

the Postal Supervisor

May 2017

LTS Delegates Engage Legislators and Convey NAPS' Legislative Message



LTS coverage begins on page 12

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Objective

The objective of the Association shall be to promote, through appropriate and effective action, the welfare of its members, and to cooperate with the USPS and other agencies of the federal government in a continuing effort to improve the service, to raise the standard of efficiency, and to widen the field of opportunity for its members who make the Postal Service or the federal government their life work.

Submissions—Articles submitted for publication should promote the welfare of NAPS and its members in accordance with Article II of the NAPS Constitution & Bylaws. The NAPS resident officers reserve the right to edit all articles, as well as decline to publish submitted material. Branch officer articles must be not more than 350 words. Send all articles to NAPS Secretary/Treasurer Chuck Mulidore at naps.cm@naps.org.

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LTS—Another NAPS Success

Unofficially, our May *Postal Supervisor* is our traditional special Legislative Training Seminar (LTS) issue. For the record, we are keeping with this tradition. However, don't think this is just another "groundhog's day" LTS issue. It's not! Each issue of our magazine is unique and different, even if we use a particular month to focus on a specific topic or event.



Brian J. Wagner
President

I encourage you to read each issue of *The Postal Supervisor* from cover to cover to make sure you don't miss anything; learn at least one thing from each issue. And this issue is no different. Our LTS special issue is filled with pictures of our LTS delegates, including many of our more than 60 LTS first-timers. We summarize our comprehensive legislative work this past March, where more than

500 NAPS and Auxiliary members took to Capitol Hill to promote postal reform, specifically, H.R. 756, the "Postal Service Reform Act of 2017."

I am not going into the "weeds" on H.R. 756 in this article. However, I encourage all members to read this LTS special issue and visit the NAPS website, www.naps.org, to learn more about NAPS' position on H.R. 756. It's important to understand why passage of postal reform is so important to the financial sustainability of the Postal Service and the welfare of all NAPS members and their families.

As I stated earlier, LTS is not a legislative "groundhog's day." Each year at LTS, we have first-timers eager to participate in our NAPS legislative efforts. If we do our job as a legislative team to welcome, coach and mentor our first-timers, they will become the next generation of seasoned NAPS legislative advocates. As such, our current first-timers will return every year to be part of the

legislative team to welcome, coach and mentor the next round of first-timers. That is success.

Each LTS, we have changes in state legislative chairs. Some veteran chairs understand it is time to pass the baton to another member who is willing to take on this important role. As state legislative chair, their role is coordinating the scheduling of their respective congressional visits. It also is making sure their members are comfortable and confident with NAPS' legislative talking points when on the Hill discussing our issues with their congressional leaders or aides. Plus, working throughout the year back in their home states is critical to ensure NAPS' legislative message and agenda are being heard and moving forward.

Never think our legislative agenda and LTS are routine and just come together. Each year, NAPS has its challenges in preparing for LTS. However, it is the team effort from our NAPS Headquarters staff, legislative counsel, resident officers, Executive Board, conference planner, *Postal Supervisor* editor, state legislative chairs, NAPS Auxiliary and the support of our members that makes our LTS events such a success. This year certainly was no exception. Our 2017 LTS was a great success.

Our legislative success will be even sweeter when postal reform is passed. My thanks go out to the entire NAPS legislative team, Auxiliary, members and branches for sending their respective LTS delegates.

As tradition, I will end my article with a friendly reminder from past LTS articles of mine. Regardless of your position in NAPS, we all are political advocates. I encourage you to take an active role to protect your postal livelihood and retirement by being heard and seen on a regular basis either on Capitol Hill or back home in your congressional district offices. You make LTS and our legislative efforts a success! Let's push for an "early" postal reform bill.

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Issue	Copy Deadline*	Mails
JUNE	APR 20	MAY 16
JULY	MAY 19	JUNE 15
AUG	JUNE 15	JULY 13
SEPT	JULY 18	AUG 10
OCT	AUG 21	SEPT 12
NOV	SEPT 22	OCT 19
DEC	OCT 24	NOV 16
JAN 18	NOV 28	DEC 21

*Copy must be received by this day; see page 2 for submission information.

NAPS' Dedicated Advocates Make Their Voices Heard

As I write this column, we just completed the 2017 NAPS Legislative Training Seminar (LTS) and spring Executive Board meeting; more than 500 delegates from around the country attended. This number was down slightly from last year's LTS, but still represented a strong presence for our speakers and the legislators who held meetings with our members on the Hill.



Ivan D. Butts
Executive Vice President

On many occasions, I have stated how humbled I am to serve NAPS as executive vice president. This emotion is magnified during the LTS season when I have the opportunity to work more closely with our legislative team, office staff, Executive Board Legislative Committee and Auxiliary in planning and preparing for a successful LTS.

Sunday, March 5, began with our annual wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery's Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Each year, I am proud to invite four military veterans to serve as NAPS honorees and watch them perform this act of remembrance. Thank you to all who have stood to defend our Constitution from enemies—foreign and domestic.

For the sixth year, we held our non-denominational worship service. I am grateful for the partnership of our worship team—Richard Green, Paul Foley, Lloyd Cox and myself—for keeping the vision of Dr. Nancy Wesley moving forward. Thanks to the Holloway Family for, once again, providing praise and worship for the service. Special thanks to my dear friend, Rev. Prescott Butler, president of Robert L. Towns Branch 327, for bringing a highly inspirational message for all in attendance. This event continues to grow and unifies us to a greater purpose within our LTS agenda.

Our theme for this year's LTS was Priority *Postal.* We sought to go beyond the postal reform legislation we are supporting to a deeper level of understanding of who we—the USPS family—are and what we have meant, historically, to the fabric of this country. This point was visually demonstrated in the presentation of post offices (old and new) that were displayed on

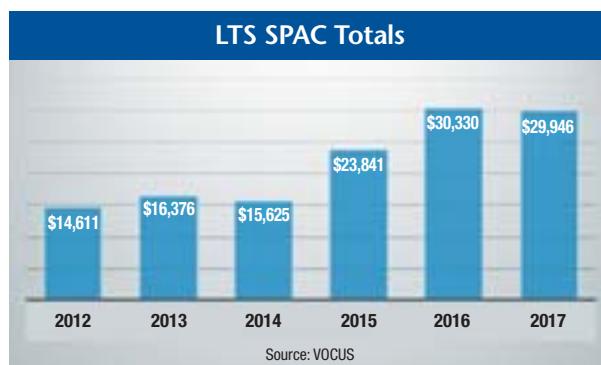
the large screens during breaks.

Our theme was further brought to life through the presentation from Winifred Gallagher, author of "How the Postal Service Created America: A History." Gallagher did an excellent job of tying the history of the Postal Service to the creation of the United States. One of the visual graphics that brought this point home to me was the picture she used in her book of a snake cut into 13 pieces, representing the 13 original colonies.

This is what is meant in the Constitution that the Postal Service was enacted to bind the 13 individual colonies together as one through post roads. Those roads connected the otherwise disconnected colonies by delivering newspapers, which documented what was going on in the new world. History shows the Postal Service is the reason why America is the *United* States. Special thanks to my friend, Junemarie Brandt, a member of Branch 526 and postal historian, for narrating this segment of our LTS.

The NAPS Auxiliary, under the leadership of President Patricia Jackson-Kelley, was instrumental in helping NAPS raise more than \$29,000 for SPAC. I thank our Auxiliary for all the hard work they do to support NAPS. I especially want to thank my #1 Auxiliary member, my wife Laurie.

