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April 2023

Queen City Letter Carriers - NALC Branch 43 News & Views

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Ted Thompson
President

From the President's Desk

Last month I wrote about postal financing in collective bargaining. This month I will focus on the contract itself, with the issues we face, and what must be addressed by our NALC leadership. The United States Postal Service today has drastically changed over the course of the last three years. Locally, for Cincinnati and some associate offices, the Postal Service is woefully understaffed. This has resulted in our members working harder and for longer hours than any point in their career, regardless of when they were hired. Many Branch 43 members are mandated to work 7 days a week and well into the darkness of night. Even with the extreme hours, the Postal Service is still unable to provide the service our customers deserve and fail daily to deliver all routes. While I do believe there is a constant push locally to hire more employees, we still do not retain as many as we should. While unable to maintain proper staffing levels and deliver the communities mail, for those of us already working, the Postal Service has responded by pursuing later starting times, arbitrarily instructing carriers to have their routes cased and pulled in an hour, assigning unrealistic workloads and assignments, and then mega-micromanaging us on the street through the use of GPS. This is on top of the fact that some offices are dealing with either unpleasant or in some instances downright toxic workroom floors. While some of these workroom floors issues are the result of abusive, improper, ignorant, or poor management, others are the result of years of insufficient staffing creating frustration among the membership to the point that carriers are now bickering, arguing, yell-

ing, and cursing at each other, thus creating our own toxicity. With all of these issues combined, Branch 43 filed more grievances in 2022 than any other year in my time of union advocacy. Unfortunately, Branch 43 is not unique in this regard. Many other union branches throughout the nation are dealing with the same issues we are. Needless to say, changes must be made to keep the ship from sinking and many of those changes must come from collective bargaining and our contract.

National President Brian Renfroe was recently quoted as saying, "Our goals are simple. First and foremost, we must address the staffing issue that is debilitating our craft. Nationwide, letter carriers are overworked, and post offices are understaffed. One obvious solution that we seek is increased wages. If the Postal Service wants to recruit and retain letter carriers, it starts with a competitive wage – plain and simple." Due to contractual increases and Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) this past contract was generous to top step and grade letter carriers in Table 1 of the wage scale by increasing salary over \$10,000. However with lower steps in Table 2 we are not as competitive as we need to be to attract quality candidates for the job. With the economic landscape changes since our last contract, combined with historic low unemployment rates, the Postal Service needs to be more competitive. While recently attending Committee of Presidents meetings in Detroit, Buffalo New York Branch 3 President David Grosskopf shared with Brian and presidents throughout the county just how abysmal the pay scale is.

While many of our veteran carriers know, and retirees took part in, the great postal strike of 1970, that strike, which started in New York, was started due to poor wages. With high cost of living, letter carriers in New York were eligible, and received, welfare, while working 40 hours or more as letter carriers.

Continued on following page



NEWS & VIEWS

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EDITOR'S (Ted Thompson) NOTES
Branch 43 members are encouraged to
send articles to the *News & Views*. Items
of interest about your station, current
events, etc. are welcome. The following
guidelines apply:

- (1) We may edit your article for grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc.
- (2) If it should prove necessary to edit an article for space or coherence, every effort will be made to preserve the substance and intent of the article.
- (3) Unsigned articles will not be printed. Letters, criticism and suggestions for improving the *News & Views* are also welcome. If your letter is not intended for publication, please state so. Letters held to 150 words are less likely to be edited.
- (4) Articles must arrive at the Branch office by the 15th in order to make the next month's issue. Digital format is preferred. Send items to: thompson@branch43.org

Printed in House

President cont.

