

BR. 14 NEWSLETTER



VOL 51, NO. 01

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SERVING LOUISVILLE, FORT KNOX, BARDSTOWN, RADCLIFF, LAGRANGE,
LEBANON, EMINENCE, SHELBYVILLE, VINE GROVE, & SPRINGFIELD

JANUARY 2022



TONY WEDDLE
President

In accordance with the NALC constitution, the branch president is required to make a report on the progress and condition of the branch at the end of a term in office. Therefore, my article for this month's newsletter will serve as that requirement. Since our branch publishes a monthly newsletter, I should be able to keep it brief, but informative, since a lot of the information I need to report is oftentimes wrote about throughout the year by me or other branch officers.

FINANCES: At the end of this term, I can report that the finances for our branch are in great condition. By continuing our commitment of taking a balanced budget approach to our finances, we've been able to keep the branch in the black for several years now. As everyone is aware, we've endured a staffing shortage at the Louisville installation for several years. And obviously, with fewer letter carriers, there's fewer dues received by the branch. Which is a substantial amount of loss in income. But we've stayed within our budget and even been able to make some improvements at the union hall.

It's recommended that branches acquire one-year's liquid assets, (money quickly accessed) to cover one-year of branch expenses. It's been our goal for several years to save and invest enough revenue to cover a year's expenses but just in the past year we've achieved that goal. We are probably one of the few branches in the country, at least branches our size, that have achieved that goal and that's

not considering that our branch owns our union hall. Which is probably the best union hall in our NALC region.

CONTRACT ENFORCEMENT/ GRIEVANCES: As to contract enforcement, our Executive Vice-President, Vice-President, and our branch stewards have continued to do a great job of defending the rights of our members. Despite most branch representatives working excessive hours to get the mail delivered due to the current staffing issues. But as I informed members last month, working excessive hours has taken a toll on several stewards and we're having trouble replacing stewards who have either resigned or retired. This is a problem that as a branch we have got to correct if our branch is to remain strong at defending the rights of our members. Essentially, we need more involvement from our members and folks willing to enforce the contract.

Nevertheless, in my last report on the conditions of the branch three years ago, I reported that the branch averaged 700 grievances a year during that term of office (2016, 2017, 2018). It was hopeful that the grievance numbers would decline for the term just ended, but unfortunately, the numbers ballooned to all-time highs due to management's failure to comply with the terms of the national agreement. For the past three years, the branch averaged 2,360 grievances a year. Just in 2021, the branch recorded 3,324 grievances. Those numbers are way too high, and they exhibit the strain placed on our contract enforcers to process that many grievances. Most of the grievances are due to Article 8/Hours of Work violations and working letter carriers beyond 12 and 60 work-hour restrictions. Which, again, is the result of the Postal Service's inability to hire new workers.

MEMBERSHIP: When it comes to union membership, we've continued to hold steady with a very respectable percentage of members. Especially, when it comes to full-time regular carriers. In my last report on the progress and condition of the branch on this subject, I reported record numbers for union membership with a 99% membership rate for full-time carriers. Obviously, it was going to be a challenge to maintain those numbers, but we've done well. Currently, our full-time membership percentage stands at 97.96%. That's something we can be proud of as a branch. The overall total for full-time carriers and CCAs, which I'll have to state as approximate since our CCA rosters change almost daily, is an impressive 97.69%.

NEGOTIATIONS: After the ratification of our current national agreement, we conducted local negotiations with all the postal installations under Branch 14's umbrella in the Spring of 2021. Due to the Covid pandemic and staffing shortages we were basically forced to take a step back from some of the goals we initially wanted to achieve during negotiations and just wait a couple years until the pandemic was behind us. So, there were only a few minor amendments in local agreements for a few of the installations where we represent city carriers. Our current national agreement is set to expire in May 2023, so another round of local negotiations will be upon us soon enough. But the local agreements we currently have with the Postal Service are pretty darn good and we'll have to make serious considerations of moving forward with any improvements in our local agreements we may want to pursue when the time comes.

