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Edmund Carley, national president

# Embracing Progress: Celebrating Two Years of Achievements

As I sit down to pen this message, I am filled with profound gratitude and pride for all we have accomplished over the past two years. Serving as your national president and witnessing our remarkable progress together is an honor. Through collective effort and unwavering dedication, the United Postmasters and Managers of America has reached new heights, setting a solid foundation for the future.

First and foremost, I want to express my deepest appreciation to every member of the UPMA family. Your commitment, resilience and passion for our mission have been the driving force behind our achievements. From recruiting new members at an unprecedented pace to advocating for the rights and well-being of Postmasters, Managers and Supervisors to fostering a culture of inclusivity and collaboration, each of you has played a crucial role in shaping our success. Our organization has grown by over 5,200 active members, which is an astonishing testament to your hard work and dedication; thank you.



We have worked tirelessly to create an environment where every member feels valued and respected.

One of our most significant accomplishments has been our relentless pursuit of fair and just policies for postal managers nationwide. Through tireless advocacy, we have successfully influenced vital decisions that impact our members' livelihoods and working conditions. We have been instrumental in driving positive changes, ensuring that the concerns and aspirations of UPMA members are heard and addressed. From the general wage



increase last year to the better NPA/PFP payouts

this year, the positive momentum UPMA has bodes well for a successful round of pay talks in the new year.

Moreover, our dedication to professional development and continuous learning has been unwavering. UPMA has expanded its educational programs, providing opportunities for members to enhance their skills, broaden their knowledge and stay abreast of industry trends. By investing in our members' growth, we are enriching individual careers and fortifying our association's collective expertise.

The Membership Academy and Kickoff Meeting now seem to be a fixture on our calendar. The Legislative Summit in March is growing every year, both in attendance and impact. The area meetings all are fantastic testimonies to the overall galvanization of our membership everywhere. The Chapter Member Rep Academies continue to draw a crowd and educate our chapter leaders brilliantly.

Finally, our crown jewel, our national convention, was magnificent this year. Attendance is growing and convention goers' fellowship, camaraderie and professional development are palpable.

In the face of unprecedented challenges, our adaptability has shone through. The COVID-19 pandemic brought disruptions that none of us could have foreseen, yet our resilience prevailed. We swiftly adapted to new work environments and implemented safety measures, while ensuring postal services continued to operate seamlessly.

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### **UPMA** Executive Board

### President

**Edmund Carley**, 8 Herbert St., Alexandria, VA 22305 703-683-9027; ecarley@unitedpma.org

### **Secretary-Treasurer**

**Susan Rice**, Wedowee, AL 36278 256-589-3211; sueleerice@aol.com

### **Executive Vice President**

**Greg Nors**, Hillsboro, TX 76645 254-582-3572; g-nors@msn.com

### **UPMA Retired President**

Mandy Heslep-Whitten, 901-B Maple St., Cleveland, MS 38732; 662-721-0151; mandywhitten@yahoo.com

### **Vice Presidents**

### **Atlantic Area**

**Dan Leonard**, Bath, NY, 14810 607-398-8200; nyupmadanleonard@gmail.com

**Jeff Lightner,** Eldred, PA 16731 814-225-4742; jeffreylightner@gmail.com

**John Douds**, Frankford, DE 19945; 302-436-7311; postaldouds@verizon.net

### WestPac Area

Jim Dunlap, Manager 970-988-9614; jtdpostal@hotmail.com

Katie Evertsen, Logan, UT 84321 435-512-3700; kateevertsen@gmail.com

**Tania Cason**, Bellflower, CA 90706; 562-804-1089; tn.cason1@gmail.com

### **Central Area**

Mari Beth Kirkland, Middlefield, OH 44062 440-632-0192; mari\_kirkland@yahoo.com

Jim Maher, Labor Relations specialist; Hazelwood, MO, 63042; 314-551-3588; jmaher300@aol.com

**Kerry Nichols**, Workforce Planning specalist, DeWitt, IA; 563-659-3712; kerrysh12@gmail.com

### Southern Area

**Tammy Powell**, Simpsonville, SC, 29681 864-444-8282; palmettopostmaster@charter.net

**Greg Nors**, Hillsboro, TX 76645 254-582-3572; g-nors@msn.com

Jerry Southard, Beebe, AR 72012; 501-882-3373; jsarrow1@hotmail.com

### **Executive Director**

**Dan Heins**, 8 Herbert St. Alexandria, VA 22305 703-683-9027; dheins@unitedpma.org

### Parliamentarian

John Galera, 2120 Oahu Ave., Honolulu, HI 96820 808-284-2833; mysurfshots@gmail.com

## National Member Representation Committee

John Sertich, program adviser, PO Box 273, Belleville, IL 62222; c: 618-830-6535; jmsert@hotmail. com—IL, KS, MO

Dixie Bentley, 1334 Whitetail Ave, Sumner, IA 50674-9586; c: 319-240-6289; pm61265@gmail. com—AR, CO, IA, NE, OK, SD, WY

Jackie Deter, 1232 Castlegate Ln., Santa Ana, CA 92705; o: 562-544-5835; c: 714-914-8752; jackiedeterupma@gmail.com—AZ, southern CA 3-6, HI, NM, NV, UT

George R. Finley, 178 Mountain View Dr., Plum Branch, SC 29845; c: 512-365-0066; grf03@ usa.net— AL, LA, MS, TX

Shari Hetzler, 1003 Shady Grove Dr., Granbury, TX 76049; c: 209-419-1635; hetz51@yahoo. com—AK, CA 1-2, ID, MT, OR, WA

Richard Hui, 49 Suomi Rd., Gardner, MA 01440-3360; c: 978-549-3360; richmeista67@gmail.com—CT, DC, MA, MD, ME, NH, RI, VA, VT

**Bill Judge**, 1610 Scottsdale Drive, Tipp City, OH 45371; o: 937-773-6424; c: 513-702-9702; judgey55@ yahoo.com—NC, KY, OH, TN, WV

Anita Pfiefer, 20576 Kearney Path, Lakeville, MN 55044-6711; 507-390-1164; amp2016@yahoo.com —IN, MI, MN, ND, WI

Roy Shaffer, 162 Poplar Way, Winder, GA 30680; 404-357-9596; roy.shaffer@gmail.com—FL, GA, PR/VI, SC

Catherine R. Winnie, 33 Cat Trail, Williamstown, NY 13493; 845-742-7774; cathywinnie@yahoo.com—DE, NJ, NY, PA

### Postal Area Coordinators

### **Atlantic Area:**

**Charles Narciso Jr.**, Barrington, RI 02806 c: 401-573-1883; cnjr21@gmail.com

### **Central Area:**

Jason Hirschvogel, Jefferson City, MO 65101 c: 573-353-2122; hv175@hotmail.com

### Southern Area:

**Jeremy Hanners**, Richton, MS 39476 c: 239-872-5695; o: 601-788-6042; jdhanners0923@gmail.com

### WestPac Area:

**Shana Mansfield**, Morrison, CO 80465 c: 303-918-4532; o: 303-785-4450; smansfield16@ gmail.com

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### **Celebrating Two Years of Achievements**

continued from page 4

This period has showcased the indomitable spirit of the postal community; I am immensely proud to lead such a determined and resourceful group. Further changes in the postal network and the reorganization of areas and districts did not distract us from continuing to serve our members and our customers.

Legislatively, we achieved postal reform together. Currently, we are advising Congress, the Office of Personnel Management and the Postal Service on how best to implement the changes to our health benefits plan.

UPMA is a well-defined, bipartisan leader on Capitol Hill. As we transition to legislative priorities closer to home, such as repeal of the WEP/GPO and *Title 39* reform, the hard work we put into enacting postal reform will stand us in good stead as we try to craft and pass legislation that benefits all our members—active and retired. Your support of UPMA PAC and our legislative priorities never has wavered and, working together, we can bring home another legislative victory.

Our Adverse Action Legal Defense Plan remains the premier representation vehicle for Postmasters, Supervisors and Managers. Recent wins by our legal gladiator have included winning court costs that help ensure your legal defense is more robust and better than ever.

The UPMA National Member Representation Committee and our lawyer win cases and mitigate adverse actions better and more consistently, fairer and reasonably than any "Disciplinary Defense Fund" ever could. The steadfastness of the National Executive Board to fully fund this remarkable membership benefit speaks volumes for the attractiveness of UPMA in the marketplace.

UPMA chapters are stronger and more vital than ever. Unlike other associations, when our members call, email or text, our chapter leaders respond. They are fully equipped to help UPMA members with workplace issues and UPMA supports them with a great team of active postal employees.

UPMA retirees play a vital role in the continued success of UPMA, but, for the most part, every leadership role in UPMA is filled with an active EAS employee. When discussing NPA goals and stretches or payouts, we have a vested interest in the outcome because it directly affects us personally in our paychecks and offices. When UPMA leaders discuss workplace issues, whether at the district, area or national level, we have firsthand knowledge of current situations because we work for the Postal Service now—not 10 or 15 years ago!

Furthermore, our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion has been at the forefront of our endeavors. We have worked tirelessly to create an environment where every member feels valued and respected, regardless of background or identity. Our efforts to foster a culture of belonging have strengthened our association and set an example for the wider postal community.



# Maximizing Our Potential

Greg Nors, national executive vice president

# Are You Ready for Peak Season?

By the time you read this, we will be in peak season. Is the USPS ready? Are you personally ready? What does your staffing look like?

For most of us, our staffing doesn't look good. I have spent the past two months trying to get enough staff in my new office and I still don't have enough. As most of you know, trying to hire RCAs is almost impossible. Most applicants don't have a personal vehicle suitable for delivering mail; most can't afford to buy another vehicle.

Recently, I selected seven or eight applicants for RCA jobs, but still don't have them on my roles. After the interview, they either changed their mind, selected an office closer to where they live or there were HR issues.

How do you think we will do without any extra vehicles during peak season? I think it will be really challenging, but, hopefully, upper management will lead us in the right direction. As Postmasters, Managers

and Supervisors, we work really hard to make sure the mail is delivered every day with many obstacles and challenges like never before.



Some days are almost impossible! I am hearing from more Postmasters and Managers who are considering sacrifice their careers. When EAS employees are willing to sacrifice their pensions, there has to be something wrong. When someone calls and tells me something like this, I try to be encouraging and talk them out of quitting. Not only is our staff worn down, but Managers are equally worn down.

With all that being said, do all you can to remain positive and work hard to have a successful peak season. Reach out to UPMA friends and neighboring Postmasters and Managers for encouragement and assistance. Hold your head high and know you are giving your very best to this great organization.

# Celebrating Two Years of Achievements

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Looking ahead, we must continue to build on this momentum. There still are challenges to face and new opportunities to explore. We must remain vigilant in our advocacy, forward-thinking in our strategies and united in our purpose. Together, we can continue to shape the future of postal management, ensuring our members thrive in an evolving landscape.

In closing, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you. Your dedication to UPMA's mission has been the cornerstone of our success. Let us continue to work together, learn from one another and strive for excellence. **Together**, there is no limit to what **we can** achieve.