That strike transformed the Post Office Department with the creation of the United States Postal Service and the ability for letter carriers to collectively bargain over wages, hours, and working conditions. David, using the lower end of inflation estimates figured the value of one dollar from 1970 compared to 2022 is approximately \$6.85. Pre-strike wages of 1970 at \$6,176 adjusted for inflation to year 2022 equals about \$42,317. Post-strike wages, after the Postal Reorganization Act of 1971, were \$8,442. Adjusted wages for inflation to year 2022 and that equals about \$57,844. So, while the 1970 postal strike resulted in greatly increased wages at the time, I want to share what that looks like compared with Step A of Table 2. Current starting wage for Table 2 Step A is \$46,030. So, while adjusted for inflation, letter carriers starting today are making a little more than carriers from pre-strike 1970, carriers today are making significantly less money than carriers were post-strike. One must also consider that cost of living varies from city to city and state to state. However, all carriers make the same wage, regardless of where they live and work. I can not over emphasize that the starting wage of \$22.13 hourly in the greater Cincinnati area is not remotely adequate to attract, hire, and retain an adequate number of qualified carriers. If this figure does not work in Cincinnati, where we already hire career PTFs, with the cost of living in New York, its even worse. Wages must be an absolute immediate priority.

Another way to address the staffing issues is to eliminate non-career positions and transition to a career workforce with immediate benefits. While Cincinnati has been directly hiring career, and Milford was recently added to hire career, the rest of our associate offices, 21 in total, still operate under a CCA model with some having difficulties attracting and retaining employees as well. National is

looking to abolish the CCA position entirely in this round of bargaining. President Renfroe made this clear in his opening address to the Postal Service when stating, "The staffing crisis can also be addressed by shifting to an all-career workforce and abolishing the City Carrier Assistant position. The CCA position, in its current form, no longer serves the Postal Service or our craft... NALC seeks to convert all CCAs to career positions and make the all-career model the standard nationwide."

As stated earlier, Branch 43 filed more grievances in 2022 than any other time during my career as a union representative. While most grievances are related to staffing and workhours, other times management violates the contract at whim. Local contract compliance throughout the nation is a problem. Many times, after management violates the contract, agrees to a monetary compensation grievance settlement to pay employee(s), then fails to honor the very document they signed by paying the employee(s) they agreed to. Again, unfortunately, this is not an issue or problem unique to Branch 43. This issue was also addressed during opening statements by the NALC.

Crime against letter carriers needs to be addressed. Since January of 2022, Branch 43 has had 10 carriers robbed, mostly at gun point, for their arrow key. President Renfroe stated, "These repeated attacks against our members are horrific, unacceptable, and must be addressed through action. No letter carrier should fear for their life or safety while on the job." Candidly he added, "...crime is a deterrent in an already difficult environment to attract letter carriers to join the postal service." In totality, there are too many issues to address what our national leaders will bargain for. I want all active members to remember, if a tentative agreement is reached, it is YOU who has the final say of acceptance. Your vote matters!

Fraternally,
Ted Thompson



Pat Dougherty
Vice President

From the Vice President

PS Form 1571 Undelivered Mail Report

Do you know what a PS Form 1571 is? Along with a multitude of other United States Postal Forms, you may not regularly use a PS Form 1571, but you likely should. The PS Form 1571 is the “Undelivered Mail Report.” What does that mean to a letter carrier? The rest of this article will inform you when, how, and why to use the PS Form 1571, as well as a few other important pieces of information about our reporting requirements as letter carriers.

There are a few times when the PS Form 1571 should be completed. 1) Any time a member of management instructs you to curtail mail at your case. 2) Any time you are instructed to bring back mail or are unable to deliver all the mail assigned to you within your work hour limitations/scheduled return time. First, you should request the PS Form 1571 from your supervisor. If there are not any forms where your station has forms, request your supervisor to print one out on the computer. If you are instructed to curtail mail management is required to provide the carrier the PS Form 1571. If a carrier needs to bring back mail from the street because they are an 8-hour carrier, medical restrictions, or instructed to return by management at a particular time, it is our duty as letter carriers to inform management we must bring back mail and upon return to station request the PS Form 1571 from the closing supervisor.