Lastly, this past Fall our members agreed to accept the merger of the Campbellsville P.O. into the branch. We haven't received final approval from NALC headquarters on the matter, but the merger should be complete very soon. That will put us up to 11 installations where we represent city carriers. That number isn't considered a lot compared to some other branches our size, but the distance between all those installations is enormous. It can be a challenge at times to represent members due to the distance, but we can all agree that with Branch 14 resources we can better represent NALC members at smaller installations.

Thank you all for the honor and opportunity to continue being your branch president and thanks to all our older members for the strong foundation you established.

At this month's union meeting we'll have the installation of officers for a new term in office. I hope to see many of you there. Until then, be safe and remember, that if you're going to do the job, you might as well take the time it takes to do the job right.



Any picture that you would like to see in the Branch 14 Newsletter should be emailed to the editor (billrock2k@yahoo.com) You can also text photos (with a short explanation) to the editor at 502-345-3732
Thank you, Bill Davis.

All facts, opinions and statements appearing within this publication are those of the writers and editors themselves, and are in no way to be construed as statements, positions or endorsements by Branch 14 or its officers.

**BRANCH 14 NEWSLETTER**

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964-3276

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40204.....Rick Cate
40205.....Vacant
40206.....Jack Kindlesparker
40207.....Carol Gast
40209/14/15.....Missy Harris
40211/12.....Damon Braxton
40213.....Jarett Sims
40216.....Vacant
40217.....Jeff Richards
40218.....Matt Weegens
40219.....Ron Frye
40220.....Carol Gast
40222.....Vacant
40228/91.....Tina Davis
40229.....Ron Frye
40241/42.....Adriane Shanklin
40243.....Ron Gast
40258.....Josh Whaley
40272.....Josh Whaley
40299.....Ron Gast
Bardstown.....Ron Osborne
LaGrange.....Vacant
Lebanon.....Ron Osborne
Shelbyville.....Vacant
Springfield.....Ron Osborne
Fort Knox.....Renee McCoy
Radcliff.....Reggie Sanders
Vine Grove.....Jose Montoya

**WELCOMING TWO NEW
MEMBERS TO THE BRANCH 14
EBOARD.
GREG RAY AND GARY EDISON ARE
NEW BRANCH 14 TRUSTEES.
A SPECIAL THANKS TO FORMER
TRUSTEES
CAROL GAST AND JARRETT SIMS**

Visit the Branch Website at:
nalcbr14.com
or **Like** us on Facebook



RON GAST
Executive Vice-President

Well we have started a new year, but it seems that last year's problems carried right over. Here we are still incredibly understaffed, overworked and just tired of the same old issues. COVID carries a large part of the blame, but management's inability to hire and retain employees is the real issue. As I have stated in previous articles, when you bring carriers in and treat them like crap, most are not going to stick around. And that is where we are, all being justified in managements minds by using the "the mail has to get delivered" excuse, when we all know that isn't happening on a daily basis.

So speaking of the new employees that aren't sticking around, for a plethora of reasons, we are now and have been promoting CCAs at a record pace. CCAs converted to full time during the year 2020 spent an average of 1 year, 2 months and 26 days as a CCA. During the year 2021, there were 12 times that CCAs were converted. The longest period carriers spent as a CCA during this year was 11 months and 10 days. The shortest period spent as a CCA was 4 months. The average during 2021 was 7 months and 4 days spent as a CCA prior to conversion to full time. The latest conversions occurred on December 18 and the average time spent as a CCA for those carriers was 4 months and 17 days. This is a bunch of numbers that add up to one thing; CCAs are converting to full time at record rates, which simply put means with much less experience as a carrier prior to converting to full time and getting their own assignment.

