

Report of the President

Bill Piwowarski





It's déjà vu all over again. We have made it through another Christmas, but from some of the reports I have heard not without attrition. The reasoning behind this is anyone's guess. Co-vid has caused many carriers' health issues and time out of work, and normal routines disrupted. We as your Union have tried our best to get back to a normal routine.

Earlier in the year we were doing everything digitally and for the most part it worked out, but without that face-to-face interaction it felt to me that something was lost. This Fall more traditional meetings worked out fairly well with the exception of National holding back on having members of the steward system being able to attend. They were there on Zoom, but as we have all come to realize it isn't the same thing. There were a few issues that we saw with that such as a slow internet connection, members doing other things while listening in, or even falling asleep. We can only hope that this new year goes a little bit better.

The new year we look forward to a bit of normalcy. First up, the MA contract ratification meeting will be Feb 10th via Zoom. Login information is on NRLCA.org. There will be in person district meetings with officer elections and nominations for National Convention. At this point I believe it will be happening, but I can't foresee the future. We may still not have a representative from the steward system in attendance. Then we have the Eastern States conference on our agenda which was in your November/December national magazine. Take a look, maybe you might want to attend if you have never gone and see how it all works and become more involved. After Eastern States is over, we will be having the Spring State meeting May 1st. I can only hope that things will be more normalized by then and we have representatives from national in attendance.

As always, I thank you all for the hard work you do every day and your support of this Union.

Respectfully, William & Piwowarski, MaRLCA President

SACKROADS JOURNAL

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Nomination Address

Massachusetts RLCA

National Delegate Nomination PO Box 141 Brookfield, MA 01506-0141

Future Dates to Remember

- District 1, 2, and 3 Meetings No Dates at Time of Press
- Feb 10 MA Ratification Mtg—Zoom
- Feb 21 Presidents Day
- Mar 9 Back Roads Journal Deadline
- Mar 25-27 Eastern States Convention
- May 1 Spring State Mtg
- Sept 6-9 National Convention

MARLCA EDITOR

Kathy Makowski-Cote backroads.marlca@gmail.com

SPRING EDITION DEADLINE WED MAR 9

Address Change: You can log on to http://liteblue.usps.gov

The Backroads Journal is a publication of the MARLCA. Opinions and views expressed in this newsletter are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect or represent those of the Editor or the State Officers of the MARLCA.

February 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	3	3	4	5
					Pay Day	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
				Rat Mtg		PP-05
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	Val Day				Pay Day	
20/27	21/28	22	23	24	25	26
	Pres Day					PP-06

March 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4 Pay Day	5
6	7	8	9 BRJ Deadline	10	11	12 PP-07
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Daylight					Pay Day	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26 PP-08
27	28	29	30	31		

April 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Pay Day	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9 PP-09
10	11	12	13	14	15 Pay Day	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23 PP-10
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

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2022 National Convention Delegate Ballot

Convention Delegate Nominations

Appearing below is Section 2 of Article VI of the Constitution of the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association. It sets forth in detail the election procedures for delegates to the national convention. This article complies with labor laws which require that national delegates must be elected by direct vote of the membership.

In accordance with Section 2 of Article VI, a nominating ballot appears below:

- You may nominate yourself or someone else from the organized state association in which your membership is affliated. (Reference Article III, Section 4.A and B of the National Constitution).
- Mail the completely filled out and SIGNED nominating ballot to your State Association at the pre-arranged post office box address that appears on the opposite page. A completely filled out nominating ballot is extremely important in order to determine eligibility of the person making the nomination and that of the nominee. Please print clearly as an illegible nominating ballot may cause it to be not accepted and/or returned for clarification to the person making the nomination.

Section 2. Delegates A. Eligibility

 Each state association shall be entitled to representation by one delegate for every 100 members or major fraction thereof and one Delegate-at-Large. Membership shall be based on the number of dues withholding and cash pay Bargaining Unit and Retired Members on June 30 of the Association year just ended.

