



**national carriers<sup>®</sup>**  
*the "Elite" fleet<sup>®</sup>*  
**MAGAZINE**

**FAMILY LEGACY RESCUED  
 FROM BONE PILE**

**A MILLION IN THE BANK AND HE KEEPS ON TRUCKING  
 FROM THE WORST COUNTRY TO THE BEST COMPANY**



# View from the Windshield

## NCI PRESIDENT JIM FRANCK



**Winter is here. It's time for the snow to fly and the ice to form, and it can be extremely cold. Be prepared.**

**Know what is in**

**front of you. If you run into bad weather let your driver manager know. You are our best source of information to get the word out to our fleet. Understand, you are the captain of your ship, so take that seriously. You are the one who feels safe or doesn't. If you don't feel safe, slow down, get to a safe-haven, shut it down, and communicate. Again, you are the captain of that ship and if you don't feel safe it is not worth it to jeopardize your safety or the safety of the people around you.**

**I want to remind our drivers of our driver reward program. We reward our drivers who are over-achievers who are out there taking care of business. It is a four-part program comparing you to your peers. The top 25% in each category earn an extra penny per mile for each category. The first leg of the stool is utilization, the second is a safety, and the third is a fuel bonus. If you qualify for all three, you will get paid an extra cent per mile and receive the President's Award of Excellence. Our drivers can earn up to an extra four cents a mile on all miles, paid quarterly.**

**Please, always, be safe out there. And please have a safe and blessed Holiday Season.**

**Merry Christmas!**

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# ***A MILLION IN THE BANK AND HE KEEPS ON TRUCKING***

March 2021 Driver of the Month John Stratton is an example of someone who was at the right place at the right time. For the last several years, John has serviced Florida customers in the Miami area with National Beef loads that originated in Moultrie, Georgia. Like clockwork, three times a week he completed his deliveries.



It was the Saturday before Christmas. Stopping for a scheduled service in Reddick, Florida, John waited two hours before learning the truck stop did not have the oil filters he required. After taking his eight-hour break, he drove to Lake Park, Georgia, to have the oil changed in his truck. On arrival, he found both mechanics were out on service calls. With time to spare, he purchased two lotto tickets for \$25 each. He remembers telling the clerk at the counter that he never wins the big one.

Much to his surprise, he won back his \$50 investment which he then reinvested in two more tickets. He once again won back the fifty dollars. This time, he decided to pocket the money as he headed for a fast food counter to purchase lunch. Leaving the truck stop, he purchased two \$10 tickets. Little did he know his fortunes were about to change.

Scratching the first ticket numbers revealed a match, guaranteeing John a \$1,000,000 prize! Hardly believing his eyes, he double checked everything on the ticket. He then scanned the ticket revealing it would need to be taken to a lottery field office to be verified. The offices were closed for the weekend. He would have to come back on Monday. He signed the back of the

ticket and hid it away in his delivery receipt book.

That evening, he left Lake Park headed to Moultrie to pick up his load for Miami. The load picked up Sunday and had to be delivered Monday evening. There was no time to stop and confirm the ticket. Tuesday was Christmas Eve so all lottery offices were now closed until Thursday. Anxiously, he waited to confirm his winnings.

Once his winning ticket was confirmed, the money was to be deposited into his account within the next thirty days. He quickly called his fellow NCI drivers, Ed Jones and Robert Allen, to share his good news. They also operate trucks from Moultrie to customers in the southeastern states. Instead of retiring, John continues to run his route each week.

“I didn’t take a vacation in 2020. I had cashed my vacation days in. I did take three days off after winning. The first day I met with a financial advisor, the second day I shopped for a recreational vehicle, and the third day I registered my new RV,” he said.

John used his good fortune to pay off his son’s home. His grandson has special needs and the money allowed John to help with his support. He plans to continue to work until he can collect full social security benefits. When he does retire, he will travel in his RV from campground to campground. He plans on relocating to a new area every 30 days. And no matter where he ends up, John knows that he will be at the right place at the right time.



# TWENTY-SOMETHINGS: NICK AND LOGAN ARE THE NEXT GENERATION AT NCI

Living with a single, working mother while his father was away serving in the military, six-year-old Nick Auten assumed many responsibilities early in his childhood. Nick's mother would leave for work each day before he awoke. He was responsible for getting up, making breakfast, dressing himself and going to school all on his own. Raised in Lone Grove, Oklahoma, Nick attended school through the day while his mother worked in a warehouse.