Now I for one think that it's great that our employees are starting their career sooner so that they are earning time toward retirement and reaching top pay. However, we are now seeing less experienced full time carriers, and we all need to step up to help. This is not a bad thing, it just means that each of us need to help guide these new full time carriers in the performance of their duties. In the average 4 months and 17 days that our latest converted carriers spent as CCAs, they were sent all over the city, with different rules at all 14 stations and learning different ways to handle the day to day issues of carrying

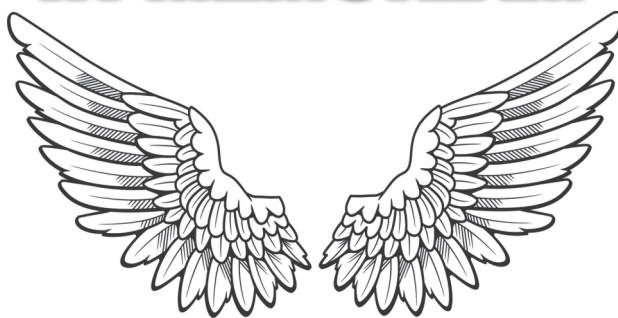
mail. So when you see a newly converted carrier starting their new assignment, whether it be a route or a swing, take the time to see where they may be lacking and offer "positive" reinforcement and guidance. Don't complain about their "inexperience", show them how an "experienced" letter carrier does the job. We can help our younger carriers become the professional carriers that we all should be by staying positive and working together.

As many have noted on our Branch 14 calendar, there is a typo in January listing the 26th twice. Slight oversight on our part, so as you may have guessed, Tuesday the 26th should be the 25th. Make the change to your calendar and then make sure that you make every effort to attend our first meeting of the year on Tuesday, January 25th at 7:30 pm. Hope to see you there.

Knowledge is power. Solidarity forever!



IN MEMORIAM



BRIAN McGINNIS

Shared Services

(National Human Resources)

1-877-477-3273

<http://liteblue.usps.gov>



RON OSBORNE
Vice-President

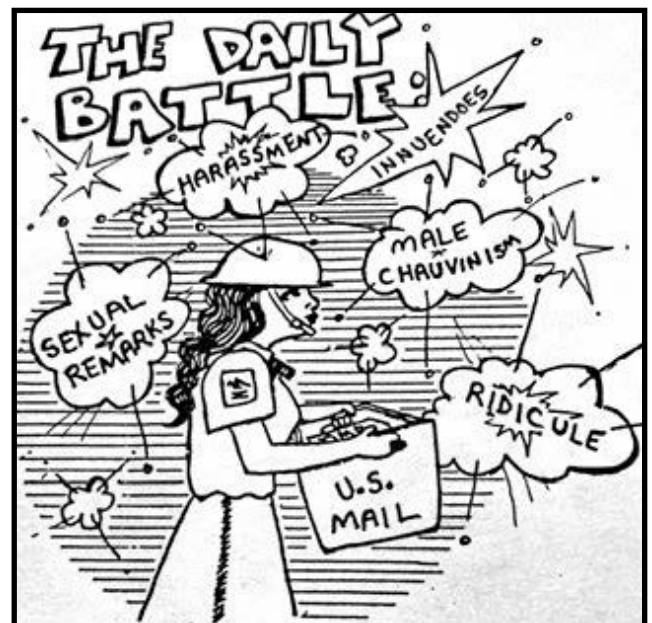
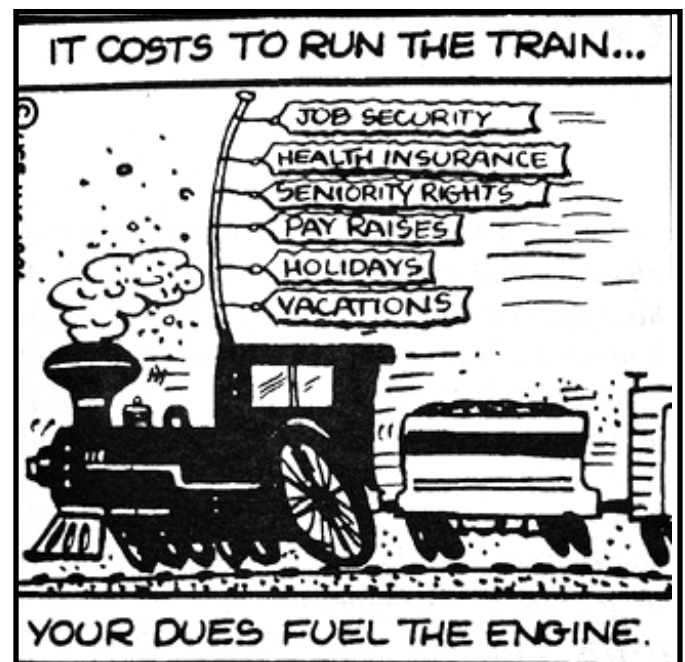
Now what? Well, 2021 is gone. Here comes 2022. So, what has changed? Nothing. It's a new year, that's it. What's going to change? Well, that is up to you, the membership of Branch 14. But what can one member do to change anything? Well, as one member, very little, but as a part of a larger crowd that all sticks together for a common goal you can accomplish anything. I know, there's a pandemic, I am working to many hours to do anything else, and management, what little management there is left, gets worse all the time. I've got kids to take care of, schools are closed sometimes and there's no room at daycare if I can find a daycare. My yard needs mowing, my spouse says I'm never home and the cow needs milking. All true stories of what you are dealing with.

