

Retirees: Expertise, Energy on Tap

A big “thank you” to the retirees who, at our National Convention in Buffalo, placed their trust in me by electing me as your Retired League Postmasters President. I value that trust and with the help of our new RLP Executive Board and you, the membership, I am confident that we will have a successful year.

I also want to thank Immediate Past President Jim Merritt for his leadership and dedication to both the RLP and the LEAGUE for the past four years and Barbara Carie and Barbara Spearman for their service on the RLP board. I’m sure that all three of these dedicated LEAGUERS will stay active in our organization.

At our Executive Board meeting, I divided the country into five regions and gave each of our vice presidents the task of making contact with the RLP Branches within their respective regions. Executive VP Nancy Trautman will have responsibility for the West, VP Tom Kelley the Midwest, VP Diane Parks the South, VP Paul Cole the East and VP Barbara Anderson the Northeast. They will initially gather contact information from the branch officers and identify branch RLP membership and legislative people. With this information, our goal will be to help our branches increase their retiree membership and develop a political presence at the grassroots level.



Retirees President

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I ask each of our members to become part of this effort and to contact your branch or national officers to offer your services. We have a lot of talent within the retiree group and we need to use that talent for the betterment of our organization and, ultimately, ourselves. Yes, we are all busy, but if we cannot or will not take the time to help build our organization and work to protect our current benefits and then try to gain improvements in these benefits, perhaps our future will not be as bright as we had hoped.

In conversations with current Postmasters we have all heard of the major changes occurring within the Postal Service. We know from experience that be it “bad times” or “good times,” these changes will continue. We have also seen corporate America make major changes in an effort to transfer, reduce or even eliminate their retiree costs. Even within the federal government, there have been those who have said, “Retiree benefits are not guaranteed.” With the current state of the economy and the mounting federal deficit there will be those in Congress and elsewhere who will try to reduce the benefits that federal retirees receive. Today those voices are a minority. The job of all current and future retirees is to see that those persons remain a minority.

My two primary goals as your RLP President are to increase our retiree membership and expand our political/legislative activities. In the past, retirees have not done a lot of membership work—at least not as we did when we were active Postmasters. We have depended on the LEAGUE National Office to send letters to the new retirees and have not made an organized effort at the branch level. To be successful, we need to make the contacts at the local level. I’m sure that most of you belong to organizations that have a nationwide membership. If in the beginning you had received two letters, one from the organization’s national office and one from a member of that group who was from your county or state, which one are you more likely to respond to? Surveys have shown that the local contact wins eight out of 10 times. Why is this so? Because we see the local contact as more personal. So local efforts do make a difference!

The LEAGUE has had a great legislative program for years. Ed Bowley was our first truly Legislative Consultant. Under his direction, many of the current legislative and PAC programs were developed. Most of this activity was and is directed at gaining support in Congress for issues that affect Postmasters and the Postal Service. As retirees, we have issues that are near and dear to us, such as the Windfall Elimination Provision and Government Pension Offset.

There have been several bills in Congress over the past several years that, if passed, would have eliminated some of the unfair reductions in earned benefits that federal retirees and their spouses face just because they were federal employees. Within the RLP we have a number of people who have the political knowledge and access that would enable us to help move bills that affect us through the committees of Congress and voted on by the House and Senate. Because of the current fiscal conditions, today may not be “our” time for the passage of these bills, but it is the time to prepare for when it is “our” time.

So it comes down to this—we need more people to take an active part in our organization. If that happens, you will benefit and the organization will benefit. To me that is a win-win situation. All we need is YOU. •

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Greetings from the National Auxiliary Editor!



What a year it has been! Last year at the National Convention in Louisville, as I was working registration, I was approached by the Auxiliary to be the National Editor. Fred Gardner, one of the VPs and AZ Auxiliary president, told me that the editor position that Mary Krejci held, just came open. After explaining the job to me, I accepted the position. I went to some of the Auxiliary meetings, took pictures and made some notes ... then when I got home, I started ... more like I panicked. I have been the AZ NLPM editor for 10 years now and have become very comfortable with that. I do four newsletters per year and send them to all AZ PMs, state editors, national officers and AZ Auxiliary. Now, I was responsible for a national newsletter that goes to all Auxiliary and had to download and get addressing set up. I owe my gratitude to Bill and Mary Krejci for all their help transferring information and mailing guidelines to me. I was on the phone numerous times with Bill to make sure it all went well.

Getting articles from everyone is always an interesting and fun experience. I go through the same situation for the state newsletter. I give a deadline and then get to bug everyone to get articles to me so I can put them into Publisher, fix problems and edit. I then correct addresses and get it to the printer.

I received all the articles from the Auxiliary Board and got my first edition out in September and knew I was on my way! Christmas came and went and then it was time for Forum. Unfortunately, my wife and I were not able to attend this year so I had to rely on others to send me pictures to include in my second edition. I appreciate the board working hard to get me information about the Auxiliary and events. The Auxiliary is a very hard working bunch of spouses, children, grandchildren and other family members. They do so much for the National League of Postmasters at both the state and national levels. Without such assistance, the conventions would not be as much fun and certainly not as organized. Be sure to sign up family members in the Auxiliary and B.R.A.T.S. organizations.

Now another National Convention is over and I get to assemble the next newsletter. We had a great time in Buffalo this year. For those of you who were not able to attend, you were missed. It is seldom that we all get together to exchange ideas and just have good fellowship. Even though the turnout was down slightly, probably due to loss of convention leave, the Auxiliary was well represented. States Night was different this year due to the layout of the hotel, but we still had a great time. Don’t be among the missing; join us next year in San Diego. “We will have fun in the sun!!”

It has been great being retired this past three and a half years so I can enjoy different duties and attend meetings. I still keep in touch with postal issues due to my wife, Josie, still a PM and also as editor of the state newsletter. Look for the next Auxiliary newsletter. I will see you all at convention.

—Brian Oakes, National Auxiliary Editor

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