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March 2023

Queen City Letter Carriers - NALC Branch 43 News & Views

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Ted Thompson
President

From the President's Desk

On February 14th, our seventh, and final, Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) under the 2019-2023 National Agreement was announced to be \$208 annually following the release of the January consumer price index. I have included information on this COLA on page 5. What this final COLA means for letter carriers is its time to get a new contract. On February 22nd, the NALC opened contract negotiations with the Postal Service in search for a sixteenth collective bargaining agreement. While we have goals to achieve to adequately address the issues of staffing, crime, and workroom floor issues, I will write about those next month. For this month, I want to focus on Postal Service finances.

The Postal Service, which is provided for in the U.S. Constitution, is vital to American political and social life as our nation's only true universal delivery and communications network. The Postal Service is the heartbeat of a trillion-dollar mailing industry. But the Postal Service is so much more to us as employees. The Postal Service is our income provider. As such, the financial and economic status of the Postal Service can greatly affect us more than the average citizen we provide a service to. It can also affect us in collective bargaining.

Many of the goals we seek to achieve revolve around salary and benefits. In order to achieve increased salary and benefits the NALC has been working tirelessly these last few years to beef up the financial status of the Postal Service. This work is done through joint programs like Customer Connect, this work is done through collaborative ef-

orts of collating stakeholders in the mailing industry, and much of this work is done legislatively, for which my focus will be.

The NALC has, or had, three main legislative goals: Postal reform, credit for overpayment in the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS), and better investment of the USPS Health Benefit Fund. Last year, one of those goals was achieved in the Postal Service Reform Act (PSRA) of 2022. While I have written on this before, the PSRA mandated into law 6 day delivery, Medicare integration, and the repeal of the 2006 Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act (PAEA) pre-funding mandate, which required the Postal Service to pre-fund future retiree health benefits 75 years in advance, through a 10 year period of time. In every collective bargaining agreement since 2006, the Postal Service made the argument they were broke and could not afford our wage requests because the pre-funding mandate. While PAEA eliminates this argument with repeal of the pre-funding mandate, it also saves the Postal Service money through Medicare integration.

Currently, over 80% of NALC retired members are enrolled in Medicare. The others that did not get into Medicare usually fall within one of three categories. First, they already have supplemental insurance, such as the VA. Second, they live somewhere that Medicare is not accepted which is usually outside the country. Or third, they are generally healthy and live a healthy lifestyle and didn't, or don't, see a need to enroll at age 65. Beginning in 2025, there will be enrollment requirements for most future retirees into Medicare Part B once they reach age 65. All NALC members will fall into one of two groups January 1, 2025. The first group, consists of all active duty members aged 64 or over and all retired members. For this group, there will be no requirement to obtain Medicare Part B.

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.

However, for those retired members who did not get into Medicare Part B at age 65, and wish they had, there will be a window to enroll in which the 10% penalty for each year not enrolled will be waived to the member and paid for by the Postal Service. Everyone else will fall into the second group, which is all active members under the age of 64. For this group, with certain exceptions, they will be required to obtain Medicare Part B at age 65. For members enrolled in Medicare, your Federal Employee Health Benefit (FEHB) plan will become your secondary insurance, and Medicare your primary insurer. Thus, saving the Postal Service in health care costs. The PSEA also created a postal only health benefit system.

Beginning in 2025, a new, Postal Service Health Benefit (PSHB) Program, within the Federal Employee Benefit Program (FEHB) will be administered by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and will provide health insurance to all eligible Postal Service employees, annuitants, and eligible family members. The PSHB Program will replace the FEHB Program coverage for these groups. All insurers enrolled into FEHB must make a mirror image plan in PSHB. No insurance, coverage, or premiums should change for postal employees. Since all active and retired members will enroll in PSHB plan, along with Medicare integration, theoretically this should save both the Postal Service and the member in the long run through reduced insurance premiums with Medicare becoming the primary insurer. While the legislative achievements of PSEA are to be championed, there are still a couple more ways of putting the Postal Service on strong financial ground.

