



**GREATER BOSTON  
POSTAL CUSTOMER COUNCIL**

**www.bostonpcc.org**



# POSTAL CUSTOMER COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

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## **PCC DAY 2023**

### **A SPECTACULAR EVENT**

***UPLIFTING. INSPIRING. INFORMATIVE.  
ENTERTAINING. MOVING. FUN. DELICIOUS.***

These words describe National PCC Day in Boston.

On September 20, 2023, your Greater Boston Postal Customer Council, joined by four other New England PCCs - Providence, Southern Connecticut, Northern Connecticut and Western Massachusetts – produced the premier PCC Day event of 2023.

If you missed it, this Newsletter offers you a glimpse of the exciting events and presentations of the day.

Held in the Great Hall of the Boston General Mail Facility, 240 industry and Postal personnel were treated to a fast-paced program with great variety.

Crowning our event was the keynote address delivered in person by Postmaster General Louis DeJoy. He expounded on the Delivering for America Plan and answered questions about it. His message was also presented in recorded form to other PCCs. You can watch it at [about.usps.com/video/PCCweek2023.mp4](https://about.usps.com/video/PCCweek2023.mp4)

It was also a day of awards to outstanding Industry and Postal leaders who devote their time to make our Postal Customer Councils work.



**Postmaster General Louis DeJoy**

Betsy Shortell, Director of Harvard University Mail and Distribution Services, was the inaugural recipient of the Alvin Silverstein Industry Person of the Year Award and George Kippenhan was awarded Postal Person of the Year for Greater Boston, adding to his recent selection as **National** Postal Member of the Year, 2023. In addition, our PCC was awarded a Platinum Certificate for achieving gold status for five years in a row.

A unique highlight of the day was the musical performance by 13-year-old Adrianna Kunevich who launched the program by singing the *Star-Spangled Banner* and later led the crowd in singing *Sweet Caroline* just as Postmaster General DeJoy entered the room. He was a good sport about it and even participated.

The entrepreneurial spirit was celebrated in two outstanding presentations which recounted the growth of two successful but very different businesses, each of which partnered with the Postal Service on their path to success. Read about PCI and about Chris Wrenn's two businesses, *Bridge Nine Records* and *Sully's*.

Good information was provided by Ji Kim-Kusel, District Sales Manager, Boston-RI, about USPS Ground Advantage.

The entire day was ably managed by our Postal Executives and Industry standouts, including Mike Rakes, District Manager Boston & RI and Kim Waltz, Providence PCC Executive Board and Cathedral Corporation.

In a touching moment, Kim presented to Postmaster General DeJoy a handmade wooden pen made by our beloved late colleague, Al Silverstein, a wood-turning hobbyist.

The day would not be complete without our participating vendors who exhibited their products and services in the hall, with raffles and with the delicious breakfast and lunch arranged by our own Anna Robinson.



Postmaster General Louis DeJoy and Greater Boston PCC Executive Board



## POSTMASTER GENERAL LOUIS DEJOY DELIVERS PCC DAY KEYNOTE IN BOSTON

When Postmaster General Louis DeJoy entered the Great Hall at the General Mail Facility prepared to talk serious Postal business, the crowd was on its feet and, led by young Adrianna Kunevich and Mike Rakes, immediately launched into a rendition of *Sweet Caroline*. He didn't miss a beat – he joined right in!



After that light-hearted start, the audience was ready to hear the Postmaster General's report on USPS's strategic 10-year-plan, **Delivering for America**. PMG DeJoy talked about the broad underpinnings of the plan as well as some of its operational characteristics. He emphasized the goals of improved operations, revenue growth, excellent service and employment stability and the critical need for the organization to be financially self-sufficient. These goals grow out of a vision for the future, a strategy for achieving it and an action plan to implement the strategy. The transformation of the organization, including change to management culture and philosophy, is under way.



At the nuts-and-bolts level, Postmaster General DeJoy described changes in processing, transportation, and network re-design. An overview with slides showed the 60 Regional Processing and Distribution Centers, 190 Local Processing Centers and 600 Sorting and Delivery Centers. The transformation of the network is projected to be completed during the next four years.

Progress to date includes improved delivery, modernized and updated facilities, new products such as Ground Advantage (expected to capture more package delivery) and a more sustainable and efficient operation.

The Postal Service aims to compete successfully for a larger share of American’s shipping and marketing budget. The PMG emphasized there is much more work to do.

