

*Official News Publication of the North Carolina Rural Letter Carriers' Association*

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May—June 2020

# STATE & NATIONAL CONVENTIONS CANCELED

Unfortunately both the National Convention and our North Carolina State Convention have been canceled. Please check the National website at [www.NRLCA.org](http://www.NRLCA.org) and our state website at [www.NCRLCA.org](http://www.NCRLCA.org) for all the latest information.

The State Convention and all local spring district meetings for the North Carolina RLCA were canceled as advised by the NRLCA National Board.

Because normal business could not take place this year we are following these guidelines issued by our National Board.

- 📁 Non-binding Resolutions should be mailed directly to the State Secretary by July 1, 2020. A modified process has been put in place for non-binding resolutions. Please see page 12 for more details on this.
- 📁 Your State Officers will remain in place until the next State Convention in 2021.
- 📁 All current local district officers will remain in place.

Your State Board will continue to follow the recommendations from the National Office. Thank you for your patience as we all try to make the best of this unusual situation. Please reach out to any member of your State Board if you have any questions or concerns.

We hope that everyone of you remain Safe and Healthy!

## Inside This Issue

COVID-19 Info

New Resolution Form

H.R. 6425~Protect Our Post Office Act

**North Carolina  
Junior Scholarships  
Deadline  
June 1st**

*See Page 30*

# North Carolina Rural Letter Carriers' Association

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Alleghany/Ashe	4	Brushy Mountain	3	Albemarle	2
Sea Level	23	Peach Belt	5	Southeastern	8
Guilford	30	Central Carolina	16	Foothills	10
Roanoke	44	Yadkin River	26	Cleveland/Gaston/Lincoln	29
Rutherford/Polk	47	Watauga/Avery	57	Randolph	42
Tidewater	52				

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Burke/Caldwell/Catawba	9	Cumberland/Hoke	20	Five County/Person	28
Smokey Mountain	11	Wake	24	Johnston	34
Durham/Orange	12	Piedmont	50	McDowell/Mt Mitchell	36
Caswell/ Rockingham	14	Union	54	Mecklenburg	38

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**Articles are the opinion of the Author and not necessarily the NCRLCA, the NCRLCA or the Editor.**

## National Emergency Hotline

**1-888 EMERGNC**  
**(1- 888-363-7462)**

is a toll-free number for  
USPS employees to use  
in the event of a facility or  
weather-related emergency.

In an emergency, the hotline  
provides employees with  
information about the  
status of their facility  
and special instructions  
or guidance.

Please keep this phone  
number for future use.

## WEBSITE

Please visit

[www.NCRLCA.org](http://www.NCRLCA.org)  
for all the latest news.

This month the password  
will be **We-R-Heroes!**

The password will be  
changed to the above on  
July 31, 2020.

At this time the password  
is only needed to access  
the Junior Auxiliary page.

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## Cover Photos

**Front Cover Header Photo**-Dogwoods bloom in Section 27 at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia on April 20, 2020. US Army Photo taken by Elizabeth Fraser/Arlington National Cemetery

**Back Cover**-Sweet thank you note received by rural carrier Barbara Mesimer while delivering from the Rockwell Post Office.

**President**  
*Brenda Gibbs*

## **COVID-19 Outbreak Disrupts Everything!**



Hi Everyone. Since my last article so much of our world has turned upside down.

Your state board has made the very difficult decision to cancel our 2020 State Convention. We had spent so much time planning special events and guests for you, but there is no way of knowing how long Covid-19 will last in our state. We could not possibly ask you to put yourself and your family at risk to attend. We will see you at the 2021 State Convention and we would love to see you at our 2020 Fall Booster in Charlotte, NC.

For a complete listing of canceled State Conventions go to the news section on the NRLCA.org website or, if you have the NRLCA app on your phone you can find the information there. If you do not have the app you can download it from the google play store.

**The NCRLCA Auxiliary is still taking applications thru June 1<sup>st</sup> for the annual scholarships. They will award those scholarships even though our State Convention has been canceled.**

On February 11, 2020 the USPS Newsbreak released health tips concerning the coronavirus. On February 29, 2020 a mandatory standup talk was issued by the USPS entitled “*Staying Vigilant*”. On March 4, 2020 the Postal Service had released a message: “*Covid-19: What do we know and what can you do?*” On the 9<sup>th</sup> the Postal Service released a 15-page document explaining their Pandemic Plan. Since that date there have been updates and new information on an almost daily basis, including Mandatory Stand-Up talks to be presented to the carriers. Numerous MOU’s have been signed to assist and protect us as carriers.

By the middle of March all local district meetings had been canceled. The officers for all districts will remain in place until the 2021 Spring business meetings. All Constitution Change Proposals and Binding Resolution Change Proposals must be held and presented to the district members at that time. Any Non-binding Resolution Proposals must be mailed to Vicki Gray immediately so that she can forward them to the National Office to be considered in the 2021 Contract Negotiations. On the National level the Secretary-Treasurer Training, the Legislative Conference along

with the Eastern, Mid-States, and Western States Conferences were all canceled. By the end of March, the decision was made to put the May Pre-Convention Issue on hold. The National Board along with the State Boards will continue to follow the guidance received from the CDC to minimize risk to our fellow rural carriers and their families. On April 1<sup>st</sup> the 28<sup>th</sup> annual Letter Carriers’ Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive, scheduled for May 9<sup>th</sup> was postponed and will be rescheduled later this year.

*Rep. Grijalva (D-AZ) has asked for Postal Employee Hazard Pay to be included in the next COVID-19 Bill. He also called for it to “include a requirement for OSHA to issue an Emergency Temporary Standard that requires employers to implement protections for these at-risk workers”. Please contact your Representative and ask for their support in this manner. To find your Representative go to [www.house.gov/representatives](http://www.house.gov/representatives) then click on NC or go to the NRLCA website, click on Legislative and then on useful links.*

**Most importantly, there is NO reason why all carriers do not have Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) items available to them including protective gloves (disposable), surgical masks (disposable), hand sanitizer and wipes. If you do not have these items, are required to sign out for them, or if they run out in your office please contact your DR or a member of the State Board immediately.**

We do not know who has Covid-19 and who does not. Err on the side of caution as if everyone has it. **Above all else please be SAFE!**



### **More Relief Carrier Appreciation**

RCAs Brenda Green (left, 4 years of service) and Sara Ruhl (right, 12 years of service ) from the Nags Head Post Office. These relief carriers are greatly valued, not only by their home office but also by the neighboring post offices where they are often utilized.



