Since July 25, 1890

July 2026

Queen City Letter Carriers - NALC Branch 43

News & Views

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Ted Thompson
President

From the President's Desk

On February 25, 2026, the NALC opened negotiations on a new National Agreement with the Postal Service. By now, hopefully all members are aware of the expiration of the 2023-2026 National Agreement, which expired on May 22, 2026. By now, we are all working under the expired agreement which will remain in effect, as well as all local agreements, until a new negotiated or arbitrated agreement is reached. This means all contract language remains in full force and effect including your current pay rates, overtime rules, route protections, etc. Currently, we are toward the end of a 60-day mediation process from which the parties are legally required to do by federal statute. Mediation is a structured negotiation with a neutral third party from the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) which helps facilitate the talks. The mediator doesn't have the power to impose a settlement; both parties would have to agree. During mediation the parties will continue bargaining, with a mediator in the room, trying to close whatever gaps remain from the final weeks of negotiations. There is no current agreement, but I do want to discuss some of what I have been made aware of.

At the beginning of June, I attended a three-day Collective Bargaining Conference. During this conference, I took over 16 pages of notes, which is impossible to cover all of them here but were discussed at last month's membership meeting for over two hours. Therefore, I will focus strictly on the economic portion of collective bargaining and where we currently stand.

For starters, I want to debunk any misinformation that may be out there that the NALC has proposed specific economic proposals to the USPS. That is simply not true at the time of the conference and as of my most recent teleconference with President Renfroe on June 25th. Any discussions President Renfroe shared were discussions amongst the Executive Council or data compiled to establish a price example with NALC priorities. Currently, to reach an agreement, President Renfroe is waiting for a reply on what the Postal Service is willing to spend in addition to what we currently have over the life of a new agreement. He believes it will take at least an additional five billion dollars to city letter carriers in order to reach an agreement. Currently, President Renfroe is pushing the USPS to commit to what they will do - or say what they will not do. Either way, President Renfroe stated, "At the end of mediation I suspect we will move towards interest arbitration."

Fraternally,
Ted Thompson

NEWS & VIEWS
Volume 137, Number 7
Published Monthly by:
Queen City Letter Carriers
NALC Branch 43
11070 Southland Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 45240

www.branch43.org
Phone: 513-542-6400
Fax: 513-542-0043

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

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC

June 17, 2026

Gary R. Barksdale
Chief Postal Inspector
U.S. Postal Inspection Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW
Washington, D.C. 20260

David Steiner
Postmaster General
United States Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW
Washington, D.C. 20260

Dear Chief Barksdale and Postmaster Steiner,

As sponsors of the bipartisan *Protect Our Letter Carriers Act*, we write today to request updated information regarding serious crimes committed against United States Postal Service (USPS) letter carriers, and the measures the U.S. Postal Inspection Service (USPIS) and USPS are taking to address this issue.

According a 2024 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report, the number of serious crimes against postal workers doubled from 2019-2023, with robberies of letter carriers increasing by over 700 percent.[1] During that same period, USPIS reported a 139 percent increase in mail theft.[2]

GAO and USPIS have found that robbers are increasingly using firearms and targeting the universal keys – known as "arrow keys" – which letter carriers use to access several mailboxes.[3] By stealing one arrow key, criminals can access hundreds to thousands of mailboxes and commit high-volume mail theft.

In 2023, recognizing the need to address this pressing issue, USPS began replacing arrow keys and collection boxes to more secure versions.[4] However, thousands of outdated arrow keys and collection boxes remain in use, highlighting the urgent need to pass our bipartisan *Protect Our Letter Carriers Act*. This legislation has over 215 bipartisan cosponsors this Congress and would provide support to USPS to replace these arrow keys and collection boxes more efficiently.

As you know, USPIS also launched "Project Safe Delivery" in 2023 in order to combat rising mail theft and attacks on letter carriers.[5] The findings of "Project Safe Delivery," along with GAO's findings, underscore the need for continued action to prevent theft and protect postal workers.