I have recapped what was achieved for SPAC, knowing it all is centered on your generosity in giving. You continually commit to putting and keeping NAPS at the top of legislator constituency pyramids. As treasurer of our SPAC, I am thankful for your support of SPAC during this time. I look forward to continuing to support and engage you as we elevate our grassroots footprint through a strong and vibrant SPAC.



Continued on page 10

An Inspiring and Informative LTS

As you probably have noticed, this issue of *The Postal Supervisor* is largely devoted to the recent 2017 NAPS Legislative Training Seminar (LTS).

As this was my first LTS as your national secretary/treasurer, I couldn't resist the temptation to offer my thoughts on this very successful event, especially because the LTS is more than a meeting to discuss postal legislation or initiatives, although that is the primary motivation for the seminar.

Let's take a moment to walk through the LTS.

The event started with a wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery, a solemn event each year that honors NAPS members who have served our great nation in the armed forces. It is a privilege to be in the presence of such men and women; to honor them in such a

beautiful, historic and majestic place as Arlington National Cemetery is a humbling experience. If you never have attended this event, please do so next year when you come to LTS; you will not be disappointed.

Then, back to the Crystal Gateway Marriott, where the early-afternoon, non-denominational worship service also provided inspiration. The Holloway Family offered uplifting, moving and beautiful music that broadened and rewarded our faith—not favoring any particular religion, but providing a backdrop to the talents of NAPS' own Rev. Prescott Butler, who preached a poignant message of love and unity. I still get chills thinking back on it!

Of course, what would LTS be without first-timers? This year, we had 62 first-time delegates, most of whom attended the first-timers orientation on Sunday, giving them guidance on their upcoming visits to Capitol Hill. Opening day then wrapped up with the Town Hall meeting, where LTS attendees interacted, gave comments and asked questions of the NAPS resident officers and members of the Executive Board. Wow! That was only day 1.

Day 2 began with our LTS program. I have to recognize the efforts of Executive Vice President Ivan D. Butts in putting together an engaging and interesting program for the day. LTS takes a great deal of work and Ivan always rises to the occasion. Kudos as well to the NAPS staff who worked hard in support of the seminar:

Katie Maddocks, our SPAC manager; Jovan Duncan, our NAPS office manager; and Pat French, my assistant at NAPS Headquarters.

LTS delegates heard from National President Brian Wagner, as well as yours truly, but the star of the day was the program itself: a mixture of politics, education, some humor and information on upcoming postal legislation. Bruce Moyer, our legislative counsel, was a guiding force in these efforts. This year, NAPS has endorsed H.R. 756 as a solution for many of the woes that have bedeviled the Postal Service since 2006.

A key piece of the legislation requires that all eligible retirees' health insurance is integrated with Medicare as a way of providing the Postal Service relief from the onerous costs of prefunding retiree health care, which largely has accounted for the massive losses sustained by the Postal Service over the past decade. NAPS also supports provisions in the bill that provide MSPB rights to all NAPS members, something now lacking for approximately 7,500 NAPS members.

Overall, the bill is not perfect, but nothing that comes from compromise ever is. Thus, NAPS looked at the big picture for all our members; we believe this legislation is worth supporting and being passed by Congress for the long-term viability of the Postal Service. A strong, stable Postal Service is not only good for NAPS members, but it's good for America, as well.

Day 2 wrapped up with photos of members present at LTS who have contributed to SPAC, our political action committee, in 2016. We cannot say enough about the generosity of these members and continue to look to their example as inspiration for all NAPS members to follow. Remember, the future of the Postal Service will be decided by Congress, so sign up today and give to SPAC.

LTS concluded on day 3, as our delegates converged on Capitol Hill to spread the message to legislators and their staffs, providing that reality check our members of Congress often need to understand postal issues. Congratulations to the men and women who "hit the Hill" and gave such strong momentum to our legislative agenda. Thank you!

There you have it—a whirlwind few days of inspiration, information-sharing, knowledge, education and good, old-fashioned footwork that will be the cornerstone of our legislative efforts in 2017. Make plans to attend LTS in 2018. It's a unique and refreshing experience—one you will never forget.

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Chuck Mulidore
Secretary/Treasurer

**Honoring 50 Years
Of Public Service**

Customer Service Supervisor Louis Ruggieri was honored March 2 by postal executives, managers, colleagues and friends at a special ceremony at the Orange, NJ, Main Post Office for his 50 years of public service. USPS Northeast Area Vice President Edward Phelan presented Ruggieri with a 50-year pin and congratulatory letter from Postmaster General Megan Brennan.

He also was recognized by Northern New Jersey District Manager Steven Hernandez, Orange Postmaster Virginia Garrett and Northern New Jersey District Post Office Operations Manager/A Tim Mulligan.

Ruggieri is a life-long West Orange resident. He began his postal career in November 1966 as a part-

time flexible letter carrier in West Orange, a branch of the Orange Post Office. Over the years, he completed the Postal Service's supervisory training program, earned an associate's degree from Morris County College and graduated with a bachelor's degree from William Paterson University.

In addition to being a letter carrier for 18 years, Ruggieri served 29 years as a supervisor, Customer Service, and three years as acting manager, Customer Service. Ruggieri and his wife Linda have been married for 40 years and are the proud parents of three sons: Louis, Edward and Charles.

Ruggieri indicated he has no immediate plans for retirement as yet; he loves to come to work. He also



USPS Northeast Area Vice President Edward Phelan presented Orange, NJ, Supervisor Lou Ruggieri with his 50-year pin and congratulatory letter from PMG Megan Brennan.

enjoys restoring a 1957 Chevrolet Bel Air in his spare time. "The USPS work environment seems as though it is constantly changing to improve the service to our customers and keep our lead over potential competitors," said Ruggieri. "I consider myself blessed to have had the privilege to work with innumerable beautiful people over the years."



NAPS California members joined the resident officers at the Northeast Region Training Seminar, March 24-25. From left: Branch 244 President Mary Burkhard, Branch 373 President Jim Isom, Branch 698 Secretary/Treasurer Mary DiGioia, NAPS President Brian Wagner, Branch 373 Vice President Sylvia Dominguez, NAPS Secretary/Treasurer Chuck Mulidore and Executive Vice President Ivan D. Butts.



At the March New Orleans Branch 73 meeting were, from left, Tomica Duplessis, Kyle Laurendine and Bertha Brumfield. Standing is Central Gulf Area VP Cornel Rowel.



On Feb. 26, New York City Branch 100 held its 99th Annual Dinner Dance. Scholarships, sponsored by M3 Technology, were presented to children of branch members who will be attending college in the fall. From left: Igor Rivilis, vice president of M3 Technology; NAPS Executive Vice President Ivan D. Butts; John Pescitelli, president and CEO of M3 Technology; Desiree Allen, supervisor, Customer Service, and mother of Isaiah Christopher-Allen Smith (next in line); Michelle Pham, daughter of Tu M. Tu (next in line), supervisor, Customer Service; NAPS Secretary/Treasurer Chuck Mulidore; Northeast Region Vice President Tommy Roma; New York Area Vice President Jimmy Warden; and Branch 100 President Tom Hughes. Unable to attend were scholarship recipient Antonio Jordan and his father, Derrick Jordan, tour superintendent, Postal Operations. Plans already are underway for next year's 100th annual event, which will be Feb. 25.