## Chaplain's Message

Jesse Ray Farmer Jr.,  
Chaplain

### Hope During Isolation

2 Timothy 1:7 "For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control."

In the book of Timothy, Paul writes a letter of encouragement to Timothy in the midst of the constant trials of imprisonment and ridicule from those they preached the gospel. In the dictionary, imprisonment can also refer to isolation, quarantine, and confinement. Over the past few months most of us in the world have not been in a literal prison, but we have been battling the fears of disease, the hopelessness of job losses, and the depression of isolation. There have been groups of mail carriers affected by the Covid-19 virus all over the world. We have been forced to distance ourselves from the comforts of daily life and have missed many important social events and family gatherings. What is God calling us to do when we are faced with fear of the unknown?

First, He is telling us not to fear. When we are fearful of a situation, our first step is to lean on the one who controls all situations. Isaiah 41:10 says "Do not worry, because I am with you. Do not be afraid, because I am your God. I will make you strong and will help you; I will support you with my right hand that saves you." What a blessed assurance that we are not alone during these times of uncertainty.

Second, He gives us a spirit of love. How do you show love to others during these times of crisis? Do you call up a loved one or send a card to someone who needs encouragement? As I have mentioned before, our job as believers in Christ is to be an example of Christ to others.

Many of us have sacrificed our health and our lives to make sure our customers and families are taken care of during some of the most difficult situations. When we have the support of each other and share these burdens of life, Christ love is shown and encouragement is found. "Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends" 1 Cor.13: 7-8a.

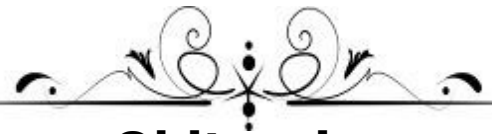
Finally, we are challenged to show self-control when life seems like it is beyond our control. We have a tendency to get caught up in the disparity of our situations and can't seem to see a light at the end of the tunnel. Do not constantly fill your mind with endless social media posts or news streams stirring the constant anxiety regarding fearful situations. We

need to learn discernment when it comes to news for our greater good. Guard your heart and your mind by filling it with His scriptures during these times and pray for understanding. This is mentioned in Philippians 4:6-7 "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

There is a greater purpose for these situations and sometimes it is to focus our attention back on our creator, sustainer, and all powerful God. He does not want us to fret, to fear, to lose our judgment but to focus on Him.

**Prayer:** *Dear God, help give us strength and encouragement during the seemingly never ending trials of life. Help us to keep our eyes fixed on you at all times so that we will not live in a spirit of fear.*

Please text or call 252-939-6826 for any prayer needs or spiritual support. Or you may email me at [rayfarmer62@gmail.com](mailto:rayfarmer62@gmail.com).



## Obituaries

**Lois Evelyn Spencer Berry** passed away on Tuesday, February 11, 2020, surrounded by her loving family

She was a caring daughter, wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. Lois was a genuine loving soul with compassion for all who met her.

Born November 2nd, 1924 in downtown Raleigh, Lois has always called North Carolina home. In 1929, Lois and her parents moved to Leesville Township in Northwestern Wake County to join Lois' mother's family. She lived there the rest of her life, becoming a cornerstone of the community. She was a remarkable cook and enjoyed feeding anyone who may stop in for a visit. She was a life-long and active member of Leesville Baptist Church.

Lois married John Thomas (JT) Berry, Sr. on December 22nd, 1945 after his service in the United States Army during World War II. JT passed away in 2015, just three days prior to their 70th wedding anniversary.

Lois began her career with University Motors, then Central Carolina Bank in Durham before leaving to become a full-time homemaker to raise a family. Lois later returned to the workforce as the very first female branch manager of North Carolina National

*(Continued on page 6)*

Bank. After retiring from the bank, she became a rural route mail carrier.

In retirement, she became the matriarch of her family, providing wisdom and guidance to those who sought it, providing comfort and loving support to all.

She leaves behind sons; John Thomas (Tom) Berry, Jr. and wife Dot, Dennis Gorman Berry, Sr. and wife Dianne, and Brian Anthony Berry. Also included are four grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. She is preceded in death by her infant son Michael Wayne Berry.

**Frank Hockaday Gardner, 91**, of Angier passed away on Friday, March 19, 2020, at Emerald Healthcare in Lillington. Born on November 3, 1928 Franks was a native of Harnett County. He was the son of the late Mack Broughton Gardner and Mary Hockaday Gardner.

After graduating high school, Frank attended school at Campbell College and played minor league baseball in New River and Rocky Mount. He then served honorably for four years in the US Air Force. Following his service to his country he continued his baseball career playing and coaching the team down in Pea Ridge. He even helped lead them to a top four finish in their semi pro tournament in Wichita, Kansas in 1957.

Frank went on to work for the US Post Office in Angier as a rural mail carrier and retired after 34 years of service and a spotless driving record on the job.

Frank is survived by his wife of 66 years, Frances "Dee Dee" Gardner, daughters, Marsha Lynn Mendenhall, Sandra Lee Myers and husband Chuck, Cynthia Woodard, Barbara Hughes and husband Gary, a son, Richard Frank Gardner; six grandchildren, four great granddaughters; a sister, Lena Marsh Gardner and a brother Stuart Broughton Gardner.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his sisters, Lois Dougherty and Mary Ann Witt; and brothers, Mack Williams and James Brooks.

**Charles Nelson Downs, 76**, passed away on Tuesday, March 24, 2020 at Memorial Campus of Mission Hospitals.

Charles was a native of Cincinnatus, New York and a son of the late Thomas M. and Carolyn Sawyer

Downs. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by a sister, Roxanne Killebrew.

He was a United States Army veteran and a member of Thickety Baptist Church. Charles was a United States Postal Carrier for 28 years delivering mostly in the Cruso community.

He is survived by his wife of 50 years, Joyce Fisher Downs; two daughters, Angie Clark and Amy Downs; one sister, Mary Wemple; two brothers, Fred Downs (Mary) and David Downs; a brother-in-law, William Killebrew (Mary) and four grandchildren.

**Luther L. "Renny" Holton, Jr.**, 75, of Statesville, passed away Tuesday, April 7, 2020 from complications of Parkinson's Disease.

Renny was born March 22, 1945 in Iredell County to Luther "Buster" Holton, Sr. and Lucille Dobson Holton. He was a graduate of Cool Springs High School and UNC State College in Raleigh.

He was also in the Army Reserve. On September 1, 2001 he married Carol Wooten who survives. He was a member of Clarksbury United Methodist Church. He retired from the United States Post Office as a rural carrier after more than 30 years. He also worked at Tractor Supply of Statesville and was also a retired volunteer fire fighter with the Cool Springs Fire Department.