As I speak to many members daily, I hear, what is the Union going to do to fix this situation. Things are getting worse, and nobody is doing a thing. Well, to bring everybody up to speed, there are a few Branch 14 officers and stewards who are carrying on as best they can, doing three times the workload and carrying mail in their spare time. Sound familiar? Yep, that's right, they are doing the same thing you are plus trying to take care of the members at the same time. So, let's ask ourselves, who is the Union anyway? Well, that's a simple answer, it's you!

If only a handful of you out there were to step up and become a steward, an on-the-job trainer, an academy instructor or any other one of many things that you could do, then the burden on all becomes much less. Have you ever seen any one person build a house by themselves? I have not. The more people you have working on that house, the quicker it gets built and quicker you move in and enjoy it. It's the same with a strong union family. The more members step up, pitch in, and support one another then the faster things get done. This is true whether things are great, we have all the CCA's we need, and every assignment has a regular on it, or we are at half strength. It makes no difference.

Why am I preaching about this? Throughout history I am not aware of any revolutions, strikes, or uprisings to overthrow ruthless dictatorships when everybody has what they need or want. People band together in tough times. As things get worse, there is no choice other than standing together if you are going to survive. People together survive. People alone do not.

I hope none of you take offense to my aggressive nature in the words I am saying. I am not trying to shame anyone or sell anyone a used car. I'm just stating facts and asking that if you can, step up. If you cannot, then support those that do. I wish everyone a Happy New Year and hope to see many of you at our next meeting.





STEVE TERRY
Recording Secretary

CCA Healthcare Plan

Effective January 1 CareFirst-Blue Cross Blue Shield is the new plan administrator for the USPS Health Benefit Plan. This plan is available for City Carrier Assistants and other non-career postal employees.

Any CCA that had the United Health Care benefit plan on December 31 of 2021 will have their health benefit plan switched to CareFirst. New enrollment cards and plan information should be sent to the employee after CareFirst receives information on CCA's enrolled in the United Health Care plan.

All covered employees should review this plan. Information can be found on liteblue Human Resources, then click on link under Insurance titled USPS Health Benefits Program. This will take you to information on CareFirst. The link titled Summary of Benefits and Coverage provides an overview of what the plan covers and your share of health care costs.

The change in plan administrators was positive because of the reduction of premiums. Self Only is -\$47.50, Self Plus One is \$108.00 and Self and Family is \$153.00. This is a substantial decrease from -\$63.00 for Self Only under United Health Care. The premium for other coverage is also much lower but it is possible the benefits may not be as good.

If you have questions concerning your healthcare contact USPS shared services at 877-477-3273, or you can contact CareFirst at 833-960-4025.

Death Benefits-Death in Service

In the unfortunate event of the death to an active USPS employee, benefits can be paid to the spouse, former spouse or child. The benefits vary slightly for employees covered by FERS or CSRS. The Basic Employee Death Benefit (FERS) and Death Benefits – Death in Service (CSRS) language can

be found in the ELM (Employee and Labor Relations Manual), sections 587 and 567, respectively.