Updated information on postal-related crime is essential for future congressional action on this topic. Therefore, we respectfully request that USPIS and USPS provide, within 60 days of today's date, the following information for the period of 2024 to the present, or the most recent period for which data is available:

1. The number of reported crimes against letter carriers, categorized by the type of offense and the percentage involving firearms.
2. An estimate of the volume and financial impact of mail theft resulting from thefts of USPS arrow keys.
3. The arrest, prosecution, and conviction rates for reported crimes against letter carriers.
4. The number of pending criminal investigations and prosecutions involving crimes against letter carriers.
5. The number of USPS collection boxes and arrow keys that have been replaced, the total amount spent to date to replace them, and the number and cost of the remaining keys and boxes to be replaced.

Thank you for your time and attention to this urgent matter. We look forward to your response, and to continue working with your offices on important issues.

Sincerely,

Congressman Greg Landsman (OH-01)

Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick (PA-01)


Pat Dougherty
Vice President

From the Vice President

Holiday Schedules

Article 11 of the NALC-USPS National Agreement provides the contractual language governing the eleven holidays observed by letter carriers. At times, it can be confusing as to when holidays are observed, who is supposed to work when it is necessary to staff postal operations on holidays or designated holidays, or the rules regarding the posting of holiday schedules. To protect your rights regarding these issues, it is important for letter carriers to understand how all of this is supposed to work.

Article 11, Section 5 identifies when a holiday is observed if it falls on a non-workday. If a holiday falls on a Sunday, the following Monday is observed as the holiday. When the holiday falls on a Saturday, the preceding Friday becomes the holiday. When a holiday falls on a weekday, the actual day of the holiday is what is observed. When a full-time regular (FTR) carrier's scheduled non-workday (non-scheduled day) falls on the day observed as a holiday, their scheduled workday preceding the holiday becomes that carrier's designated holiday.

Holiday scheduling is governed by the provisions of Article 11, Section 6 of the National Agreement, and any applicable Local Memorandum of Understanding (LMOU) provisions. Article 11 requires that management determine the number and category of employees needed for holiday work. Article 11.6.A. The Employer will determine the number and categories of employees needed for holiday work and a schedule shall be posted as of the Tuesday preceding the service week in which the holiday falls. Article 11.6.B. As many full-time and part-time regular schedule employees as can be spared will be excused from duty on a holiday or day designated as their holiday. Such employees will not be required to work on a holiday or day designated as their holiday unless all casuals and Part-Time Flexibles (PTF) are utilized to the maximum extent possible, even if the payment of overtime is required, and unless all full-time and part-time regulars with the needed skills who wish to work on the holiday have been afforded an opportunity to do so.

In January of 2021, the NALC and USPS settled a national-level dispute regarding whether the holiday schedule pecking order is applicable to the assignment of personnel to complete parcel select delivery during testing of Sunday parcel delivery (which includes Monday holidays). The settlement (M-01937) states in pertinent part: The Employer determines the number and categories of employees needed for holiday work. In instances where there are eight or more hours of work available, the normal holiday pecking order is used to schedule employees to work on a holiday. In instances where the holiday pecking order applies and a parcel delivery hub and spoke model is utilized, employees of the installation where the carriers report and from where delivery originates on the holiday or designated holiday will be scheduled pursuant to the holiday pecking order, and existing Local Memorandum of Understanding (LMOU) provisions regarding the holiday pecking order in that installation will apply. This does not preclude the scheduling of CCAs from other Post Offices consistent with existing contractual provisions. This agreement does not alter existing LMOU provisions regarding the holiday pecking order or holiday scheduling in any installation.

Article 11.6 requires that management post a holiday schedule as of the Tuesday preceding the week in which the holiday falls. What if the holiday schedule is not posted as of the Tuesday preceding the week in which the holiday falls? The Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM), Section 434.53c(1) states: If the schedule is not posted as of Tuesday preceding the service week in which the holiday falls, a FTR bargaining unit employee who is required to work on his or her holiday or designated holiday, or who volunteers to work on that day, receives holiday scheduling premium for each hour of work, not to exceed 8 hours. This premium is in addition to both holiday leave pay and holiday-worked pay.

Continued on page 9

Dave Utz
Formal A Rep

Time to say goodbye.

By the end of this month, it will be retirement for me. It was an enjoyable and satisfying run as a Branch 43 steward and Formal A representative. As I think back on the many carriers that I have known and worked with, my reward is to know I was able to help them and settle some of the grievances. For the grievances not settled I always did my best for carriers. When beginning this article certain names of carrier's pop into my head that I helped excess EAP and other resources to get the help they needed. And I feel incredibly pleased with my work.