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## Leadership for Success

John Douds, Atlantic Area national vice president

# Meeting for the First Time, 32 Years Later

At the national convention in Denver, a few members from the Delaware and Maryland chapters sat down to lunch. We shared introductions, conversations and a nice meal, but one conversation stood out above the rest.

Ken Carter, retired Postmaster of Berlin, MD, is a long-time UPMA officer and national convention attendee. Steve Newman, the current Postmaster of Harrington, DE, was a convention first-timer who had won the trip at the Delaware Chapter Convention.

Ken and Steve were getting to know each other for the first time when the conversation turned to military service. Ken served honorably in the Maryland Army National Guard and Steve in the U.S. Army. The conversation soon piqued the interest of everyone at the table.



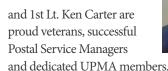
# The interaction among members at just one table illustrates the power of a UPMA convention.

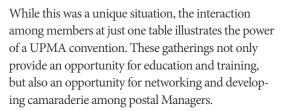


Having never had the honor of serving in the military, I always find it intriguing when military folks trade stories of where they served. But what really made this special was the common ground these two found through their conversation. It came to light that Ken and Steve both served in Operation Desert Storm beginning in 1990, sparking excitement in both.

As their discussion progressed, it was discovered that Steve arrived in Saudi Arabia only seven weeks after Ken and they lived in Khobar Towers near King Abdulaziz Air Base at the same time. Ken and Steve even figured there is a distinct possibility they flew home on the same plane!

Now, 32 years later, they were meeting for the first time as fellow Postmasters and UPMA members at a national convention. Master Sgt. Steve Newman





This example embodies UPMA's ability to unite members from different chapters in working toward common goals, reminding us we all are in this together. These experiences develop a unity among our members, which is a formidable force when used for the benefit of the membership at large.

To all UPMA members who have served this great nation through military service, thank you for your commitment and courage.



Ken Carter (left), retired Postmaster of Berlin, MD, retired Army 1st lt., and Steve Newman, Postmaster of Harrington, DE, retired Army master sgt.



# **Chapter Presidents**

### **Alabama**

Kristie Grant Collinsville 35961 kgrant176@hotmail.com

### Alaska

**Amy LaPorte** Supervisor, Anchorage amylynn4077@gmail.com

### **Arizona**

Brian G. Wade Prescott 86301 ninetoone@ymail.com

### **Arkansas**

Carla Biggerstaff Rogers 72756 calahe@aol.com

### California

**Tania Cason**Bellflower 92647
tn.cason1@gmail.com

### Colorado

**Shana D. Mansfield** Morrison 80465 mansfield16@gmail.com

### Connecticut

Peter Urbani Waterford 06385 purbani@aol.com

### **Delaware**

Richard Zurowski Laurel 19956 rczurowski@comcast.net

### **District of Columbia**

Albert Ruiz

PO Box 44758 Washington DC 20026 alruiz214@yahoo.com

### Florida

**Tony Leonardi** Mims 32754 tonyupmafl@gmail.com

### Georgia

Becky Manley Cleveland 30528 rb.manley@yahoo.com

### Hawaii

**Sheila Apana** Kahului 96732 ssapana@msn.com

### Idaho

Sue Ellen Law Glenns Ferry 83623 sueelaw23@gmail.com

### Illinois

Earl Husbands
East Hazel Crest 60429
earlhusbands@gmail.com

### Indiana

Jeff R. Jarrett New Palestine 46163 jarrettj55@gmail.com

### Iowa

**Greg Snow** Clarion 50525 snowteam6@yahoo.com

### Kansas

**Deb Dressman** Supervisor, Council Grove 66846 dressmanfarms@hotmailcom

### Kentucky

Jill Smith Owensboro 42301 jillsmith1@logantele.com

### Louisiana

Tracy Johnson Walker 70785 la\_upma@yahoo.com

### Maine

Jarrod LeBlanc Dover-Foxcroft 04426 jarrodleblanc@yahoo.com

### Marvland

Michelle Cornish Forest Hill 21050 hawkinscornish@msn.com

### **Massachusetts**

Robert Leary Whitinsville 01588 pmrleary@yahoo.com

### Michigan

Beth Martin Marshall 49068 bamartinbc@aol.com

### Minnesota

Tony Terwey Richmond 56368 mnupmapresident@gmail.com

### **Mississippi**

Betty Roach Louisville 39339 bettyjaneroach02@gmail.com

### Missouri

Jim Maher Labor Relations Hazlewood 63042 jmaher300@aol.com

### **Montana**

**Iris KillEagle** Malta 59538 killeagle45@yahoo.com

### Nebraska

Katrina Frey McCook 69001 katrinafreyupmane@outlook.com

### Nevada

Joshua Armstrong Kings Beach CA 96143 nevadaupma@gmail.com

### **New Hampshire**

Elizabeth Warner Dover 03820 lwarner77@gmail.com

### **New Jersey**

Danny Estrict Hoboken 07601 estrictd@gmail.com

### **New Mexico**

Penny E. Cline Capitan 88316 pendav03@gmail.com

### **New York**

**Dan Leonard** Bath 14810 nyupmadanleonard@gmail.com

### **North Carolina**

Nancy Applewhite Leland 28451 nacapple4@gmail.com

### **North Dakota**

Ryan Nelson Hettinger 58639 ryancnelsonupma@gmail.com

### Ohio

Alan T. Metzcar Zoarville 44656 messdad@outlook.com

### Oklahoma

Brent Cofield Blair 73526 okiebrentpm@yahoo.com

### Oregon

Padric Fisher Jefferson 97352 oregonupmast@gmail.com

### Pennsylvania

**Stephanie L. Thompson** Meadville 16335 dragonfly\_11@live.com

### Puerto Rico/U.S. Virgin Islands

Kendrick Comulada Supervisor Old San Juan Station San Juan 00901 kcomulada@yahoo.com

### **Rhode Island**

Charles Narciso Jr. Barrington 02806 cnjr21@gmail.com

### **South Carolina**

Howard Brown Imro 29063 brownhj@bellsouth.net

### **South Dakota**

Jo Manke-Rodgers Murdo 57559 manke@gwtc.net

### **Tennessee**

Mark Mills Supervisor Church Hill 37642 jmarkmills32@gmail.com

### Texas

Darwin Adams Carrollton 75006 darwinadams@hotmail.com

### Lltah

Katie Evertsen Logan 84321 kateevertsen@gmail.com

### **Vermont**

Michelle Lingley Putney 05346 postedonna@icloud.com

### **Virginia**

Morris (Morty) Bennett Accomac 23301 unitedpma@yahoo.com

### **Washington**

C. Scott Christiansen Ellensburg 98926 christiansen.cs@gmail.com

### **West Virginia**

**Eric Grossa** Clarksburg 26301 samuelgrossa@gmail.com

### Wisconsin

Melissa A. Tarlton Shawano 54166 melissatarlton@gmail.com

### Wyoming

**Susan Linko** Thermopolis 82443 lynette4366@msn.com





### From the Editor's Desk

Steve Kochersperger, national editor

# 'To All To Whom These Presents Shall Come'

One unique benefit of being a Postmaster is receiving a certificate of appointment signed by the postmaster general. It is an honor not bestowed on any other category of postal workers. These certificates have a history older than the founding of our nation.

Benjamin Franklin, as deputy postmaster general for the British, appointed and signed commissions for Postmasters serving in the colonies. Postmasters were commissioned to serve in His Majesty's government, the same as any other military or civil officer.

After the Continental Congress named him postmaster general in 1775, Franklin issued new commissions to the Postmasters under his purview. Subsequent postmasters general continued to appoint local Postmasters until the presidency of Andrew Jackson. Starting in 1836, Postmasters

earning \$1,000 or more per year were appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate.



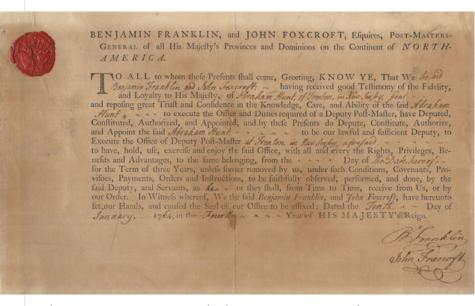
These offices became known as "presidential post offices." In addition to the signature of the postmaster general, the commissions for these presidential Postmasters were signed by the president of the United States. The smallest, Fourth-Class offices were not commissioned by the president, but by the postmaster general. Over time, these commissions became grandiose documents, with engraved printing on parchment, raised seals and the signatures of the president and/or postmaster general.

The Postal Reform Act of 1970 did away with presidential appointments; since that time, all Postmasters have been appointed by the postmaster general. But the tradition of providing Postmasters with a

signed certificate of appointment has continued. Although the appearance of the certificates has changed over the past 50 years, the wording is quite similar: "Know ye, that reposing special trust and confidence in the intelligence, diligence, and discretion ..."

Postmaster certificates are issued by Human Resources at USPS Headquarters. They are generated automatically based on *PS Form 50* data; no requests are necessary. The certificates are sent to the district managers, who generally give them to the MPOOs for distribution.

Rather than mailing the cer-



This commission appointing Abraham Hunt Postmaster of Trenton, NJ, was signed in 1764 by Benjamin Franklin and John Foxcroft, "Post-Masters-General of all His Majesty's Provinces and Dominions on the Continent of NORTH AMERICA."

tificates, most MPOOs try to deliver them in person. MPOOs are responsible for a lot of offices and, despite their best intentions, it might be months before they get to your office. That is how most certificates are delayed. If your certificate is overdue, check with your MPOO. There is a good chance it is at the district office.

Sometimes certificates get damaged or lost, in which case Headquarters will issue a new one. For non-receipt of certificates and program-related questions, send an e-mail to PostmasterCertificates@usps.gov. You also can search for "postmaster certificates" on the Blue page for answers to frequently asked questions.

### editor.upma@gmail.com





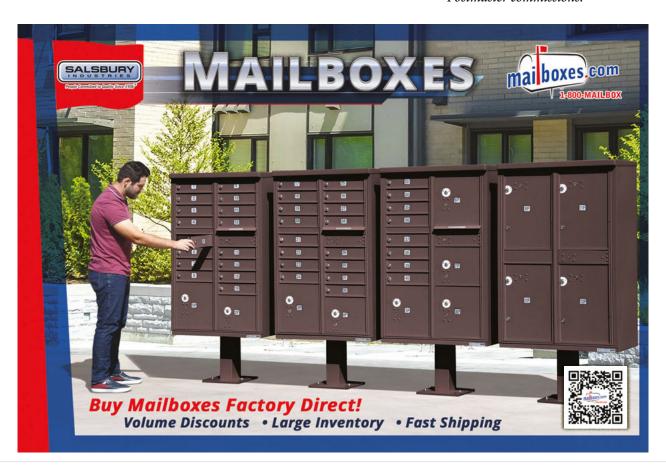
Examples of Postmaster certificates since 1970.







Examples of pre-1970 presidential Postmaster commissions.