He loved to farm. In addition to his wife he is survived by 3 step-daughters, Kelly Cansler Moore (Tim), Tricia Cook Spry (Eddie), and Christie Cook Shore (Phillip), 4 grandchildren, one great-grandson, two brothers, Tommy Holton and Jeff Holton and a sister-in-law, Mary Holton. He is also survived by 2 nephews, and a niece.

He was preceded in death by a brother, John Holton and his parents. Special thanks go to a good friend, Kenny Williams and the Mountain Valley Hospice staff.

**Ralph Atlas Baird**, age 89, joined his beloved "Betsy" in their heavenly home on March 24, 2020. He passed peacefully at home surrounded by his family.

Ralph was born on June 1, 1930 to the late Charles (Charlie) Bosler Baird and Virginia (Virgie) Banner Baird. In addition to his parents, he was also preceded in death by two brothers, Charles (Bill) Baird & Johnny Baird. Two siblings left to share his memories are Jean (Boyte) Lutz of Shelby, NC and Guy (Ingrid) Baird of Pittsboro, NC.

Ralph married the love of his life, Betty Jean Daniels on April 7, 1951. He was a devoted & loving hus-

(Continued on page 19)





**Safety**  
*Scott Deal*

## No FEAR

Hello all, I hope you all had a safe and Happy Easter.

I never in my wildest dreams thought we would be delivering mail through a global pandemic. WOW. All the more reason to take the time to be safe while we work in the office and on the street.

If you do not have or run out of PPE's, ask your manager to provide or refill. If you do not have any (mask, gloves, hand sanitizer-for office and street) contact your District Representative.

The words *Thank You* and *Essential* only begin to describe the appreciation our customers have for us for the service we provide. The comfort it provides them is hard to put into words. We must still be vigilant when it comes to keeping our distance from other employees and our customers while we deliver.

While off duty, staying at home not only keeps us safe, but also helps keep our families and friends, the communities we live in, the entire world safe during these extraordinary historical times.

I encourage you to stay positive. We will triumph through this tragedy. It will take time and sacrifice and unfortunately some loss but hopefully by the time this is published we are beginning to get back to normal.

Remember, EAP is always available to help in times like this: 800-EAP-4YOU (1-800-327-4968). TTY users should call 877-482-7341.

On the bright side, it is nice to have some time to get caught up on some reading. Below I have posted the service talk that we get around this time of year on the No Fear Act.

## Postal Service Stand Up Talk No FEAR Act

The No FEAR Act was designed to help ensure federal agencies and their employees comply with anti-discrimination laws and protect those who report discrimination. The No FEAR Act does not introduce new rights, but rather serves to strengthen existing rights under existing laws. Anti-discrimination laws, whistleblower protection, and equal employment opportunities are the main focus. As an employee of the United States Postal Service ("Postal Service" or "USPS"), you must actively ensure that the rights protected by the No FEAR Act are not violated. This can be done by avoiding prohibited personnel practices. Postal staff with personnel authority must not engage in prohibited personnel practices. Postal employees, like all other federal employees, are said to have personnel authority when they participate in making decisions that relate to appointments, promotions, discipline, transfer, reassignments, reinstatements, pay, benefits, training, change in duties, responsibilities, or other terms and conditions of employment. Postal employees, like all other federal personnel, should be aware of their rights to seek remedies for discrimination and retaliation in the workplace.

The No FEAR Act requires that federal employees receive notice of several prohibited personnel practices under federal law. You can find these prohibited practices in Section 666 of the Postal Service's Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM). Prohibited personnel practices include the following:

- Discriminating against an employee or applicant based on sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, and gender identity including transgender status), race, color, religion, national origin, age (40 or over), disability, marital status, genetic information, or political affiliation;
- Improperly influencing employment recommendations;
- Coercing political activity;
- Engaging in nepotism;
- Engaging in retaliation for whistleblowing;
- Retaliating against employees who exercise their rights;
- Improperly influencing an applicant to withdraw

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USPS EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM  
**A Program You Can Trust**



**800-327-4968**

(800-EAP-4-YOU) TTY: 877-492-7341  
[www.EAP4YOU.com](http://www.EAP4YOU.com)

*Life can present all of us with many challenges, some we expect, and some we don't. Either way, we can usually work them out. However, sometimes these challenges can affect our personal happiness, family relationships, and work performance. When things get overwhelming, anyone can benefit from seeking professional help.*

***EAP is there to help you. Call 1-800-327-4968***

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from competition for a position;

- Improperly exercising influence to benefit or harm a particular employee;
- Intentionally obstructing someone from competing for employment;
- Discriminating on the basis of conduct that is not job related; and
- Violating the merit system principles.

When a postal employee covered by a collective bargaining agreement believes that he/she has been subjected to a prohibited personnel practice, he/she may file a grievance regarding wages, hours and working conditions in accordance with the provisions of the applicable agreement.

Non-bargaining, non-probationary employees may use the appeal procedures under the provisions in Part 652 of the ELM.

In certain situations, eligible employees (generally employees with veterans' preference and managers, supervisors, and personnel employees) with one year of current, continuous service in the same or similar position may appeal certain adverse actions to Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB).

Allegations of reprisal for the release of information as set forth in the ELM Section 666.18, Prohibited Personnel Practices (e.g., information regarding violation of a law, rule, or regulation, or a gross waste of funds, gross mismanagement, an abuse of authority, or a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety), raised by any USPS employee, should be addressed to the USPS Office of the Inspector General.

Any employee who feels he or she has been a victim of discrimination or discriminatory retaliation can contact the Postal Service Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Office using the online Postal Service EEO efile application at <https://efile.usps.com> or by writing to: NEEISO - EEO Contact Center, PO Box 21979, Tampa FL 33622-1979. They must make contact within 45 calendar days of the alleged discriminatory action, or in the case of a personnel action, within 45 days of the effective day of the action. An employee also can contact the EEO Office more than 45 days after an alleged discriminatory action if; (a) the employee did not know about the action when it occurred; and (b) the employee files within 45 days of the time he or she knew or reasonably should have known it occurred.

You may remain anonymous during the pre-complaint process. If you request anonymity, the EEO Office will honor your request. However, in

some instances, such as certain harassment cases, the EEO Office is required to divulge information regarding your pre-complaint to Human Resources and other appropriate officials. Note that formal complaints cannot be anonymous.

For more information on this topic, see Publication 133: What You Need To Know About EEO or Poster 72: Equal Employment Opportunity Is The Law. All of these publications are available to you through the Blue and LiteBlue websites.

Several types of complaints can be filed by applicants, employees, and former employees of the Postal Service or other federal agencies. You can have individual, class, and mixed case complaints, as well as mixed case appeals. If you contact the EEO Office in pursuit of a complaint, an EEO Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Specialist is available to explain the types of complaints in detail.

