.0 cents/mile due to the contractual increase of 3 cents/mile and a 3 cent/mile increase due to the increase in the November 2007 CPI-W Transportation Index. (Article 9.2.J.3.c)

➤ **Article 9.2.M Training Pay**

Newly appointed RCAs will be paid the higher of the actual hours worked per week or the evaluation of the route(s) for the week (up to 40 hours) for the first 5 pay periods of employment. An RCA utilized on a route he/she has not served in the past 12 months will be paid the greater of the actual hours worked or the evaluation of the route (up to 40 hours).

RCA's are now contractually entitled to actual hours worked for the first five pay periods. Regular carriers who in the past "came in off the clock" to help new RCA's out will hopefully stop this practice now that the RCA's will be getting paid for any hours they work. Management still has the option to bring in another RCA to help out new RCA's. There is no mention of whether TRC's will also be paid actual time.

➤ **Article 9.2.N Training Presentations**

Form 8127, *Rural Carrier Supplemental Payment*, will be paid at the carrier's straight time rate.

In the past 8127 time was paid out at the National average for all rural carriers rather than what a carrier was actually earning. This change will be positive for carriers at the high end of the pay scale and negative for newer carriers. To determine your straight time rate you will need to take the annual salary of a regular carrier at your step and divide it by 2080 hours. (Article 8.3.A.1)

➤ **Article 12 Principles of Seniority, Posting, and Reassignment**

A new bidding procedure will be implemented. Initially, carriers will bid by using PS Form 1717-A, *Preferred Assignment Multiple Bid Card*. When a vacant route is posted, a description of all regular routes in the office will be listed on the posting. Carriers wishing to bid will list, in order of preference, any route that will be accepted by the carrier should the route become available as a result of filling the vacant route. The bid card will be submitted and the carrier will not be able to decline any route they listed on the form after the posting period. The use of PS Form 1717-A is temporary until such time that the process of bidding for rural carrier vacancies in this manner can be automated (e.g., computer, telephone). At that time, rural carriers will be required to utilize the automated bidding procedures (similar provisions have been added to Article 30 for bidding on PTF rural carrier assignments).

See Chuck's article for more information on the new bidding process. This is basically the same process that the Northland District has been using since July 8th 2006.

➤ Another change to Article 12 concerns reassignments due to an excess number of rural carriers in an office. Changes in the reassignment provisions will allow carriers to bid in an expanded area to avoid involuntary reassignments. Added provisions also allow the Employer to reassign rural carriers temporarily when the situation that causes the excess number of rural carriers is not permanent. The offices where vacancies are withheld for excessing may be expanded to accommodate the number of impacted rural carriers. Another provision allows opportunities where a regular rural carrier may elect to revert to a PTF rural carrier in lieu of involuntary reassignment outside their office.

This change will give the Post Office greater flexibility in dealing with any carriers that are "excessed" due to the introduction of FSS flats. The impact of FSS flats cannot be predicted at this time since there has not any agreement on a time standard for them. There are no plans in "phase one" of the FSS deployment schedule to place any machines in either the Lakeland or Northland Districts. It is possible that carriers from neighboring districts could be excessed to offices within 100 miles of the office from which they are excessed, this may include offices in the Lakeland and Northland Districts. It would also allow

the Postal Service to excess carriers in situations such as occurred with Hurricane Katrina where a large number of routes lost substantial numbers of deliveries..

➤ **Article 15 Grievance and Arbitration Procedure**

Increases the time limits for the Union to appeal an adverse Step 2 decision to Step 3 to 15 days. Provisions were also modified concerning area and national arbitration panel vacancies.

➤ **Article 17 Representation**

In addition to state and assistant state stewards, area stewards are also now permitted to handle a particular grievance in lieu of the local steward. Representatives identified by the Union will be notified and provided ample opportunity to address new employees during orientation.

➤ **Article 21 Health Benefits**

The Employer's contribution to the cost of employee health insurance under the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program is decreased as follows:

- 2009 plan year – 2%
- 2010 plan year – 1%
- 2011 plan year – 1%

➤ **Article 25 Higher Level Assignments**

Eliminates the requirement to provide a copy of Form 1723, *Notice of Assignment*, to the state steward.

➤ **Article 30.2.E Filling a Leave Replacement Vacancy**

When a vacancy occurs in the leave replacement ranks, the route may be added to a PTF rural carrier's assignment instead of being offered to other leave replacements. Additionally, leave replacements must be offered a leave replacement vacancy that was previously not accepted by any leave replacements on the initial offer; when the regular carrier assigned to the route has been on extended absence for more than 30 days.