I can say the stewards that I have worked with over the years do an excellent job on the floor. Most are always trying to learn and gain more knowledge. I will say for some of our newer carrier's knowledge is power and if you don't learn the simplest rules management will run all over you. I would like Branch 43 to gain new stewards and Branch 43 officers to be younger carriers, and I challenge carriers to step up and speak up for each other.

I want to thank David Kennedy who made me a Formal for Branch 43 and all the others that helped me for the last 25 years. I have worked with so many officers and Formals I cannot name them all, but I learned from every one of them. As I retire the group of Formals at Branch 43 is great but there is always room for more.

I want to say a big thank you to all the Murray carriers that covered my route when I was representing many stations in Cincinnati over the years. I know you all stepped up for my route and the customers. I sincerely appreciate this and appreciate what all of you did for me.

I do not know if all the stations that had route adjustments this year are doing this. Murray is placing route placards showing parcel count and leave time, if you are 30 minutes late leaving per placard time, request overtime on 3996. If over parcel count, request overtime on 3996. If you newer carriers don't start protecting your routes and following the contract regarding your rights, all the routes will be 8 hours on the street and routes will be lost in every station over & over.

Thanks for the years!
David Utz

Corey Isham
Formal A Rep

In May 2026, Environmental Performance Index (EPI) reported that United States employers spend roughly $1.7 billion annually to avoid unions. In 2025, union membership in the United States grew to its highest level since 2009, and reports show that 50 million nonunion workers would join a union but are unable to because of employer's efforts to derail unions.

While the law requires employers to report how much they spend on lawyers who directly engage with employees regarding collective bargaining and union-related issues, it does not require them to report how much they spend on receiving advice from those same lawyers. These attorneys have developed programs that employers can purchase, including supervisor training, communication strategies, and other tools designed to discourage unionization. EPI estimates that employers spend more than $440 million on anti-union campaign services specifically designed to intimidate and persuade workers to vote "no" in union elections.

One company that letter carriers know very well is Amazon. According to the EPI article, Amazon spent an estimated $26.5 million on union-avoidance consultants in 2025 alone. At first glance, that figure may seem surprising. In reality, it is quite predictable. A quick Google search asking, "What is it like to work at Amazon?" will return many responses that are strikingly similar. Workers frequently express frustration with their experiences at Amazon and often raise concerns about workplace culture, something many letter carriers can unfortunately relate to. However, many Ama-

Continued on page 7

Branch 43 Presents

GOLF

OUTING

OCTOBER 12, 2026

8:45 AM

Cr. sign up here

$6 HOTDOG COMBO

Entry for prizes & games
$40
a team

2200 John Gray Rd.
Fairfield, OH. 45014

$37 PER PERSON

QUEEN CITY BRANCH 43 NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS CINCINNATI, OHIO

REGISTRATION FORM

Team Name: ______________________________

Phone: ______________________________

Email: ______________________________

PLAYERS ______________________________

*******EVENT IS LIMITED TO THE FIRST 18 TEAMS*******

Charles "Skip" Grant was recognized by having the branch office named after him at the June membership meeting.

Motions made at the June Membership Meeting

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

To name the front office the Charles "Skip" Grant office. **Carried**

To name the back hall Hughes Hall. **Carried**

To update and replace the computers of the Financial Secretary and Treasurer. **Carried**

To accept the February Financial Report and pay the bills. **Carried**

To adjourn. **Carried**

Natasha Wever
AFL-CIO

Flag Day 2026

What is Flag Day?

It is the 14th of June! It is when the Continental Congress adopted the flag we fly proudly! This year we happened to also have a (Hopefully Annual) Cornhole Tournament on the same day. We as a Union don't do much as a group that is outside of normal meetings. We hope this will turn into an annual event. We had 16 teams that played this year. There were cash prizes won by 1st, 2nd & 3rd place teams. It all kicked off around 10:30 am and was over by 2pm. The first-place team: 1803 (Dwayne Keeton & Jerry Gee - picture on page 8).