March 2 at the Flushing P&DC was the kickoff meeting for the SWCs pilot site work study of supervisory daily duties—a long-awaited event. Supervisors in offices, branches and stations working at six sites in each of the Westchester, Connecticut Valley, Long Island, Triboro, New York and Northern New Jersey districts will be conducting the work study by documenting each of their daily duties and the time taken to complete them. The district managers, support staff and supervisors from each site participated in the first meeting; the study began March 18. From left: Elvin Mercado, Triboro District manager; Steve Hernandez, Northern New Jersey District manager; Tommy Roma, NAPS Northeast Region vice president; Ed Phelan, USPS Northeast Area vice president; and Jimmy Warden, NAPS New York Area vice president.



Former NAPS President Louis Atkins (center) and Central Gulf Area Vice President Cornel Rowel (right) with Rep. Cedric Richmond (D-LA) at the Mardi Gras Ball.



On Feb. 16, the 2nd Quarter District Managers and Management Associations meeting was held at the North Houston P&DC. From left: Beverly Harris, manager, Labor Relations; Michael Bonnette, MPOO 1; Sherry Bridges, UPMA Texas co-president; Jaime Elizondo, NAPS Texas Area vice president; Antonio Garcia, (A) manager, Operations Programs Support; A.J. Washington, NAPS North Houston Branch 589 president; Kelvin Dansby, manager, Marketing; Stephanie Anderson, MPOO D; Mary Irving, NAPS Houston Branch 122; Chenise LeDoux, Houston postmaster; Teresa Brady, MPOO 3; Robert Brown, manager, Human Resources; Debra Brandyberg, MPOO 4; Edward Muniz, MPOO 2; Christopher Frier, manager, Finance; and David Camp, (A) district manager.



NAPS Secretary/Treasurer Chuck Mulidore with the Los Angeles Branch 39 Executive Board, from left: Marilyn Jones, Sam Booth, Velma McClinton, Kent Buckley, Dave Smith, Sly Moore, Robin Walker, Larry Martinez, Trinise Johnson, Carmen Johnson, Damon Leopold and Mulidore.

Growing Our Influence

By **Richard L. Green Jr.**
Eastern Region Vice President

NAPS has been around since 1908. That year, a group of supervisors saw that, by coming together to address EAS employee concerns, they could have greater influence in the Post Office Department.

Fast forward to 2017; our issues still are the same. How can we continue to grow our influence in the Postal Service? I know these are challenging times, but, with challenges come opportunities to grow our influence as a management association. How do we go about doing this?

1. Legislation. We need to continue to have a strong presence on Capitol Hill, addressing postal reform with our representatives in Washington, DC, and through grassroots activism at home. Schedule visits when your congressional representatives are in their home districts to let them know your concerns about postal legislation and your need for their support of H.R. 756. Let them know postal reform is important to you and a host of other constituents who work at post offices and plants across their districts.

2. Recruitment. Let's make sure we are engaged in growing our membership. Right now, we have just over 9,000 non-members. This does not include postmasters who also are more than welcome to become members of NAPS. As NAPS Secretary/Treasurer Chuck Mulidore stated recently: "We need to be aggressive in

signing up people who don't even know they need us."

I thought that was a very poignant statement. Indeed, there are people out there who need NAPS and don't even know it! We need to take a close look at our non-member list and talk to friends on the list



about what NAPS has to offer and why they should become members. Help them fill out an 1187 and send it in to NAPS Headquarters. We need to be at every NSP class, Postmaster Essentials class and Career

Awareness Conference, signing new members for our organization!

3. Becoming salespersons. How do you sell NAPS to someone who needs it and doesn't even know it?

Talk about the things we do: advocacy, pay consultation and our network of EAS employees across the country who are subject matter experts on any issue they may face. Talk, too, about our Disciplinary Defense Fund that costs our members nothing and is the best insurance they have if they are in trouble. Tell them NAPS is like health insurance: You hope you never have to use it, but it's great to have, just in case!

As I said, these are challenging times for NAPS, but, with challenge comes opportunity. The other day, someone wished me luck in my new position as postmaster of Williamsburg, VA. I replied that luck is when preparation meets opportunity. Are you ready and prepared to meet every opportunity to grow our influence?

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'One Problem at a Time'

By **Marilyn Walton**
Western Region Vice President

I recently had the opportunity to attend a day-and-a-half Employee Engagement training hosted by the Sacramento District. Full disclosure: I retired from the Sacramento District. It was great to attend the class and see some old friends and make a few new ones.

Dr. Dennis Humphrey, USPS Headquarters, and Ramona Franco, Pacific Area Engagement ambassador, facilitated our training. It was a great team-building exercise that helped us identify the



things on which we could focus in the workplace to help us engage with our employees. The training demonstrated tools and techniques to help us create an engaging workplace in the Postal Service.

Engagement helps us understand the Postal Pulse, which measures how we are relating as employee and employer in the workplace. We were reminded to read and understand the Postal Pulse results and share that information—good or bad.

I found the training insightful; one takeaway was using our ability to work as a team to focus on a problem. The



main theme of the training was, “Remember, only one thing, but always one thing, for you and your team.” We learned to tackle one problem at a time; don’t try to solve everything at once.

I was very impressed with the training. If we believe that employee engagement is a process that will continue to be the way the USPS conducts its business, the engagement training will have achieved its goal. It also was great to see Jeff Lelevich, Sacramento district manager, take time to visit the class and share important, current business information with the attendees.

I appreciated the opportunity to attend the training so I can share my experience with other EAS employees. Thanks to everyone for making we feel so welcomed. The Pacific Area Engagement ambassadors are Diana Munoz, Rachel Ivory, Ramona Franco, Tim Basquez, Irma Zine and Richard Nunes.

Instructive Work Study Group

NAPS held a work study group at the San Francisco NDC on Saturday, Feb. 25. The group spent the day reviewing the NAPS Toolkit and other important NAPS materials. These included how to interview a NAPS member seeking assistance. We also reviewed the NAPS worksheet and representative signature disclosure sheet and how to fill out an incident form when members allege harassment, bullying or any other inappropriate workplace behavior.

Sample NAPS response letters to assist members in appealing Letters of Warnings, Adverse Action appeals and Debt Determination appeals were reviewed. We discussed in detail how to submit a NAPS Disciplinary Defense Fund (DDF) appeal and what documents to include in the packet, including a signed DDF form. We studied revisions to the latest revision of the *ELM 650*.

We had a great work study session.

Because it was small group, we were able to talk

specifics about how to assist our members and respond to various situations occurring in the workplace. My thanks to Severo Garza, plant manager at the San Francisco NDC, for allowing us to use his training room for our work study session.

East Bay Branch 127 Annual Celebration

On Sunday, Feb. 26, East Bay Branch 127 (Oakland, CA) hosted its annual retirement and installation of officers brunch in Berkeley, CA. Special guests of the branch were NAPS President Brian Wagner, former Western Region Vice President and branch member Dorothea Bradley, Pacific Area Vice President Hayes Cherry, Oakland Postmaster Daryl Trujillo and me.

Maria Patterson and Alphonso Wright were two of the 19 recent retirees honored. Each year, the branch awards the Margarete A. Grant Memorial Scholarship to children or grandchildren of branch members. Three \$750 scholarships were awarded.

Each guest offered comments on current information. Wagner was the keynote speaker and installing officer. The NAPS branches represented at this event were 77, 210, 466, 88, 497 and 159. Everyone had a fantastic buffet lunch and a great view overlooking Berkeley Bay. It was a great opportunity to enjoy good food, fellowship and networking.

marilynwalton@comcast.net

NAPS President Brian Wagner (second from right), with the help of Western Region Vice President Marilyn Walton, installed Branch 127 officers, from left, trustees Hayes Cherry, Stephanie Ann Blythe, Rachel Gholston and Garp Pope, Sergeant-at-Arms Julio Leto, Treasurer Yolanda Lewis, Secretary Tiffany Townsend-Tahsen, Vice President Frances Barfield and President Vontina Swygert.