This change will have an adverse effect on RCA's in offices with PTF's. Prior to this, if a vacancy opened up in an office with a PTF, RCA's in that office would have the opportunity by seniority to switch their primary assignment to that route prior to management assigning the route to a PTF. The second half of this article allows RCA's in order of seniority to switch to

a route whose assigned regular is on extended leave IF there is no primary relief carrier assigned to the route.

➤ **Article 31 Union / Management Cooperation**

Changes have been made that provide data to the NRLCA on a routine basis.

The Postal service will be providing the union several reports electronically on a regular basis that in the past we have received only when requested. These will include reports from which the NRLCA will be able to extract valuable information. One example is the “P” code report from which the NRLCA will be able to tell if a carrier has been in a higher level assignment and ineligible to participate in QWL. Having this information in an electronic format rather than hard-copy should make it easier to glean the information that we need from it.

➤ **MOU #7 Bids by Rural Carriers Unable to Perform the Duties**

Rural carriers temporarily unable to perform the duties of a bid-for position, due to job-related or non-job-related restrictions, may have the assignment held in abeyance for up to six months, rather than one year, with supported medical documentation.

➤ **MOU #8 Right-Hand Drive Vehicles**

Provides a lump sum payment of \$1,000 to rural carriers who purchase new RHD vehicles for use on rural routes. It also provides \$500 to rural carriers who purchase used RHD vehicles or convert their LHD vehicles to RHD for use on rural routes. The incentive applies to regular rural carriers and bargaining unit leave replacements.

In past contracts only regular carriers who purchased new factory RHD vehicles were eligible for an incentive of \$500. This time around any PTF, substitute, RCR or RCA who has completed their probationary period. Vehicles that are converted to RHD must have the steering wheel and brake and gas pedals fixed to the right hand side of the front passenger compartment. They must have an automatic transmission and horn, turn signals and warning lights that are easily accessible to the driver. All vehicles must be less than five years old to qualify for the incentive. I would recommend if you are considering converting a regular car into a RHD that you make sure it will qualify for the incentive prior to having

the work started. If you purchase a RHD vehicle from another carrier who received an incentive on it you will not be eligible to receive one for that vehicle. At this time we have not received word on whether or not the incentive will be paid retroactively.

➤ **MOU #12 Court Leave for PTF Rural Carriers**

Provides court leave to eligible part-time flexible rural carriers.

➤ **MOU #13 Employer Provided Vehicles**

Provides 3,000 additional right-hand drive (RHD) vehicles on rural routes each year from 2009 through 2013, totaling an additional 15,000 RHD Employer provided vehicles on rural routes.

Once these 15,000 vehicles have been placed there will be more than 40,000 Employer provided vehicles on rural routes. Currently there are 67,853 regular rural routes, it is probable that once these vehicles have been placed at the end of 2013, that more than half of all rural carriers on regular routes will be delivering mail out of a government supplied RHD vehicle.

➤ **MOU #20 Route Adjustment Process for DPS Flat Mail**

After a route begins to receive DPS flats and has passed any required qualifications, a mail count will be conducted in one of the three periods: • National mail count period set forth in Article 9.2.C.3 (currently Feb – Mar) • Special mail count period during the last 12 working days of September • The 12 working days immediately after Mother’s Day

The new mail count period will only be used for routes on which DPS flats are introduced between this time period and the last national or special mail count.

➤ **MOU #21 Revenue Generation**

Engages rural carriers in revenue generating initiatives by submitting leads from business customers currently utilizing competitors, by increasing customer awareness of our products and services and by informing customers of the USPS website usps.com in an attempt to promote alternate access to Postal products and services. The weekly stamp stock standard credit will encompass any time associated with these activities.

At his time I haven’t received any information on

what this entails. It would appear to make it less likely that the Postal Service will try to take the time credit for stamp stock away

➤ **MOU Mail Count Task Force**

Establishes a committee of union and management representatives at the national level to consider methods of selecting a representative period to conduct national mail counts.

➤ **MOU Leave Replacement Task Force**

Establishes a committee of union and management representatives at the national level to review training and retention issues for leave replacement employees.

➤ **Handbook Changes PO-603**

Modifies Handbook PO-603, *Rural Carrier Duties and Responsibilities*, to reflect a different credit for changes of address (COAs). Each 3982 label received during the mail count will be 15 seconds unless the carrier is required to perform any additional duties of completing Forms 3575, 3546 and/or writing addresses on Form 3982. In such instances, the credit for the 3982 label will be two minutes.