- 2. Only Bargaining Unit Members and Retired Members in good standing may be nominated, elected or seated as delegates. Such "good standing" status shall be the sole prerequisite for determining eligibility or entitlement to service as a delegate or to any payment or benefit, except that a state may establish reasonable rules to ensure attendance at the Convention.
- A member who accepts or acts at any time in any capacity normally performed by a manager from the end of one Convention to the end of the next Convention shall be ineligible to be nominated or serve as delegate.

B. Nomination

- Within each state association, nominations for National Delegate shall be submitted by U.S. Mail to a pre-arranged post office box on a nominating ballot or copy. The nominating ballot shall be signed and show the name and address of the member making the nomination, and may include self-nomination. The nominating ballot and instructions shall be posted on the NRLCA website and in all published issues of The National Rural Letter Carrier from December-May.
- Nominations must be received in the prearranged post office box at least 50 days prior to the opening of the state convention. Upon receipt, the State Secretary shall send a notice of nomination to the candidate by U.S. Mail.

C. Elections

A member must be on the rolls at least
 days prior to the opening of the state

convention in order to be eligible to vote for National Delegates.

- 2. The State Secretary shall prepare a ballot listing the candidates for National Delegate. Instructions on each ballot shall include the number of delegates to be elected, the deadline for return of the ballot and the mailing address of the designated post office box. The number of votes cast on each ballot shall not exceed the number of delegates to which the state association was entitled at the previous convention.
- 3. The State Secretary shall cause the ballot to be mailed to eligible members at least 25 days prior to the opening of the state convention. In addition, the State Secretary/ Designee shall arrange for the rental of a post office box for the receipt of the ballots and another for the return of undeliverable ballots.
- 4. An envelope marked "Ballot" shall be provided in which to seal the ballot. To permit verification of membership and to maintain the integrity of the voting procedure, an outer envelope, also marked "Ballot" which clearly identifies the name and address of the member, shall also be provided. The sealed envelope containing the ballot shall be placed in the outer envelope by the member and mailed to the designated post office box.
- 5. An Election Committee shall be appointed by the State President. No candidate for National Delegate may serve on the Election Committee. After the deadline for receipt of ballots, the Election Committee shall collect and tabulate the ballots at the state convention. The post office box designated for the return of ballots shall be accessible only to the Election Committee.

NOTE: Nomination Address Top Left Opposite Page; Convention Dates Sept 6 thru 9.

2022 NATIONAL CONVENTION DELEGATE NOMINATING BALLOT

This form must be completed in its entirety. Please print clearly.

I am a member of the		Rural Letter Carriers' Association.				
Signature of Member:						
Name						
Address						
City						
Phone						
I hereby submit the name of:						
Address						
City						

as a candidate for delegate to the 2022 National Convention of the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association. To the best of my knowledge, the above nominee qualifies under the provisions set forth in Article VI, Section 2, as cited above. Mail to the address listed for your state on the following page.

Report of the Vice-President

Robert "Bob" Richardson



Hello once again fellow rural carriers!! As you read this copy of the BRJ, we will have passed Christmas and rolled into a New Year. But things still remain the same. For me, this past year has been eye opening. As many of you may remember, I started off the 2021 year as your District 3 President. This was a very comfortable position and I completely understood all my duties and responsibilities. I was then asked if I could take over the State Vice President position due to the resignation of the State Secretary Treasurer and restructuring of the State Board. I felt a little bit out of my comfort zone due to all the scheduling and booking of events. But, now that I have done it a few times, I feel right at home. It's by stepping out of our comfort zone that we can grow. So what does 2022 have in store for all of us? If we could only look into a crystal ball and see the future. There are many things that we need to keep an eye on though. A few of these items are: RRECS, a new contract, covid issues, and etc.