Attendees at the work study session were, from left, Pacific Area Vice President Hayes Cherry, Frances Barfield, Branch 127; Tom Wong, Branch 905; Roxanne Bradley, Branch 210; Dorothea Bradley, Branch 127; Bridget Evans, Branch 159; and Vontina Swygert, president of Branch 127 and host of the event.



NAPS' Dedicated Advocates

Continued from page 4

As always, congratulations and thanks to Bruce Moyer, president of the Moyer Group, for once again preparing our delegates to hit the Hill in force in support of sustaining America's Postal Service. His focused attention to details through an engaging and informative PowerPoint presentation and talking points helped educate our new legislative leaders and reacquaint our champions to our cause.

Most of all, thank you—NAPS legislative delegates—for your ongoing work with NAPS Headquarters to be legislatively informed, legislatively prepared and legislatively smart. This is what makes our legislative presence impactful. For example, your commitment to remain engaged on the issue of MSPB rights for all EAS employees shows a pursuit of equality and excellence, regardless of the obstructions placed in your path. You have kept your

Thrift Savings Plan					
Fund	G	F	C	S	I
March 2017	0.20%	(0.01%)	0.12%	(0.08%)	2.85%
Past 12 Months*	1.92%	0.71%	17.20%	22.53%	12.12%
The G, F, C, S, and I Fund returns for the last 12 months assume unchanging balances (time-weighting) from month to month, and assume that earnings are compounded on a monthly basis.					
Fund	L Income	L 2020	L 2030	L 2040	L 2050
March 2017	0.33%	0.48%	0.64%	0.71%	0.78%
Past 12 Months*	4.72%	8.03%	11.06%	12.67%	14.21%
These returns are net of the effect of accrued administrative expenses and investment expenses/costs. The performance data shown represent past performance, which is not a guarantee of future results. Investment returns and principal value will fluctuate, so that investors' shares, when sold, may be worth more or less than their original cost. The L 2010 Fund was retired on Dec. 31, 2010.					
Visit the TSP website at www.tsp.gov					

heads high and moved forward.

When it looked as if others stood against us, you continued to push this due-process issue forward. While others looked for reasons to say "no," you voiced our reasons for saying "yes!" As we move closer to the goal, our many members will one

day look back and see that our dedicated grassroots legislative advocates carried NAPS to the goal line. Now, we continue the work to cross that goal line.

In solidarity ...

naps.ib@naps.org

Cuban-American Veteran and NAPS Member Jacinto Acebal Dies at 75

Jacinto Acebal, former NAPS Miami Branch 146 legislative representative, died March 29 after a two-year battle with cancer. He was honored as the most decorated Cuban-American soldier of the Vietnam War; Acebal was awarded 18 medals during his tour of duty from 1964 to 1965.

He was 23 when he was sent to Vietnam as a military adviser—six years after immigrating to Miami from Havana in 1958. When he returned home, however, he faced a hostile homecoming, fueled by anti-war protests.

Acebal told the *Miami Herald* when he visited the Vietnam Veterans

Memorial in Washington in 1983, "I wasn't interested in the medals." He was very moved by his trip to the memorial, realizing that people, after all, did care. And suddenly, at age 41, so did he—with a vengeance.

He contacted then-Rep. Claude Pepper, the legendary Democratic congressman from south Florida. A congressional aide determined that Acebal, a machine gunner and helicopter crew chief, had earned the most medals during 544 hours of combat missions.

"What a patriot he was," Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen said on Thursday,



Jacinto "Ace" Acebal is comfortable behind a Vietnam War-era .50 caliber machine gun mounted on a vintage jeep.

March 30, 2017. "The one part of his wonderful life of which he was the proudest was the fact that he was the highest decorated Cuban-American Vietnam combat veteran."

After returning from the war, Acebal joined the U.S. Postal Service in 1968. He rose from letter carrier to Hispanic program specialist in a 45-year career. Acebal was a member of NAPS Branch 146, where he served as legislative representative. He is survived by his wife Maria Antonia Acebal, his sister Felicia and grandchildren Evan, Julia, Olivia and Jacob.

Bruce Moyer

NAPS Legislative Counsel



The campaign to enact postal reform legislation crossed the first hurdle on March 16 when the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee cleared

(R-UT) said, “This is a big day. We’ve been working on a postal reform bill for a long time. This is the next step in a process that has been very bipartisan from start to finish.”

The bipartisan group of original co-sponsors of the measure, in addi-

governments to provide payment and other services through post offices.

- Assure that all USPS EAS management employees have the right of appeal to the Merit Systems Protection Board; currently, 7,500 managers are locked out.

Postal Reform Measure Approved by House Oversight Committee

the “Postal Service Reform Act of 2017,” H.R. 756, intended to set the U.S. Postal Service on a firmer financial footing. Passage of the measure followed on the heels of lobbying efforts in support of the legislation by more than 500 NAPS members on Capitol Hill in early March during the NAPS Legislative Training Seminar (LTS).

NAPS advocates made a difference through their meetings on Capitol Hill by educating members of Congress and congressional staff on the need for the reform legislation and how mail service would be assured. NAPS advocates helped secure more co-sponsors for the bill, as well as build key bipartisan support for the measure among House Republicans and Democrats. H.R. 756 also has received support from the four major postal unions, private industry and the Oversight committee’s leadership on both sides of the aisle.

Bipartisan Support

Bipartisan support for the measure will be key to its prospects for passage, seasoned observers have suggested. At the March 16 markup of the reform bill, House Oversight Committee Chairman Jason Chaffetz

tion to Chaffetz, included Reps. Elijah Cummings (D-MD), Mark Meadows (R-NC), Stephen Lynch (D-MA), Gerald Connolly (D-VA) and Dennis Ross (R-FL). More co-sponsors since have added their names to the bill.

Key Provisions of H.R. 756

The House postal reform measure would:

- Modify the burdensome USPS retiree health benefit prefunding arrangement by stretching out the obligation over 40 years. This mandate has accounted for most of the Postal Service’s losses since 2007. The Postal Service prefunded more than \$50 billion before defaulting on the annual payment.
- Require OPM to use postal-specific workforce data in calculating the Postal Service’s pension costs and liabilities.
- Integrate Medicare and FEHBP health coverage for postal retirees, achieving USPS cost savings and full value for retirees.
- Allow First-Class Mail rates to increase by 2.15 percent—a partial restoration of the earlier exigency postage rate.
- Authorize USPS service relationships with state, local and tribal

Broader Investment of Retiree Health Fund Assets

The House Oversight and Government Reform Committee also ap-

proved the “Postal Service Financial Improvement Act,” H.R. 760, which would permit the government to invest Postal Retiree Health Benefit Fund assets (currently over \$50 billion) in the same index funds and strategies applied to federal employee and retiree assets held in the federal Thrift Savings Plan (TSP).

“Today, the roughly \$50 billion the Postal Service already has put into the retiree health benefit fund is invested wholly in U.S. Treasury securities. These securities yield lower returns, on average, than any other prominent government investment portfolio,” Chaffetz said. “These life-cycle investment funds are designed by the TSP to follow an aggressive investment approach, one that is highly diversified to limit the overall risk.”

What’s Next?