Sections 131.44, 131.45, and 131.46 of the M-41 Handbook describe what we are supposed to do as follows:

131.44 Report on Form 1571 all mail undelivered – including all mail distributed to the route but not cased and taken out for delivery. Estimate the number of pieces of mail.

131.45 Do not curtail or eliminate any scheduled delivery or collection trip unless authorized by a manager, in which case you must record all facts on Form 1571.

131.46 Before you leave office, enter on Form 1571 the mail curtailed; when you return, add any mail which was not delivered, and which was returned to the office.

Section 111.2(j) of the M-39 Handbook describes what the supervisor is supposed to do as follows:

“Issue Form 1571 when the carrier is instructed to

curtail mail, indicating action thereon. Upon request a duplicate of the completed form will be provided to the carrier.”

The supervisor must sign the form. Without a signature from a supervisor, the form is not valid or complete. The form should also indicate the action taken, whether it will be cased in the PM or held until the next day for casing and delivery. Remember to request a copy for your records and your protection.

U.S. Postal Service UNDELIVERED MAIL REPORT		
Delivery Unit	Route No.	Date
TO: Delivery and Collection Superintendent		
The Following Mail Distributed To Me For Delivery Was Left In The Office Or Returned Undelivered.		
<small>NOTE: If mail left undelivered by carrier is later delivered on the same day, the manager should explain the action taken.</small>		
	Preferential	Other
Letters		
Newspapers		
Magazines		
Flats		
Samples		
Other Pieces		
For Use By Parcel Post Carrier Only		
Parcel Post Distributed To Me For Delivery Was Left In The Office Or Returned Undelivered.		
Sacks	Outside Pieces	
<small>Remarks: (Reasons for nondelivery. Report of trips omitted or curtailed. Note any other matter of which record should be made.)</small>		
Reg. Use	Tech of Part Time	Signature
Action Taken (Manager)		
Manager's Signature		Date

PS Form 1571, June 1988 (July 1977 edition usable)

The union has seen at the local and regional level more carriers being disciplined for “Delaying Mail” or other such charges. The easiest way to avoid a situation like this is to request and complete a PS Form 1571. This is a simple way to avoid facing discipline or even potential removal by simply filling out this form. It is our responsibility as letter carriers to communicate with management if we cannot complete delivery of all assigned mail. In addition to potentially receiving discipline for “Delay of Mail,” we could even face charges brought under the United States Code by the Office of

Inspector General. Delaying mail is a federal offense punishable by fines or even potentially jail time. 18 United States Code 1703, states the following:

“(a) Whoever, being a Postal Service officer or employee, unlawfully secretes, destroys, detains, delays, or opens any letter, postal card, package, bag, or mail entrusted to him or which shall come into his possession, and which was intended to be conveyed by mail, or carried or delivered by any carrier or other employee of the Postal Service, or forwarded through or delivered from any post office or station thereof established by authority of the Postmaster General or the Postal Service, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than five years, or both.”

Remember, if for whatever reason you are instructed to curtail mail or “manage your mail” or need to bring back mail because you cannot finish all your deliveries, ensure you request a PS Form 1571, complete the form, ensure a supervisor signs the form, and request a copy of the form for your records. Protect yourself!



Matt McCarren
Leg. & Pol.

STEWARD'S CORNER

Office Standards

We have all heard management give blanket instructions to the workroom floor. Management's latest instruction seems to be "mail is light, everyone needs to be out in an hour." They are saying this in order to manipulate data and make their numbers look good, but office time fluctuates. Office leave times MUST be determined based upon each route's mail volume on an individual basis. Let's take a look at how to determine what your office leave time should be. M-39 section (222.214) states the standards for throwing letters and flats at 18 and 8 pieces per minute respectively. Strapping out (pull down) time standard is 70 pieces per minute. To estimate how much flat casing time you have, the general feet to pieces conversion is 1 foot of flats equals 120 pieces or 15 minutes of casing time. Management likes to tell you that you don't have 4 feet of flats and you should be able to be out in an hour. This is incorrect, management is intentionally trying to omit the 28 minimum base minutes included in your morning fixed office time. This minimum base time is included daily for vehicle safety inspection (3 minutes), collection of accountable mail and partial completion of PS form 3849 (6 minutes), stand up service talk and other duties (9 minutes), collecting hot case mail (5 minutes), and personal needs (5 minutes).