You can see a video of a pre-taped address distributed to the other PCCs for their PCC Day events at [about.usps.com/video/PCCweek2023.mp4](https://about.usps.com/video/PCCweek2023.mp4)

At the end of his speech, on behalf of the PCCs, Kim Waltz presented Postmaster General DeJoy with a wooden pen made by our late colleague Al Silverstein, a wood-turning hobbyist. It was a touching moment for those of us who knew and worked with Al over the decades.

Before and after his appearance on stage, Postmaster General DeJoy had conversations with our other special guest, 13-year-old Adrianna Kunevich, and showed just how personable and down-to-earth he is.



## THE GREATER BOSTON PCC ACHIEVES PLATINUM

The Greater Boston PCC was awarded a Platinum Certificate at PCC Day for achieving gold status for five consecutive years. This consistently-excellent performance even harks back to the very earliest years of our PCC when, in 1968, the then-Postmaster General Lawrence O’Brien referred to the Greater Boston PCC (then in its seventh year) as “one of the most vigorous and effective in the nation!” Help us keep it going.



Receiving the Platinum Certificate:  
Greater Boston PCC Co-Chairs Tim O’Connell and Acting Postmaster Joshua Balcunas,  
flanked by Mike Rakes and Kim Waltz



# OUR STARS

## INDUSTRY PERSON OF THE YEAR - BETSY SHORTELL

## POSTAL PERSON OF THE YEAR - GEORGE KIPPENHAN



Betsy Shortell (middle), Al Silverstein Memorial Industry Person of the Year (with Mike Rakes and Kim Waltz)

It is difficult to imagine two people who do more for their colleagues and their industry than Betsy Shortell and George Kippenhan. That they were both selected for awards this year was just so fitting.

**Betsy Shortell** has been at Harvard University for 22 years and is currently the Director of Mail and Distribution Services and Interim Director of Parking and Commuter Choice. These departments are all under the Transportation umbrella at Harvard. Betsy began her career at Harvard at the Parking Office as the Assistant Manager. From there she was

promoted in 2007 to Manager of Mail and Distribution Services. In 2013 she was promoted to Director of Mail and Distribution Services. In October of this year, Parking and Commuter Choice has been added to her portfolio. Betsy's management resume began in retail, with the TJX Companies as her last stop before coming to Harvard. Even with her demanding job, Betsy devotes time and resources to the Greater Boston PCC. She has served in leadership positions, including Industry Co-Chair and PCC Secretary. Don't be misled by the latter title. It involves much more than recording/compiling notes of our Executive Board meetings. Rather it is the Industry-side Administrator of our PCC.

Betsy always steps up to do whatever is needed to move things forward, from coordinating meetings, serving on committees (both on the Greater Boston PCC and on multi-PCC activities) and undertaking the nuts-and-bolts tasks of contacting prospective Board members, Postal leadership, prospective vendors and others. She makes sure we check the By Laws when an issue arises and she even hosts many of our PCC Executive Board meetings at her facility.

Betsy delivers strong leadership, commitment, management skills and basic hard work.

Betsy has presented at the National Postal Forum, MAILCOM, ACUMS, and NACUMS conferences. She holds industry certifications of OSPC, MDP, MDC, EMCM AND CMDSM. Betsy received her master's degree in management from Harvard University. In her free time she loves to travel, most recently spending time in France and Spain. An avid lover of music and the arts, she attends many events each year.



George Kippenhan, Postal Member of the Year (right) with Mike Rakes and Kim Waltz

**George Kippenhan** was not only Greater Boston PCC's Postal Person of the Year, he was also chosen as the NATIONAL Postal Person of the Year, selected from among many contenders throughout the country.

George is involved in every aspect of the PCC. He not only contributes ideas for new initiatives, he implements them. Without fanfare, George just acts. He is ever-present in the community, representing the Postal Service and the PCC in his various presentations. These include stamp unveilings conducted at community organizations including nursing homes, senior centers and schools, and his Power of Mail presentations to school children

of all ages and even to a home-schooled population. In addition, George created his Celebrity Series Podcasts in which he interviews an actor or author or other celebrity with attention to the role of the Postal Service in their career success.

But that's not all. George is a major contributor to this Newsletter, whipping out articles with ease. He is also always thinking of ways to make an event or activity better. He was responsible for arranging the charming, singing participation of young Adrianna Kunevich on PCC Day.