Life became more challenging when Nick's mother was involved in a forklift accident at work, leaving her with a broken back, neck and arm. No longer able to work, mother and son found themselves living hand to mouth. Then as a high school freshman, Nick was also involved in a serious accident as the passenger in a car street race that ended in a crash. Although he was not permanently injured, his best friend died as a result of the accident. Losing focus mentally, he began missing school while launching into a string of jobs, never staying with one for long. When he dropped out of high school, his father stepped in and brought him to Texas to complete his education.

He moved back to Oklahoma after graduation. There, he landed a local job and soon got married. When his workplace asked him to relocate to another state, he refused and was once again unemployed. Now with a wife and a young daughter, he felt a need for stability. His father offered him a home in Copperas, Texas, which Nick quickly accepted.

To provide for his growing family, he decided to pursue earning a Class A CDL. Gaining his CDL through a major carrier, the 25-year-old spent the next six months moving freight to the northeastern United States. While delivering in New Jersey, his

family became sick with the flu. After his repeated requests to return home went unanswered, Nick took his truck to a company terminal, terminated his employment, and flew home.

Over the next two months Nick committed himself to online research to find a trucking company that could meet the needs of his growing family. He wanted to avoid another mega-carrier. Repeatedly, he found National Carriers rated high in online surveys. Reaching out to National, he contacted driver recruiter Gene Rose who helped him gain employment. Once he completed orientation, he was paired with 26-year-old Driver Manager Logan Tenopir.

“Nick isn’t like the stereotypical youth of today - one that society has stamped with the image of our age, lazy or entitled. He has a family at home and is dedicated to working hard while running all the miles he can. He takes his mother out on the truck with him as he travels. I believe her keeping him company is a big help while being away from home,” shared Logan.

“Nick and I communicate mostly with our blue tree system. When he calls me, he feels the importance of his issue warrants a phone call. If I feel he needs information right away for a certain situation, I will call him. For example,



when a load changes or there is information that the customer has not included in the dispatch, I will call him. If there is something that is holding him up from his delivery or pickup, he calls to notify me. I coach my drivers to follow-up with a message that documents any conversation they feel needs to be recorded,” Logan continued.

Logan concluded, “Like many drivers, Nick has a family at home. As I stated before, he is dedicated to working for them. However, like anyone else, he needs a break from the road. He lives near our Irving, Texas, terminal and he parks his personal vehicle here. By living near, if his truck goes into our shop for extensive repairs, he may ask if it was ok for him to head home for the night. Once each month, he puts in for 4 to 5 days at home, dropping his truck here at the yard. He drives his personal vehicle home. He has never done me wrong on communicating when his return date will be. I’ve never had an issue with that and I know he appreciates it.”

# FAMILY LEGACY RESCUE FROM BONE PILE

In 1986, Arkansas owner operator Vernon Whittmore leased his 1986 Marmon semi-tractor to National Carriers, Inc. in Liberal, Kansas. Whittmore had signed on to transport beef throughout the United States. Business was good, so good in fact, that he upgraded his truck in 1988 followed by another new truck in 1990. In 1992, his son Jerry ordered a new Peterbilt and joined his dad at the "Elite" fleet. Later that year, Jerry became ill and Vernon took over his son's custom 379 model tractor. In 1993, Vernon left National Carriers to join Jerry in the logging industry. Vernon sold the truck to Potter Transportation in Booneville, Missouri.

Fast forward to 2015. Jerry's oldest son Jeron, a high school student, stumbled across a photograph of his dad standing proudly in front of his then new 1992 Peterbilt truck. Jeron remembered hearing stories from his dad explaining how together with his pregnant wife, they had delivered frozen freight around the country. Jeron remembered hearing his father tell of his first load of frozen beef leaving Liberal and promptly delivering to Fulton, California. The photograph inspired Jeron to see if he could track down his dad's long-gone truck.

Using the found photograph, Jeron searched for other information in the family archives. He began by contacting his local Peterbilt dealer with a partial vehicle identification number he had come across in his research. The manufacturer provided the complete number allowing Jeron to begin an exhaustive online search. Pouring through site after site, state after state, he eventually found a matching number in Texas. Further internet searching revealed the current owner of the truck and an attached telephone number.