In order for a letter carrier to only have one hour of office time, they must only have roughly 1.75 feet of flats and 54 letters. Any mail volume beyond that would earn carriers' office time commensurate with the 18/8/70 standard. If management is asking you to curtail mail in order to leave in an hour, a PS Form 1571 must be completed with management's instruction of what mail to curtail. Of course, if management is instructing a letter carrier to curtail mail, they cannot ask for a pivot that day. Please request a union steward if this occurs.

Now let's talk about other casing instructions where management is trying to get the better of us as letter carriers. Mail with the designation of ECRWSS (such as reach magazines) is the only type of mail that can be carried as a third bundle. ECRWSS mail is not recorded as caseable mail volume. It is intended to be taken to the street and carried from your satchel. The maximum number of bundles a park and loop letter carrier can be allowed to carry is three. This means that management cannot instruct you to

carry DPS, residual flats, or mail designated as ECRLLOT, or ECRWSH as a third bundle. (For new hires, you can find the designation of mail on each flat along the row above the address. e.g., *****ECRLLOT C-052). ECRLLOT and ECRWSH mail should be recorded by your supervisor as part of your caseable mail volume. If management wants you to take more than one ERCWSS bundle, DPS bundle, or residual flat bundle, the other(s) must be cased into your route which would in turn increase your caseable mail piece count and thus, your office time.

Through these types of instructions, management is trying to manipulate data and subvert their own manual in order to achieve their numbers and also affect changes in the route adjustment process. We must hold them accountable by assessing our caseable mail volume, standing up for our appropriate standard times, and filling out the correct forms when mail is curtailed.

In Solidarity,
Matt McCarren

STEWARD SEMINAR

Thursday, April 20th

Dinner begins at 6:00 with training beginning at 7:00. Please call the office to reserve your spot.

In accordance with Article VII, Section 5 of the Branch 43 by-laws...*Steward Seminars will be conducted two times per year. Stewards will be informed in advance for scheduling. Stewards or their designee will be required to attend one (1) of the two (2) steward seminars given each year. Failure to attend a steward's seminar will result in the forfeiture of one half (50%) of the steward dues reimbursement paid annually.*

Steward Seminars are open to all members interested in contract education, discussion, and information. Agenda folders will be provided.



Mark Camilli
Region 11 NBA

Region 11 Spring 2023

For the NALC and the USPS, challenges and opportunities appear to be the mantra of 2023. One of the main challenges is the competitive demand for employees in a low unemployment environment. Hiring and retention challenges are major factors the USPS (and many other industries) are facing. According to the Department of Labor, the current National unemployment rate is an astonishing low 3.4%. The Veteran unemployment rate is even lower at 2.5%. Bottom line, the USPS needs to be more creative and competitive in attracting new and retaining its current employees to provide a stable and efficient workforce to carry out its mission to deliver the Nation's mail. The opportunity in this is that we have just opened negotiations for our sixteenth collective bargaining agreement. We have a unique opportunity to negotiate with Postal Management to craft an agreement that will be fair for all parties and address our challenges. If we cannot reach a voluntary agreement, the NALC is well prepared to pursue a fair agreement via binding interest arbitration. In other challenges effecting Letter Carriers, the USPS has begun implementing some of their "Sorting and Delivery Centers" (S&DC). S&DC's are part of the PMG's ten year "Delivering for America" plan. The premise of the S&DC's are to move City Letter Carriers (and rural) from their smaller post offices to a larger, centrally located facility to reduce transportation and dispatch costs (and time) transporting mail between the facilities. Region 11 just had one of these facilities go live in Utica, NY on February 25, 2023. While the new employees were met with brand new