Overall it appears from the decision that Arbitrator Fishgold had decided from the outset that the tentative agreement which had been rejected by the membership would serve as the framework for his award. It appears that he attempted to structure his award in such a way that the total package would have a cost to the Postal Service as close to what we were offered in the tentative agreement as possible. Both the NRLCA and the Postal Service attempted to make changes that appear to have been dismissed out of hand by the arbitrator. The Postal Service tried to back away from providing the 15,000 additional vehicles and it would appear that the NRLCA attempted to increase general wage increases beyond what was awarded among other things. It was a historic event when the tentative contract was voted down since it had not happened in the Postal Service since the 70's.

It was interesting to see how this was handled, it will be more interesting to see what effect this has on negotiations for our next contract. It may be hard to believe but it's only about another 2 1/2 years until once again we'll be negotiating a new contract.

“Fletters”

In Late November we received word that a decision has been reached on the “Fletters” arbitration. Arbitrator

Eischen found in favor of the Postal Service. While this was disappointing, it should be noted that carriers who counted according to the NRLCA's instructions at their last count would not lose any time credit.

Carrier Pickup

On December 7th President Pitts signed off on an agreement regarding time standards for items picked up as a result of the “Carrier Pickup” program. During the upcoming mail count a route will be credited 90 seconds for each carrier pickup request completed and 9 seconds for each item picked up. The only items that will receive this credit are Express Mail, Priority Mail and International Mail. All other items will continue to receive credit as they have in the past (letters and flats collected 25/minute, ordinary and insured parcels collected 4 minutes total).

MOU on Sequenced Flats

On December 21st President Pitts signed off on an MOU establishing a process to determine what the effect on rural carriers will be when sequenced flats are introduced. Two union representatives and two management representatives from each district that have rural delivery will meet to discuss concerns, issues and recommendations related to FSS flats. These representatives will need to submit their concerns, issues and recommendations to an Area Review Committee no later than March 1st 2008. The two NRLCA representatives for the Lakeland and Northland Districts will be named by Committeeman Bill Gordon. We will post their names on the website (www.wirlca.org) once they are named, I am sure they will be interested in your input. As I mentioned earlier in this article, at this time there are no plans to place any FSS machines in either the Lakeland or Northland districts in Phase one of their deployment. Phase one is scheduled to end in late 2010

There is more information on all of the above available on our website.

Tom Bittner—WIRLCA State Steward

STEWARD HOURS

Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri 7-11 AM	12-5 PM
Weds.	12-7 PM

OPTIONS AND CHOICES

I may have briefed you on much of my life story already; however, I guess there is still more to inflict upon you.

In sharing this with you, I will be able to give you my best perspective on a few of the benefits that the US Postal Service has to offer. These are, 'advanced sick leave' and 'donated leave'.

Some of you may know that in March of 2002, I was diagnosed with congestive heart failure. My husband was terrified, my boys were only ages one and three, and here I was at the ripe old age of 34 spending a week in the cardiac unit at St. Luke's Hospital. Just one-year prior, I had used my sick leave balance as maternity leave when my son Jace was born. When the heart failure came about, I had a very limited number of sick leave days accumulated. My office had just gotten a new OIC the same day that I went in to St. Lukes, and I had no idea what I was going to do next. Now, I do have a sister that works for the USPS, so I turned to her for advice. It was with her suggestion that I requested 'advanced sick leave'. I had to go to my OIC, and request to be advanced a maximum of thirty days sick leave. He needed to ask me a few questions, and then make a recommendation one way or the other. Luckily for me, I wasn't terminal, and he and the USPS determined that I would be able to repay their loan of thirty days of sick leave. For many, many paychecks, I had a negative balance of sick leave. When I received my first check stub that had a zero sick leave balance, I celebrated like I had just won the lottery. Ever so gradually, I was able to accumulate a balance of unused sick leave again. YEA!!