### National Office News

Dan Heins, executive director

# Don't Feel You Have to Go It Alone

Greetings everyone! By the time you receive this issue of the *Leader*, you either will be in the middle of peak season or right on the verge of really getting into it. Remember to keep your head about you as you go through this stressful time of year.

We always tell ourselves we can handle it and, for the most part, we always do. But there will be days that may well push you to your limit. If that happens, keep your wits about you and make good, solid decisions. Do not decide to curtail or delay mail without reporting it.

You may get questions from upper-level managers about why those decisions were made, but at least you will have followed protocol and done the right thing. A better approach yet is to make sure your manager is aware of your situation and let them help you make decisions regarding what mail will and will not go out and how you will handle that mail the next delivery day.

Do not ever believe you are an island. You are a part of a great, big organization known as the United States Postal Service; you should have a support network available. If you do not have resources available, you cannot get all the work done. Do not allow the stressors of the day push you over the edge without reaching out for guidance and assistance.

If you find yourself feeling as if there is no end in sight, reach out to the Employee Assistance Program for the

help and counsel they offer. The EAP is as close as a phone call to 1-800-EAP-4YOU.

Also, as you go through the next couple months, make sure you are staying on top of posting your holiday schedules in order to avoid any issues with the unions or your managers for not adhering to our contractual obligations. We need to make sure we are doing the right thing.

Thanks to UPMA National President Edmund Carley working with Postal Service Headquarters, the agency has agreed to make adjustments to the Proposed Pay Matrices for base salary increases based on where you finished on the NPA scorecard (see below). There also will be increases to the tops and bottoms of the pay bands going forward; we aren't sure at this time what percentage those calculations will be. We will do our best to keep you informed as we receive more information.

As you go through the holidays, find time to spend with family and friends; enjoy the season to the fullest! This month, I leave you with this quote from Henry David Thoreau: "I am grateful for what I am and have. My Thanksgiving is perpetual."

### **FY23 Proposed Pay Matrices Adjustments**

	Cell	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Current	Base										
	Salary	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%	2.5%	3.0%	4.0%	5.0%	6.0%	7.5%	9.0%
	Increase										
	Cell	1	2	3	4	-	_	-	•		
	Cell								× ×	(6)	10
	Dasa	_	_	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
_	Base										
Proposed	Base Salary	0.0%	0.0%	3.0%	4.0%	5.0%	6.0%	7.0%	8.0%	8.5%	9.0%
Proposed											

# Support the Postal Employees' Relief Fund







On Aug. 8, a wildfire sparked in Lahaina on Maui, HI, fed by hurricane winds following months of drought. Once the capital of the Kingdom of Hawaii, significant portions of the historic town have been destroyed. Residents are cut off from the rest of the island. They have no power or communications and are dealing with devastating losses.

The Lahaina Main Post Office survived, but the Downtown Lahaina Finance Station is a total loss. Seven Postal Service employees lost their homes.

When disaster strikes, the Postal Employees' Relief Fund provides tax-free relief grants to postal employees and retirees to help them reestablish their homes and replace necessities. PERF is your charity. Please make a donation to help members of the Postal family in their desperate times of need.



# **DONATIONS CAN BE MADE:**

- Online at postalrelief.com
- By sending a check made payable to "Postal Employees' Relief Fund" to:

Postal Employees' Relief Fund PO Box 41220

Fredericksburg, VA 22404-1220

 By contributing to PERF through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC); designate #10268

All donations are tax-deductible.

For more information, go to www.postalrelief.com; 202-408-1869; perf10268@aol.com.



## Focus on the Hill

Chris McCannell, UPMA Legislative Affairs

# UPMA PAC Helps Drive Legislative Accomplishments

At the UPMA national convention in Denver, members made a commitment to grow UPMA PAC by 10% to increase the group's voice on Capitol Hill with important members of Congress who help active and retired Postmasters, Managers and Supervisors. I recently had the opportunity to witness firsthand the power of UPMA PAC when National President Edmund Carley and I attended a dinner with Ways & Means Chairman Jason Smith (R-MO).

The Ways & Means Committee has tremendous influence over UPMA retirees. It affects everyone who receives Medicare and Social Security, but its role in setting legislative policy is critical to UPMA retirees who are impacted by the WEP and GPO.

I joined Carley at a dinner hosted by Smith for Rep. Blake Moore (R-UT), a dynamic, young member of Congress who represents parts of Salt Lake, Park City and other towns with a strong UPMA presence. Moore is a member of the bipartisan Problem Solvers Coalition and the Ways & Means Committee.

Moore voted with a majority of his Republican colleagues in the previous Congress to pass the Postal Reform Act. As a moderate Republican, fiscally conservative and socially liberal, from conservative Utah, Moore always is worried about a potential primary challenge. Smith raised money from UPMA PAC and others to ensure Moore would have funds to fight against any electoral challenge.

At the dinner, Smith opened the conversation to questions. Carley, never one to pass up an opportunity to promote UPMA, asked about WEP/GPO. Smith has heard a lot from his Republican colleagues and particularly from two WEP/GPO champions—H.R. 82 sponsor Rep. Garret Graves (R-LA) and lead co-sponsor Rep. Julia Letlow (R-LA).

Smith went into detail about his hopes to move



legislation that might not deal with the entire WEP/

GPO issue, but would, at least, make the situation a bit better for those affected. Smith mentioned the Ways & Means Social Security Subcommittee would convene a field hearing in Louisiana (tentatively scheduled for Nov. 20) to hear from Graves, Letlow and key constituents on the impact of WEP/GPO and the need for legislation.

The lesson of this story is twofold. First, UPMA PAC gives UPMA the opportunity to "be in the room where it happens" to meet with leading policymakers in Washington and to inform them about our agenda. Second, UPMA PAC allows UPMA members to support champions for Postmasters, Managers and Supervisors.

UPMA is committed to supporting Democrats and Republicans who are committed to supporting EAS employees and ensuring the Postal Service has the resources and political support it needs to thrive.

UPMA and UPMA PAC want to continue building and growing. That is why we have set a goal to grow by 10% by the 2024 UPMA National Convention in order to expand our opportunity to help friends and build stronger advocates in Washington, DC.

Can we count on you to support us? At UPMA events, please consider stopping by the PAC table, buying a raffle ticket. Also consider sending a check or starting an ePAC deduction from your paycheck or annuity. You are a critical partner in our growth.

Chris McCannell is a senior director at UPMA's lobbying firm, GrayRobinson; chris.mccannell@gray-robinson.com.

# Life in the USPS Pressure Cooker

Bill Judge, National Member Representation Committee



So, what can get you in trouble? With all the craziness going on right now, preparing for peak season and everything due yesterday, there are plenty of opportunities for problems.

The current charge being leveled in corrective action is "failure to follow instructions." As a member of POOMville, I see the potential for corrective action almost daily. In today's environment, there is no way to hide anything. Computers run algorithms to deter-

mine where scans are being made. If you scan or key in tracking numbers in the office after 1500, the POOM or district manager gets a call to investigate. Not having scanning integrity can get you in trouble.

Rural routes used to be the easiest employee group to manage. Now, with their evaluations based on scanning and breadcrumbs from the route delivery, they can try to manipulate the system. We are charged with monitoring that. Every month, all edit books must be submitted to AMS (by the 10th). There also are mapping programs that determine the number of deliveries and how far the route is. So, another compliance opportunity.

We are moving into a new phase in FY24: Rescuing mail delayed by the plant will be a thing of the past. Mail received from the plant or drop shipper after the scheduled DUT or DOV will be DOA. But it must be accurately reported, which will bring scrutiny; truck scanning and placard scanning will be imperative. There is an army of Gemba auditors to ensure compliance, which offers another opportunity to get in trouble.

Just as the Chinese New Year has different animals, the Postal Service is calling FY24 the "Year of the Budget." There are over 200 dashboards in Power BI and we are supposed to know about all of them. So, the heat will be on. You might make a bad decision by adjusting TACS or enter inflated volume to justify your hours, neither of which is an option you should use.

The other high-priority issue is being at work. There are EAS employees we call ghosts—ghost masters and ghost supervisors. If you are off work, make sure your manager knows your status. If your leave isn't properly input, make sure you get it corrected.

Most of our schedules are posted with 730-430 or 800-500 work times. If you are not working those hours, make sure your manager concurs. Your staff will let it be known what schedule you are working and if you are there.

Finances still are as important as ever. If you are unsure how to handle something, make sure you reach out for help. If you have a Postal Retail Unit audit, you need to abate any deficiencies. Make sure to keep your manager in the loop as you make the corrections. Never "borrow" anything or use your position for any kind of gain.

### National Committee Chairs/Executive Board Advisers

### **Articles and Bylaws**

**Drew Martin**, 336-246-8861, dbmartin@skybest.com; **Susan Rice**, adviser, 256-589-3211, sueleerice@ aol.com

## Member Representation Commttee

John Sertich, 618-830-6535; jmsert@hotmail.com; Jim Maher, adviser, 314-551-3588, jmaher300@aol.com

### **Diversity and Inclusion**

**Jeff Lightner**, 814-225-4742, jeffreylightner@gmail.com

### **EAS Professionals**

Albert Ruiz, 214-535-1346, alruiz214@yahoo.com; Jim Dunlap, adviser, 970-988-9614, jtdpostal@ hotmail.com

### **Education**

**Kerry Nichols**, 563-659-3712, kerrysh12@gmail.com

### Legislation

**Jim Dunlap**, 970-988-9614, jtdpostal@hotmail.com

### Membership

Tony Leonardi, 321-267-5122, tonyupmafl@gmail.com; Katie Evertsen, adviser, 435-512-3700, kateevertsen@gmail.com

### **PAC**

John Douds, 302-436-7311, postaldouds@verizon.net

### VIP

Clarence Gagner, 218-686-5702, jcrgagner@hotmail.com

We have to take care of business at our offices. Make sure you are in communication with your managers if you foresee workload and staffing issues will prevent you from providing the level of service required. If you can't get everything delivered, reach out to your manager. Always report it; never take anything that isn't yours.

Dealing with people accounts for most of our job.

It also is our greatest source of trouble. A lot of the cases we encounter as member representatives have a great deal to do with our craft employees. The things they allege we do can result in letters of warning, up to removal.

Always treat your employees the way you want to be treated. If the iceberg is melting out from under you, reach out to one of us for help.

# Membership

## COMMITTEES

# The Seasons of Membership

Katrina Frey, National Membership Team



Happy fall! I hope you are having as beautiful a fall as we are in Nebraska. We are enjoying pleasant days, cool nights, football and colorful leaves—changes of the seasons. I think membership is a lot like the changing seasons.

Spring is new growth with new members and chapter conventions. Summer is a time for tending to family, gardens, lawns and warm-weather projects. For membership, it's a time of nurturing the growth—tending to our members and bringing them in to our UPMA family. Also, building long-lasting relationships and showing new members the importance of attending our national convention.

Fall is time to wind down from outdoor activities,

harvest and put away the lawn mower and outdoor furniture. We prepare for winter and welcome football! We have more time indoors; it's the perfect opportunity to reconnect with members, glean knowledge from each other, build on those relationships and help each other prepare for another peak

If you are an active postal employee, you know how difficult this year has been. Every report is due yesterday; more are added all the time, with none being deleted. It seems like one bonfire after another. While bonfires can be fun, they sure aren't at work!