The past 2 years have been hard on all of us. We would like to turn the corner and put all of this covid stuff behind us once and for all. Wouldn't it be nice to get back to training new RCA's the correct way? How about being able to walk into a business without grabbing a mask? How about having all meetings "in person" and not "zoom". The only way this can happen is to be cautious, vigilant, and to be vaccinated against covid and all the different strains that keep coming out. I do recognize "my body, my choice" debate as well. I just ask that you be cognizant of your coworkers, customers and family.

As I bring this article to a close, please remember that it is membership that drives this union. We need your help in promoting the union to non-members. Tell them your experiences; inform them of something you did not know until you went to a meeting. One big point would be how important being a member would be when RRECS gets implemented. You don't want to lose your shirt!! I look forward to seeing all of you in February at the district meetings. Come and hear the news that is happening in your union, and you can put your name down to run for a position within the union.

Stay Safe and Make Smart Choices!!

Robert Richardson, MaRLCA Vice-President



800-327-4968

(800-EAP-4-YOU) TTY: 877-492-7341 www.EAP4YOU.com

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Sec-Treasurer's Two Cents

Lorraine Pacheco



Happy New Year

Welcome to 2022...You survived another holiday season working for the USPS.

In my last article I talked about membership and the challenges with recruiting. As of today, we have 1247 members and 337 non-members. In addition to the academy instructors recruiting, I have been sending recruitment letters to non-members. New members will receive their first three months free. Any member who recruits an RCA will receive \$15 provided they are on the rolls for the three months. Recruiters will also receive \$50 for recruiting a regular carrier. Our delegate strength at the national convention is based on our June 30, 2022, membership total.

District meetings will be taking place within the next few months. They will be in person meetings. Every effort to social distance will be made. Along with local elections, nominations will be accepted for both state officers and delegates for our national convention which will take place in Orlando, FL this year. Delegate nomination forms can be found in the NRLCA magazine. All delegate nominations need to be received no later than March 12, 2022. The PO Box will be closed at the end of day. Nominations received after this date will be returned to the sender. Ballots for both the state officer and national delegates should be in the mail by the first week of April. Please take the time to fill out your ballot and return it.

As of today, the Eastern States Conference is still scheduled to take place March 25-27, 2022, at the Holiday Inn Harrisburg-Hershey in Grantville, PA. The ESC board is currently working on the itinerary. If you are interested in attending, please complete the registration form and mail it to me. Registration forms can be found in the national magazine. Your registration fee will be paid by the state. Hotel reservations must be made by February 22nd to receive the \$104 group rate. If I can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to call or email me. My contact info can be found on the state website and this issue of the backroads journal.

Stay Safe,

Lorraine Pacheco, MaRLCA Secretary / Treasurer



Sec-Treasurer's Two Cents

Lorraine Pacheco



MaRLCA Statement of Financial Position

As of January 1, 2022

	Jan 1, 22	Jan 1, 21	\$ Change
ASSETS Current Assets Checking/Savings			
1000000 · TD Bank 1100000 · APCU Savings Account 1100500 · APCU Checking Account 1200000 · APCU CD's	17,852.45 172,475.53 5,001.81 118,233.43	5,544.06 131,832.62 0.00 117,191.02	12,308.39 40,642.91 5,001.81 1.042.41
Total Checking/Savings	313,563.22	254,567.70	58,995.52
Total Current Assets	313,563.22	254,567.70	58,995.52
TOTAL ASSETS	313,563.22	254,567.70	58,995.52
LIABILITIES & EQUITY Liabilities Current Liabilities			
Other Current Liabilities	323.72	16.44	307.28
Total Current Liabilities	323.72	16.44	307.28
Total Liabilities	323.72	16.44	307.28
Equity 3900 · Net Assets Net Income	279,959.74 33,279.76	204,771.71 49,779.55	75,188.03 -16,499.79
Total Equity	313,239.50	254,551.26	58,688.24
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	313,563.22	254,567.70	58,995.52

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From The District Rep's Desk

Art Courcy, MA-RI and CT DR



Happy 2022 to all!