First, NALC Brian Renfroe recently met with the White House to discuss the Segal report. You may not have heard me talk much, or at all, about the Segal report before. Around 2010, the Office of Inspector General

(OIG) commissioned and audit firm to review Postal Service liability in the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS). The Segal report is a record of this audit. The history of this report goes back to 1971 when the Postal Reorganization Act (PRA) turned the Department of the Post Office, which was taxpayer funded, into the United States Postal Service, which is not taxpayer funded. In 1971, Congress decided that postal employees would continue under the same benefit programs available to general government employees, which included CSRS. The deal was that the government would be responsible for liabilities incurred before 1971, and the Postal Service responsible for liabilities incurred after. In 1974, OPM was instructed to determine pension liability due to wage increases from collective bargaining achieved after 1971 and the Postal Service was to pay off that amount off over 30 equal annual installments. The Segal report outlines how OPM erroneously calculated Postal Service liability and that OPM has overcharged the Postal Service by \$75 to \$80 billion dollars. Currently, President Renfroe is working with the White House and lawyers from the Department of Justice to see if this money can be not refunded, but credited, to the Postal Service through Executive Order of President Biden.

Second, and again working with the White House, the NALC is attempting to gain better investment of the USPS Health Benefits Trust Fund. This fund, which the Postal Service deposits health benefit liabilities into, is currently invested with low returns that do not keep up with inflation. The NALC is seeking to have this fund invested safely in government securities to labor higher returns on investment and keep up with, or be greater than, the rate of inflation. If we can achieve credit for \$75 billion dollars, allowing the Postal Service to invest in its future, infrastructure, and employees, as well as achieve higher returns on investment of the USPS Health Benefit Trust Fund,

Continued on page 8



Pat Dougherty
Vice President

From the Vice President

How to request overtime and complete a PS Form 3996

The morning routine of estimating your workload for the day is often difficult to do, even for experienced letter carriers. Whether you are just starting your career or are an older experienced carrier, the rules remain the same when you believe that the route you are assigned to carry has more work than you can complete within eight hours, or you believe that you cannot complete all the work assigned to you for the day within your scheduled time. I will provide you with six steps to help you successfully request overtime and complete a PS Form 3996.

Step 1. Verbally inform your supervisor/manager if you don't think you can complete your assignment in eight hours. Sections 131.41 and 131.42 of Handbook M-41, City Delivery Carriers Duties and Responsibilities, the USPS handbook that outlines the duties of a city letter carrier, require you to tell the supervisor/manager when you cannot carry all the mail distributed to your route in eight hours or within your normal schedule. Once you have verbally informed management, they are required to tell you what to do. If you are instructed to take all mail and stay in eight hours and you still believe that you will not be able to finish your route in eight hours, proceed to step 2.

Step 2. Request PS Form 3996 from management. Article 41.3.G of the National Agreement and Section 122.33 of Handbook M-39, Management of Delivery Services require the manager to provide you with a PS Form 3996 when you request one. Handbook M-39 is a guide for management detailing their responsibilities when dealing with city letter carriers, but it often provides explanations to help city letter carriers. No matter what your manager says to you, say the words, "I am requesting a PS Form 3996" and explain the reason(s) for your request. If you are denied the form, immediately request to see your union steward. If your request to see your union steward is denied, make sure that another carrier hears you say the words. After you have verbally informed management that you don't believe you can finish your route in eight hours, have made them aware that their instruction has not changed your belief that you can stay in eight hours, and have been provided a PS Form 3996, proceed to

step 3.

Step 3. Fill out the form 3996 completely. It is important that you fill out the form completely. In the "Reason For Use of Auxiliary" box, you must write down why you believe that you cannot complete your assignment in eight hours. If your belief is related to your mail volume or type of mail you have, you should write comments that are specific and not general as to why you are requesting overtime. Your reason also could be related to your street duties. Some examples: known road construction, weather-related issues (inclement weather ice, snow, heat), excessive accountable, flats, letters, and DPS (normal 4 trays today 10 trays), etc. Comments like "heavy volume" or "route overburdened" aren't sufficient for this section. Often, there are other circumstances that might be the reason why you will need overtime or auxiliary assistance on a given day. Always list the circumstances that will prevent you from finishing your assignment in eight hours on PS Form 3996 as explained be specific not general comments. Statements from management such as "This is your demonstrated performance," and "You are not mak-