It was determined that medication was the best way to treat my CHF, and this would continue for the rest of my days. I was feeling great, nary a concern about any heart issues. It wasn't until my husband, Rod, noticed that I had been seemingly more tired than normal. He suggested that I go and get 'checked out'. It had been a couple of years since I had last seen a cardiologist, not a smart move on my part. The doctor determined that my heart had weakened again, and that I was an excellent candidate for 'sudden cardiac death'! Those were three words that I didn't like hearing, so I asked about my options. The best course of action was to implant a cardiac defibrillator. The date of my implant was October 22, 2007; the first day of the rest of my life as the energizer bunny. Here I am, once again, looking to get another round of 'advanced sick leave'. I again turned to my sister for advice; it's never a bad idea to get a second opinion. My sister said, "Why don't you put in for donated leave, and I'll give you a week?" I had really no idea how this whole thing worked, so she helped me through it, step by step, we filled out PS



Lisa Wojnarowski

Form 3970-R, and started the whole ball rolling. With her help, and with the help of other very generous and wonderful postal employees donating their annual leave on a PS Form 3970-D, I was able to receive enough sick leave to cover the days that I needed to recover.

Now, of the two methods that the USPS offers to us, I tend to lean towards the 'advanced sick leave' method. It seemed to flow a bit more smoothly, and there weren't any zero paychecks while I waited for everything to kick in.

Don't get me wrong, I am very grateful to all who helped me get through this, I couldn't have done it without you. My boys and my husband are very grateful; even Santa Clause is grateful! I'm just the type of person that feels like I don't deserve all this niceness and that there is always somebody out there that could use the help more than me.

I have shared this very personal story with you, so that you will be aware of your options, should you ever need to use them. You need to determine which method would work best for your and your circumstances. Don't forget, if this is a qualifying FMLA occurrence, have your doctor fill out the proper form.

I have been back on my route since December 3, 2007. I couldn't wait to get back. What was I thinking? It was a challenge, but with the moral support of my friends and coworkers, I made it through the 'Christmas Overtime Period'! Now if my vehicles could just hold up to the riggers of the job!

My health is good (I'm still not terminal), and I have a great insurance plan for the future. I just keep going, and going, and going, and going...!

With the utmost sincerity and gratitude ,
Lisa 'Wojo' Wojnarowski
WI RLCA Committeeman/Asst.Steward

DON'T FORGET TO BRING YOUR "NEW STATE SIGN" TO THE MID-STATES CONFERENCE IN BROOKFIELD!

One winner will be selected from all of the entrants and will be awarded a really cool prize provided by your WIRLCA State Board.

If you have any questions about our old sign, feel free to contact Lisa 'Wojo' at
414-810-4860



Vehicle Maintenance!

Well it's that time of year again. Mother Nature is treating us to a good ole Wisconsin winter – maybe a little earlier than we were prepared for. Are you ready? Is your vehicle ready? Vehicle maintenance is important to us, as Rural Carriers, all year around but with the sudden changes in temperature and road conditions it is more important than ever now.

How To Winterize Your Car

Climate changes don't affect just you—they also affect your car. You wouldn't dream of heading outside without a heavy coat if the wind chill brought the temperature below freezing. Don't expect your car to function properly without some attention to its winter needs, too.

Engine Oil in the Winter

The oil in your engine changes depending on how hot or cold the engine is running. Because the outside temperatures will influence the internal temperature of your engine, you need to make sure you're using the proper oil for the conditions.

During the winter months, where temperatures get below freezing, if you run a 10W-30 oil in the summer, for example, you may want to try a 5W-30 when changing your oil in the fall or winter. If you are in doubt, refer to your manual or the manufacturer.

Engine Coolant

Every vehicle requires a certain ratio of coolant to water, and your owner's manual or repair technician can explain what your engine needs. For most vehicles, a winter ratio is 60% coolant to 40% water. Adjusting this ratio is an important step in winterizing your car, so if you need help, ask someone who is experienced and knowledgeable.

Cold Weather and Battery Capacity

It isn't only your engine that doesn't like to start in the winter. Your battery capacity is reduced by the cold weather, too. A thorough inspection of your battery, cables, terminals, and fluid will help you make sure your car is ready for the winter.

Check over the battery cables for cracks and breaks. The terminals should fit snugly with no loose connections. You can check your battery fluid by uncovering the refill hole (or sometimes holes). If the level is below the bottom of the cap, refill with distilled water.

To read the level of charge in your battery, you will need to turn the engine off. Some batteries have a built-in hydrometer eye that tells you the amount of voltage remaining in the battery. If you prefer, a handheld hydrometer can be used to collect the same information.

Windshield Treatment

An easily overlooked part of your winterizing program is

your windshield. If you have ever driven behind another vehicle kicking up wet, dirty road snow, then you already have a true appreciation for windshield washer fluid.