This year will be bringing significant changes to the rural craft. With so much going on in today's Postal Service, it is more than ever troubling for me to see how limited our members participation is in attending meetings, whether virtual meetings or in person. Hopefully we will be back to in person meetings this year, which is certainly my preference. Now is not the time for our carriers to be complacent and

just go with the flow day to day. Our members need to have the knowledge of all

"This past year we had another handful of carriers that did not bid properly, and the result was detrimental to their careers."

these changes. Whether it be new contractual language, (if our new tentative agreement is ratified by the membership), the Rural Route Evaluated Compensation System (RRECS), work rules and rural carrier rights. I am asking all of you, please try to get the carriers in your office more involved. Take someone new with you to a meeting. We all need to improve on banding together to continually work to improve our craft.

All of you that read the articles contained in your state and national NRLCA publications are probably well educated by now on the automated bidding process. Unfortunately, we continue to have situations where our carriers are given misinformation from management and even fellow carriers regarding the bidding process that lead to detrimental effects. This past year we had another handful of carriers that did not bid properly, and the result was detrimental to their careers. This process has been in place for many years now and everyone needs to know and understand how it works. With that, I must again take this opportunity to explain this process.

All bidding for vacant regular routes and PTF positions must be done through the automated bidding system. Bidding for the regular rural route(s) listed on the posting is not only for the posted vacancy, but for any regular route(s) in the office that may become available as a result of filling the original route vacancy. Eligible rural carriers will submit bids using employee self-service at www.liteblue.usps.gov, HR Kiosks, web bidding computers or phone bidding at 1-877-477-3273 Option 2, TDD/TTY 1-800-265-7208. The use of telephone, computer or other automated bidding at an installation is the prerogative of the Employer. The following conditions apply to the Automated Bidding System:

- 1. EIN and PIN numbers are required for carriers to utilize Interactive Voice Response (IVR) telephone bidding.
- 2. The Automated Bidding System is available twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week.
- 3. All bids close at 11:59 p.m. (Central Time).
- 4. Employees can enter, withdraw, change preferences and/or review the status of their bids.
- 5. Employees will need their Employee Identification Number (EIN) and personal password to access web applications for eJob bidding.

From The District Rep's Desk

Art Courcy, MA-RI and CT DR



Any eligible rural carrier, who wishes to be considered in the bidding process, must utilize the method(s) of bidding indicated on the route posting. A carrier will list, in order of preference, ONLY those routes that he or she will accept. Carriers will not be able to decline a position/route that they have listed as a choice after the close of the 10-day posting period. If a carrier wishes to withdraw or change bid preferences, the carrier must do so through the Automated Bidding System prior to the closing date of the posting. The carrier should indicate their decision to withdraw from the bidding process or change preferences previously submitted. A carrier who withdraws from the bidding process will not be considered for routes that may be vacated in association with the vacancy notice. All eligible rural carriers (regular rural carriers, PTFs, substitutes and non-probationary RCAs) must list preferred routes by the official position identification number(s), not route number(s). If the vacant position/route is not listed as a preference by any regular rural carrier, then no movement or changes of other regular routes will occur because no other regular routes will become available. PTF rural carriers do not need to submit a bid for a posted vacant regular rural route unless the office has posted multiple vacant routes. When more than one vacancy exists, PTF rural carrier(s) submitting bids have a choice of the residual vacancies based on the longest period of service in the office. When a posting contains multiple vacant routes, PTF rural carriers must list all regular routes by the official position identification number(s), in the order of preference. If a PTF rural carrier does not indicate preferences when multiple vacant routes have been posted, the PTF rural carrier will be assigned a residual vacancy without the benefit of a preference. Substitutes and RCAs who are eligible to bid and will accept any regular rural route in the office should click the "Select All & Submit Bid" button on the USPS Job Bidding Screen of the web-based application. No preferences need to be listed except in the following situations:

- 1. The substitute or RCA would only accept a regular position dependent upon a certain route(s) becoming available. In this situation, the substitute or RCA would list, in the order of preference, only those routes that would be accepted if the route(s) becomes available.
- 2. The office has posted multiple vacant routes.
 - a. If more than one vacancy exists, the substitute or RCA may have a choice of residual vacancies based on the longest period of service in the office in accordance with Article 12.3.C.2.g.
 - b. When bidding, substitutes or RCAs may list all regular routes by the official position identification number(s), in the order of preference, should the route(s) become available.
 - c. If a substitute or RCA bids but does not indicate preferences when multiple vacant routes have been posted, the substitute or RCA will be assigned a residual vacancy without the benefit of a preference.

Submitted preferences for any regular route in the facility will be honored based on availability and in accordance with seniority. Preferences are considered for all routes that become vacant due to placement of any carrier into the initial vacancy. Carriers may withdraw a bid at any time during the 10-day posting period. Bids will be sorted by HRSSC. A Pre-award notice will be forwarded to Local Services at the District level to verify before the vacancy award notice is printed.

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From The District Rep's Desk

Art Courcy, MA-RI and CT DR



When a PTF (part-time flexible rural carrier) assignment is posted in accordance with Article 30.2.A.3, eligible substitute rural carriers and RCAs are simply bidding to be converted to a career status PTF. The specific route assignments are not to be included on the posting notice. When an office posts more than one PTF position, the eligible substitute rural carriers and RCAs will need to submit a bid for each position by the individual position identification number to be considered for each assignment.

I cannot stress enough that when the time comes that you may have an opportunity to bid on a route vacancy or PTF position and have any questions, do not hesitate to call me or an ADR with your questions. There is just too much misinformation out in the field, and it is paramount that all of our carriers understand the bidding process.

Who Ya Gonna Call?

Stewards at a glance

District Representative, MA-RI and CT (*Full Time DR*)

Art Courcy, <u>Arthur.Courcy@nrlca.org</u> 508-761-6870

Full-Time Assistant District Representative

Joan Tenerella, <u>Joan.Tenerella@nrlca.org</u> 401-536-8697

Assistant District Representatives:

Don Ryle (Massachusetts)

<u>Donald.Ryle@nrlca.org</u>

508-997-1696

Dan Cote (Massachusetts)
<u>Daniel.Cote@nrlca.org</u>

978-237-2625

Michael Merola (Connecticut)

<u>Michael.Merola@nrlca.org</u>

860-921-7643

Peter Allatin (Connecticut)
Peter.Allatin@nrlca.org
860-267-0033

Area Stewards:

Ed Knight
Edward.Knight@nrlca.org
413-323-7392

Theron Boudakian
Theron.Boudakian@nrlca.org
774-266-7056

Thomas Gorman

Thomas.Gorman@nrlca.org

774-319-0788

Matthew Barrett

Matthew.Barrett@nrlca.org

508-525-9854

From The Assistant District Rep's Desk

Joan Tenerella, MA-RI and CT ADR

As we enter a New Year, I would like to wish everyone a happier and especially healthier year! With the start of this New Year there has been a significant increase in Covid cases, and it is more apparent than ever that we need to remain diligent to help prevent the spread of this virus. The face covering and social distancing policy remains in effect, and nothing has changed. If you are feeling ill or have a family member who lives with you that is ill, or has been diagnosed with Covid 19, you cannot go to work, no matter what your supervisor or PM says! If you're having an issue related to Covid that you are unsure about, please contact your local steward, area steward, ADR or DR for guidance.

I have included documentation related to filing an OWCP claim for Covid 19 if the attached information applies to you. Also please see the attached Covid related MOU's that have been extended through Feb 11, 2022.

As always feel free to contact me with any questions. Joan Tenerella 401-536-8697 or Joan.Tenerella@nrlca.org.