United States Postal Service
Carrier - Auxiliary Control

A. Delivery Unit		B. Telephone	C. Date				
D. Carrier's Name and Route No.		E. Lunch Place and Time					
F. Indicate entire or portion of the case shelves covering mail as street auxiliary assistance						G. Keys Required? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
1	2	3	4	5	6	H. Carfare Required? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
						I. Accountable Mail? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
J. Reason For Use of Auxiliary							

K. Estimated Work		L. Management Action. Check and initial all appropriate actions.						
Hours	Minutes	Auxiliary Assistance		Hours	Minutes	Overtime	Hours	Minutes
		Approved <input type="checkbox"/>				Approved <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Disapproved <input type="checkbox"/>				Disapproved <input type="checkbox"/>		

M. Transportation (If drive-out, show parking location(s) on reverse)

Transportation Mode to and from route: Postal owned: Drive-out: Contract: Public:

N. Starts Delivery at: * Collect mail from all collection boxes on your part of the route, unless instructed otherwise.

Deliver

Collection boxes locations:

1
2
3
4
5
6

O. Find Relays At:

1	4
2	5
3	6

P. Assistance Completed By (Carrier Name and regular route number if assigned):

Office Time		Street Time				Total Auxiliary Time
Begin Time	Time Used	Begin Travel To	Begin Delivery	Begin Travel From	Travel To	
					Delivery	
End Time		End Travel To	End Delivery	End Travel From	Travel From	
					Total Street	

PS Form 3996, November 1997



Dave Utz
Formal A Rep

STEWARD'S CORNER

HELP EACH OTHER

First, I want to thank you all for working long hours in all of 2022 and I know our customers thank all of us also. It seems like management could care less if customers get mail daily, if they cared they would get off their ass and at least deliver some parcels. Now that I got that off my chest, now it's your turn to step up.

Let's get over ourselves, it took me years to make regular and the new carriers make regular in 60 days. What older carriers need to think about is you had years to learn all the stuff we do daily. I want you to think about how you felt just starting your new job in the USPS. But wait now you're a regular and haven't cased don't know where anything is in the station or even where the restrooms are on the route. Get over it and help the new carriers be successful because we know how a lot of management is. Let's be a friend and helping hand.

We have so many new carriers I need name tags to learn their names. That is exactly what we need, so I ask all carriers to help the new carriers. Help with mark-ups, help set up parcels, help with flagging or banding DPS, help with casing, and EDDM & house to house mail. As I write this, I can hear carriers "no one helped me, so let them learn the hard way." To that I say fine do you like working 12 hours a day 60 hours a week, 20 hours of overtime every week? Then don't lend a hand and help new carriers be successful and you can work 12 hours dai-

ly and 60 hours weekly for the rest of your career.

This leads me to my next point for all you newly converted regular carriers you can only work **12 HOURS A DAY, 20 HOURS OF OVERTIME A WEEK, 60 HOURS MAXIMIM A WEEK**, this is a major part of our contract. So, at 12 hours in a day, you come back to the station and state I have reached my contractual limit, at 20 hours of OT tell management I will work 8 hours a day till the end of the week, at 60 in a week **GO HOME TO YOUR FAMILY**. Use virtual timecard on lite-blue or keep track by writing it down like I do. If you have seen me, I always have a calendar in my pocket and I write down my daily hours. So far this year I am off every Friday at 4 or earlier. This past Friday I returned to Murray with 2 hours at 4pm and went home and cooked dinner for my family. Your family is just as important as the post office.

I challenge all the new carriers to get involved with the NALC. We need you; knowledge is power. Of course, it can't be learned in a day, but the NALC has many people to help you as you grow in the NALC. Steward elections will be this year, we need young energetic people wanting to learn to step up and take control of your stations.

My last point, in 2022 as a carrier was getting ready to retire, he was trying to buy back military time into retirement, and it took months and months. It took so long he got to stay next to me for weeks longer than needed. First thank any and all that have served and if you are buying military time back call Branch 43 or human resources and do it at least a year before retirement.