H.R. 756 awaits clearance by two other House committees—the Ways and Means and Energy and Commerce committees—before it can proceed to the House floor. NAPS members are encouraged to schedule and meet with their House lawmakers back home to continue to urge support for H.R. 756.

brumoyer@moyergroup.net

LTS Delegates Use Their *Power and* To Push for Passage

LTS coverage by Karen Young, NAPS editor; photos by Dave Scavone;
design by Christopher Smith

Executive Vice President Ivan D. Butts welcomed delegates to Washington, DC, Monday morning, March 6, as the Legislative Training Seminar got underway. He thanked everyone for traveling to the nation's capital to participate in NAPS' grassroots efforts. "We have a tremendous task and unique opportunity to make a real difference when we visit the Hill tomorrow," he said.

"This is the first time since 2006 and the enactment of the 'Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act' (PAEA) we can say we have true bipartisan legislation to correct the burdens placed on the USPS. As EAS employees, we show resilience and dedication day in and day out, leading this agency as it serves America. Please use that same resilience in engaging your legislators."

President Brian Wagner also thanked every-

one for attending. "This is one of the most significant Legislative Training Seminars regarding postal reform. I cannot thank you enough for your support of our legislative agenda," he told delegates.

He compared the pending visits to lawmakers on Capitol Hill to the TV show, "The Voice." Four judges sit facing away from singers auditioning to be chosen by the judges. If the judges like what they hear, they hit the button to choose that singer.

"Pretend I'm one of those judges," Wagner said. "I know nothing about you; all I do is sit and listen to what you say. If you're tall or short, black or white, Hispanic, whatever

Eastern Region Vice President Richard L. Green Jr. gave Monday morning's invocation.



Influence of Postal Reform Bill



President Brian Wagner

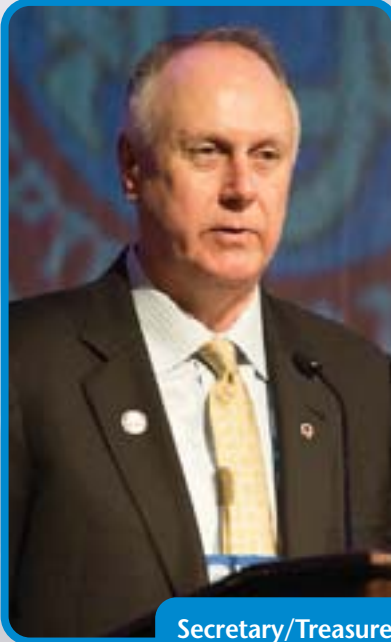


Executive Vice President
Ivan D. Butts



your religion—when we go to the Hill, we have one voice. We want our lawmakers to hear that one voice—the NAPS voice.

“When they hear our message, we want them to hit that button, turn around and say, ‘We like what we hear.’ Even though we have a lot of diversity, we are the NAPS family and they hear our message. Thank you for making our voice heard on Capitol Hill.”



**Secretary/Treasurer
Chuck Mulidore**

Secretary/Treasurer Chuck Mulidore welcomed LTS delegates, saying this was his first LTS serving as NAPS secretary/treasurer. He said he was looking forward to a constructive day to help delegates

prepare for their visits to lawmakers on Capitol Hill the next day.

Butts stressed to NAPS members they need to be well-informed about the issues and build strong relationships with members of Congress when they visit Capitol Hill and, throughout the year, in congressional home districts. “We need to support the Supervisors’ Political Action Fund (SPAC) and know what it’s all about,” he declared. “SPAC helps keep NAPS at the top of the constituency pyramid. It helps sup-



Paul Norton (right) presented a NAPS challenge coin in recognition of the LTS delegates who served as honor guards at the wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery on Sunday. From left: William Paige, Branch 46, Air Force; Larry Ewing, Branch 52, Army; Dennis Gawron, Branch 27, Naval Reserve; and Mary Mitchell, Branch 61, Army.

port the election of members of both parties; we support those who support a strong postal system and share our concerns regarding postal managers. And it helps us grow solid relationships with those who become champions of our efforts.”

National Auxiliary President Patricia Jackson-Kelley thanked everyone for their support of the Auxiliary. She said she was proud of her members who are helping collect funds for SPAC at LTS. “Last year,” she said, “we collected over \$30,000 for SPAC. We want you to focus and do your business in this room while we’re outside, work-



U.S. Marine Band Brass Quintet



Auxiliary President Patricia Jackson-Kelley

ing hard for you. Please take time to stop by the SPAC table. We're a great group and we'll be working hard to provide support for you."

Butts thanked the Auxiliary for their commitment and dedication to NAPS. He intro-

duced SPAC Manager Katie Maddocks, saying she does an outstanding job in bringing new processes and energy to what NAPS is doing with SPAC. "When we send a group of you to your local rep-



SPAC Manager Katie Maddocks

resentative and you vote, that means a lot. Voting constituents have the power to move and change things," he stressed.

Maddocks invited delegates to visit the SPAC Internet Café and sign up for the "Drive for Five" campaign. Members can stipulate an amount to regularly come out

of their paychecks or annuities for SPAC.

Legislative Counsel Bruce Moyer told members he appreciated them taking time away from their families to travel to Washington, DC. He said it's an honor for him to work with the NAPS



Armed Forces Color Guard



resident officers, state legislative chairs and all LTS delegates. He reminded everyone they are exercising their First Amendment right to petition the government for the address of grievances. "Boy, do we have some grievances!" he declared.

"Congress has an opportunity to undo the problems resulting from the 2006 law (PAEA) and take steps to put the Postal Service on a firmer financial footing. Doing so will make your jobs easier and more effective and make the Postal Service the strong institution it deserves to be."

He referred to a recent article in the *Congressional Quarterly* regarding the most effective means of influencing members of Congress. Personal contact—the in-person

meeting—either with staff or the lawmaker has the greatest impact of any action in trying to generate support on an issue, he said. It's more effective than emails, letters or phone calls.

"You are at the threshold of having an influential moment," he stressed. "Please don't discount that and the power you have in pushing postal reform forward tomorrow."

Moyer said postal reform is an easy lift compared to other legislative efforts, including repeal of the "Affordable Care Act," tax reform and infrastructure spending. "Postal reform is the sensible thing to do and it can be done in a relatively budget-neutral way," he said. The Postal Service is an organization that delivers one-half of the mail in the entire world and is the second-largest corporate organization in terms of the size of its workforce; only Walmart has more employees.

Also, the Postal Service is a \$71-billion operation, delivering to 155 million addresses daily.

And that number keeps rising; the work does not stop. "That's huge," he declared, "in terms of the breadth and impact on the economy." But, at the same time, the

Members of the National Auxiliary helped raise funds for SPAC during LTS. Contributions totaled \$29,945.68.

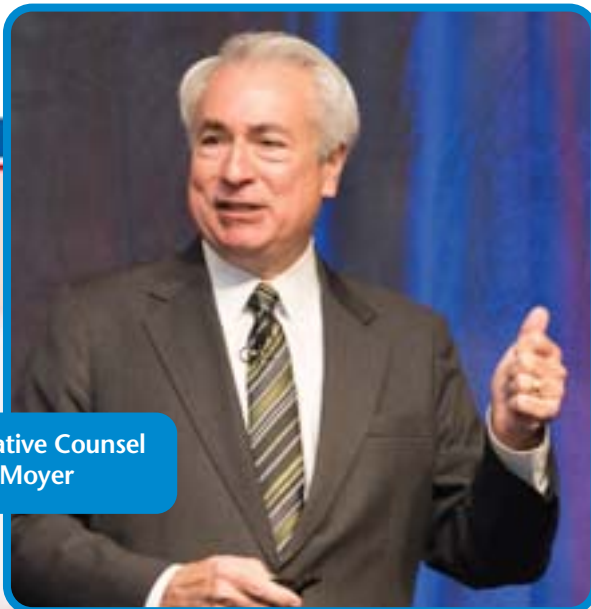


agency is saddled with two conflicting tensions: the obligation to universally serve all Americans, households and businesses, yet, being self-sustaining—relying solely on postage.