For best results in clearing off cold, heavy grime, select a washer fluid with an antifreeze solution. But beware—some washer fluids can be harsh and damage your car's paint.

Tire Maintenance

Check Your Tire Tread : There are two popular ways to check for signs of tire tread wear. One easy way is the penny test. Simply insert a penny into your tire's tread groove with Lincoln's head upside down and facing you. If you can see all of Lincoln's head, it's time to replace your tires.

Another way is to look at the tread wear indicator bar that's molded into your tires. The bars are located at the bottoms of the tread grooves in several locations around the tire. When a tire is so worn that these bars become visibly flush with the adjacent tread ribs, it's time to replace the tire.

Check Your Tire Inflation: Proper tire inflation is essential for safe driving and long tire life. It's wise to check your tires' air pressure at least once a month with an accurate tire pressure gauge. Be sure to check pressure while your tires are cold and have not been used recently. Even driving a mile will cause your tire pressure to increase and give you an inaccurate reading. A ten degree decrease in air temperature will decrease your tire pressure by 1-3 pounds.

GMAC Insurance

If, after all your efforts, you still find yourself requiring roadside assistance, give GMAC a call.

Vehicle insurance quote 1-800-325-7727

Homeowners insurance 1-800-366-4607

24-hour claims service 1-800-325-1088

RLC Plan Director Shirley Corno 1-800-847-6442 ext.8645

Customer Relations 1- 800-847-6442 ext.8186

Be Careful Out There!!
Louan



Weingarten Rights

The U. S. Supreme Court established the Weingarten Rights in 1975 to help protect employees against intimidation and prevent coerced confessions. The Weingarten rules gives employees the right to request union representation during investigative interviews. This means that the employee has the right to request a steward to be present during any interview when he/she feels that discipline could be imposed based on what is said during the interview.

Weingarten does not apply for employees to have stewards present at discussions as provided for in Article 16.1 of our National Agreement (sometimes referred to as official discussions) and for meetings in which supervisors give instructions on operating methods or safety practices. In addition, no steward representation is required at meetings when a manager gives an employee a letter of discipline and there is no questioning or discussion at that time.

During an investigative interview the employee must make a request to have a steward present. Management is not required to inform the employee of his/her Weingarten rights, it is the employee's responsibility to know.

When the employee makes the request for a steward to be present management has three options. (1) they can stop questioning until the steward arrives, (2) they can call off the interview, or (3) they can tell the employee that they will call off the interview unless the employee voluntarily gives up his/her rights to a steward (an option the employee should always refuse).

The Supreme Court has also ruled that during an investigatory interview, management must inform the steward of the subject of the interrogation. The steward must also be allowed to speak privately with the employee before the interview. During the questioning the steward can interrupt to clarify a question or to object to confusing or intimidating tactics. While the interview is in progress the steward cannot tell the employee what to say but they may advise them on how to answer a question. At the end of the interview the steward can add information to support the employee's case.



Lois Graper

Stewards must be aware that at times postal inspectors and/or managers will assert the stewards must remain silent during the interview. This is not the case. In addition to the Supreme Court, the National Labor Relations Board as well as recent court decisions have also ruled that stewards do have the right to participate as explained.

2008 State Convention Expectations

Pam Michajlak a 13 year rural carrier in Silverlake office 51370.

She spent countless hours this past year creating this beautiful piece.

It can be a wall hanging or a lap quilt. It's being raffled at the June 2008 State Convention.

Hosted by Racine/Kenosha Counties.

Tickets are \$1/each or 6 for \$5.

Her talents are endless but sewing is definitely one of her best attributes.

Thanks Pam for your dedication to the WRLCA.



DOCUMENT !
DOCUMENT !!
DOCUMENT !!!

Do you hear me now?

How many times have you heard a steward say those words? I find myself saying that to nearly every carrier who calls me with a question or a problem.

DOCUMENT
DOCUMENT
DOCUMENT

The task of documenting something doesn't have to be feared or worrisome. It can be as simple as scribbling the facts on a piece of paper for later use. If your manager tells you something you believe is wrong or 'ridiculous' in your opinion.....**DOCUMENT IT**. If you are given a direct order or directions you feel may be 'off beat'.....**DOCUMENT IT**. If you observe something worth noting or maybe recalling..... **DOCUMENT IT**. Anything at anytime which you believe worthy of remembering.....**DOCUMENT IT**. Do you hear me now?