Winter is next. The only good thing I'm going to say about winter is we get to kick off the year right with our Membership Academy and Kickoff Meeting in Florida.

Enjoy this fall season of warm days and cool nights. Don't forget to encourage others and, most importantly, take care of the amazing you!

# In Our Prayers

... the family of **William Paul "Bill" Reynolds**, former NAPUS Kansas Chapter president and retired Postmaster of Lawrence, who died Oct. 3. Condolences may be sent to his wife Sharon at 827 N 1710 Rd., Lawrence, KS 66049-9015.

... the family of **John "Ollie" Boynton**, retired Postmaster of St. Ignace, MI, who died Oct. 5. He served in the U.S. Army. Condolences may be sent to his wife Patty at 7157 Kettle Lake Dr., Alto, MI 49302.

... the family of **Robert T. Heslin**, retired Postmaster of Wharton, NJ, who died Oct. 14. After retirement, he was a consultant to the USPS and a distinguished member of the Postmaster General's Speakers Bureau. He served in the U.S. Army. Condolences may be sent to the Heslin family at 39 Kitchell Ave., Wharton, NJ 07885-2525.

# We Welcome You With Open Arms

Tania Cason, California Chapter president and National Membership Team



No one wakes up to fail, especially a UPMA leader. We are trained to equip ourselves with the tools and resources needed to lead in this ever-changing environment. A UPMA leader easily can be identified in a room—dressed for success

with an aura of confidence.

At my first UPMA national convention, I had an opportunity to do a lot of networking, get a photo with then-PMG Megan Brennan and receive essential training to improve my job performance and awareness. To say I had a great experience would be an understatement.

I continued to return every year and began to attend other training offered by UPMA. I did not realize this would result in discovering my passion to share the amazing benefits of joining our UPMA family.

I say "family" because we have reunions each year

when attending our national conventions. We challenge each other to be the best we can be and welcome new members with open arms.

Families also stay in touch; sometimes a simple phone call, text message or email to check in on someone makes a difference. We use every avenue of communication to make sure our members stay informed, feel valued and know how to reach us.

We are a growing organization that encourages every EAS postal employee to join us. We have extended our one-year free membership offer for EAS emploees—another incentive to join now!

Make plans to attend UPMA's Membership Academy and Kickoff Meeting in Orlando, FL, on Jan. 14. Let's kickoff 2024 together!

Apple co-founder and CEO Steve Jobs said: "Management is about persuading people to do things they do not want to do, while leadership is about inspiring people to do things they never thought they could."

# Join the Membership Bandwagon

Peter Urbani, Connecticut Chapter president and National Membership Team



Make plans to attend UPMA's 2024 Membership Academy and Kickoff Meeting on Jan. 14 in Orlando, FL. This event helps invigorate members to sign new members. The organization is growing at an incredible rate due to the

hard work everyone has been doing with membership. Thank you, all.

The involvement by so many members has provided us with many tips and tactics to help recruit. This has helped me be more successful.

The hardest thing to deal with is rejection. At the academy, you will learn how to deal with someone who is reluctant to join. It's tough hearing someone say "no" to joining our premier management association. Learn how to work with someone who needs more persuasion.

There will be breakout sessions and some role-play scenarios. The knowledge you gain is extremely valuable in building a strong chapter. And a strong chapter is a Star Chapter.

There also will be time to network and learn what works in other chapters. I encourage everyone to attend the Membership Academy in January. Register online at unitedpma.org.

# Let's Bring People Together and Create Experiences

Darwin Adams, Texas Chapter president and National Membership Team



Explore what UPMA can do for you now for free for one year. Goodness happens when like-minded people gather with purpose, spirited discussion and progress. Whatever your passion is, UPMA makes these experiences possible:

- Uplift your own leadership role.
- Grow membership in the organization.
- Make your chapter great.
- Easily manage dues; it's free for the first year.
- Make group events and planning a breeze.
- Easily manage communications.

We look great! The UPMA National Office has given us a professional website and easy ways to manage our member communication. Whether you are interested in strengthening your network, furthering your career or maybe just in need of a few

more friends, professional networking organizations such as UPMA can be a great option. In addition to providing information about your chosen field, UPMA can enhance your personal and professional development and provide endless networking opportunities.

We all know that networking is key for the movers and shakers of any organization. Making connections is critical and joining UPMA gives countless opportunities to connect on local and national levels. For most people, creating professional relationships is important; joining UPMA gives you a sense of security and trust.

If you've been helped by a UPMA member, spread the news to nonmembers in your network—there's something in it for everyone!

Reach out to other offices to see if they are members. If not, get them to join the great UPMA.

Think big, be big.

## PAC

## COMMITTEES

# Set It and Forget It!

John Douds, Atlantic Area national vice president and national PAC chair



Using ePAC is a terrific, easy way to contribute to UPMA's PAC. Active and retired members can sign up online to have an amount deducted from their paychecks biweekly for active members or monthly for retiree members.

To sign up for ePAC, go to unitedpma.org. Click on the "Government Relations" tab, then click on either "PostalEASE Authorization Form" for active members, or "Retirees Authorization Form" for retirees.

If you have questions, I am happy to help; reach out to me any time via email or cell phone—postaldouds @verizon.net; 302-258-9541.

Thank you for your contributions and support!



n Sunday morning at the UPMA National Convention in Denver this past August, members attended an All-Hands Membership Meeting. National President Edmund Carley opened the event exclaiming, "What a year!"

He told members the National Executive Board had mapped out a vision for growth and pledged to invest in chapters. The organization was in a death spiral, losing 1,300 to 1,500 members a year and only recruiting 800 to 900. "I challenged the Executive Board and we invested money from the reserve fund to empower chapters to offer rebates and provide funds for their members to actively recruit new members," he said.

Carley acknowledged UPMA members' amazing efforts. "When I set goals and give you the tools," he observed, "you knock it out of the park. We have added over 4,300 members.

"The challenge now is how we invest to reach and engage with our new members," he advised. "I appreciate the enthusiasm and challenge. Thank you for the effort and support in general."

Katie Evertsen, WestPac Area national vice president and adviser to the National Membership Committee, told members that, in November

2021, it was the first time a board focused on recruiting. She cited the quote, "Poor leadership is building a great team and doing everything in your power to hold onto control."

"Edmund has given us the freedom to do what we want," she stressed. "We have a great team." The National Membership Team members proceeded to talk about their recent successful recruitment efforts.

Tony Leonardi, National Membership Committee chair, cited his favorite quote from Henry Ford: "Whether you think you can or you think you can't, you are right." He acknowledged it was hard to put POStPlan behind and start rebuilding the organization. He talked about the current membership contest, explaining that chapters were given goals and a number of chapters already have surpassed their goals for the year.

Scott Christensen, Washington Chapter president, talked about the importance of making office visits. He started with a map and drove 1,400 miles across Montana, stopping at 51 post offices.

"The Postmasters I visited felt as if they were on an island," he said. "The biggest selling point of UPMA membership is to assure them they are not alone. I told them I am just a phone call away; there's a team invested in their success."

At the end of his trip, Christensen had signed 31 new members.

Brian Wade, Arizona Chapter president, and Tania Cason, WestPac National Vice President and California Chapter president, told UPMA members the organization sells itself. "Some will reject you," they advised, "but someone else will join. It helps to tag team during office visits. And be sure to follow up!" Wade and Cason signed 79 new members.

Jeff Arment, past Iowa Chapter president, recommended attending Career Conferences. At a conference in Wisconsin he attended with Wisconsin Chapter members, 70 new members were signed. "We had a team and we had a plan," he said.

Leonardi stressed the importance of local participation. "Relating to someone local makes it more successful," he advised. "It's always better to have local participation. Tell the local chapter, 'We need you to help us.' Recruiting at Career Conferences has been very successful."

Darwin Adams, Texas Chapter president, reinforced attending Career Conferences, where he signed 36 new EAS members in one day. "It was a

competition between Texas and Florida," he said. "We talked to everyone at the conference and were physically located in a good spot."

Drew Martin, retired North Carolina Postmaster, told members he was working to inspire the team effort in his chapter. "Your opportunity is when a group of people come together and you are prepared; you have to be ready," he stressed. "Don't let anyone leave the hall until you have met them all. Look at it as an opportunity to make a big impact on your chapter."

Jerry Southard, Southern Area na-

tional vice president, has had success planning a trip and stopping and visiting post offices. "Go to a Career Conference, be professional and say what you need to say about UPMA," he advised. "We were busy at an Oklahoma conference getting new members and getting them engaged."

He also suggested attending district and training meetings and talking to nonmembers. "Don't give up!" he urged.

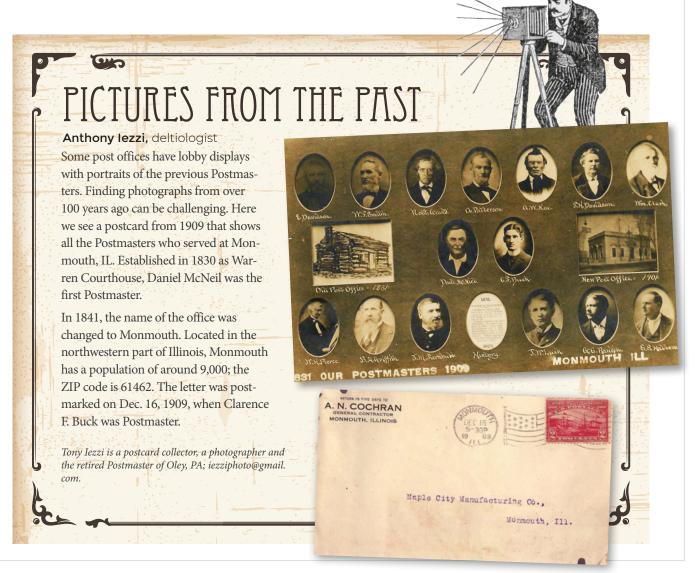
Leonardi told members the National Membership contest is based on each chapter's opportunities. "Do the work and make the effort—do what's in

your control," he suggested. "We'll challenge you again next year."

He said signing supervisors is part of UPMA's succession plan, as well as signing younger members. "When we diversify, we make ourselves strong in many areas," he observed. "We'll be around a long, long time."

Carley encouraged everyone to make plans to attend the 2024 Membership Academy and Kickoff Meeting Jan. 14, in Orlando at the Caribe Royale, site of the 2024 National Convention.

Be sure and register at unitedpma.org.





# 'You're Going to Be Here a Long Time'

By Steve Kochersperger, national editor

t age 23, Gerri Bergin wasn't looking for a job, but she went to an interview as a favor for a friend who just started working for an employment agency. On June 16, 1981, Gerri reported to the Xerox Building in Rosslyn, VA—the offices of the National Association of Postmasters of the United States (NAPUS).

Gerri walked into the building, went up to the ninth floor and met Dorothy Johnson, the membership director. Johnson greeted her, shook hands, then said something strangely prophetic: "You're going to be here a long time."