casing equipment, new "stress" mats and large LED overhead lighting, the facility was not quite ready to receive its new employees. The PS had to set up temporary locker facilities, outdoor trailered restrooms, no "swing" room, as it is being gutted and rebuilt. Construction crews continue to work on many items in the facility as the new carriers reported. It remains to be seen if there will be positive outcome for the displaced employees and our customers. For the employees - their vehicles, hot case etc., are much further away from what they were accustomed to. It was an eye opener for them coming from a much smaller community-based post office to this very large, industrialized facility. The one positive I did note when I visited the office was the SDUS (small delivery unit sorter). This piece of equipment has the capability of sorting parcels and SPR's directly to letter carrier tubs at a minimum of 2,250 per hour. I visited the office twice and all the parcels were sorted before 7:30am! Hopefully this equipment remains durable.

In closing, we had some staffing changes at the Region 11 office. RAA John Collins, Branch 63 Zanesville, OH has decided to "hang up the cleats" and retire from his position. John was a stalwart in the field of Letter Carrier representation and contract compliance. He maintained a work ethic that was unmatched, and he was never one to back down from a challenge. John - you will be missed. We wish you a very long, happy and healthy retirement! Mike Brim from Branch 78 Columbus, OH has been assigned as the new RAA. Mike brings his successful experience as a Regional Grievance Assistant for Regions 11 and 6, and Arbitration Advocate to his new position. Mike has hit the ground running and we welcome him in his new position to Team 11!

Motions made at the March Membership Meeting

To dispense with the roll call of Officers and reading of the previous months minutes. **Carried**

To accept the proposed 2023 annual operating budget. **Carried**

For Branch 43 to match (\$234) collected for Taft carrier Ivory Alexander. **Carried**

To accept the January Financial statement and pay the bills. **Carried**

To adjourn. **Carried**

Railroad Stations Forever Stamps First Day of Issue at Union Terminal

*The Honorable Daniel Tangherlini
USPS Board of Governors*

*The Honorable Alicia Reece
Hamilton County Commissioner*



Cincinnati, Ohio

March 9, 2023



(L-R) Branch 43 President Ted Thompson, USPS Board of Governors Daniel Tangherlini, Region 11 RAA Dave Kennedy

2023 NALC Branch 43 Scholarship Rules & Application

Eligibility Requirements:

1. Applicant must be the son/daughter, legally adopted son/daughter, stepchild or grandchild of an active or retired Letter Carrier of Branch 43.
2. Applicant's parent or grandparent must be in good standing with Branch 43 NALC for a minimum of three (3) years prior to submitting the application.
3. The member may not have applied for or have held a management position with the USPS, including 204-B positions, for three (3) years prior to submitting the application.
4. Application forms will be made available for pickup at Branch 43 headquarters beginning March 1st of each year. The application form will be printed in the April edition of the News and Views annually. The form will also be available at the Branch 43 website beginning March 1st of each year.
5. Applications MUST be postmarked no later than April 30th of each year. Applications may be dropped off in person at Branch 43 no later than the close of business on April 30th of each year.

Name of Member: _____

Name of Scholarship Applicant: _____

Applicant's Relationship to Member: _____

Applicant's school of choice: _____

Awarding of the Scholarships:

1. Winners will receive a Five Hundred (\$500.00) scholarship to be drawn by lottery at the Branch 43 Membership meeting in May each year.
2. Four (4) scholarship winners and four (4) alternates will be drawn. If, for any reason, a scholarship recipient will be unable to use the scholarship, then the alternates, in the order they were drawn, will be awarded the scholarship.
3. Awards are for one (1) year only. However, the winner is free to submit an application each year he or she is eligible to apply.
4. Scholarship Awards will be deposited into the winner's school account, established at an accredited college or trade school, in the applicant's name.

Any and all issues arising from the rules and applications as it pertains to the Branch 43 Scholarships will be reviewed by the Branch 43 Board of Trustees. The findings and decision of the Board of Trustees pertaining to the Branch 43 Scholarship Fund will be FINAL.