Brother Jim Metz grilled up food for those that came out to join the fun! Side was provided by Brother Brian Bailey and his Wife. Sister Diana Enwright sold Split the Pot tickets! All the proceeds were donated to the NALC Disaster Relief Fund! Brother Corey Isham Won the Split the Pot and in turn donated the winning to the fund as well!

I hope that we can grow this into an annual event, this will not be on Flag Day every year, but around the same time! I hope that more of you younger brothers and sisters will come enjoy an afternoon with us! Mostly I want to see more of your faces, not just the ones I know but more of the ones that are new to the Union! I see other Unions through the AFL-CIO doing fun outings and always think why don't we do things like they do? The reason is participation. We need to know that you will show up! Let's make more of an effort to show up not only for special events but even meetings and each other!!!!!

In Solidarity,
Tasha Wever

Steward's Corner cont.

zon workers also describe concerns about at-will employment and the lack of workplace protections available to unionized employees.

Most Amazon employees are not unionized. Some are, such as, the approximately 5,000 brothers and sisters from Staten Island NY who secured a major labor victory earlier this year. Unfortunately, most Amazon employees do not have the option to file a grievance within 14 days or less when they believe they have been treated unfairly.

For Amazon, the ability to terminate workers for things such as the scanner not reporting delivery scans or inaccurately reporting inactivity is worth at least $26 million annually. In fact, that figure is likely only a minimum estimate because Amazon, like many employers, can take advantage of the reporting loophole discussed above and spend additional money on legal advice and union-avoidance strategies that are not publicly disclosed.

For letter carriers, the ability to file grievance and bargain collectively for wages, benefits, and working conditions is invaluable. Many active and retired letter carriers would tell you that the right to bargain is worth everything. Collective bargaining has enabled countless letter carriers to provide housing for their families, raise children, and retire with dignity.

In other labor news, New York City housekeepers secured a new contract that will raise annual pay to more than $100,000 for workers. Hotel owners at nearly 250 New York City hotels reached an agreement with the union and will continue covering the full cost of health care benefits for 27,000 union members and their families.

The victory highlights the power of collective bargaining. Housekeepers strategically used the upcoming World Cup as leverage, recognizing that hotels will rely heavily on tourism during the event. By threatening to strike at a critical time, workers strengthened their bargaining position and ultimately made significant gains. Congratulations to them, and I'm glad to see it.

Locally, the Cincinnati AFL-CIO picnic is set for Saturday, September 5, 2026, at Stricker's Grove from Noon until 6 P.M. If any letter carrier is interested in going, just let me know, and I will get you all the information that you