On March 11, 2021, President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. The new law makes it easier for federal workers diagnosed with COVID-19 to establish coverage under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA). Section 4016 of the law provides that a federal employee who is diagnosed with COVID-19 and carried out duties that required contact with patients, members of the public, or co-workers, or included a risk of exposure to the novel coronavirus during a covered period of exposure prior to the diagnosis, is deemed to have an injury that is proximately caused by employment. FECA Bulletin 21-09 (Processing FECA Claims for COVID-19 under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021), issued on April 28, 2021, provides more detail on claims processing and requirements.

The impacts of this provision are as follows:

- Any COVID-19 claim filed under the FECA that was accepted for COVID-19 prior to March 12, 2021, is **not** impacted because coverage for benefits has already been extended.
- Any COVID-19 claim filed under the FECA that was denied or withdrawn prior to March 12, 2021, is eligible for review under the new eligibility requirements.
- Any COVID-19 claim filed under the FECA on or after March 12, 2021, will be reviewed solely under the new eligibility requirements.

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From The Assistant District Rep's Desk

Joan Tenerella, MA-RI and CT ADR

The following Memoranda of Understanding between the United States Postal Service and the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association have been extended through February 11, 2022. The parties agree to meet and discuss the above Memoranda of Understanding prior to February 11, 2022, to determine whether further extension is appropriate.

- Re: Temporary Expanded Sick Leave for Dependent Care During COVID-19
- Re: Temporary Workplace Changes to Promote Social Distancing COVID-19
- Re: Temporary Additional Paid Leave for RCAs. Newly-hired RCAs hired after the signing of
 this agreement will be permitted to use up to 80 hours of paid leave for the reasons provided
 for in the original March 18, 2020 MOU—Temporary Additional Paid Leave for Rural Carrier
 Associates. It does not provide an additional 80 hours for existing RCAs. Those RCAs
 already hired prior to the signing of this extension who only used a portion, or none of the 80
 hours of leave from the original MOU, will be entitled to use the remainder of the 80 hours
 that was left over that went unused.

Considering Running for District or State Officer or National Delegate?

Did you know that every Spring MaRLCA re-elects Officers (both district and state level) and National Delegates? Are you considering running for one of these positions? Did you know these positions are open to all members?

- Watch your mailbox for your Spring District Meeting Notice
- Attend your Spring District Meeting to hear more about the responsibilities of each office.
- Nominate, run, and vote for District Officers that same night.
- Nominate or announce intentions to run for State Office that same night (or until announced closing date).
- Candidates for National Delegate fill out and mail in the nomination form (found on page 3, published in the National Magazine, or obtained from your State Secretary at your Spring District Meeting.
- Write an optional candidacy article for the Backroads Journal, up to 100 words, with optional 1x1" photo, and email it to backroads.marlca@gmail.com prior to midnight on Wed, Mar 9th, 2022.
- Watch your mailbox for two ballots in the same envelope—1 for State Officers and 1 for National Delegates.
- Follow all ballot instructions carefully and exercise your right to vote!

Backroads Journal

Kathy Makowski-Cote, Editor 290 Sutton St. Unit A North Andover, MA 01845

First Class Mail

Presorted
First Class Mail
U.S. Postage Paid
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Permit No. 72

NEW EMAIL ADDRESS:

backroads.marlca@gmail.com

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State Executive Officers:

President: Bill Piwowarski (508) 344-2475

william.piwowarski@nrlca.org

Vice President: Robert Richardson (978) 314-4449

rnrich84@comcast.net

Sec-Treasurer: Lorraine Pacheco (774) 244-0837

Lorraine.pacheco@nrlca.org

District Presidents:

#1: Camille Graves

#2: Dianne Daley

#3: Haley Bureau

Appointed Positions:

Assistant

Sec-Treasurer: Position Vacant

PAC Chair: Chrissy Chamberland

Editor:

Kathy Makowski - Cote

NEW EMAIL ADDRESS:

backroads.marlca@gmail.com