Vice President cont.

Safety and Health

Both federal law and the National Agreement mandate that the Postal Service provides safe working conditions for letter carriers and other postal employees. They are required to investigate accidents and maintain records on occupational injuries and illnesses. The Postal Service is subject to the Occupational Safety and Health Act. This law empowers the Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) division to enforce the Act’s standards and regulations. In addition to its requirements under federal law, Article 14 of the National Agreement, obligates the Postal Service “to provide safe working conditions” in postal facilities and “develop a safe work force” and that the NALC will cooperate with and assist management to live up to this responsibility. Article 14, Section 1 states: It is the responsibility of management to provide safe working conditions in all present and future installations and to develop a safe working force. The union will cooperate with and assist management to live up to this responsibility. The employer will meet with the union on a semi-annual basis and inform the union of its automated systems development programs. The employer also agrees to consider human factors in the design and development of automated systems. Human factors and ergonomics of new automated systems are a proper subject for discussion at the National Joint Labor-Management Safety Committee. The contract provides that employees have the obligation to observe safety rules and procedures and management must correct unsafe conditions and equipment and ensure that the workplace is safe and sanitary. In ful-

filling its responsibilities, management must make available at the workplace PS Form 1767 Report of Hazard, Unsafe Condition or Practice that carriers and other employees can use to report unsafe and unhealthy conditions. You are encouraged to contribute to a safer work environment by reporting hazards that you encounter using this form. In addition, employees must report all accidents and injuries immediately. Article 14 also sets forth several paths for employees to pursue should they believe they are being required to work under unsafe conditions. These avenues include notification to your supervisor, notification to your supervisor through your shop steward, filing a PS Form 1767, and ultimately the filing of a Formal Step A grievance within 14-days of notifying management if no corrective action has been taken during the employees’ tour. Stay safe!

In Solidarity,
Pat Dougherty

A Dime Holding Up a Dollar

I observed the Time and Attendance Supervisor standing, not doing any work, for about 30 minutes. When he didn’t have his hands in his pockets, he had a yard stick that he was tapping against the floor. Just think of all the non-working positions the Cincinnati Post Office has, let alone across the entire United States. So, when your supervisor asks you for a 30-minute pivot, tell them that you don’t have the time to pivot but you know of someone that does have the time to pivot.

Kevin Hensley, Sharonville Union Steward

Proposed By-law Change. First Printing. Vote to take place at May Membership Meeting

Current Language Article V Section 1:

Each member shall pay monthly dues equal to two hours base pay for an NALC grade 1, step O letter carrier employed by the United States Postal Service. The dues of each retired member shall be thirty-seven dollars and twenty cents (\$37.20) per annum. Per the National Constitution all 1189 for deduction of dues, unless retired on OWCP.

Proposed Language Article V Section 1:

Each member shall pay monthly dues equal to two hours base pay for an NALC grade 2, step P letter carrier employed by the United States Postal Service. The dues of each retired member shall be thirty-seven dollars and twenty cents (\$37.20) per annum. Per the National Constitution all 1189 for deduction of dues, unless retired on OWCP.

John	Ambrose
Melvin	Cain
Frances	Carpenter
Mark	Franxman
Charles	Grant
Richard	Grimes
Paul	Heger
Thomas	Horn
Russell	Kater
John	Landers
Kelly	Marshall
Patrick	McGowan
James	Merritt
Michael	Molloy
Cynthia	Mulvaney
Kevin	Murphy
Linda	Murphy
Lewis	Reffitt
Theodore	Ridder
Carmelo	Romito III
Virginia	Schomaker
Paul	Schotte
Dennis	Shields
Michael	Siemer
Lewis	Southall
Alan	Steely
Gary	Wilson
Thomas	Winters
Willard	Woodall
Michael	Young