Forty-two years later, Gerri is still "here," although "here" has changed a lot. The office moved from Rosslyn to Alexandria, NAPUS became UPMA and 20 national presidents have come and gone, along with scores of other employees. What hasn't changed is the executive assistant to those presidents-Gerri Bergin Swarm.

Former NAPUS National Editor Sally Robinson called Gerri "the glue that holds this organization together." Robinson added, "She has weathered the good, bad and ugly and always remained the constant in a long line of office changes."

Gerri was born in Dublin, Ireland; her family moved to Baltimore in 1960. "I was not quite three years old," she said. "My sister and I were Irish twins; she's 11 months younger than me." Gerri attended Catholic school all the way through 12th grade and graduated from the all-girls high school Archbishop Keough.

She mostly took business classes, which led to a work-study program. "I went to school a week and went to work a week," Gerri explained. After graduation, she worked at a bank for several years, before moving with a friend to Northern Virginia.

That is how she ended up in the office of NAPUS Executive Director Frank Miklozek. A devout Catholic himself, Miklozek was won over by Gerri's Irish Catholic upbringing and her considerable organizational skills. He offered her a bit more money than she had been earning and she took the job.

Jim Syers from Kentucky was the first of 20 presidents for whom she worked. "With 20 presidents, you've got 20 sets of all different kinds of political, personal, office and everything stuff," she observed. "Every one of them came with a story."

Gerri's memories of Jim Miller from Kansas are especially fond. "When Jim was national president, he and his wife Irene kind of took me under their wing when I was divorced with a young child," she said. "He made sure I was okay; they always were so thoughtful, which meant a lot to me."

In addition to being executive assistant to the president, Gerri eventually took on the task of planning conventions and meetings. When she first started working at the office, the executive director did all the planning and Gerri learned the ropes as his assistant. After Miklozek retired, new Executive Director Emmett Good told Gerri, "I'm not interested in the meeting planning, would you like to do it?" Without hesitating, she said, "Yes, sure. I'll do it!"

How did she learn to plan conventions? "I started doing it with what I picked up from Frank," Gerri said. "And I got a lot of direction from a lot of people."

One of those people was chair of the National Convention Committee, a Mississippi Postmaster named David Heslep. "David and I worked together for many years on a lot of conventions," said Gerri. "And in case you didn't know this, David Heslep was

[UPMA Retired president] Mandy Heslep-Whitten's father."

A 1995 article in *Federal Times* reported, "Swarm is busy finishing up final details for this year's event while juggling demands for the next four conventions." In those days, when Postmasters received paid convention leave, attendance at national conventions often topped 4,000.

In the article, Gerri described her duties: "I do everything, from setting up air travel to housing, registration, to making sure there are enough microphones for the speakers. Once the convention starts, I'm on site to meet and greet the speakers, take them to the stage and make sure they have what they need."

No matter how much planning goes into an event, there always are last-minute snags and logistical nightmares. "The nightmares go on constantly," observed Gerri, "but if you have good convention people, they're never seen." One near disaster she laughs about now, which wasn't so funny when it happened, was the night NAPUS nearly killed the Postmaster General.

At the 1994 national convention in New Mexico, Gerri could hardly believe she was seated on the dais next to Marvin Runyon. "I was thinking, I'm sitting next to the Postmaster General!" We had some interesting conversation, but he wasn't much of a talker," she recalled. "I remember he was a vegan—didn't eat anything with a face." Suddenly,

the backdrop, drapes and pipe that held them up fell and landed on top of Runyon. "He was fine, we were all fine, but it was a memorable year," she said with a laugh.

As far as planning conventions goes, Denver 2023 was Gerri's swan song, but that won't keep her away. "I'd love to be in Orlando next year," she exclaimed, "and see how they do it, just so I can say, 'Wow, look what they've done. Isn't this great!"

# Four questions for Gerri Swarm:

# What's been the most enjoyable aspect of working here?

I've had the opportunity to travel the country and see cities, towns and places I never would have seen in a million years. At the same time, it was bittersweet because I was raising four children and I had a new husband. It was a lot of time away from them.

# What changes have you seen over the past 40 years?

I think we've finally brought ourselves into the 21st century, even if we were a little slow in getting there. We did not have computers until we moved into our new building. Back then, you listened to letters on a dictaphone

and typed them on a typewriter with carbon paper behind it. You had a foot pedal and if you made a mistake, you had to correct all the copies. I mean, this was way back in the dark ages.

# What will you miss the most about your work?

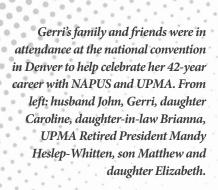
The people, the relationships, the friendships, the people reaching out to you. They don't have to—they do it because they're kind of family and they care. I hope to keep up some of that.

### What are your plans for retirement?

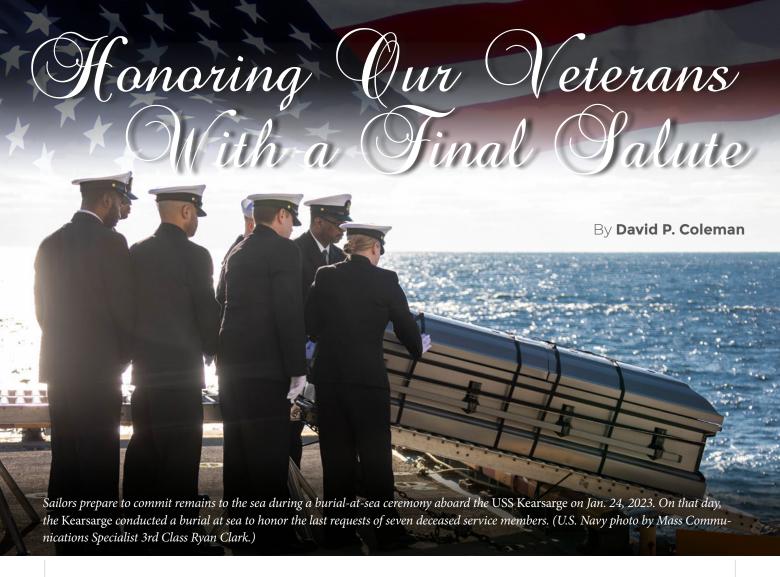
Mostly traveling. This is hard to believe, but I've never been to the Grand Canyon. So, I want to go see the Grand Canyon and maybe go to a dude ranch in Wyoming. I'd love to see the redwoods.

My daughter Caroline is in Scotland. Her twin, Elizabeth, is in Charlotte, NC, and Katelyn, the oldest, lives in Sterling, VA. My son Matthew and his wife Brianna live in Nashville, TN. My husband John and I just bought a house in Florida at The Villages; he has two grown children and three grandchildren.

Gerri looks forward to staying in touch with the many friends she has made over the years; you can contact her at gerriswarm@gmail.com.







he Postal Service employs nearly 63,000 military veterans, making it one of the largest employers of veterans in the country. Every uniformed service member or veteran with an honorable discharge from the armed forces is eligible for a free military funeral honor when they die.

The Military Funeral Honors Program includes traditions intended to express deep gratitude for those who have served our nation. This service is provided by the decedent's branch of service. Requests for military funeral honors should be made through the eligible veteran's funeral director/planner or funeral honors coordinator.

When I was a Navy reservist, I was assigned to a Funeral Honors Team and participated in scores of military

funeral honors ceremonies in the Baltimore area. I retired from the Reserves in 2021, with three decades of service. Being part of a military funeral honors team was one of the most rewarding and awe-inspiring experiences of my military career.

Here is what you need to know to understand how a military funeral honors ceremony works:

By law, military units are required to provide, at a minimum, a two-person uniformed detail to present the core elements of a funeral honors ceremony. This includes the playing of taps and the folding and presentation of the U.S. flag. A uniformed representative from the veteran's service will present the flag to the next of kin.

**Taps and the ceremonial bugle:** The version of taps we know today was

officially recognized by the U.S. Army in 1874. Beginning in 1891, the playing of taps became standard at military funeral ceremonies and was legislated in 2013 as the "National Song of Military Remembrance."

The National Defense Authorization Act 2000 directed the playing of taps at veterans' military funerals. Although a live bugler is preferred, a ceremonial bugle or a high-quality recording on a stereo player may be used. (A ceremonial bugle is an electronic device that fits directly inside the bell portion of a bugle and contains a recording of taps.)

Flag presentation protocol and flag folding: The U.S. flag honors the memory of a service member's or veteran's service to our country. The ceremonial folding and presentation of the flag is a tribute of lasting importance to our

service members, veterans and their families.

The flag is draped on a closed casket so the union blue field is at the head and over the left shoulder of the deceased. When an urn is used, the flag is already in a military fold. The lead body bearer carries the folded flag to the right of the urn. Once the urn comes to rest, the body bearers unfold the flag and hold it at the pall over the cremated remains. The remainder of the ceremony is conducted in the same manner as casketed remains.

After taps is played, the flag is carefully folded into the symbolic tricorn shape. A properly proportioned flag will fold 13 times on the triangles, representing the 13 original colonies. The folded flag is emblematic of the tricorn hat worn by the patriots of the American Revolution. When folded, no red or white stripe is to be evident, leaving only the blue field with stars.

The flag then is presented as a keepsake to the next of kin, close friend or associate of the deceased veteran if there is no next of kin. Effective April 17, 2012, the Department of Defense standardized the flag presentation language for military funeral honors ceremonies.

The following words, mandated by the DOD, are to be used when presenting the American flag during the funeral service: "On behalf of the president of the United States and a grateful nation, please accept this flag as a symbol of

our appreciation for your loved one's honorable and faithful service." If no claim is made for the flag by the next of kin, it may be given, on request, to a friend or associate of the deceased veteran. Burial flags are provided at no charge.

### Additional funeral honors elements:

Depending on available resources and personnel, other elements may be added to the minimum two-person uniformed detail. These elements may include a rifle volley, color guard, pall-bearers, caisson and military flyover. Trained volunteers with the Authorized Provider Partnership Program and veterans' services organizations may augment the two-person service detail as members of the firing party or color guard. They also can serve as pallbearers and assist in other elements of the process.

Military flyovers are not part of the mandated funeral honors ceremony required by *Title 10*, Section 1491, U.S. Code, but can be arranged if supporting personnel and aircraft are available. It should be noted that requests for a military flyover are just requests.

Approval must go through an administrative process in each military service. Approval is based on many factors, including the eligibility of the deceased, the availability of personnel and aircraft, the location of the funeral service, the time and date of the funeral and weather conditions.

Burial at sea is a means of final disposition of cremated or casketed remains that is performed on U.S. Navy and Coast Guard vessels. The Coast Guard normally will not provide burial at sea for casketed remains. Family members are not routinely authorized to be present, especially for the Navy, as the committal service is performed while the ship is deployed.

The commanding officer of the ship assigned to perform the ceremony will notify the family of the date, time and longitude and latitude once the committal service has been completed. For additional information concerning eligibility and procedures, refer to Navy Personnel Command or the Coast Guard.