The teenaged investigator called the current owner of the semi who resided in Olton, Texas, just miles from the border of New Mexico. The truck was operating in a gravel hauling business. Jeron asked the owner to confirm the VIN number. Although the owner confirmed the number, he was not interested in selling the tractor.





Soon though, the owner reconsidered and on July 15, Jeron received current photos from Texas with Peterbilt paperwork confirming the truck was indeed Jerry's original truck. The current owner also confirmed the glove box still had a mounted custom metal plate with Jerry Whittmore engraved on it. Next, Jeron convinced his father to drive to west Texas to make an offer to buy the truck.

Jeron had been given one of the original keys for the ignition which Vernon had retained. When he arrived in Olton, Jeron was delighted to find it worked perfectly. The truck was now painted red and white, yet it still had the original blue frame. The original CAT 3406B engine had over 2.6 million miles. The rear main seal poured oil out when the truck was not moving. Jerry felt the tractor was well beyond repair; however, Jeron convinced his dad to go ahead and invest in the



Owner Operator Jerry Whittmore poses with his new truck in 1992.



Left: Justin, Jackson (baby), Jeron, Vernon, and Jerry Whittmore  
Right: The family's restored Peterbilt is shown at local venues and driven weekly.

Peterbilt. Once purchased, the Whittmores drove their Pete back to Arkansas.

Restoration began immediately. Except for painting the truck to match its original blue scheme and rebuilding the engine, the Whittmore family did all the restoration work. The rebuild became a family project which included Jeron's mom and sister, all working from the family shop. A high school sophomore, Jeron worked with his middle school brother Justin most nights until midnight on their project. Having grown up in the family business, they were the accomplished mechanics while their dad financed the project.

Now 22 years old, Jaron displays the Whittmore model 379 Peterbilt at local car and truck shows. A total of 2,400 miles have been driven since the rebuild. Although the truck is kept garaged, the shiny blue tractor is taken out once a week to keep the seals lubricated. As they enjoy their reclaimed treasure, it reminds the family of the "good old days" in the "Elite" fleet.

# FROM THE WORST COUNTRY TO THE BEST COMPANY



Freedom of the road is an expression we use easily. It describes the joys of moving freely, making spontaneous decisions, and fulfilling the wanderlust entrenched deep inside. In transportation, it is something that is sometimes taken for granted. National Carriers company driver Taher Osman takes the freedom of the road quite literally.

Taher is a recent citizen of the United States who immigrated from eastern Africa. He enjoys traveling of his own accord. He also appreciates the close relationship he has with his driver manager, Mike Holloway. They work closely, moving time sensitive freight from shipper to receiver. Escaping from his home country of Eritrea, he crossed the Sahara Desert through Sudan, across Lybia to a safe haven in Tunisia. The trip itself could be made into a big budget Hollywood adventure movie. Once there, a refugee worker asked if he would like to relocate to the United States. His reply was simple: he had just left the worst country in the world in terms of human rights, so he was willing to go anywhere he could live without threat of harm.

Arriving in America on December 4, 2012, he lived in various locations before settling on Kansas. Seeking employment, he settled in Garden City, Kansas, on the western plains. Having earned his class A commercial driver license, he chose to go to work for National Carriers.

“It was a special day for me when I passed my citizenship test. Last year, I married my wife, Hanaa who is in Ethiopia. She gave birth to my daughter, Entisar, in July. I am very excited to meet my daughter in November. I am so glad to be an American,” he stated proudly.

# **DOLPHINS IN HIS REAR VIEW MIRROR**

Whale watching. Observing pods of dolphins frolicking in the ocean. Cruising among the Hawaiian Islands. Eating meals prepared by seasoned chefs throughout the day. Being entertained by professional activity directors. Relaxing poolside. These are a few of the benefits enjoyed by guests while on an all-expense paid cruise.



It's a glorious life for the passenger, but what about the people onboard who make it all possible?

At seventeen-years-old, Joseph Schucha, a native of Warren, New Jersey, had his whole life ahead of him. Involved in a sudden auto accident, he was left in a coma for six months. As Joseph recovered, he made plans to attend Monmouth University on the eastern shores of his home state. As his interest in learning changed, he decided to focus on becoming a chef and ended up attending the Culinary Institute of America. After two and one-half years of intense training, he graduated and sought employment. But not just any employment. His focus was on creating banquet meals for cruise ships.