When an active employee dies, HRSSC (Human Relations Shared Service Center) is supposed to contact the next of kin or emergency addressee and advise such person of benefits payable and of the right to apply for the benefits. A surviving member(s) of the employee can contact HRSSC at 877-477-3273, listen to menu or select option 5 and then option 2 to report the death.

If you know of an active or retired letter carrier that has passed please call the branch office and leave us a message because this information doesn't get to the branch sometimes until weeks or months after the death, especially in the case of a retired letter carrier.

Information can also be found on the NALC website by entering "death of an active or retired carrier" in the search bar on the top right side of the page. If you have questions, please call the branch office at 502-964-3200 or NALC headquarters at 202-393-4695.



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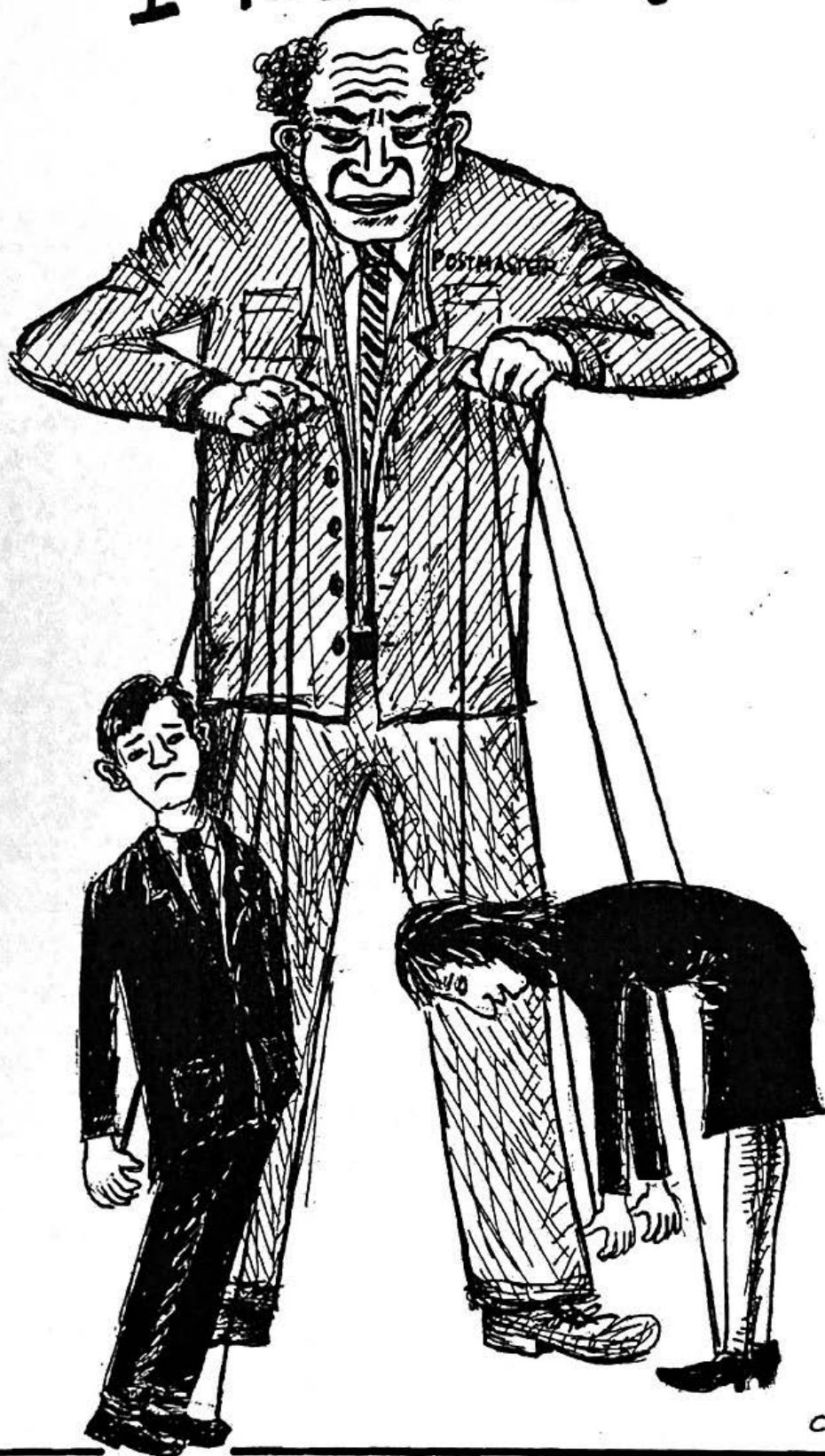
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C. AUSTIN BR 33