Also, several remedies may be available to an individual through the different complaints procedures should he/she prevail on a claim. Remedies include the following:

- Being returned as nearly as possible to the role he or she would have occupied if the discrimination had not occurred.
- Payment of compensatory damages.
- Awarding attorney's fees, interest, expert witness fees, and other costs.
- Reimbursement for lost benefits.
- Ending the discrimination involved to prevent further harm.

## NCRLCA Dues for 2019-2020

Effective PP 02/2020 (January 24, 2020)

<b>Regular, PTF...Cash.....</b>	<b>\$739.00</b>
<b>1187...Bi-Weekly.....</b>	<b>\$28.42</b>
<b>Retired.....Cash.....</b>	<b>\$111.00</b>
<b>1187R...Monthly.....</b>	<b>\$9.25</b>
<b>73, RCA, RCR, ARC.....Cash.....</b>	<b>\$246.00</b>
<b>1187.....Bi-Weekly.....</b>	<b>\$9.46</b>

The membership year begins July 1, ends June 30. Please make checks payable to **NCRLCA**. Checks or membership forms should be mailed to Vicki Gray, NCRLCA Secretary/Treasurer, 424 Wapiti Dr., Spring Lake, NC 28390.

**NOTE:** "Dues, assessments, contributions or gifts to the NCRLCA are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes.

## Retirement

*Brian Hamlett*



# Planning for Retirement

Planning for retirement is not something you should put off until the last minute. Proper plans, made early, can make things substantially easier and offer the best benefit when the day finally arrives. It's important to remember that FERS employees are looking at three parts to provide for their income needs in retirement. Social Security, pension, and TSP will make up most of our retirement plans. TSP offers the greatest benefit when contributions are started early and at the greatest amount that you can afford. Given the low cost to administer the TSP and the options available, it's a valuable investment opportunity that should be taken advantage of.

Here's some basic tips as listed on OPM.gov website.

### Five years from retirement

So hopefully you've been putting as much in the TSP as you could since becoming eligible. Now is the time to make sure your health care options will serve you into retirement. To continue your health coverage into retirement you must meet certain conditions.

- Your annuity must begin within 30 days or, if you are retiring under the Minimum Retirement Age (MRA) plus 10 provision of the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), health and life insurance coverages are suspended until your annuity begins, even if it is postponed.
- You must be covered for health insurance when you retire.
- You must have been continuously covered by the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program, TRICARE, or the Civilian Health and Medical Program for Uniformed Services (CHAMPUS):
  1. for five years immediately before retiring; or,
  2. during all of your federal employment since your first opportunity to enroll; or,
  3. continuously for full periods of service beginning with the enrollment that started before January 1, 1965, and ending with

the date on which you become an annuitant, whichever is shortest.

When you get within one year of retirement eligibility, you should:

- Confirm when you will be eligible to get a retirement benefit;
- Decide when you want to retire;
- Get information about other benefits to which you may also be eligible, such as Thrift Savings Plan payment options and any other entitlements based on employment, for example: Foreign Service, Social Security, pensions from private industry, and Individual Retirement Accounts (IRA). You should have a fairly comprehensive picture of all sources of your retirement income and when each is payable.
- Tell your supervisor about your proposed retirement date. You should give sufficient notice to allow for planning for someone to take your place.
- Attend a pre-retirement counseling seminar.
- Make an appointment with your personnel officer to review your Official Personnel Folder (OPF) or its equivalent to make sure all your records are complete and accurate, all service is verified, and your insurance coverage is documented.

You also have another decision to make if you're not planning to draw your pension immediately. Check and see which option you're eligible for, either deferred or postponed retirement, and which best suits you. Disability retirement is also an option but generally isn't planned for. That's where prudent early planning can really make a difference.

### Less than a year

If you have not already done so, you should choose your exact retirement date. Afterwards, your benefit can be estimated based on the exact date. The best place to obtain assistance is Human Resources Shared Service center.

They can provide personalized assistance and they have your employment records. They will provide you with information on when your benefit payments can begin based on your proposed retirement date. You will also find out how this date affects factors used to determine the amount of your retirement benefit, such as your length of service, high-3 average salary, and the proration of cost-of-living adjustments.

Please contact me if you have any questions.  
Be Safe.



**RCHBP**

*Elaine Althoff*

## **COVID 19 Pandemic & The Spanish Flu**

The Similarities between the Spread of the 1918 Spanish Flu and the current COVID 19.

As influenzas virus mutate rapidly, changing enough each year that the human immune system has difficulty recognizing and attacking it even from season to season. A pandemic occurs when an entirely new virus emerges, which the immune system has not previous grown immunity to, enters the population and spreads worldwide. Ordinarily seasonal influenza viruses bind only to cells in the upper respiratory tract- the nose and throat-which is why they transmit easily. The 1918 pandemic virus infected cells in the upper respiratory track, transmitting easily, but also deep in the lungs, damaging tissue and often leading to viral as well as bacterial pneumonias. Its victims, normally elderly people, account for the overwhelming number of influenza deaths, but in 1918 that was reversed with young adults killed in the highest numbers.

In January 1918 a severe influenza outbreak struck Haskell County in southwestern Kansas. The outbreak was so severe that local physician Loring Miner went to the trouble of alerting the U.S. Public Health Service, although influenza was not then a "reportable" disease. It was the first recorded notice in the world of unusual influenza activity that year.

Camp Funston (now Fort Reilly), an Army base in central Kansas, was training men for combat in World War I.

In March 1918 several men that were exposed to the influenza in Haskell county went to Camp Funston. Within days the first ill soldier was reported. Two weeks later about 1,100 soldiers were admitted to the hospital and thousands more were sick in the barracks. The influenza was then carried to other Army camps within the US and overseas and began spreading through civilian communities.

In July 1918 a U.S. Army medical bulletin reported from France, the "epidemic is about at an end...and has been...a benign type." A British medical journal stated flatly that influenza "has completely disappeared."

This was not the case. A second wave (September 1918) exploded all across the world; and it was much more lethal than that first wave.

A third wave followed in January 1919, ending that spring.

Eventually, this noxious virus lost its extraordinary fatal power, partly because many human immune systems now recognized it and partly because it lost the ability to easily invade the lungs.

It evolved into a seasonal influenza, for reasons that are still unclear, the virulent form of the virus becomes more common in the fall.

Today (4/25/2020), the USS Theodore Roosevelt, an aircraft carrier currently docked in Guam, has 840 sailors testing positive for COVID-19.

For those who have never been on a Carrier, they are very much a moving city with very tight quarters. There are currently 4,865 total crew members on the ship, which means around 17 percent of the crew have now tested positive.