April Retiree Birthdays

**March YOPC
Attendees**

Deborah Bryant
Liz Darby
Diana Enwright
JR Ford
Jerry Giesting
Burt Hughes
Dick Keller
Gerry Mees
Ken Pflanz
Robert Wilkinson

Join fellow retirees next month for sharing old times, playing cards and lunch



**April
Gold Carders**

Joseph	Brock, Sr.
Stan	Burch
Chester	Cox
John	Fields
Larry	Irvin
James	Jenkins
Thomas	Keane
Daniel	Mugavin
Charles	Williams
Joseph	Yount

March Membership Meeting

Raffle Winner

Split the Pot -

Charlie Schweppe



Richard Grimes was inaccurately reported last month as deceased. We apologize to Richard for any duress this caused

Join fellow retirees for lunch

1:00 pm - 1st Monday of each month

May 1st

Price Hill Chili

**4920 Glenway Ave
Cincinnati, OH 45238**

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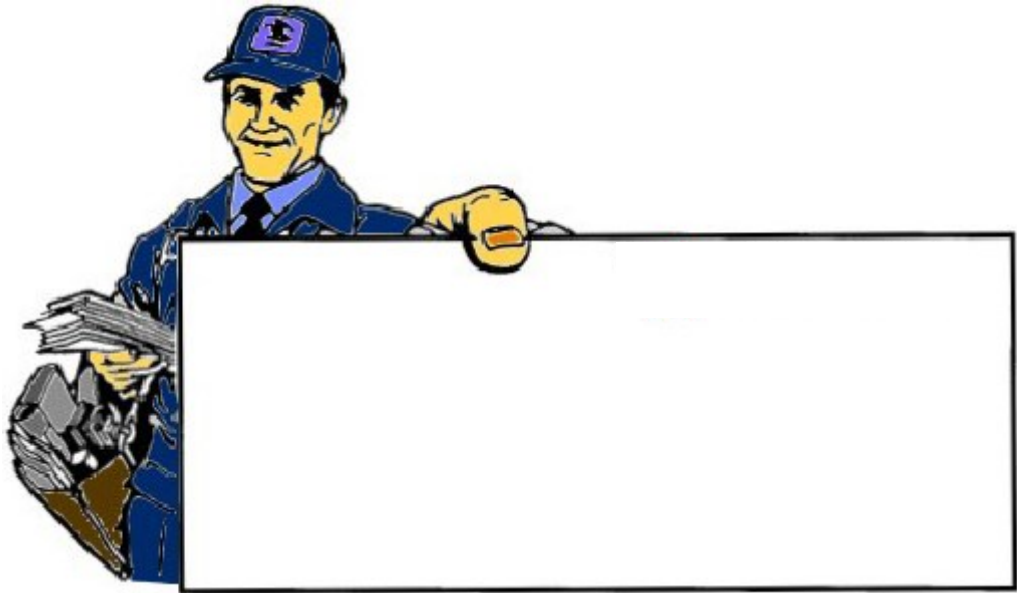
*Balance must be at least \$10,000 or greater to qualify. For loan balances below \$10,000 only the 90 day deferment will be offered. Member must qualify for the loan under normal underwriting guidelines. Minimum rate floor of this offer is 2.99% APR. Interest will accrue over the 90 day deferment period regardless of balance. Member must be able to provide verification of existing rate. Existing PFCU loans are excluded. This institution is not federally insured. **MEMBERS' ACCOUNTS ARE NOT INSURED OR GUARANTEED BY ANY GOVERNMENT OR GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED AGENCY**

Queen City Letter Carriers

NALC Branch 43
11070 Southland Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 45240

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Upcoming Events

- Region 11 Training** - April 4th - 6th
- Officers Meeting** - April 13th, 6:00 PM
- Branch Meeting** - April 13th, 7:30 PM
- Steward Seminar** - April 20th, 6:00 PM
- May YOPC** - Wednesday, May 3rd
- Ohio Legislative Conference**
- Washington DC** - April 26th - 27th