TOM WEBB
Health Benefits/Retirement



MISSY HARRIS
Community Activities Coordinator

Identification Cards

You will receive an identification (ID) card in the mail when you enroll. You should always carry your ID card with you. You must show it whenever you receive services from a Plan provider or fill a prescription at a NALC CareSelect retail pharmacy.

If you do not receive your ID card within thirty days of your effective date of enrollment, or if you need replacement cards, call 703-729-4677 or 888-636-6252, or write to 20547 Waverly Court, Ashburn, VA, 20149.

Cover Care

You can get care from any "covered provider" or "covered facility." How much the plan pays and how much you pay depends on the type of provider or facility you use. If you use our covered providers, you will pay less. We all know how high medical services and prescription drugs have risen in the last few years; it is in your best interest to use preferred providers for the services.

Vaccines and Masks are good for all of us.

Happy New Year. I hope everyone had a good holiday. My holiday was interrupted very rudely by COVID. I wanted to make sure everyone knows what to do if you test positive. First notify management. Then go to e-comp on the Department of Labor website and fill out a COVID-19 CA-1. You will be instructed from there how to fill out the form. You will need to upload test results from your COVID test. In a few days you will get your claim number via email, make sure your supervisor has it to put your time in for COP. If you have been off a few days, make sure your supervisor converts all your time to COP. The first 3 days, you must use your leave, but then should be on COP until you return. Unless you are off for 14 days, then you get the 3 days returned to you and all your time is COP.

Be watching the Branch 14 Facebook page and Branch website for the NCAA brackets and Superbowl pool. I am out to raise \$12k this year for Muscular Dystrophy so let's get this party started!

On March 20th, we will be having the Branch 14 Muscular Dystrophy Bowl-A-Thon. Please get a team together and come out for a Sunday Funday! We will have a 50/50 pot and Door prizes up for grabs, so come out and help us start the year off raising mad money for MDA. Four people to a team and we will as always have lanes set up for the kiddos. The station raising the most money gets bragging rights for the year!



NALC
Health Benefit Plan



NALC BRANCH 14 MDA BOWL-A-THON



MARCH 20th 1PM
KEN BOWL LANES
7021 SOUTHSIDE DR



ADRIANE SHANKLIN
Sergeant at Arms/Scribe

Happy New Years! I hope everyone made it into 2022 safely. On another note, I also hope you've been able to dodge Covid. If your station is anything like my mine, its being passed around. Drink a lot of fluids, vitamins, wash your hands, and wear your mask! Nothing's worse than coming to work sick, then having to deal with customers looking for their missed packages and mail.

With the different variants of Covid-19 popping up weekly we're struggling to have enough carriers to carry the mail. Of course, due to the holidays most carriers spent time with their families. We've come to learn that even if you've been vaccinated and boosted you can still contract Covid-19. Thus, the shortage we're seeing here. On top of the CDC giving the number of days you quarantine, and the work

work nurse saying, "no you have to wait 14 days". Then if you don't have Covid you're just plain tired of work. Plus adding the fact that the Post Office not only wants you to work your off day, but they want you to come in on Sunday as well! If you're not well rested, then you're just being unsafe. Make sure you're telling the supervisor prior to your off day on Sunday if you're unavailable. Fill out your 3971 or call the line, but don't just not show up.

Stay safe, stay masked up, and remember knowledge is power!



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Louisville, KY 40202

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