The Navy stated that the entire ship's crew members have been tested. Some tests are still pending.

Of the number of confirmed cases, four are currently being treated for the virus at the U.S. Naval Hospital Guam. This is down from nine that were in the hospital a few days ago.

88 crew members have recovered from COVID-19. One sailor has died of the virus. 4,234 sailors have been moved ashore.

The COVID-19 outbreak was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on March 12, 2020

Much like the Spanish Flu, COVID-19 is a respiratory illness. Here's what to look for if you think you might have COVID-19. Symptoms usually begin 2 to 14 days after you have come into contact with the virus.

### Common Symptoms

- Fever
- Cough
- Fatigue
- Lack of appetite
- Shortness of breath
- Body aches

Some people are infected but won't notice any symptoms. Most people will have mild symptoms and get better on their own. About one in six people will have severe problems, such as trouble breathing.

The odds of more serious symptoms are higher if you're older or have other underlying health condition such as diabetes or asthma. In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure and even death.

*(Continued on page 11)*

It is usually spread from an infected person to others through the air by coughing and sneezing and through close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands. It may be possible that the person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own nose, mouth or possibly by rubbing their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. Like the 1918 Spanish Flu, COVID-19's victims are not only our elderly but include the young and healthy also.

Protecting yourself is key although currently there are no vaccines available to protect against human coronavirus infection, you may be able to reduce your risk of infection by washing your hands often, avoiding touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands, and avoiding close contact with people who are sick or could be unwittingly carrying the virus..

Today's top public health experts routinely rank influenza as potentially the most dangerous "emerging" health threat we face.

***When asked what scared him the most, what kept him up at night. "The biggest concern is always for an influenza pandemic...(It) really is the worst-case scenario." Said Tom Frieden prior to leaving his post as head of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.***

The 1918 pandemic in the United States had a loss of life of some 670,000 Americans. Today's loss of life is still rising as we go to print. But please do not panic. We will get through this.

In 1918 schools closed, you had no church, no community life, people were afraid of friends and neighbors, afraid to even breathe.

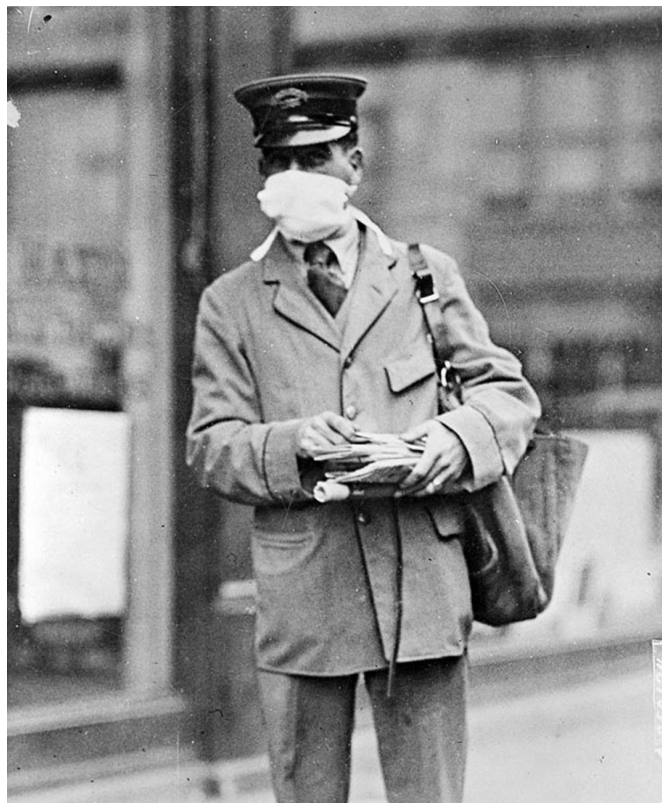
How true as history repeats itself. Today many businesses have closed, no schools, no church, and no community life. We are all told we must practice "social distancing".

In 1918 people were afraid to even stay home, but today home is your safe place. Only going out when absolutely needed, our daily life consists of going to work, the gas station and back home to decontaminate just to repeat it all again the next morning.

This too has brought out of some change in all of us. Those already going the extra mile, going beyond the call, helping those who can't go to the store due to an illness, calling instead of texting, putting down the phone and looking up. It's making us stop and notice how much we take for granted, how unprepared we were or not.

I salute our teachers as many of us struggle to work, go home and get the schoolwork done.

I want to add to this that I have seen those that care about us, their mail carriers, leaving what I call a made from the heart "Hazmat Kit": masks, gloves, alcohol wipes and hand sanitizer all in a bottle or Ziplock bag with an note attached; saying something like "I hope these can help you stay safe."



October 16, 1918, a New York City letter carrier wears a mask for protection from the Spanish Flu while making his rounds.

Photo from The Smithsonian National Archives

As we look for this to run its course and our life to return to some normalcy, for businesses to reopen, the schools to start back up and the traffic return to the streets. We look forward to hanging out with those we have missed during this social distancing and heading back through the Church doors on Sunday. We will get there.

**Take care of yourself & Stay Safe!**

*Sources: Smithsonian Magazine, Fox News, Newsweek, Aetna.com*

# Temporary Procedures

Who would have ever imagined that we would go through a global pandemic of this caliber? It is truly incredible to me. I hope that by the time you are reading this that this horrible outbreak has peaked, America is back to work and our small businesses are safe and rebuilding.

During all this the terms *Essential Employee* and *Hero* have been tossed about rather loosely. I do believe most of the American public does view us as both. I also think that those that don't see us in that light would come to that realization very quickly if we were to disappear.

Now speaking of disappearing, Postmaster Megan Brennen has stated that if something is not done to help save the Post Office soon the USPS will be out of money by this summer. We desperately need you to contact congress now and ask them to support the USPS. Please see Van and Robbie's articles for more on this.

Although Harrah's may reopen and be up and running by June 21st your State Board decided to cancel the State Convention. This decision was not made lightly. We listened to the advice from our National Officers and decided that canceling the State Convention would be in the best interest of our members.

## State Convention Canceled, Now What?

Here are some of the things that are being done.

- ☆ All officer's will remain in place. Anyone that no longer wishes to remain in their position may resign. Resignations must be in writing and sent to me. The State Board with input from the current local officers will appoint someone to fill the vacated position.
- ☆ All Annual Reports will be printed in the next edition of the newsletter.
- ☆ Finance Report will be in a future edition of the newsletter.
- ☆ Member of the Year will still be chosen and will be recognized at the Fall Booster.
- ☆ Junior Contests and Scholarships will still be awarded. Deadlines are June 1st. See page 30.
- ☆ No Constitution changes this year.
- ☆ Only Non-binding Resolutions allowed this year.
- ☆ No PAC auction. We will be very short in funds this year. Please send donations to Robbie.