Doc-u-ment / *something that serves as evidence or proof: a writing conveying information: to provide with factual or substantial support for statements made:* (Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary)

To document something doesn't mean you need to get all fancy, know how to type, know how to use a computer or even know how to write or spell well. You just need to scribble some notes to yourself that will serve as a reminder, evidence or proof of the situation in question. Any 'written evidence' will carry more weight than someone who is "recalling the event" in their head at a later time. Facts are easily 'forgotten' or 'distorted' when recalling them in a hearing or a follow-up meeting.

While all this **DOCUMENTing** is important when dealing with situations in your office, on your route and with your supervisors, it is even more important during that dreaded time of year when we all face **THE COUNT!!!**

THE COUNT!!! February 23 – March 7, 2008



Roger Schewe

Two weeks. No holiday.

Since there is sure to be plenty of information in this newsletter regarding the count, I won't dwell on it or repeat things here. But: **DOCUMENT DOCUMENT DOCUMENT** Do you hear me now? Does there seem to be an echo?

More and more calls I receive include comments on the evaluated system failing us as regular carriers. So many regulars (and even more relief carriers) feel we are doing more and more each year for less compensation. While the contract (especially the Wells decision) has been partly responsible, carriers through out the nation are often to blame also. **ATTEND A COUNT TRAINING SESSION**. Your state steward has many count training sessions scheduled through out the state prior to the start of our national count. Make it your goal to get to one training and learn what you can do to increase your pay. Don't let your manager buffalo you into doing something for nothing. Get paid for EVERYTHING. Each little task has a 'time value'. Each 'time value' represents real money and we can take real money to the bank. If you don't feel you can confront your manager for each little task then **DOCUMENT it** and discuss it with your steward. If you do it for nothing then you not only hurt yourself, but you hurt each carrier in your office and probably future carriers until someone stands up and puts a stop to it.

Think about your average day. Ask yourself: "Was that duty accounted for during the last count?" Figure out how? If not you may be doing it for nothing. Some little task may be just enough time to get you in to the next evaluated hour and increase your pay. Talk about it at your pre-count conference. Some things do vary according to individual office size and duties, however, do you document every duty you do?

- Each trip to the throwback case
- Picking up accountables and keys
- Holding mail or delivering hold mail to a central holding area
- Safety talks/service talks before, during and after the count
- Training videos or items to read
- Locking or unlocking doors
- Raising or lowering the flag
- Moving your car for loading
- Changes to your red book or your case

COMMEMORATING FIRST RFD IN WISCONSIN

By Barbara Bergsma
WI-RLCA Historian

On May 5, 2007 the Dane County Historical Society (DCHS) dedicated a historical marker commemorating the establishment of Rural Free Delivery in Wisconsin.

Mary Clark, DCHS president, dedicated the historical marker on an overcast and blustery day. "We're glad that it's up... and we want to thank the City of Sun Prairie for that. We're really happy to be able to commemorate... Wisconsin's first rural free mail delivery... right here in Sun Prairie. We've been talking a lot about this... we're really happy to be able to dedicate this marker here today," Clark said. The historical marker is located at the Sun Prairie Post Office, 1750 Linnerud Drive.

The wording on the marker:

FIRST RURAL FREE DELIVERY IN WISCONSIN

In 1896, the U.S. Post Office Department began rural free delivery in Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Iowa and West Virginia on an experimental basis. On November 16, Sun Prairie became the first community in Wisconsin to initiate rural free delivery, with four routes. Each carrier rode 20 to 30 miles daily delivering mail in an area of 60 square miles, for a salary of \$25 a month. The first appointed carriers included: Charles Woerpel, James Dunphy, Charles Phillips, and William Evans. William Mosel was Sun Prairie Postmaster at the time.

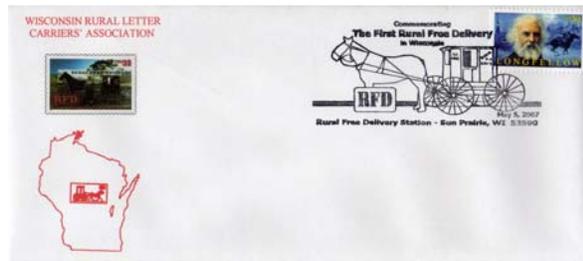
Village merchants initially opposed free delivery, fearing loss of business if farmers did not come to town for their mail. After a month's trial, satisfied farmers announced they would carry on the service themselves should the Postal Service discontinue it. Rural free delivery continued and became a permanent service.