His first step toward working for a cruise line was to get his TWIC card and his Merchant Mariner Credentials. Next, he was required to attend an Able-Bodied Seaman Course. The five-day course is designed for entry-level positions. Graduates of the course become proficient in the knowledge and understanding of merchant vessels. Part of the training includes tying various knots, bends, hitches, and splices. Upon completion, he joined Norwegian Cruise Lines working in the Pacific Ocean near the Hawaiian Islands.

Working under the Head Chef as Sous Chef, Joseph oversaw up to 30 kitchen staff. He was a two-stripe office manager,

preparing seven days of menus for seven separate onboard restaurants and one buffet while establishing safety procedures for the kitchen. He was also responsible for reordering supplies for the ship, including the alcohol orders that could total over a million dollars each week. To ensure guests had a great dining experience, he worked seven days a week for four months in a row. He would then rotate off-shift for two months while getting paid for the full six-month tour.

“My favorite dish to prepare was stuffed swordfish with seared mushrooms on a bed of grilled onions and tomatoes. Garlic mashed potatoes and cooked carrots completed the dish. My most challenging meal each week was when serving Rack of Lamb. My staff prepared for 900 people per meal. Our ship would have 3,600 guests plus 1,000 crew members to accommodate,” Joseph shared.

After three years of service to the cruise line, he decided to complete his higher education. He left the seas at the beginning of 2020 only to find university classes were being cancelled due to COVID-19. While considering his love of travel, he examined his options. He decided to give trucking a chance. Joseph earned his CDL, then searched through reviews on the internet to find a reliable carrier. He had never heard of National Carriers before, but he quickly learned about NCI after numerous positive reviews and reports online.

Joseph concluded, “Trucking has several advantages. Much like sailing, there is the freedom of the road. I get to see the United States while interacting with many people. I take videos of my adventures and share them with my mother so she can also experience what I am experiencing. All in all, it’s a beautiful thing!”





# CELEBRATING OUR LIVESTOCK DIVISION



**SIGIFREDO PACHECO**  
18 YRS



**KEVIN O'MOORE**  
26 YRS



**DAVE VOGES**  
14 YRS



**TELILO MARTINEZ**  
16 YRS



**BILLY WALKER**  
21 YRS



**ADOLFO TERRAZAS**  
16 YRS



**ALFREDO  
PENA**  
17 YRS



**FELIPE  
CHACON**  
18 YEARS



**LUPE  
HEREDIA**  
10 YRS



**PHIL NIX**  
31 YRS



**PORFIRO  
MARTINEZ**  
15 YRS



**MARGARITO  
NEAVE**  
10 YRS



**ALFREDO  
MARTINEZ**  
21 YRS



**MARTIN  
MARTINEZ**  
17 YRS



**ADOLFO TERRAZAS**  
16 YRS



**MARIO ZAVALA**  
13 YRS



**PERRY WILLIAMS**  
18 YRS



**JOSE TREJO**  
11 YRS



## Safety Meeting = NCI Gear



Each quarter we have an online safety meeting. The meeting will either be a topic from our infinit-library or a video that our very own Hershel Kyser has created to match our educational needs we are having at that time.



Either way, once your meeting has been completed, you will be eligible for a drawing each quarter for NCI gear. Safety meetings are also considered when we are looking for candidates for Driver of the Month and Driver of the Year. We all know what that is all about \$\$\$\$.



This is one of the ways we are investing in you- our most precious asset- Thank you for all you do!



Jill Maschmeier,  
Safety Director





# & facebook **LIVE**

Join Director of Driver Services James White each Wednesday at 9 AM. Featuring driver tips, office guests, pay information, and safety updates.



## FIRST FRIDAY FORUM

Join Us On

facebook

LIVE



NCI President Jim Franck leads a monthly in-person discussion with drivers. First Friday of each month. Orientation Room in Irving, TX, at 11:00 AM. Free lunch is provided.

First Friday Forum will return when COVID conditions allow public meetings.

Join What's Up, NCI with Director of Social Media Ed Kentner each Sunday at 5 PM. Featuring NCI drivers, NCI administration, Prayer & Praise, and Promotions.

## What's Up, NCI?