Moyer told delegates to be sure and emphasize to their lawmakers that the Postal Service does not use a dime of taxpayer money to finance its operations.

He explained that, since 2000, mail volume has been declining, due in large part to electronic diversion; First-Class Mail has seen a 60 percent decline since 2007. At the same time, expenses continue to grow; 80 percent of the agency's costs are labor. Also, health care costs continue to rise. Expenses continue to out-

**Legislative Counsel
Bruce Moyer**



strip revenue; the USPS has lost money 10 years in a row. And the largest contributor to this decline is the requirement that the USPS prefund future retirees' health care benefits, which coin-

cided with the recession in 2008.

"We see expenses increasing to a point where something has to be done in terms of tempering the prefunding burden and putting the Postal Service on a more even keel," Moyer said. "That brings us to postal reform and some of the proposals contained in H.R. 756."

He referred to recent testimony by the Government Accountability Office that the

The Auxiliary is instrumental in collecting funds for SPAC at LTS. From left: NAPS President Brian Wagner, Executive Vice President Ivan D. Butts, and Auxiliary officers President Patricia Jackson-Kelley, Southeast Area President Jane Finley and Southern Region President Beverly Austin.



Auxiliary Southern Region President Beverly Austin (left) and Jo Geter hold one of the Auxiliary's SPAC baskets containing Jo's renowned homemade fudge.

Photos taken by the Auxiliary



bers Reps. Elijah Cummings (D-MD), Mark Meadows (R-NC), Dennis Ross (R-FL), Gerald Connelly (D-VA) and Stephen Lynch (D-MA). The legislation has to go through Chaffetz' committee, as well as the House Ways and Means and Energy and Commerce committees. Moyer told LTS delegates to be alert if

path forward for the USPS is unsustainable; the business model is not working and needs to be corrected. And this is despite significant cutbacks made by the agency, including facility consolidations and lowered service standards. The USPS recognizes improvements need to be made—modernizing the fleet and equipment—but cannot afford to; the agency's debt limit was hit long ago.

Moyer acknowledged everyone has heard these facts and trends, but now the country is dealing with a president whose style is very different from his predecessors with a preference for the private sector. "Time is not on our side," he declared, "unless we restore the Postal Service to financial health and do it now. That's why it's so important that you're visiting Capitol Hill tomorrow."

The "Postal Service Reform Act of 2017," H.R. 756, is bipartisan legislation introduced by House Oversight and Government Reform Chairman Jason Chaffetz (R-UT) and committee mem-

they are meeting with House members who are on these committees. He proceeded to summarize H.R. 756. The legislation:

- Deals with the prefunding burden by providing for annual contributions to satisfy the Postal Service's future health benefit responsibility and amortizes that obligation over 40 years, which makes payments more tolerable.
- Prevents the USPS from overpaying into the Federal Employees Retirement System by requiring the Office of Personnel Management to use Postal Service demographics rather than civil service demographics.
- Integrates Medicare coverage for postal retirees. This is the key financial component to achieve greater efficiency and USPS savings in the coordination of health benefits for retirees. Currently, all retirees are covered by Medicare Part A, but not necessarily Part B. The Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) is the primary payer; Medicare is secondary. About 75 percent of postal retirees have Part B coverage.

The 25 percent who do not adds up to about 80,000 retirees who would be required to participate in Part B and pay the premium. For the first three years, premium subsidies would be provided to these retirees and the late sign-up penalty would be waived.

Moyer stressed that NAPS endorses the Medicare integration because of the significant savings it represents for the Postal Service. The agency has been paying into Medicare for years for primary coverage for its retirees without getting the benefit of that coverage. Medicare integration would achieve savings almost equal to the amount of the prefunding burden over the next 10 years. Prefunding essentially would be eliminated as a result of the savings achieved by Medicare integration.

“Your NAPS leaders asked what was in the best interest of the Postal Service to assure NAPS members have jobs and greater security as to pay and benefits because the institution is stronger financially—what is the greater good,” Moyer explained. “This is why your leaders decided to embrace H.R. 756. The unions support it, the Postal Service supports it and bipartisan members of Congress support it.”

The legislation restores one-half of the ex-

igent rate case that expired last year—2.15 percent would be restored. And, because of NAPS’ influence, the bill includes a provision that would provide Merit Systems Protection Board rights for all EAS employees who face personnel actions that represent adverse actions. Also, the bill would expand partnering with federal and state agencies in the delivery of services and require the Postal Service to establish a chief innovation officer.

“The bill is not perfect,” he pointed out. “We have to recognize that.” It does not deal with service standards or provide a moratorium on the consolidation of facilities. It does reduce the size of the USPS Board of Governors. Hopefully, greater harmony would be achieved with a smaller board and it would be easier to get it fully

Continued on page 22



Tips on Visiting Capitol Hill



Members of Los Angeles Branch 39 and Honolulu Branch 214 showed off their thespian skills by demonstrating how not to and how to conduct a visit to lawmakers on Capitol Hill.

How Not to Conduct a Congressional Visit



How to Conduct a Congressional Visit





Continued from page 19

staffed. The bill also encourages the agency to move toward more centralized delivery.

“When you go to your meetings on Capitol Hill tomorrow, emphasize the degree to which the Postal Service is directly connected to the U.S. Constitution,”

Moyer urged. “No other governmental function is addressed so directly in the Constitution as the delivery of mail. Also, point out the Postal Service is the oldest public institution continually serving the America people and whose mission has remained largely unchanged.”

Additional points to stress, he said, are the agency does not rely on any taxpayer dollars, is the largest civilian employer of veterans and is an economic engine for the nation. The USPS helps support and is the key activator for at least 7 percent of the gross domestic product. Also, for 10 years in a row, Americans have named the Postal Service the most trusted federal agency, especially significant in this age of identity theft and cybercrime.

Maddocks presented an overview of the mid-term elections in 2018. She talked about the need for working stronger with NAPS’ champions, among them Reps. Elijah Cummings (D-MD), Jason Chaffetz (R-UT) and David McKinley (R-WV) and Sens. Jon Tester (D-MT), Claire McCaskill (D-MO) and Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND). It’s also important, she said, to reach out to moderates, such as Reps. Will Hurd (R-TN), Lynn Jenkins (R-KS), Jeff Denham (R-CA), John Katko (R-NY) and Dan Donovan (R-NY).



“We need to work with moderate Republicans,” she said. “As you know, NAPS is a member of the Federal Postal Coalition. We’ve been meeting with Republicans—especially those from rural areas.” Maddocks encouraged NAPS delegates to continue the dialogue with their representatives back home in their districts.

“Go to town hall meetings,” she urged. “We can help you with that. We need to make sure we’re having conversations—not being confrontational. We need to show them the plain facts about the benefits of the Postal Service and how it is beneficial to their communities.”

Maddocks pressed delegates to be informed about what’s going on at NAPS; she said she always is available to answer questions about bills or legislators. “I’m glad you’re going to the Hill tomorrow,” she said, “but that dialogue has to go beyond March. Go to events, town hall meetings and one-on-one meetings. Call me and see if there are any fundraisers in your area. That’s a great opportunity to discuss with your representative how NAPS and postal issues affect the nation. And be aware of your local ballot and who is running; be well-educated.”