Dave Utz
Formal A Rep, AFL-CIO Delegate

Motions made at the February Membership Meeting

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

To accept the November, December, & Year End reports and pay the bills. **Carried**

To send up to four people, at the President's discretion, to Region 11 training in Syracuse, New York April 4 - 6, to include travel, lodging, per diem, & wages. **Carried**

To adjourn. **Carried**

National Association of Letter Carriers

100 Indiana Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20001-2144

Memorandum

Telephone:
(202) 393-4695

February 14, 2023

7th COLA: \$208

The seventh regular COLA under the 2019-2023 National Agreement is \$208 following the release of the January 2023 Consumer Price Index.

On February 14, 2023, the Bureau of Labor Statistics announced that the CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W, 1967=100) stood at 874.441 in January, 129.065 points above the base level of 745.376 in July 2019. The 7th COLA stood at 10 cents per hour or \$208 annually.

The seventh COLA is based on the increase in the CPI-W between the base index month and January 2023, less any previously calculated COLAs, and will be payable the second full pay period following the release of the January 2023 index. The seven COLAs that have been calculated under the 2019-2023 National Agreement, totaling 322 cents per hour, are as follows: the 1st COLA, 8 cents per hour (\$166 annually), the 2nd COLA, 9 cents per hour (\$188 annually), the 3rd COLA, 20 cents per hour (\$416 annually), the 4th COLA, 93 cents per hour (\$1,934 annually), the 5th COLA, 64 cents per hour (\$1,331 annually), the 6th COLA, 118 cents per hour (\$2,455 annually), and the 7th COLA, 10 cents per hour (\$208 annually).

2024 Retiree COLAs Projection: 0.6% as of February 2023

The 2024 COLAs for CSRS and FERS benefits are based on the increase in the average CPI-W between the 3rd quarter of 2022 (291.901) and the 3rd quarter of 2023 (TBA).

Based on the January 2023 CPI-W (1982-84) of 293.565, the 2024 CSRS and FERS COLAs are currently projected to be 0.6%. The 2024 retiree COLA calculation will be finalized in October 2023 with the release of the CPI-W for September 2023.

CSRS annuities receive full COLAs; COLAs for FERS annuities are payable for retirees 62 and older and may be reduced by up to one percentage point from the increase in the CPI.

2024 FECA COLA Projection: 0.9% as of February 2023

Based on the release of the January 2023 CPI-W (1982-84=100), the 2024 FECA COLA projection is 0.9%. The January 2023 CPI-W of 293.565 was 0.9% above the December 2022 base index (291.051). The 2024 FECA COLA calculation will be finalized when the December 2023 CPI-W is published during the month of January 2024.

FECA COLAs are applicable only in cases where death or disability occurred more than one year prior to the adjustment's effective date.

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: _____

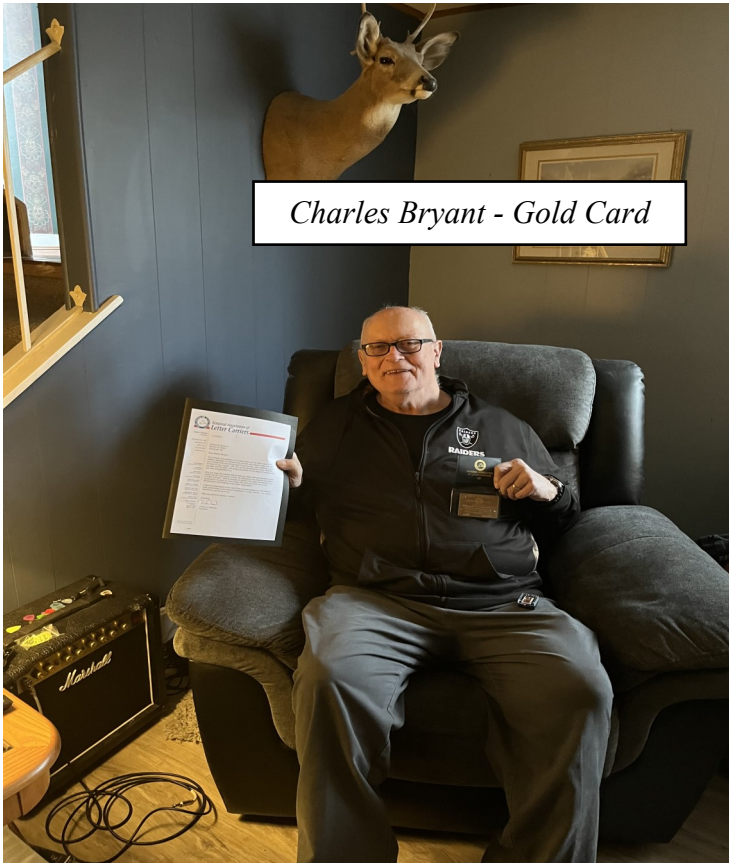
Applicant’s school of choice: _____

Awarding of the Scholarships:

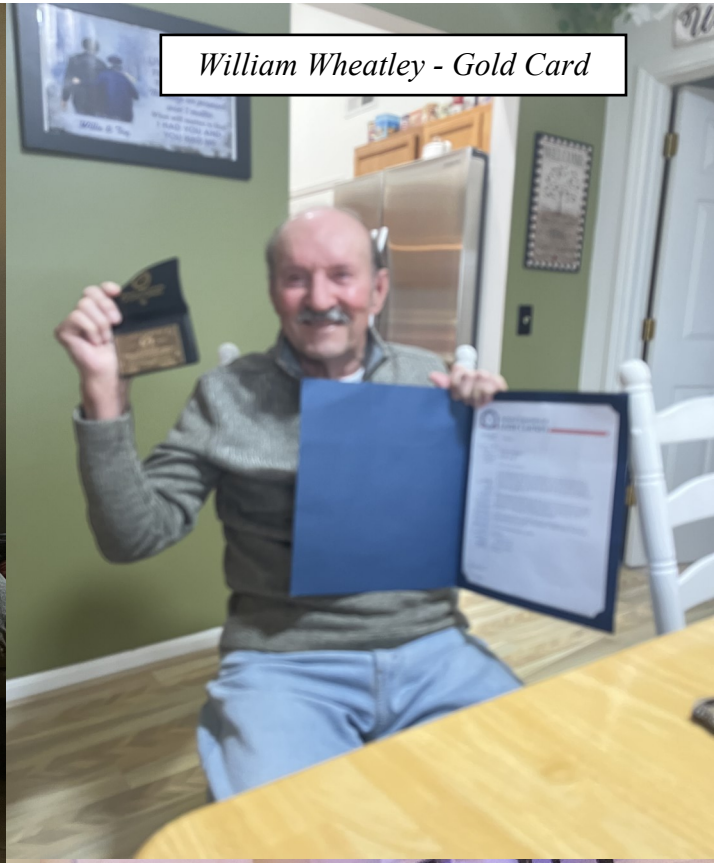
1. Winners will receive a Five Hundred (\$500.00) scholarship to be drawn by lottery at the Branch 43 Membership meeting in May each year.
2. Four (4) scholarship winners and four (4) alternates will be drawn. If, for any reason, a scholarship recipient will be unable to use the scholarship, then the 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.