As our PCC Administrator on the Postal side, he makes the wheels turn. There is literally nothing too big or too small to command George's attention, always smoothing the way for PCC colleagues to accomplish their goals, whether it's checking out the rules, finding the right person to contact about an issue or finding you a parking space!





# ENTREPRENEURS AND THE POSTAL SERVICE

## POSTAL CENTER INTERNATIONAL PCI



Ismael Diaz, PCI President and CEO

A legendary success story in the American mold, PCI grew from a kitchen-table operation launched in 1984 by Cuban refugee Luis Echarte to a \$400 million dollar business occupying 500,000 square feet in four state-of-the-art facilities in three states with PCI emblazoned on the roofs of their buildings.

Begun as a courier service in a small Florida condo, the next generation Arturo Echarte and soon his wife Susan added presort and then other mail services. They took the leap and leased 10,000 square feet of space to accommodate the growing business. As is common in bootstrap operations, the couple mortgaged their home to finance growth. Growth was steady. PCI expanded its services to include print and comprehensive mail services and its space to 50,000 square feet.

By investing in equipment and by acquiring several key businesses, over the years PCI continued to expand and became a one-stop shop for print, mail, fulfillment, signs, packaging, and promotional and marketing solutions for large enterprise companies. PCI attributes its success to its client-centric white-glove approach to business. Driving this growth since 2006 is Ismael Diaz, President and CEO of PCI, a top-level executive formerly employed at Johnson & Johnson who brought his vision and professional management talents to PCI. The PCC Day audience was riveted to his presentation as he told the story of PCI.

A certified minority-owned business headquartered in Florida, PCI now has facilities in several cities in Florida as well as in San Antonio Texas and in Franklin MA. PCI has won numerous awards including #1 Business of the Year by the South Florida Business Journal and for the last four years has been included on the list of Biggest Printers in the United States by Printing Impressions.

In an era of shrinking mail volumes and numerous business casualties in the mailing industry, PCI employs 470 associates and continues to grow.



PCI Team in attendance at PCC Day in Boston

# CHRIS WRENN and BRIDGE NINE RECORDS and SULLY'S



This year's Greater Boston PCC Day attendees were treated to a story of true entrepreneurial grit. Chris Wrenn, founder and CEO of two long-standing Boston-area-based brands, Bridge Nine Records and Sully's, shared the remarkable account of building his businesses. Chris started Bridge Nine, a punk-music-oriented record label, when he was 19 years old and soon realized running an independent record label required more money than he was making at his record store job. Finding himself living near Fenway Park at the start of the 2000 baseball season, Chris saw an opportunity to successfully peddle sports rivalry merchandise outside the park and Sully's was born.



Chris Wrenn receiving his gift from Kim Waltz

The PCC Day audience sat in rapt attention listening to this remarkable story of seizing opportunity and creating not one but two businesses. Fast forward and Sully's designs have adorned T-shirts worn by Bostonians Ben Affleck, Casey Affleck and Conan O'Brien. Dunkin' Donuts reached out to Chris to create his Boston T-shirts in Dunkin's colors for Dunkin' spokesperson Ben Affleck.

Throughout the years, Chris has relied on the U.S. Postal Service to ship thousands of mail-order packages worldwide for both Bridge Nine and Sully's. Chris Wrenn's story showed that hard work and a willingness to take risks can lead to incredible and fun opportunities.



Chris now has his two businesses side-by-side in a building in Beverly MA. Entrepreneurship and artistry run in the family. His teenager creates autumn and Salem-themed items sold at the Peabody-Essex Museum and at pop-ups in Salem. All money made goes into the young entrepreneur's college fund.



Chris at his record store in Beverly



and T-shirts in the other half

## JI KIM-KUSEL PROMOTES GROUND ADVANTAGE

Ji Kim-Kusel is the District Sales Manager in the Boston MA/RI District. She presented on the recently-launched Ground Advantage service which provides an affordable and reliable way to ship packages up to 70 lbs for delivery in 2 to 5 business days.

Previously-separate products Retail Ground, First-Class Package, and Parcel Select Ground services (including returns options such as First-Class Package Return service and Ground Returns) are now part of a single, streamlined ground shipping service.