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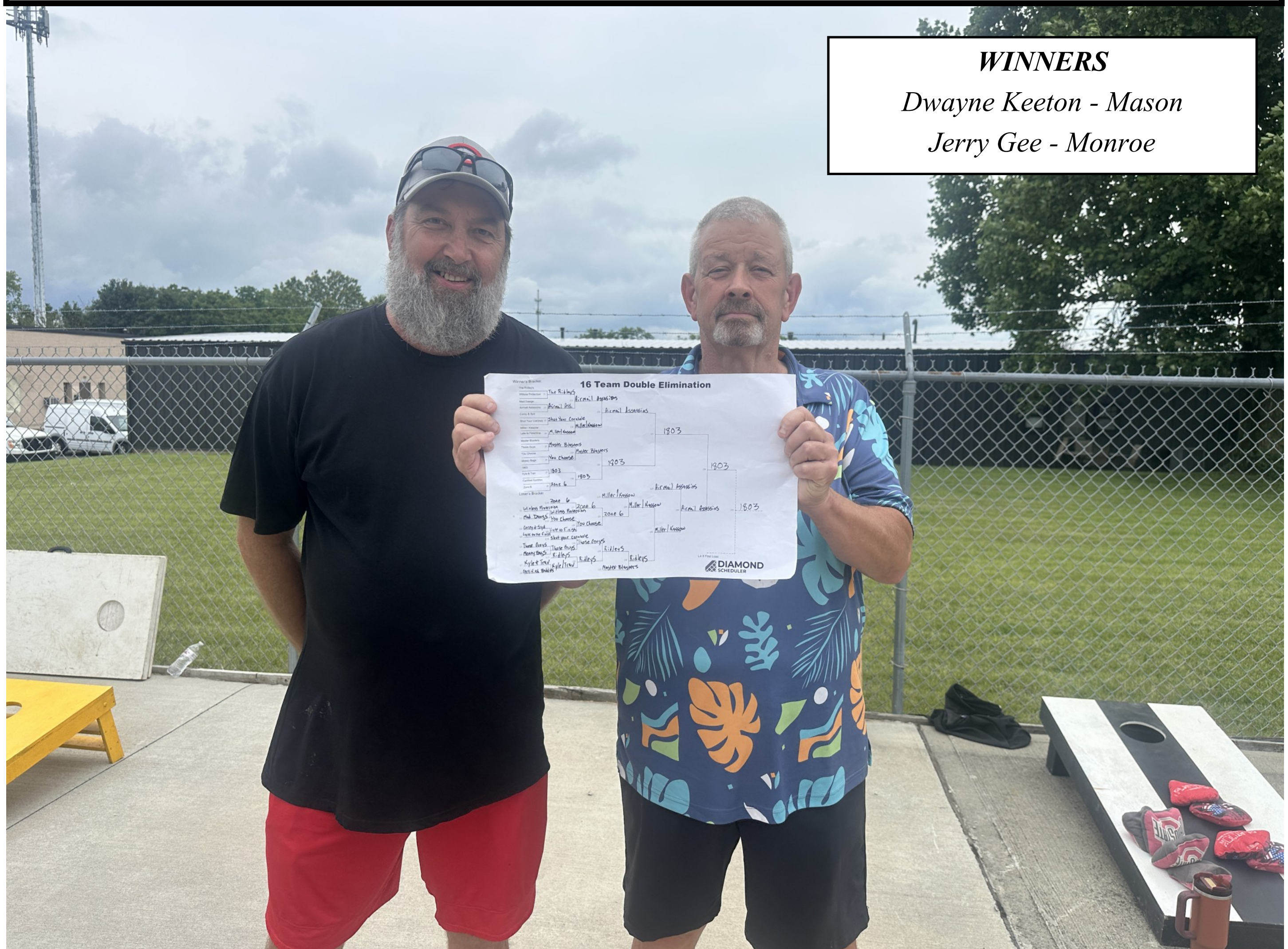
Branch 43 Cornhole Tournament

WINNERS

Dwayne Keeton - Mason

Jerry Gee - Monroe



Steward's Corner cont.

need. The price is set at $25.00 dollars per person. Furthermore, the branch will be hosting a golf outing on Indigenous Peoples' Day, October 12, 2026. The flyer is included in this News & Views with all of the details. Hope to see you there.

In solidarity,
Corey Isham

Vice President cont.

It is easy to misunderstand the relationship between the holiday scheduling provisions of Article 11 and the overtime scheduling provisions of Article 8. It is important to make clear distinction between the two separate phases of scheduling holiday work: 1) the advance scheduling of employees needed for holiday work; and 2) the assignment of overtime work on an actual holiday or designated holiday among employees who were properly scheduled. Much of what is often incorrectly considered "overtime" worked by full-time employees on their holidays or designated holidays is technically not overtime. Rather, it is "holiday worked pay" or "holiday scheduling premium." For the purpose of the overtime provisions outlined in Article 8, the only work that is contractually considered to be overtime for full-time employees working on their holiday or designated holiday is work beyond eight hours in a day.

Non-ODL carriers working on a holiday or designated holiday are considered to be working on their scheduled day. Thus, they may be required to work overtime only under the provisions of Article 8.5.C.2.d as modified by the "letter carrier paragraph" found in the JCAM. Non-ODL carriers working on their non-scheduled day can be required to work beyond eight hours only after the ODL has been exhausted, as required by Article 8.5.G. Similarly, since carriers on the Work Assignment List working on a holiday or designated holiday are considered to be working on their scheduled day, they should be assigned overtime on their own assignments as required by the USPS-NALC Work Assignment Letter of Intent. By contrast, if letter carriers on the Work Assignment List are working on their non-scheduled day, the provisions of the work assignment agreement do not apply.

There are times when management does not follow the rules outlined above. If this happens, you should contact your steward so that they can investigate the situation and file a grievance on your behalf.