Military funeral honors are intended to honor the service member or veteran's commitment and sacrifice to their country that started when they raised their right hand and pledged to their oath of enlistment. It also provides comfort and gratitude to their families.

According to a census taken in 2021, there were over 16.5 million veterans living in the United States. When a veteran dies, a military funeral honors ceremony is a great way to show fanfare for their honorable and faithful service.

David P. Coleman, UPMA District of Columbia Chapter legislative chair, is a USPS senior Public Relations representative.



funeral at Arlington National Cemetery on Sept. 24, 2021. Hoover, assigned to 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, was killed as the result of an enemy attack while conducting non-combatant evacuation operations in support of Operation Freedom's Sentinel in Kabul, Afghanistan, Aug. 26, 2021. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Tanner D. Lambert.)

# Welcome, New Members

These new members joined in September



Stephanie Nicole Collins, John Bradley Deckard, Kenny McDonald

### Δlaska

Ian David McGowan

### Arizona

Steven Durham, Scott Edmonds, Cassandra Hart, Jesenia Hernandez, Bradley J. Hilgart, Victoria Johnson-Crisp, Fernando Llamas, Melissa Murga, Tracey Wolfe, Raymond William Zaragoza Bluder

### **Arkansas**

Jordan Edmonson, Rachel Anne Hutcheson, Michael L. Mitchell, Darreyl Simpson

### California

Bernard E. Barber Jr., Dana N.
Berrett-Greiner, William Brevard III,
Jessica Burch, Eric Campos, David
D. Chromy, Howard B. Fauntroy III,
Melanie Gallegos, Lane Gard, Carlos
Hernandez, Rukshana Iqbal, Mark Islas,
Rachel L. Fuory, Jessica Joyce, Lenin
G. Lau, Tonya Levels, Luis Marquez,
Shaddai Milow, Roberto Munoz,
Melissa Oquita, Jose Luis Perez, Dezirae
Perez, Vencent Quaglia, Ana Valdes

### Colorado

Alexandra Rae Banda, Bethanye Krushall, Mark Leander, Stephen Paul McDonough, Shunna L. McEwen, Lisa K. Montgomery Graham, Lisa K. Montgomery-Graham, Nicole Roberts-Gurley, Lyndee Ruud, Brent A. Stall, Earnest Taylor, Darin Wright

### Connecticut

Melissa Palmisano

### Delaware

Francine D. Butler, Flor McCane, Derrick L. Spratley, Devin A. Willis

### District of Columbia

Branden R. Seymour

### Florida

Micheal S. Brown, Dinah L. Campbell, Josuc Caraballo Jr., Anyeli Fana, Patricia Fleming, Angel Fortis Rivera, Leni Han, Stacy Hansen, Randy G. Johnson, Vincent J. Leonado III, Sonny F. Lind, Felicia S. Marshall, John L. Martinez, Aldo Mayorga, Eboni McCorvey, Jose M. Mercado, Tracy Mobley, Debyani Mustapha, Rosemary Onody, Peter Rapone, Shana M. Reyes, Michael Devan Russell, Gerardo Santiago, Necchi Tunious-Boyd, Marcus A. Vega, Pauline Williams

### Georgia

Kenley G. Bentley, Mecca L. Benton, Julie A. Carson, Rachelle L. Carter, Suzanne Colvin, Sherlarnda Conner, Antoine Cooper, Zakary Darlak, Michael Alan Fisher, Nicholas R. Florida, John Frierson, Eugenie Gibbs, Bill M. Gill III, Paula Glenn, Latonda Hollins, Rebecca A. Mathis, Thomasina McCoy, Raven McCrory, Ranjan Patel, Sheresha L. Rainey, Merideth A. Roberts, James C. Roberts, Patrice T. Shaw, Jacquelyn M. Smiley, Eric Smith, Kristy R. Stubbs, Deloris Taylor, Shyishah Thomas, Travis Thornton, Ramona R. Tolbert, Robin S. Walters-Anderson, Christina M. Williford, Nicole L. Wright

### Idaho

Brittany Painter

### Illinois

Everette Bond, Abbey Bort, Donny Bradford, Brianna Braman, Jacqueline Branch, Marnna Brown, Marcia Byrd, Katie Casner, Larry Roger Chandler, Joe Clark, Bianca Clay, Talisa Clemons, Regina Colburn Sourek, Lois Covington, Candace Daubs, Stephanie Dixson Powell, Tony K. Dolfus, Kasey Dowdy, Cathy Dutz, Laneise Fola, Albulena Hamide Freitag, Raynald L. Grady Sr., Michael Gray, Jamaale Green, Patricia Green, Melissa Hall, Nicole Harris, Solomon Hawthorne, Trishawn Henderson, Michael Hicks Shariq Hosan, Deontavius Jackson, Tonya Jackson-Hammock, Shaheena Jinks, Taylor Starr Jones, Angelica Jorge, Syed Kaleemulla, Jeremy Klapp, Megan Lease, Sharon Long, Thomas Longo, Kimberly Martin, Ouintin Mayberry, Ashley N. McGhee, Keyonia Milon, Khaja Misbahuppin, LaShonda Moore, Denina Morales, Kimberly Morris, Hoseena Muhammad, Michelle Oliver, Dominiqua Perkins, Ouvenisha Pierce, Robin Pollard, Devin Pratt, Lachundra Price, Anthony Reese, Jimmie D. Rines, Phi Rodriguez, Michael J. Roesch, Tracy D. Sager, Krystle Shadd, Ladebra Simpson, Benesse Simpson, Pleshette Spears, Marc Steele, Marissa L. Sudduth, Ruth Swords, Azure D. Taylor, Tyler N. Thomas, Niesha N. Thomas, Jeffrey D. Troutman, Jessie M. Tucker, Mechaune Turner, Samantha Tye, Marcus D. Wadley, Shannon Washburn, Saskeia Whiten, Alaina Whitman, Balynn Widemon, Annette Williams, Marcus Anthony Williams, Curtis L. Wilson, Jonniece Windham, Christal Woods Robinson, Heather Young, Joshua Yuill

### Indiana

Sunday S. Ajimati, Lee Ann Alexander, Charles A. Anderson, Vida Benjamin, Jillaune Sue Bennett, Amber R. Bledsoe, Krystal M. Bolen, Monica Borgerding, Brandon Brooks, John C. Brown, Brian D. Burchfield, Joshua W. Campbell, Kelly M. Clark, Deborah A. Clark, Yvette Claxton, Jeremy S. Dameron, Jordan I. Darnall, Derek R. Downie, Paula Elkins, Laura L. Graeber, Carl L. Grathwohl, Nicole D. Harsh, Krystal J. Hawkins, Ryan A. Hawn, Amie Leigh Hayden, Linda Hernandez, Christopher A. Heston, Dianna Hill, Terrence T. Hopkins Sr., Suneetha Inguva. Martinda C. Jones, Jeffrey Jones, Glenda L. Judkins, Teri N. Kirby, Michelle R. Koerner, Davis Lawerence, Stacy R .Long, Angelique D. Maclin, Jessica R. Mason, Jlynnda Muhammad, Sherricka L. Norris, Timothy O. Okubadejo, Bryan V. Oxley, Brent Paull, Christine I. Porter, Jackie M. Ralstin, Myra E. Reed, Thomas A Richardson, Erika Roh.leder, Trisha Salinas, Bilqis Stigler, Dawn M. Turpin, Ovanual L. Walker, Marcel Webb, Daniel R. Wells, Samantha R. Williams, Joshua R. Williams, Brenda M. Williamson, Krista R. Wright

### Iowa

Sandra Drew, Maranda C. Hoeger, Douglas Hoeppner, Douglas O'Donnell

### Kentucky

Marnie Bell, Kayla J. Clark, Michelle Gray, Kyle Johnson,

### Louisiana

Ralexis Allen, Henry J. Cole, Liz M. Duhon, Doneisha Dyer, Danielle George, Michon Jordan, Michon A. Lewis, Lisa M. Rice, Clarudette M. Robinson

### Maryland

Sharone Bigelow, Terry C. Bonenberger, Lennea Bunch, Lorenzo Clark Sr., Ceylon Davenport, Ernest M. Davidson, Sonya G. Dean, Joyce Hamilton, Kimberly L Harris, Quinton Jones, Stephanie Sullivan Mannion, Antonina Newsome, Mohammed Noor, Christian Owens, Victoria Sidjabat, John Taylor, Marcus Dion Williams, Patrice R. Wilson, Licha Shemay Wilson

### Massachusetts

Matthew David Allen, Monique Cassie, Matthew Manuel Delgado, John E Drummond, Eduardo Ferreira, Katie Goodwin, John Ji, Michael Lohnes, Aleyda Yatska Lopez, AnneMarie Novak, Bhavisha Patel, Bryan Piesz, Mark Porter, Veronica Reczko, Michael Rogers, Zachary Senecal, Kelley B. Smith, Jessica Sutherland, Amanda E. Williams

### Michigan

Michael Jared Gray, Amy Kauffmann, Charles W. Shrader, Dollena Thomas, Danielle VanDeWater

### Minnesota

Janell Baker, Jesus Baltazar, Rachel M. Christen, Dustin J. Hinz, Colton Hulbert, Christina Hunziker, Kanika Jackson, Kristen Martinez, Kristyn Mensink, Alyssa Perry, Allyssa Bethany Ritschel, Qiana Schmidt, Alexis Schwochert, Tammy R. Stock, Brian Alleni

### Mississippi

Jackquelyn Sykes

### Missouri

Estelle Bell, Gina R. Bell, Ryan L. Chapin-Smith, Karmyn Clark, Devin Cusick, Toni L. Davidson, Amanda S. Eckard, Chad Ganaway, Christopher Grado, Tiara C. Grim, Laura Hammond, Tashia Hankins, Stephanie Dawn Hockaday, Ashley B. Hubbard, Katrece S. Merritt, Patricia L. Moore, Sheila G. Sims, Pamela S. Trower, Shanice Williams, Earl S. Young II

### Montana

David Sorensen

### Nebraska

Alfred Adi, Terra L. Boyer, Alicia Green, Terri M. Grimes, Nicholas A. Madden, Michelle R. Medich, Lillie-Anne N. Troutt, Leslie J. Troutt, Amber N. Van Wey

### Nevada

David Harnitz

### New Hampshire

Kelly Arnold, Joshua A. DeNauw, Christine Marie Gerrish, Gregory Grant, Jack M. Guyette, Brett Andrew Hanlon, Stacey Harris-Edwards, Catherine M. Martin, Irving Scales

### New Jersey

Parikh Bansari, Aisha Behlin, Samy Beshai, Bernadette Chisolm-Wilson, Shannol M. Clarke, Lakira R. Davis, Yanibel Deleon, Babatunde G. Dosunmu, James Douglas, Tracy Edwards, Pamela Fitzgerald, Rafael Flores Jr., Christine K. Harris, Irvin Henry, Alexis Herreros, Romonda D. Hickman, Bradley Johnson, Joonho Matt Karl, Manuel Lizardo, Danyiel R. Matthews, Sharese Mazyck, James Miller, Denaya S. Myers, Trushika Patel, Joanne Perri, Mary S. Perumpail, Nicole L. Picaro, Ashraf H. Rezk, Matthew F. Sausman, Jasmine A. Whitaker, Victor O. White, Hilda Woodson