Butts talked further about SPAC. At the 2016 LTS, more than \$30,000 was raised. “That helped

us move through the year, going to events and sending you to events—getting our job done,” he said. “We want to be on top of the constituency pyramid with as many legislators as possible. And to do that, we need SPAC dollars. We can put them to work and get you to events to bring our issues forward and make those connections that make things happen for our association.”

He encouraged everyone to donate to SPAC to put NAPS at the forefront of the postal associations. “Every dollar goes to candidates who will work for NAPS and our benefits,” he said. “We talked about our champions being up for reelection; we have a lot of work to do. These are dedicated people and we have to support them to keep them in office.”

Butts referred to the remark made this past fall by Trump campaign adviser Rudy Giuliani who said the government can’t even run the Post

Office. “This is why our SPAC dollars are so important,” Butts stressed. “They show who we are and the value we deliver to the American public. We are the agency that binds America together!”

He announced the 2016 top achievers in the SPAC categories:

Top region: Southern, \$63,560

Top area: Southeast, \$33,069

Top state per-capita: Maine, \$24.79

Top state: Florida, \$30,338

The top-five donors were Ivan Butts, Branch 355; Ann Konish, Branch 11; James Warden, Branch 100; C. Michele Randall, Branch 531; and Brian Wagner, Branch 255.

“We have to commit to support SPAC,” he reiterated. “I appreciate what everyone does.” He also suggested donating by signing up for the “Drive for Five” campaign. Donating through payroll deduction allows NAPS to better forecast





and budget its SPAC resources for the year.

He acknowledged the work of the Auxiliary and asked delegates to thank their members for all they have done to make the Auxiliary the best it can be. "Thank you for all your support and for all you are going to do with SPAC and our legislative efforts," he said.

Tricia Neuman, senior vice president of the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation and director of the foundation's Program on Medicare Policy, discussed the basics of Medicare. She said the program, which is very popular, covers nearly one in five Americans—57 million people. Medicare takes care of seniors and people with permanent disabilities. The program accounts for 20 percent of national health spending and, in 2015, accounted for 15 percent of the federal budget. Neuman said when there is talk about cutting the federal budget, it's hard to do that without considering Medicare.

Part A covers in-patient hospital visits and stays in skilled nursing facilities. Costs are covered by the 1.45 percent payroll tax. Americans are eligible for benefits when they turn 65. Part A is subject to deductibles and cost-sharing benefits. "You may hear about Medicare possibly going bankrupt," she said. "It can't go bankrupt, but there are insolvency issues. The fund is solvent through 2028. In 2028, money will be coming into the system, but not enough. Congress needs to shore up the system to assure benefits way into the future."

Part B covers physician, out-patient and preventive services, as well as diagnostic tests. It has its own deductible and different co-insurance; it



Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation Senior Vice President Tricia Neuman

is not funded by the payroll tax, but by premiums people pay and revenue generated by general taxes paid through income taxes. Part B is voluntary, but there is a penalty for delayed enrollment.

Neuman explained that standard premiums cost \$134 a month, but they vary depending on income and Social Security income. She said premiums are expected to rise gradually, based on Medicare spending. There is no limit on out-of-pocket expenses for parts A and B services. Nor are there long-term care benefits and there is limited financial support for low-income beneficiaries.

Part D, the prescription drug benefit, was implemented in 2006. It is administered exclusively by private plans. In order to get the drug benefit, participants need to be either in a stand-alone plan or a Medicare Advantage plan; otherwise, they need an employer/retiree plan that commits to providing what is comparable to the Part D benefit. There is a premium for Part D.

She said Medicare is not perfect; there are gaps in coverage. Part D pays a portion of expenses, then stops, at least for awhile, when

enrollees reach the so-called donut hole. Also, the program does not cover dental services, dentures, hearing aids, routine eye exams or glasses. There is no limit on out-of-pocket expenses for parts A and B services. Nor are there long-term care benefits and there is limited financial support for low-income beneficiaries.

Many people have some kind of supplemental insurance. Traditional Medicare without supplemental coverage could result in very high bills and a lack of catastrophic protection. Even with Medicare, Neuman said, you can pay high out-of-pocket expenses that rise with age, as well as long-term costs. Out-of-pocket spending continues to be an issue and is why changes to Medicare are so important.

She said the "Affordable Care Act" (ACA) went a long way in putting Medicare in a stronger financial position as a result of reduced Medicare spending and a payroll tax on high earners. The Medicare Trust Fund is much stronger than it was: per-capita spending before the ACA was 7.4 percent vs. 1.4 percent after.

Spending is going up and projected to go up based mainly on drug prices; high drug prices affect everyone. This could put more pressure on Medicare spending in the future. Repealing the ACA would affect Medicare because there are so many Medicare provisions.

Neuman said the biggest challenge is how to finance health care for an aging population; Medicare spending rises with age. "With federal policymakers concerned about Medicare spending," she said, "there's concern about increasing costs to the federal budget. Yet, when you look at

real people and their budgets, there is concern about shifting these costs onto people on Medicare. We're going to see this tension played out; it will be a big part of policy discussions, even in the near future."

Doug Tulino, USPS vice president of Labor Relations, talked about why Medicare is so important regarding the Postal Service's prefunding liability. He said health-care costs for the agency were \$14.2 billion in 2016, which included \$3.3 billion for retiree premiums, \$5 billion for active employees and \$5.8 billion for the prefunding requirement. The USPS has not been able to pay the prefunding for the past several years; the liability is now \$33 billion.

"Health care is a significant expense," he said, "and something we want to continue to provide our employees. But, at the end of the day, that expense, outside of wages, is our largest expenditure: 20 cents of every \$1 goes toward health care costs."

The Postal Service has concentrated on finding solutions to the challenge of prefunding retiree benefits in its legislative proposals. The key element of H.R. 756 is Medicare integration for eligible retirees. Medicare becomes the primary payer for health care and the FEBHP is the secondary payer. "Any legislation without this," he stressed, "will not put us on firm financial footing."

Tulino said integrating the USPS' health care process with Medicare will reduce claims paid by insurance plans, which will result in lower insurance premiums. And out-of-pocket expenses will be almost zero. Costs will go down because, with



Medicare being the primary payer, the FEHBP will pay fewer claims.

He said 73 percent of the Postal Service's retirement population already is signed up for parts A and B. For the 27 percent who have not signed up, H.R. 756 waives the late enrollment penalty for Part B. Also, for those not in Part B, there would be transition relief for the first three years: 25 percent in 2018, 50 percent in 2019 and 75 percent in 2020. In the fourth year, participants would pay the full amount. Premium assistance would be available during the transition period, if and when the bill passes.

"Why do this?" he posed. "This will help return the Postal Service to financial stability. When you compare us to any other entity, we are more prefunded than anyone else—private or government. We are a little more than 50 percent prefunded. But we've defaulted; it's on our balance sheet.

"Medicare integration, which would become effective in 2019, would reduce health care costs going forward and put us back on sound financial footing. This solution would eliminate our obligation for prefunded payments under the PAEA; without a legislative change, this will remain on our books. With the current legislation, this will go away."