Branch 43 Membership Awards Part 1



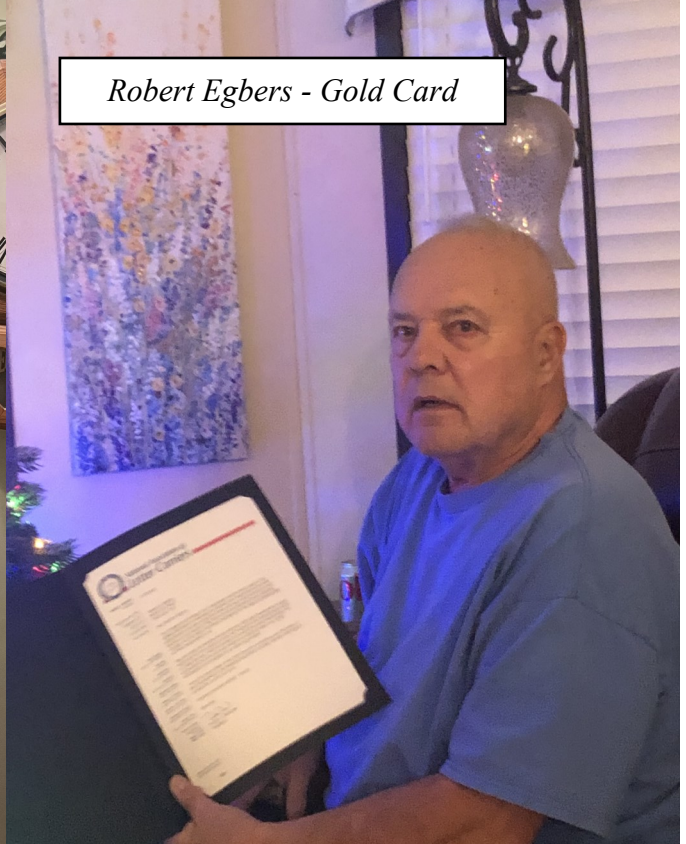
Charles Bryant - Gold Card



William Wheatley - Gold Card



Robert Copenhaver - Gold Card



Robert Egbers - Gold Card

Vice President cont.

ing standards,” are not legitimate and do not change the situation. Never let these comments get to you and stop you from requesting the overtime or assistance you need. Sometimes managers will tell you that you don’t need the requested overtime or assistance because of what DOIS projects for your route. The national parties have agreed that computer-generated time projections are not the sole determinant of your leave or return time. Nothing can replace the opinion of the professional letter carrier.

Step 4. Keep your cool. Don’t lose your cool. While this process can be frustrating, you will do nothing to help yourself by becoming angry. If management denies your request for overtime or assistance, tell them you will do your best. Then ask what they want you to do if you are not able to deliver all the mail by the time they want you back. Often, their answer will be “I just told you what I want you to do,” or “Deliver all the mail and be back in eight hours.” Your manager has just put the ball back in your court and placed you in a situation that you can’t do.



Step 5. Don’t argue with management.

There is no reason to argue with your manager at this point. The only thing you will accomplish by arguing with your manager is to become frustrated and angry. The smartest thing you can do is say, “Ok, I’ll do my best,” and ask for a copy of your PS Form 3996. Article 41.3.G of the National Agreement and Section 122.33 of Handbook M-39 require management to provide you with a copy if you request it.

Step 6. Don’t make decisions. Letter carriers get paid to deliver mail. Management gets paid to make decisions. If you realize that you will not be able to deliver all the mail and get back to the office by the time management approved, you should do

everything you can to put any further decisions back to management. The best way to handle this situation is to call your supervisor prior to 3:00 pm and let them know where you are at and how long you think it will take you to finish. Ask management whether they want you to bring mail back to be able to meet the approved time or give authorization to complete the route. If the supervisor/manager refuses to tell you what to do with the rest of the mail, or if you can’t finish your assigned duties in the amount of time authorized, you should return to the office within the allotted time and ask for further instructions. Don’t ever return mail to the office and leave it without getting instructions on what to do with the mail from someone in management.

You should also complete a PS Form 3996 to track the amount of time you spend assisting or working on another route. If you are instructed to provide auxiliary assistance to another route, management should provide you with a PS Form 3996 indicating this additional work. Make sure that you fill out the bottom of each PS Form 3996 showing both your travel and delivery times for whatever assistance you are carrying. If you don’t believe that you can complete the work in the amount of time authorized, you should notify management as soon as possible.

The above listed advice will assist you anytime you need to fill out a PS Form 3996 and submit it to your supervisor.

In Solidarity,
Pat Dougherty

President cont.

the Postal Service will be on strong financial ground and that is good for everyone, especially when it comes to collective bargaining.

Fraternally,
Ted Thompson

STEWARDS SEMINAR

Thursday, April 20th

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



NALC Health Benefit Plan



NALC Health Benefit Plan

Customer Service

For eligibility, claim and benefit information

1-888-636-NALC (6252)

For additional information visit our website at:

www.nalc.org/depart/hbp

www.nalchbp.org



You continue to serve your country—

THANK YOU!

NALC Veterans Group

Complete this form and mail it to:
NALC Veterans Group, c/o NALC,
100 Indiana Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20001-2144

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____

NALC BRANCH NUMBER: _____ BRANCH OF SERVICE: _____

I BELONG TO THE FOLLOWING VETERAN GROUP(S):

AMERICAN LEGION DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

OTHER: _____

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

Human Resources Share Service Center

1-877-477-3273 Option 5, then Select 6

TTY: 1-866-833-8777

MAILING ADDRESS:

HRSSC FMLA EASTERN

PO Box 970905

Greensboro NC 27497-0905

FAX: 651-456-6041

Make the Call!