### New Mexico

Alice Luera, Jennifer Montez, Danielle Romero, Crystal Sears

### New York

Bridget Barry, Housline Benjamin, Joseph Birchenough, Michael Brotherton, Marla Chauvin, Nicholas Degrace, Patty Fisher, Kayla Ketchum, Anthony Kuhn, Andrew Lathrop, Sarah Sabino, Kharee Christian Salahuddin, Brian Serrano, Deon M. Smith, Alyssa Tomkins, Trina Underhill

### North Carolina

Donte L. Bessent, Alexis E. Bond, Debra P. Clayton, Clarence Davis Jr., Leon Faison, AntoNina M. Graves, Debra H. Lawson-Johnson, Ryan Williams, MaKisha Shereka Young

### North Dakota

Sharon Ann Opdahl

### Ohio

Hallie J. Adair, Trisha Baker, Ernest Blanton, Paris Brown, Amanda K. Bulcher, Tabitha Fourman, John F. Klenk, Kimberly L. Kohlenberg, Tiffany C. Larkin, Dylan A. Martin, Alison M. Merrill, Aaron J. Nauman, Alovode J. Sangnidjo, John Smithers

### Oklahoma

Shelley D. Cole, Joseph M. DeSimone, Summer M. Hyde, William Lynn Watson

### Oregon

Ronald C. Ryther, David J. Sims, Benjamin Vargha

### Pennsylvania

Catherine A. Adams, Xaira Arguinzoni, Kiayonah A. Bailey, Mena Beshara, Shahzad M. Bhatti, Reginald Boose, Jennifer Bushey, Deirdre Carter, Megan Lynn Cassidy, Kimberly Cummings, Felicia R. Davis, Tracy A. Evans, Michelle Ferguson, Michael Gracia, Joshua Graul, Bill Grimenstein, Martin Hoesch, Deborah D. Holloway, Clitona Hulsinger, Jaquil Jacobs, Lisa R. Jones, Jacqueline Jones, Vartouhi Kazanijan-Rinick, Kelly A. Knipe, Shawn C. Laughman, Phylicia Manes, Tyahisa Millner, Stanley Montgomery, Kimberly J. Morton, Irina Mushaeva, Giselle Ottley, Robert Perkins III, Stephanie Pettis, Morgan E. Petzold, John Pirela, Jessica L. Probst, Shannon J. Santiago, Bill Smith, Sonia Camacho Snead, Jennifer Tayeras, Claudia R. Taylor, Alexander Tittle, Joel Watson, Terri Yatison, Alyssa Zaccagnini

### Puerto Rico

Marimar Marimar Rivera Medina, Eric Noel Molina Cruz

### Rhode Island

Amanda Caires, Nicholas Moniz Jr.

### South Carolina

Mateen Abdul, Amar A. Alawar, Antonia Andrews, Pernell A. Battle, Andrea C. Beloc, Ella S. Black, Nanessa Iris Bradshaw, Damian Bryant, Kimberly Chestnut, Jermeine Christian, Adriene L. Crawford, Britney Elyssa Brook Cumiskey, Alastair C. Daris, Jessie J. DeSpirito, Karen Dowd, Kimberly Dunbar, Daniel Etim, Nekeesha Felder, Evelyn J. Fox, Karell A. Gantt, Brenda Garcia, Brandi N. Gause, Queen Gillespie, Francis T. Glenn, Kaisha Grier, Stacie Gunnell, Amy L. Hufham, Penny Jenkins, Travis Johnson, Latoya D. Kilgore, Zhadayla Miller, James Mimms, Brittany Morrison, Shermal Mungin, Nicole Parrish, David Paterniti, Latoya C. Peroret, Teresa Pruitt, Jennifer J. Reeves, Kelli S. Rose, Deziree T. Ross, Yolanda V. Sanders, George M. Shaw, Kayla N Short, Chrystal G. Skaggs, Eddie L. Skinner, Dominiqu C. Stenort, Ronald Storey, Linda T. Stroble, Tiarra Sullivan, Courtney D. Watson, Latasha

B. Williams, Kip A. Wilson

### South Dakota

Welcome!

Melinda Brence, Ronda Moe

Tracy L. Adams, Nyisha Adams,

### Tennessee

Lynette Brown, Sharon Daniels, Sharon Renee Horner, Michelle R. Mitchel, Erica Montgomery, Mallory Ray, Charles Jeffrey Seay, Cammie K. York

### Texas

Charles Adjei, Mohammad Alqadhi, Maria Carmen Avila, Darryel Bailey, Sheila Bailey, Aaron P. Barcuch, Michael Bell, Johnny W. Bethune, Sheri Y. Blackmon, Monica Bobbit, Tiffany Brewer, Chrystal L. Brooks, Nedra L. Cameron, TeAndrea M Campbell, Lori Carey, Alicia C. Chaney, Sharon L. Cleveland, Quinn Cruz-Hawkins, Brenda S. De La Rosa, Erica S. Derby, William Dyck, Michael U. Humphrey Ese, Juana Espino, Cody Danielle Freeman, Keyonne Garner, Kiwana M. Gatlin, Angela M. Gavin, Jennifer R. Gee, Darren Giles-Bay, Roshanda Gormer, Joseph G. Goss, Veronica F. Green-Battles, Shandra K. Hall, Tyrena L. Harris, Phillip F. Harrison, LaQuinta D. Hawkins, Nina N. Heath, Brett William Heinen, Debra A. Hendrix, Aaron I. Hernandez, Priscilla A. Jackson, Amy K. Jennings, LaKia R. Johnson, Kimbarlee L. Johnson, Redrick B. Jones, Donna Jones, Altina F. Kargbo, Skyler M. Kilgore, Landa L. Koppenol, Cynthia Lohman, Chrystal Y. Lowery, Sterreca L. Mayfield, Ryan D. McConnell, Brenda Mendez, Cynthia A. Moore, Karina Moselev, Rav W. Murry, Claudette L. Nash-Chisolm, Michelle Paris, Homer Perkins, Colby D. Qualls, Glenda A. Richard, Efrain Rivera, Davion M. Rogers, Kenneth R. Ruelas, Karina M. Salazar, Daniel P. Samuel, Stephanie Schlesinger, Joseph A. Sevalia, James C. Simons, Satnam Singh, Jacquelyn L. Smith, Larry W. Thornton, Chasity S. Todd, Shawn A. Watson, George Williams II, Jadarius A. Wilson, Jodi Wilson, Alicia L. Winn, Victor D. Woods, Joseph M. Wright, Latrese Wynn, Noelle R. Ybarra

### Utah

Scott Smith

Megan M. O'Brien

### Virginia

Kimberly M. Bunner, Jennifer DeMarr, Joslin R. Harris, Traci R. Miller, Ania S. Muriel, Loukisha M. Quartey

### Washington

Bernie John Albelda, John Alo Jr.,
Maria Aquino, Sandeep Bhuller, Conor
D. Carter, Christopher M Casillas,
Stephanie A. Daughtry, Robert Blake
Douglas, Laurel L. Dubuque, Cory R.
Gagnon, Jewon Ha, Nicholas J. Jensen,
Kevin Kleidon, Vera V. Kroshko, Dany
Leiva-Batres, Suki Porter, Dinetta M.
Scott, Yadwinder Singh

### Wisconsin

Sara Rose Christenson, Hunter Cook, Colleen M. Daron, Justin Michael Dent, Brian Dory, Andrea L. Garski, Dameko Harper, Chauncey Harville, Jared E. Herro, Sarah A. Hiess, Rebecca A. Karlen, Jeremy McDonough, Zachary Mindham, Keisha Lynette Morris, Melissa M. Popp, Lynne Schroeder, Bethany C. Smith, Shannon Sullivan, Ethan L. Vizer

# I Was Thinking...

## Life Is a Roller Coaster

**Darcy McDonough**, Oregon Chapter editor and Postmaster of Umatilla

The past three months have been a roller coaster of emotions in my life. For those of you who don't know, on June 26, my husband Patrick had an accident while helping a friend cut down a tree. This changed many things in our lives.

He sustained a pilon fracture in his right tibia, a smaller fracture in his left tibia, as well as tearing everything in his left knee he could tear. And to top it off, he fractured his L3 vertebrae. That is the short version!

Patrick spent 2½ weeks in the hospital. He has had two surgeries on his right leg; his right tibia was surgically repaired. We are waiting to see if, at the end of September, he can start to put weight on it. His left leg seems to be healing on its own, but, until he is able to bear weight, we won't know what his pain levels are.

We also are waiting for the three-month check on his back to see where that stands. We have been doing a lot of hurry up and waiting. Patrick is able to get himself around the house in a wheelchair thanks to a little demolition I did to our bedroom and bathroom door frames.

He didn't hurt his arms, except for some scrapes. He is very strong in that regard, so that has been a blessing. The situation could have been so much worse, but he is a very positive person, for which I am thankful.

I was able to take some time off to be with him at the hospital thanks to other Postmasters covering my office or sending me clerk help. It goes to show we all are in this together.

The accident changed our summer plans. I won't lie; I was mad at my husband for getting hurt. We were going to drive to the national convention in Denver and do some sightseeing on our way back to Oregon, but that didn't happen.

I was sad to miss the convention because it's an opportunity to see our UPMA family from around the country. On Wednesday, Aug. 30, I received a text from one of those family members saying, "Congratulations!" I said, "Thank you," but was confused as to why I got the message.

We just had a new grandson and I thought that was the reason for the message. But I got many more messages of congratulations; one was a picture of a plaque with my name on it—I was named UPMA Editor of the Year! I was in shock; it was surreal and I started to cry.



There are so many wonderful editors in our organization. Never in a million years would I have thought I would receive this honor. I would like to thank everyone who voted for me.

I also would like to recognize Ruben Valdez from the Oregon Chapter for winning 1st place for "Best Use of a Headline" in this year's Editor's Contest: "We've Got Our Checklist and They're Checking It Twice." Without the articles the Oregon Chapter members submit, I wouldn't have a newsletter to publish.

When a life-changing event happens, you run through the gamut of emotions— sometimes daily. I definitely have had them all, but the one feeling I have had the most is being thankful. I am thankful I have a career that affords me paid time off to be at doctors' appointments.

I am thankful for my peers and my team who help in my office so I can be away when needed. I am thankful to our friends, family and neighbors who have pitched in to help do chores this summer. And I am thankful to my UPMA family and friends for the encouraging words and prayers when we most needed them.

Most of all, I am thankful my husband is on the mend and navigating the long recovery road we are traveling. We hope he will be healed so we can see you all in Orlando next year!

Reprinted from the September 2023 issue of The Oregon Leader; Darcy McDonough, editor.

# Whatever Happened to Joan Darling?



Hello, everyone! I made it to Denver this summer. It was a great trip and so fun to see so many friends. I was

asked by many as to what I have been doing since retirement.