Tulino explained that OPM will identify all current USPS participants and what plans would be integrated into Medicare in 2018. The segregated postal plans would maintain the blended



USPS Vice President of Labor Relations Doug Tulino

FEHB rate structure: All participants—current, pre-eligible and currently eligible—would be looked at in unison, which is why there would be savings across the board. OPM would continue administering the plans inside the FEHBP; the Postal Service will not be running health care. Contribution amounts for current retirees would continue to be set by law. All future annuitants would receive the USPS employer contribution only if they select a USPS segregated plan within FEHBP.

"We want to assure that, as an institution, we



Ivan D. Butts (right) posed questions regarding Medicare to Doug Tulino and Tricia Neuman before they took questions from the audience:



maintain our commitment to provide retiree health coverage for our employees going forward; that is an absolute must!"

Tulino stated. "Integration is the only way to reduce our unfunded liability to an affordable level and it's the best way to preserve choice in FEHBP."





Junemarie Brandt, NAPS Branch 526, introduced the next speaker, Winifred Gallagher, describing her as an author, journalist and social critic. Gallagher's latest book is "How the Post Office Created America: A History." Brandt said the book's message is relevant to LTS delegates because it illuminates the constitutional mandate for the USPS and the important role it plays in the fabric of our nation. "This book would do more to foster pride in the Postal Service; the dedication of its employees is its most valuable asset," she said.



Patti Lynn, Ft. Lauderdale, FL, Branch 296, gave Monday afternoon's invocation.



Junemarie Brandt, Northern Virginia Branch 526, a research analyst in postal history at USPS Headquarters, introduced author Winifred Gallagher.

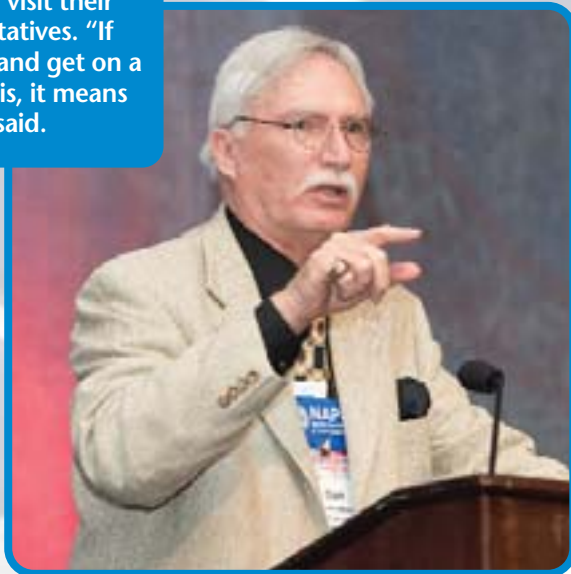
imagined writing a book about the Postal Service," she admitted. But after she and her husband started spending part of the year in northwest Wyoming—driving between there and New York—she was amazed at the sheer size and variety, culturally and geographically, of our enormous country. She started doing research and decided she wanted to write a book about the Postal Service.

"It's been a wonderful adventure—intellectually and as a citizen," she said, "learning how this foundational institution shaped America's history." Until World War I, mail delivery was one of the federal government's biggest and most important functions.

Gallagher said that, in 1792, politics were shaped by having an informed electorate. The nation's Founding Fathers were determined that citizens would have access to newspapers. Postage for letters was very costly, which helped subsidize the delivery of cheap newspapers. "This sparked our lively, uncensored political culture and made us the global communications super-

Gallagher told delegates she was thrilled to be with postal people—the most dedicated and most misunderstood public servants. "I never

Former Illini Area Vice President Dan Rendleman exhorted LTS delegates to go home and make appointments to visit their local representatives. "If you go home and get on a first-name basis, it means so much," he said.





Winifred Gallagher, author of "How the Post Office Created America: A History"

power with astonishing speed," she pointed out.

Also, the post office created the United States in the physical sense: In order to spread the news, the post office had to jumpstart a transportation network from scratch, transforming a wilderness into towns and roads on maps—based on post office roads that carried the mail.

Gallagher said the post office also created the country in the social sense. By the mid-19th century, citizens wanted more; letters were a costly luxury that only businesses and the wealthy sent. In 1845, the post office responded to these demands and reduced letter postage to mere pennies, followed by the first stamps in 1847. Cheap, frequent communication,

even same-day replies, profoundly changed American's relationships and their daily lives.

She explained that the post was long the only way to get information and money from one place to another, which put the post office at the heart of the national market and the shift from an agrarian to industrial economy. Money orders became popular for businesses. Fast and efficient rail service

turned America into a global business power near the end of the 19th century.

Postal savings banks provided services to average citizens ignored by traditional banks, especially during the Great Depression. Gallagher said it was a very popular program for a radically underserved group.

Subsidies for publishers helped the book and magazine industries explode, essentially creating an informal educational system by mail. This was crucial to the modern consumer culture;

LTS delegates who bought Winifred Gallagher's "How the Post Office Created America" had an opportunity to get her to sign their books.





the advertising industry was stimulated by helping publishers inexpensively promote their services and products.

Gallagher talked about how the post office developed up to the modern day, including its ups and downs. “Whatever the post office of the future looks like,” she said, “I know it is the least remarked and most misunderstood of the country’s original institutions, but one that did the most to create our expansive, information-oriented culture. Before deciding the Postal Service’s future, it behooves Americans and their representatives to think about what the agency has accomplished and consider what it could contribute in the years to come.”

Rep. Jamie Raskin (D-MD), a member of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, addressed LTS delegates. He said he’s worked with Bruce



Steve Shawn, Montgomery County, Maryland, Branch 403, introduced Rep. Jamie Raskin (D-MD), saying the freshman congressman hit the ground running when he assumed office.

Rep. Jamie Raskin



Moyer and the NALC to expand vote by mail in Maryland; Oregon has the best voter turnout in the country because they allow voting by mail. “I feel strongly about that,” he stressed. “The use of the mails for voting follows logically from the constitutional foundation for the Postal Service. That has been the backbone of the development of our country.”

He pledged to oppose any cuts to the earned retirement and health benefits of federal and postal retirees, as well as cuts to federal pay and compensation. “And I will oppose any reforms to civil service that undermine the merit systems protections we have fought for,” he said. “Thank you for standing strong during these tough times; consider me a resource going forward.”

NAPS Legislative Counsel Bruce Moyer, Rep. Jamie Raskin and NAPS Executive Vice President Ivan D. Butts



Butts returned to the podium to present this year's Gold Standard Legislative Leadership Award. "We work with legislative chairs around the country," he said. "You, as well as our members, do an outstanding job. It is my honor to present this year's award to Ann Strickland, Florida State legislative chair."

He called Strickland a yeoman on the legislative trail this past year. "Ann was active; she would call me and send me texts about where she was. She really put out an outstanding effort, not just for NAPS, but for the grassroots political process. I really appreciate her for that."

Butts thanked everyone again for attending LTS. Mulidore thanked everyone for a very productive day. "Let's keep moving forward!" he urged.

Executive Vice President Ivan D. Butts presented Florida State Legislative Chair Ann Strickland with this year's Gold Standard Legislative Leadership Award.



Wagner thanked everyone for their efforts on the Hill and representing NAPS' members in the field. "Let's get this reform done!"

South Jersey Branch 74 members George Barrett (left), Russell Carmondy and Gary Rutter (right) presented a \$300 money order for SPAC donations collected from local meetings to Executive Vice President Ivan D. Butts and Auxiliary Eastern Region Vice President Laurie Butts.



The top-five 2016 SPAC donors were, from left: Jimmy Warden, Branch 100; Brian Wagner, Branch 255; Ann Konish, Branch 11; C. Michele Randall, Branch 531; and Ivan Butts, Branch 355.



Photo taken by the Auxiliary