Although our State Constitution states that elections will be held yearly, the Dept. of Labor (DOL) has allowed concessions due to the current pandemic. DOL laws state union elections must be held at least

## Secretary/Treasurer

*Vicki Gray*



every three years. So we are still in compliance even without elections this year.

There are almost daily updates from the National office at this time, along with new MOUs to deal with the current crisis. There were too many to include all of them in this issue. To stay informed please consider downloading the NRLCA app. When you do you can receive a push notification whenever new information is added to the website.

I am going to miss seeing many of you at our meetings. Please do whatever you need to do to remain safe & healthy!

## Modified Resolution Process From the National Office

In the attempt to preserve the members' rights of participation in the affairs of the association during this unprecedented time in our history the Resolution Process has been modified.

At this time we may only submit Non-Binding Resolutions that are intended to be used in the preparation for the 2021 contract negotiations.

Binding Resolutions and Constitutional Changes will not be addressed. The main reasoning for this is that they are brought to the Convention floor with the ability of being amended by the delegates.

Because the resolution process is a manner in which the members voice is heard our National Office has outlined a process for members to submit **Non-Binding resolutions** for consideration in the upcoming contract negotiations.

### Types of Resolutions

**Binding**-The National Board has the sole authority to implement and does not have to negotiate with another party and this will not harm the organization.

**Non-Binding**-An idea that must be negotiated with another party.

## Instructions for submitting Non-Binding Resolutions

Please use the Resolution form in this issue on page 13. Resolutions must be received by July 1, 2020.

Also, the National Office wants to remind everyone all resolutions passed at previous conventions are on file and will be used in upcoming negotiations.

Please fully research your issue before submitting. Make sure your intent is clearly understood. It is the quality of the issue/resolution that is important.

# NRLCA RESOLUTION

This form is only applicable for the 2020 Year  
Any Member Resolution Submissions must be received by the State Secretary Treasurer  
by July 1, 2020. Any Resolution received after that date will be  
returned to the Member as Time Expired for Submission.

\_\_\_Non-Binding (Only for Negotiations with the USPS and/or other applicable agencies)

The following Resolution is hereby submitted for consideration and appropriate action.

## ISSUES

Check one;

- |   |   |                                     |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> AUTOMATION           | <input type="checkbox"/> MAILCOUNT      | <input type="checkbox"/> VEHICLE    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BENEFITS             | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIEF DAY     | <input type="checkbox"/> WORK RULES |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EMA                  | <input type="checkbox"/> RETIREMENT     |                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES | <input type="checkbox"/> SALARY         | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> LEAVE REPLACEMENTS   | <input type="checkbox"/> TIME STANDARDS |                                     |

The following procedures are suggested for effectively presenting resolutions:

- 1) Place only one Resolution per sheet.
- 2) Print legible.
- 3) Indicate the issue this resolution concerns (above).
- 4) Identify any Handbooks, Manuals, or Documents (if appropriate) to be amended by:

Name of Document \_\_\_\_\_

Article \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_ Paragraph \_\_\_\_\_

- 5) Explanatory paragraphs should be headed as follows: (If spaces below are inadequate, use additional sheets with appropriate heading)

**WHEREAS:**

**BE IT RESOLVED:**

**INTENT OF/REASON FOR CHANGE:**

**Print Member Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **State** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail to:** Vicki Gray, 424 Wapiti Drive, Spring Lake, NC 28390

# Actor Ryan Reynolds Thanks the USPS On His Twitter Account



Look at that Tweet! Ryan Reynolds sends a shout out to the USPS and the USPS responded! Isn't that great?

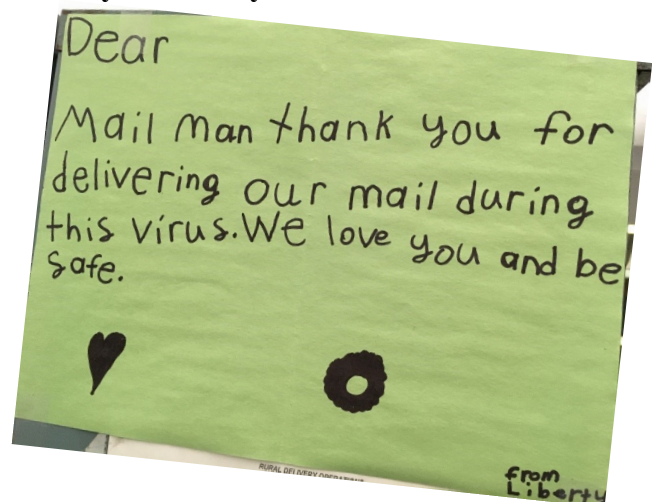
Ryan Reynolds is an American actor best known for his role as Deadpool and he is very popular on Twitter. He has over 15 million followers. This tweet/post thanking the USPS is his most popular tweet to date.

I do not know how the USPS plans on using his comment but I do want to let you know that there is a special page on LiteBlue just for Thank Yous. It is <https://liteblue.usps.gov/lite-blue/covid19/>. The last tab along the top is for the Thank Yous.

So far they have four different thank you videos posted. The videos are relatively short. They consist of pictures of chalk drawings on driveways, notes in mailboxes, cookies and small gifts left for carriers, etc. These videos just make you feel good and proud to be a carrier. I hope you check them out. Plus this link is a one stop place for all things COVID-19 related.

Many of us are receiving these thank you notes and small gifts of appreciation from our customers. The USPS is well aware of how much the American public appreciates us. They have issued a guideline regarding the acceptance of these gifts during this unusual time. It is included in this issue on page 21.

I hope you are proud of the work you do for your family, your customers and your communities. **Thank you for all you do!**



North Carolina Rural Carriers receive "Thank you" notes from their young customers.

# Face Covering and Mask Update

## Mandatory Stand-Up Talk April 21, 2020

Cloth face coverings or masks are mandatory in support of local or state face covering directives or orders. In addition, face coverings and masks are mandatory in all facilities where social distancing cannot be maintained. Throughout the ongoing Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak, the Postal Service has continued to fulfill its critical mission to bind the nation together. Postal Service employees are working hard across the country to ensure we are there for our customers every day, serving as a lifeline for millions of people.

Your safety and wellness are of primary importance to the Postal Service. We continue to strongly recommend the use of face coverings per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance. Many states are now mandating that face coverings are required in public settings.