House-to-house delivery in the village did not begin until 1950.

Erected by Dane County Historical Society ~ 2007



Left-Right: Becky Burbach, Officer-In-Charge Sun Prairie Post Office; Mary Clark, President Dane County Historical Society; Sue Janczak, Lakeland District Post Office Operations Manager; and rural carriers: Roger Schewe, Oregon; Barbara Bergsma, Avoca; Karen Schauer, Eau Claire.



There was a pictorial cancellation designed by Katie Hoepfner, editorial cartoonist of *The Star*, Sun Prairie's newspaper. There are a few of the above envelopes still available for 50¢ plus postage.

Contact Barbara Bergsma at:

1109 Lakeshore Drive
Avoca, WI 53506-9640
608-532-6007
babergsma@mhtc.net

Thanks to Chris Mertes, Managing Editor, The Star

To all of our members in Racine, Kenosha and Portions of Walworth Counties.

Effective December 1, 2007 I have resigned my position as Area Steward. I urge all of you to continue to fight for your rights and refer your questions and issues to Lisa Wojnarowski, Assistant State Steward. I have all the confidence that she is knowledgeable and able to address your needs. I thank you for your confidence in me.
Paul G. Loumos

Auxiliary News

Things are changing! Due to financial restraints and in keeping up with technology, we are offering a new way for you to view and purchase project items for this year's humanitarian project. Lisa "Wojo", our web master, has scanned pictures of the project items that are available, information on the poster and essay contests for the Juniors, the eight National Scholarship forms, as well as our Wisconsin Scholarship Form.

National Auxiliary President, Herschell Miller, has chosen the American Diabetes Association as his project. Countless individuals have been diagnosed with this disease or know someone who lives with the difficulties that this disease presents. The mission of this Association is to prevent and cure diabetes and to improve the lives of all people affected by diabetes.

If you have access to the internet, go to www.wirlca.org and click on Auxiliary on the left hand side of the page. You will be able to view the project items, download scholarship information, etc. To purchase items, contact any Auxiliary Board Member. We will work out sending the items to you after we receive your check. If you do not have internet access, contact any Board Member and we will let you know what is available and send the items to you upon payment. Monetary donations to the project can be sent at any time to June Strobel, Secretary/Treasurer for the Auxiliary.

National Scholarships are due postmarked no later than March 1, 2008. Information as to where to send the forms is on each individual application. Please remind the young men and women filling out the applications to answer all questions and to follow directions accurately so as not to be disqualified. If you do not have the internet and you have a son, daughter, grandson, or granddaughter that is eligible, contact June Strobel and forms will be sent to you.

Besides being available on the website, the application form for the Wisconsin Scholarship will appear in an upcoming newsletter. Applications should be sent to June Strobel postmarked no later than May 20, 2008.

Present Auxiliary Board Members and a few past Auxiliary Officers will have project items available at their own Spring County Meetings. A few of the Association Board members have kindly offered to sell items at the meetings that they attend. Items will be available at the Mid-States Conference in Brookfield the beginning of May and at the State Convention in Racine in June.

continued from page 19)

Handling second runs of DPS or DPS mail out of order
Dismounts, walking distance and NDCBU's Route mileage
Carrier pick up -vs.- parcels left for pick up
Letter -vs.- Flat -vs.- Parcel
Riffling time
Column R time
'Do Not Bend' items

I could go on and on. When in doubt....write it down. **DOCUMENT DOCUMENT**

D O C U M E N T

Attend a count training seminar. Your union is spending money to teach you how to count. Know more than your manager. Increase your route's evaluation. Increase your pay. When you need assistance....call your steward. Any differences not settled prior to or during your count should be documented and forwarded (by you) to your State Steward, Tom Bittner. Tom will meet with a CSA (Customer Service Analyst) to discuss and settle all compensation issues. Your DOCUMENTATION will mean everything. (what, where, when, why, how, size, numbers)

DOCUMENT DOCUMENT DOCUMENT

You got to hear me now!!!

I hope your NEW YEAR 2008 is off to a great start. Good luck with your count!

Roger Schewe
Assistant State Steward
535, 537, 538, 546
608-692-5621

WIRLCA Auxiliary Officers—2007-08

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10686 County Road Bb
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715-676-3376

Vice-President

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Executive Board—Secretary

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Junior Officers—2007-08

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Treasurer

Kevin Schewe
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Oregon, WI 53575
608-835-3789

Chaplain

Ian Ekern
PO Box 121
Blair, WI 54610
608-987-2126

Running for National Delegate?