I cared for my mom and dad for eight years after I retired. They needed help, so I retired as Postmaster of Hanford, CA, and took on the role of caregiver and running their ranch. After they died, I bought the ranch. It's only 30 acres, but it's enough to keep the land clear of someone else planting trees to obscure my view.

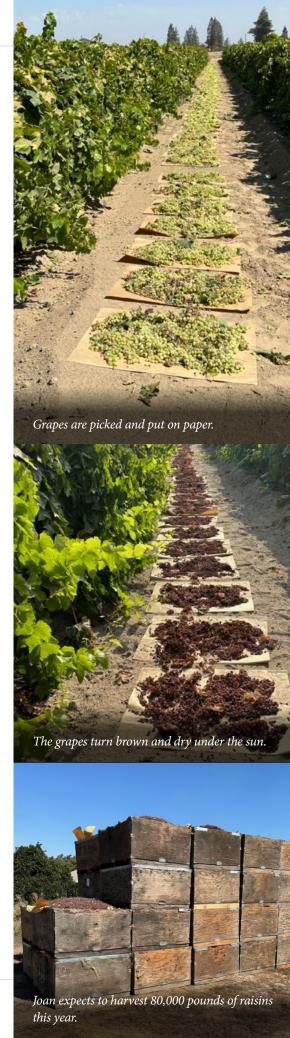
Sounds crazy, I know, but I like being able to sit outside and see the distant mountains and the road through the field. My land is planted in Thompson Seedless grapevines.

The grapes are picked and put on paper. They lie on the ground until the sun turns them dry and brown—Sun-Maid raisins! I am a grower for Sun-Maid. After the grapes dry, they are picked up and dumped into bins.

This year, I expect to harvest 80,000 pounds of raisins. The bins then are transported to the Sun-Maid plant for processing. After that, they are ready for you to buy and enjoy. I hope all is well with everyone!

femailgolf@yahoo.com







# New Convention Registration Process Coming Soon

### By Lori McDonough

Greetings from the beautiful Sunshine State of Florida! Recently, I had the opportunity to meet via Zoom with Leslie Howard and Heather Robidoux, our new event planners from Crisp Events. I am excited to take advantage of their knowledge and possibly implementing some suggested changes we feel will make our 8th UPMA National Convention a success.

One change to be implemented is the registration process. Very soon, you will be able to easily register online. Refer to the UPMA website at unitedpma.org for updates over the next few weeks as this process is finalized.

The registration process for the national convention will be very similar to the one here that has been set up for the Membership Academy and Kickoff Meeting in January. Through the link, you not only are able to register to attend,

you also can make your hotel arrangements from the same, easy-to-use location. This link is posted on the national website.

We have had a number of inquiries about the villas at the Caribe Royale. At this time, all the villas in our room block have been assigned. Besides the villas, every room on the property is a suite:

- Spacious, modern one-bedroom suites— Separate living room and bedroom, spacious bathroom with convenient, separate vanity.
- Bedroom features— King or double queen beds, 55-inch

- wall-mounted, high-definition television, USB charging stations, safe, iron and ironing board and ample storage space.
- Living room features—Sofa with queen-size sofa bed, 55-inch wall-mounted, high-definition television, Keurig\* coffee maker, mini cooler, microwave, ergonomic workstation and USB charging stations.

Stay tuned for more information in future issues such as experiencing Orlando, registration updates and topics that will help enhance your experience as an attendee. So, if you have not already done so, save the dates, Aug. 24-30, and plan to have an unforgettable experience in the Sunshine State at the Caribe Royale!

Lori McDonough, Florida Chapter secretarytreasurer and Postmaster of Bell, is the very excited 2024 National Convention chair.

### 3rd Annual Membership Academy and Kickoff Meeting

January 14, 2024 Caribe Royale, Orlando FL

The 2024 UPMA Membership Academy training will be held at the Caribe Royale Orlando on Sunday, January 14, 2024.

A light breakfast will be available beginning at 7 AM. Lunch and all necessary materials will be also provided on Sunday. The training sessions will begin at 8:30 AM and are expected to conclude by 5 PM.

### Schedule

Coming soon!

Every member wishing to attend must register.



If you prefer to submit your registration by mail, please download the registration form here.

### Hotel Reservations:

Contact the Caribe Royale Orlando to book your hotel room. Mention that you are attending UPMA Membership Academy. UPMA rates are available until December 11, 2023 or until the room block is sold out, whichever comes first.

Caribe Royale Phone Number: 800-823-8300 Group Code: UPMA Membership Academy

BOOK ONLINE NOW



## **UPMA** Retired

## **A Worthwhile Book**

Mandy Heslep-Whitten, president

I attended the UPMA Central Area Officers' Summit in Indianapolis in late September. I enjoyed meeting and chatting with retired Postmaster Paul A. Joseph, currently serving as the Ohio Chapter editor. He has written a book, "The Untold Story of Operation Iraqi Freedom."

According to a review on Amazon, "This book is a first-hand account of a company in action from the mobilization point through the actual time in the Iraq theater of operations. The book looks at the human side of soldiers and is an easy read; you will not want to put it down." Paul previously donated all proceeds from the book to the Wounded Warrior Project.

At the Central Area summit, he donated all proceeds to UPMA PAC. I talked to Paul about *UPMA Gold News Today* and *In The Mailbox* and asked if he would be willing to make donations to the UPMA Scholarship Fund if members ordered the book from him through either publication; he graciously agreed.

There is no set price for the book; you can purchase a book with a donation of your choice, knowing all proceeds are donated back to the cause. Any orders received from *UPMA Gold News Today* or *In The Mailbox* will go to the scholarship fund!

We always honor our veterans who have made this country strong. I just started reading the book; it's very interesting. Paul Joseph's address is 727 Atalan Trail, Lima, OH 45805; repins@bright.net; 419-236-0166. Please mention you learned about his book in the *UPMA Leader*, *UPMA Gold News Today* or *In the Mailbox*.

He shared this poem, "It Is the Soldier," by Charles Michael Province, U.S. Army:

It is the Soldier, not the minister who has given us **freedom of religion**.

It is the Soldier, not the reporter who has given us freedom of the press.

It is the Soldier, not the poet who has given us **freedom of speech**.

It is the Soldier, not the campus organizer who has given us **freedom to protest**.

It is the Soldier, not the lawyer who has given us the **right to a fair trial.** 

It is the Soldier, not the politician who has given us the **right to vote**.

It is the Soldier who salutes the flag, Who serves beneath the flag, And whose coffin is draped by the flag, Who allows the protester to burn the flag.

# **Autograph Books Full Of Memories**

Keva Richardson, historian

Did you ever have an autograph book? They were little bound books about six by four inches, full of blank pages. You would hand it to your friends, family or whoever and ask them to write down a memory or just some words so you would remember them. I have two—one from my great-grandmother, Sicily Island Travis, and the other from my grandmother, Clara Eleanor Omer.

One page in great-grandmother's book reads: "If our lips keep from slips, five things observe with care: of whom we speak, to whom we speak—how and when and where." The page was signed, "With regards of Maude Goodman" and dated June 27, 1883!

Yes, indeed, over 140 years ago, yet very sound advice. A page in Grandmother "Nellie" Omer's book reads: "Nellie, when you are bending o'er the tub, think of me before you rub. If the water be too hot, WAIT and forget me not. Your friend, Jessie Hann, April 22, 1896."

These are just two of many, many pages written by classmates, friends and family of these two women. It makes me stop and wonder if our grandchildren and great grandchildren will be fortunate to find and keep any emails or text messages we may have written to a friend or relative. What do you think?

I want to thank UPMA Retired President Mandy Heslep-Whitten for the opportunity to serve as retiree historian during her term. I retired over two decades ago. I have enjoyed over eight decades of one birthday cake per year.

It's time for me to sit back and relax because I can *remember* to do those two things. Many other things fall in the "iffy" category. What has this column got to do with UPMA? Information and lifelong friendships!

## The Seasons of Life

Cecilia Oak, KY UPMA Retired president

Most of us are in the autumn stage of life. You never are fully prepared when your spouse or significant other dies. Whether it is a sudden death or lengthy illness, the emotional trauma can affect your thought process and ability to initiate or complete the many tasks required when someone dies.

I hope sharing my experience after my husband's death will be helpful; every person's situation is unique.

Make sure each of you has a last will and testament! This saved me from a lengthy court process and made probate much easier. I also encourage you each to have a power of attorney and living will. I scanned a copy of both documents on my phone for easy access to share with hospitals or nursing homes.

Have you talked to a funeral home about arrangements? Many people don't want to preplan; my husband was one of these. After Jerry was admitted to the hospital and the doctors told me he wasn't coming home, I made an appointment and began planning the funeral and purchased our burial plots. This was one of the best decisions I made to avoid the stress of trying to make necessary decisions in a short time frame.

After Jerry's death, I canceled his dental insurance, which was automatically deducted from our checking account, and his cell phone. Our cell phone carrier allowed me to suspend his service for three months while he was hospitalized. You may not want to do this if your loved one still can call, but Jerry had lost that ability.

Know the phone's password. Have a copy of passwords for all computers and programs your loved one used.

If you are a member of a cooperative, such as an electric cooperative, notify the company. Our electric was in Jerry's name and qualified him for capital credits earned. This is payable now for deceased members with different payment options.

Be prepared to be patient with all the paperwork and phone calls you will make. If the deceased was a Postmaster or federal employee and was retired, have their Civil Service Active (CSA) number and Social Security number written in a book for easy access.

If there is a Thrift Savings account or a 401k, know the phone numbers to call and initiate the process as an annuitant. Because Jerry was a veteran, I used the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs. The field representative was a tremendous help.

Also, locate these important documents: will, birth certificate, Social Security card, marriage license, divorce papers if it is a second marriage, military discharge papers (DD-214) and life insurance policies.

Do you know where your Social Security card is? I couldn't find my card and had to apply for a duplicate, which delayed the process of applying for benefits. Check your life insurance policy or other documents and update beneficiaries, if needed.

Don't let the overwhelming paperwork and phones calls interfere as you process your grief. Know you are not alone in this process and do not hesitate to reach out for help from the many agencies or groups that can help.

Talk to others in similar situations who can guide you. Grieving is a lifelong process; everyone's journey is different. However, preplanning can make the process a little easier.

# Working on Membership

Margie Jacobson, Area 9 Rep

I attended the 2023 Kickoff Membership Meeting and have been working with active and retired members to increase membership in my four chapters: Minnesota, North and South Dakota and Wisconsin.

Some of the chapters have incentive programs, which have helped boost membership. We are working on retiree membership, but, in the present Postal Service climate, it's a tougher sell, despite being a terrific value.

With the upcoming changes to our postal health insurance, I have been working with members and getting questions answered. Although we still have time to make decisions regarding our selections, I have been proactive and getting the word out. More information will be coming as policy and rate information become available.

This year, I was able to speak at all four conventions. I went over Mandy's talking points and discussed them with the retirees from each chapter. We also covered information on the health insurance plan changes.

Another issue is H.R. 82, the Social Security Fairness, that would repeal the WEP and GPO. We have 290 co-sponsors. We are awaiting long-overdue action on this bill.



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