As a result, we will modify our policy with face coverings to require all employees to wear face coverings in the following situations, until the COVID-19 pandemic is no longer an issue:

- When there is a local or state face covering order or directive in place; or
- When an employee who does not deal directly with the public cannot achieve or maintain social distancing in the workplace.

You may request a face covering or surgical mask from your supervisor. Employees also may bring their own personal cloth face coverings to work for use while on duty. An employee who cannot wear a face covering for health reasons should immediately contact his or her supervisor.

You should not rely solely on the use of cloth face coverings to prevent the spread of COVID-19. You should also adhere to social distancing guidelines (6 feet) whenever possible while on delivery routes, at retail counters, and within the postal workplace: in plants, on docks and in lunch and break rooms. In addition to social distancing, please remember to follow these CDC recommended prevention methods:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with tissue, then throw tissue in trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Use a 60-percent or higher alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

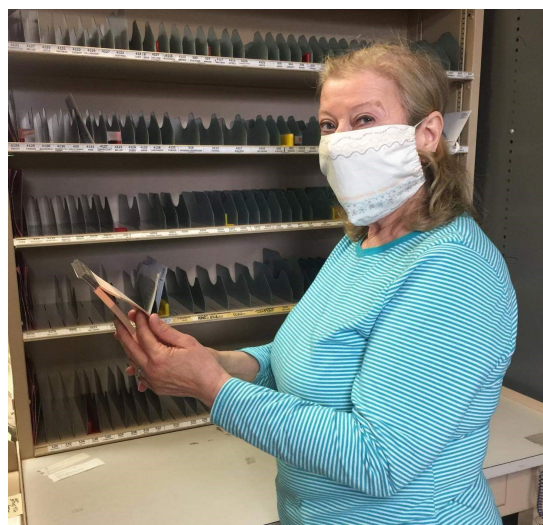
The Postal Service provides an essential service to our nation. Customers are expressing their gratitude to us in every community we serve.

Taking steps to stay healthy and well means we can continue to be a stable, calming presence across the country. Thank you for everything you are doing for our customers, and for your professionalism every day.



**Left:** Myles Bennett  
from Shallotte.

**Right:** Brenda Green  
from Nags Head.





# NORTH CAROLINA RURAL CARRIERS DON FACE MASKS

## This page:

Top Row: Beth Julian at the Lexington Post Office.

Middle Row: Sandy Moody in Shallotte, Nina Varghese in Raleigh, Sharon Rush in Lexington; "Tin-Tin" Lane in Shallotte.

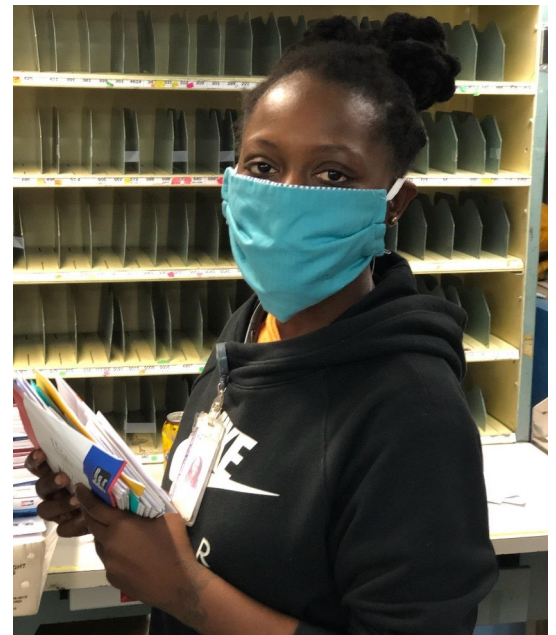
Bottom Row: Phillip Fulwood and Judy Godwin, both from Shallotte.

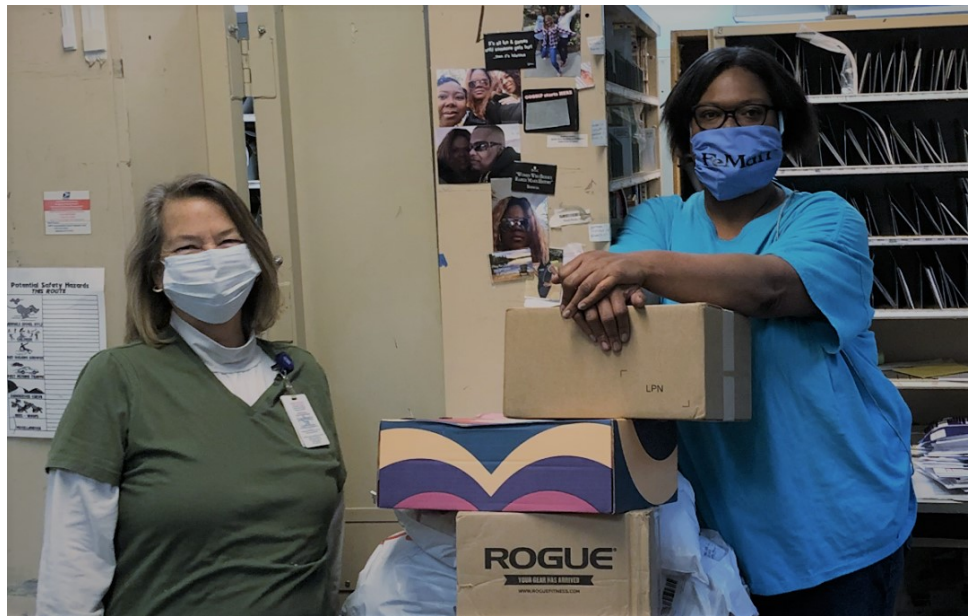
## Opposite page:

Top Row: Andre Bynum in Fayetteville, Cathy Hogan & Tiffanie Huey from Waxhaw.

Middle Row: Jesse Ray Farmer Jr, William Hardy both from LaGrange, Lisa Fields in Shallotte.

Bottom Row: John Chandler in Lexington, David Williams in Clayton.





## North Carolina Armed Forces Veterans Club

It is time to renew or join for the upcoming year.

Anyone that is a member of the National Rural Letter Carriers Association is eligible for membership. Veterans are full members and non-veterans are associate members. All members have full voting rights on Club issues.

Current membership dues are \$7.00 per year. Of that, \$3.00 is forwarded to the National Secretary/Treasurer. The remaining \$4.00 will stay with our state.

One purpose of the club is to raise money for book scholarships for college students; the children and grandchildren of members. Scholarships are awarded at both the state and national level.

Please send membership dues to Mike Shue, 325 Ed Weavers Road, Salisbury, NC 28146-8570



The Old Guard work in the pouring rain to place flags at each headstone at Arlington's "Flags In" ceremony on May 23, 2019.