Ji Kim-Kusel delivers a presentation on Ground Advantage

## A MAN OF HIS WORD AND AN EVENT OF A LIFETIME

Adrianna Kunevich had a once in a lifetime experience for a 13-year-old. It's not too often when you get to sing the National Anthem and Sweet Caroline for 240 USPS and Industry Professionals as well as the highest-ranking member of the United States Postal Service, Postmaster General Louis DeJoy. With all that pressure, the 4-foot 10-inch powerhouse blew the audience away with her beautiful voice and her wonderful stage presence in the Boston General Mail Facility's Great Hall on September 20<sup>th</sup> for National PCC Day.



Adrianna Kunevich singing the *Star Spangled Banner*

“When I arrived, I had that nervous/excited feeling. I saw a sea of people in business attire in the audience. When I am performing in a musical like ‘Grease’ or ‘The Descendants’, the stage lights are so bright that I can’t see the audience...believe me, I saw every face this time. Once the National Anthem was finished, I was relieved because that song is so meaningful. I wanted that to be perfect. I knew how much fun ‘Sweet Caroline’ was going to be.”

Sean and Katie Kunevich, Adrianna’s parents, were also in attendance. Sean was beaming. “I was so proud of her. It was such a great experience for her to perform at a professional conference in front of representatives from such acclaimed companies and institutions.”

Katie Kunevich agreed. “Everyone was so kind to her. People were coming to our table just to tell her what a great job she did and what a beautiful voice she has. They have no idea what their thoughtful words meant to a Mom and Dad. It was such a memorable day for our family.”

The memories grew bigger as the day continued. Adrianna and her parents were whisked away to a private reception room with members of the award-winning Greater Boston Postal Customer Council to meet Louis DeJoy, Postmaster General. “I saw all these men with earpieces in the hallway. Postmaster Joshua (Balcunas) told me that this was the PMG’s security team. I thought ‘oh, this is a really big deal.’”

Joshua Balcunas, Acting Postmaster of Boston stated, “The Postmaster General walked into the reception area and made a bee line toward Adrianna and said, ‘There she is, the 13-year-old singer!’ The smile on her face was priceless.”

“He talked to me for a few minutes about singing. His daughter is a singer too. She made a CD and writes original music. He was so nice. He talked to my parents too and thanked us all for supporting the PCC on this special day. Then we all got to get a picture with him. It was really cool!” stated Adrianna.

“We had to run back to the Great Hall because District Manager Mike (Rakes) wanted ‘Sweet Caroline’ to be sung as the Postmaster General walked in with everyone singing the chorus. We timed it





Adrianna Kunevich with the letter from Postmaster General Louis DeJoy, Commemorative Coin and CD

perfectly. The Postmaster General got on stage with me and sang along. The whole audience sang it with us. It was a moment that I won't forget."

As Postmaster General DeJoy finished his speech and was leaving, he made sure to stop by Adrianna's table to thank her and her parents for attending. He thanked Adrianna for singing and told her that she did a great job. He stopped again and told his Chief of Staff to get Adrianna's home address so he could send a CD of his daughter's music.

A little less than a week later, Adrianna received a Priority Mail envelope from Postmaster General Louis DeJoy. The contents were a handwritten letter, his daughter's CD and three USPS Commemorative Coins. Katie, forever the Mom, saved the Priority envelope and bought a shadow box for the coins and letter. Adrianna has the PMG's daughter's CD on rotation. Her favorite songs from the CD are "Madeline" and "First Last Change." "She's really great. I really hope to be able to record an album someday like her."

"The hand-written personal letter, the commemorative coins, the CD...they are wonderful keepsakes of a day that our family will remember forever" stated Sean Kunevich.

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## **SPECIAL EDITION: PCC DAY 2023**

### **IT'S TIME FOR OPERATION SANTA**



It's time for Operation Santa 2023. The USPS Operation Santa program helps countless families across the United States during the holiday season. The 110-year-old program provides an online channel for individuals and organizations to adopt letters written to Santa and send gifts anonymously. Once again, the Greater Boston Postal Customer Council plans to whole-heartily support the program. Under the enthusiastic leadership of long-time member Karen McCormick, letters from several families will be adopted and gifts that match the wish-lists will be purchased and dispatched to arrive on time. Please donate. Additional information is available at [uspsoperationsanta.com](http://uspsoperationsanta.com)

For more information about the Greater Boston PCC, visit us at: [www.bostonpcc.org](http://www.bostonpcc.org)