USPS Employee Assistance Program

1-800-327-4968

(1-800-EAP-4-YOU) TTY: 1-877-492-7341

www.EAP4YOU.com

February Membership Meeting

Raffle Winner

Split the Pot - Diana Enwright

Happy Birthday

Loyal	Brock
Edward	Brown
Michael	Bryson
Paul	Burnhimer
Joseph	Dean
Gerald	Giesting
Dennis	Halcomb
Greg	King
Rhonda	Kuntz
Joe	Lee
Thomas	Marckesano
David	McCaffrey
Michael	McGowan
Paul	Meyer
Jerry	Mielke
Kelse	Murphy
Dennis	Poe
Gregory	Propes
Karon	Remillard
Lois	Schuerman
Norbert	Schultz
Mark	Singer
David	Taylor
John	Westerman III
Timothy	Wiechman

March Retiree Birthdays

February YOPC Attendees

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

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

March Gold Carders

Gilbert	Bird
Carl	Bockman
Orville	Cupp
Robert	Gabbard
Albert	Matheus
Joseph	McGowan
Altha	McNeil
Donald	Nagel
Jack	O'Leary
Clifford	Ritzi
Thomas	Rouse
Robert	Stulz
Frederick	Wehby
Larry	Yung



Richard Grimes
Charles H. Leesman
James H. Miller

You will be missed.

Join fellow retirees for lunch

1:00 pm - 1st Monday of each month

April 1st

Riverside Marina

**145 Mary Ingle Hwy
 Dayton, KY 41074**

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Toll Free 1-800-265-4527 • www.URmyCU.org

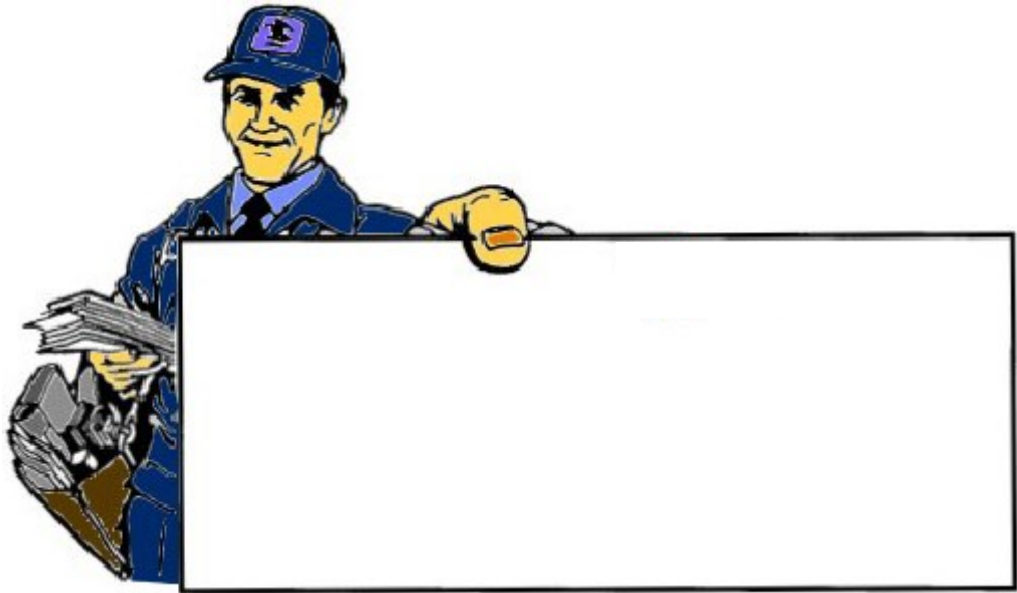
*Balance must be at least \$10,000 or greater to qualify. For loan balances below \$10,000 only the 90 day deferment will be offered. Member must qualify for the loan under normal underwriting guidelines. Minimum rate floor of this offer is 2.99% APR. Interest will accrue over the 90 day deferment period 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

"ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED"

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Cincinnati, Ohio
PERMIT No. 6919



Upcoming Events

Officers Meeting - March 9th, 6:00 PM

Branch Meeting - March 9th, 7:30 PM

Committee of Presidents - March 12 - 13

April YOPC - Wednesday, April 5th