In Solidarity,
Pat Dougherty

US Federal Holidays 2026

July 4, 2026	Independence Day
September 7, 2026	Labor Day
October 12, 2026	Columbus Day
November 11, 2026	Veterans Day
November 26, 2026	Thanksgiving Day
December 25, 2026	Christmas Day


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
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NALC BRANCH NUMBER: BRANCH OF SERVICE:
I BELONG TO THE FOLLOWING VETERAN GROUP(S):
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☐ OTHER:

June Membership Meeting

Raffle Winner

Split the Pot - Natasha Wever

July Retiree Birthdays

Richard	Berndsen
Leslie	Burgard
Edward	Colegate
Stephen	Depenbrock
Steve	Dison
Dalton	Fee
Roger	Giblin
Stephen	Ginn
Frederick	Holl
Mark	Hubbard
Jeffery	Jacobs
Denise	Knue
Thomas	Kroner
Barbara	Martin
David	McCleary
James	McNulty
James	Meale
Melvin	Miles Jr
John	Neeley
Christopher	Padgett
Mark	Petersen
Mary	Rosenacker
Harry	Schwettman
Albert	Sellmeyer
Richard	Smethurst
Mark	Walter

May YOPC Attendees

Deborah Bryant
Liz Darby
Diana Enwright
Art Holt
Burt Hughes
Dick Keller
Ken Pflanz
Angela Stone
Robert Wilkinson

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

July Gold Carders

Jerry	Ashmore
Robert	Caldwell
Billie	Chitwood
Herman	Douglas
Dennis	Estridge
John	Eveland Jr.
Edward	Holzschuh
Fred	Hugenberg
Gerald	Knight
Raymond	Koch
William	Saurewein
Donald	Scheben

John Dobranski Jr.
Thomas A. Feist
Linda Murphy
George Taylor
Andrew Zeiser

Join fellow retirees for lunch

1:00 pm - 1st Monday of each month

<u>August 3rd</u>

Twin Peaks

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Cincinnati, Ohio 45240

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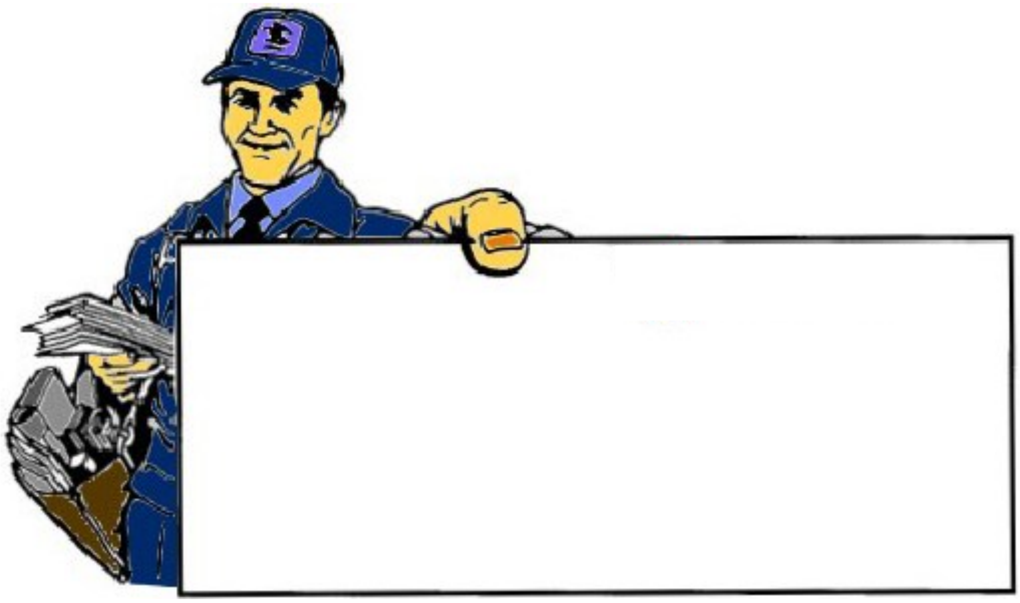

Upcoming Events

Officers Meeting - July 9th, 6:00 PM

Delegate Meeting - July 9th, 7:00 PM

Branch Meeting - July 9th, 7:30 PM

August YOPC - Cancelled (Convention)

National Convention - August 3rd - 7th