The next issue will have space available for those members running for national convention delegate. Your submission has to be 50 words or less. The deadline for the next newsletter is March 1, 2008. Please send them to Lois Graper, Editor or email: LAGraper@frontiernet.net.



From left to right: Cindy Graper, Ethan Weber, Katie Volz, Allison Du Lac, Rachel Rasmussen and Kyle Schewe

STATE OFFICERS	ADDRESS	PHONE	ASSIGNMENT
Dan Strobel President	N4431 Daley Rd. Hustisford, WI 53034	920-349-3782	Dane, Dodge, Grant-Iowa, Fond du Lac-Green Lake, Ozaukee-Washington
Linda Vanden Plas Vice-President	1610 S. Ridge Rd. Green Bay, WI 54304	920-498-2948	Brown, Door-Kewaunee, Marinette, Outagamie, Oconto
Karen Schauer Secretary/Treasurer	5857 Prill Rd. Eau Claire, WI 54701	715-836-9612	Buffalo-Trempealeau, Chippewa-Eau Claire, Jackson, La Crosse, Pierce-Pepin, St. Croix
Lisa "Wojo" Wojnarowski Chairman Executive Committee	1202 S. 49th St. Milwaukee, WI 53214	414-810-4860	Jefferson, Lafayette- Green, Milwaukee- Waukesha, Racine- Kenosha, Rock-Walworth
Lois Graper Committeeman	W10980 Riverside Rd. Marion, WI 54950-9020	715-754-4904	Lincoln-Langlade, Mara- thon-Clark, Shawano, Tri- County, Wood-Portage
Charles Groth Committeeman	12729N Small Rd. Hayward, WI 53843	715-699-0070	Barron-Washburn, Polk- Burnett, Price-Taylor, Rusk, Sawyer, Lake Superior
Louan Friend Committeeman	N685 10th Dr. Endeavor, WI 54843	608-697-8113	Crawford, Columbia, Monroe-Juneau, Sauk- Richland, Vernon
Tom Bittner State Steward	PO Box 305 Chilton, WI 53014	920-273-0760	Cal-Man-She, Marquette- Adams, Waupaca, Waushara, Winnebago
Dennis R. Nelson PAC Chairman	1002 55th St. Amery, WI 54001	715-948-2605	

Wanted:

Factory RHD Subaru Legacy wagon in good condition. Please call Dennis at (608) 214-1622
Monroe, WI

For Sale: (715) 479 7134

2-P205/65R15 Eagle Goodyear snow tires, 3000 miles or less \$100.00 28' Mail Hawk \$8.00
Conversion Kit to make right window electric \$20.00
Carrier Greeting Cards Grace Sales \$18.00
All items must go Make offer

WI RLCA Lois Graper-Editor
W10980 Riverside Rd.
Marion, WI 54950-9020

**Nonprofit
Organization
US Postage
Paid
Permit 20
Waupaca
WI**

WIRLCA Mail Count Training

<u>January 27, 2008-1-3:30 p.m.</u> Best Western Midway Hotel 780 Packer Dr. Green Bay These two in conjunction with Local Steward training	<u>February 10, 2008-1-3:30 p.m.</u> Avalon Hotel 1009 West Park Avenue Chippewa Falls	<u>February 5, 2008 6:30-9 p.m.</u> Ramada Plaza One N. Main St. Fond du Lac	<u>Voyageur Inn</u> 200 Viking Dr. Reedsburg
<u>February 7, 2008 6:30-9 p.m.</u> Howard Johnsons 2101 North Mountain Rd. Wausau	<u>La Crosse PO</u> Upstair La Crosse	<u>February 12, 2008 6:30-9 p.m.</u> Tanner Paull 6922 W. Orchard St Milwaukee	<u>Comfort Suites</u> 15586 Cty Rd B Hayward

Joint Training with the Post Office

January 8, 2008	10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.	Rhineland Post Office
January 9, 2008	8:00 a.m. – 11 a.m.	Wausau Post Office
January 9, 2008	11:15 a.m. – 2:15 p.m.	Wausau Post Office
January 10, 2008	8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	Green Bay Main Office Training Room
January 10, 2008	11:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.	Green Bay Main Office Training Room
February 5, 2008	9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Green Bay Main Office Training Room
February 6, 2008	8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	Oshkosh Post Office
February 6, 2008	11:15 a.m. – 2:15 p.m.	Oshkosh Post Office