## Flags In at Arlington National Cemetery

Just before Memorial Day weekend, the 3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment (the "Old Guard") honors America's fallen heroes by placing American flags at gravesites for service members buried at Arlington National Cemetery and the U.S. Soldiers' and Airmen's Home National Cemetery. .

This tradition, known as "Flags In," has taken place annually since the Old Guard was designated as the Army's official ceremonial unit in 1948.

Every available soldier participates and within four hours, an American flag is placed at more than 280,000 headstones to honor every individual buried at Arlington National Cemetery. .

Each flag is inserted into the ground, front and centered and exactly one boot length from the headstone's base.

Old Guard Soldiers will also place an American flag at the foot of each Columbarium to account for the more than 400,000 interred.

A Tomb Sentinel will conduct a ceremony at noon at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. The Sentinel will place American flags at each of the four crypts to honor all of our nation's fallen heroes.

All flags are removed after Memorial Day, before the cemetery opens to the public.

**NOTE:** While the public is usually welcome to observe the Flags-In tradition, the public cannot participate in the flag placement.

At this time Arlington is currently closed to the public due to the Corona virus.

Photos taken by Elizabeth Fraser /Arlington National Cemetery



May June 2020

band, as well as, father to his four children; Peggy Baird, Jim (Vickie) Baird; Ben (Bev) Baird and Patricia (Norm) Potter.

Ralph served in the US Air force for two years beginning in 1950. Upon discharge from service he began his 33 year career with the Newland Post Office, serving as a rural mail carrier. In addition to his postal work, he & Betty worked together both as parents and as caretakers of the Baird farm.

In 1978 Ralph & son, Ben established B & R Nursery where they worked together for many years growing and harvesting Christmas trees. In 2003, Ralph & Ben Baird families were recognized by NC Farm Bureau as the Farm Family of Year.

Ralph was an active member of Avery County Lions Club serving in various capacities for many years including District Governor of District 31-B. In 1973 he was chosen by the Avery Chamber of Commerce as Avery County's Man of the Year.

Ralph served as a member of the Avery County Board of Education for several years. He grew up in the Newland Presbyterian Church where he served as an Elder, Sunday School Teacher, & Choir Member for many years. He was a deeply devoted Christian whose life was dedicated to serving others. One of Ralph's greatest talents was his incredible tenor voice often heard in local choirs, at special events and even while delivering mail or working on the family farm.

You could never go to Ralph & Betty's home without leaving with more than you came, whether it was vegetables from his bountiful garden, fruit from an assortment of trees grown in the backyard or a bouquet of beautiful flowers from his flower garden.

Ralph's legacy will live on for years through his beloved grandchildren and great grandchildren.

**Ella Elizabeth "Liz" Perry Hemilright, 77**, of Kitty Hawk, NC died unexpectedly Monday, April 13, 2020, at Chesapeake Regional Medical Center.

Born October 15, 1942, she was the daughter of the late Minnie Parker Perry and Roland Perry. In addition to her parents, Liz was preceded in death by a brother, Rupert Perry, Sr.; a son-in-law, Wes Meekins; and her former husband, Frankie Hemilright.

She is survived by four children, John Tisdale (Judy), Heidi Meekins, Dewey Hemilright (Sara Hallas), and Chad Hemilright (Joanne); four grandchildren, and many loved nieces, nephews and brothers and sisters-in-law.

Being a native of the Outer Banks of NC, Liz loved the salt air, sand between her toes, ocean swims and nighttime breezes. She often reminisced about grow-

ing up in Nags Head at her mother's Sea Rock Cottage Court and great memories of childhood on the Outer Banks. Her family loved listening to the many adventures especially her accounts of being in the Ash Wednesday Storm as a teenager and the happiest of times spent with family.

A 1961 graduate of Manteo High School Class, Liz retired as a USPS mail carrier having served the Kitty Hawk and Kill Devil Hills area for over 24 years.

In the more recent years, Liz looked forward to helping her son tend the crab shedders in her backyard each spring. If she was not looking after the crabs, she was feeding and watching her backyard birds and critters which have brought her many hours of enjoyment.

Liz has touched so many lives young, old, near, and far. She will always be remembered for her amazing strength, faith in Jesus, her gracious kind heart, and huge giving spirit. Whatever was hers was yours. She was also known for her bright loving smile, sweet hugs, home-cooked meals, and delicious cakes.

Her greatest gift was to her children and family which she showed unconditional love. In 2014, Liz received one of her most treasured gifts of life being reunited with her first-born child John after 50 years.

By whatever name you have known her, whether it was Ella, Elizabeth, Liz, Miss Liz, Lizzy, Momma, Granny, or Aunt Liz, cherish her memory in your heart. Our lives are forever enriched because of her.



## Some Gave All

Please Remember and Honor  
them this Memorial Day.

# OUTSTANDING MEMBER OF THE YEAR

## GUIDELINES FOR SELECTION

### *I. Method of Selection*

1. Nomination of candidates for the award shall be made prior to the State Convention. Nominations may be made directly from the members inviting such nominations. Also, local, county or district units may select candidates for the award.

2. In either event, the name of the candidate should be submitted, with a brief resume of accomplishments, to a Selection Committee to be named by the State Board, or by any other means, which may be the prevailing policy in the State Association.

### *II. Eligibility for Award*

1. Any MEMBER of the Association may be nominated as a candidate for the Outstanding Member of the Year Award.

2. State Association Officers should not be arbitrarily selected for the award nor should they be eliminated from consideration. Officers have been chosen to lead and serve, but it is frequently demonstrated that their services go far beyond the routine duties of the office and, thus may be worthy of selection.

### *III. Criteria for Selection*

1. The primary consideration of the Selection Committee shall be:

- (a) The service rendered by the candidate to the Rural Letter Carriers' Association;
- (b) Attendance and participation in local, state and national meetings;
- (c) Willingness to accept responsibilities and dedication in performing those duties;
- (d) Fraternal Attitude to others of the Rural Carrier Craft.

2. The Selection Committee should also consider, as a secondary matter, other service which the candidate may have rendered, such as civic and community activities, which reflect favorably upon the Rural Letter Carrier Craft and the Postal Service.

3. Consideration shall be given for services rendered in the immediately preceding twelve-month period, but not completely limited to this period of time. New carriers should be encouraged to seek to achieve this award.

### *IV. Presentation of Award*

When each State Association has made its selection, the name of the candidate shall be reported to the

National Office by the State Secretary on the regular Annual Report. An appropriate award will be presented by the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association at its National Convention.

### *V. Other*

These guidelines are not intended to be binding and a State may use any other selection procedure that is suitable for each State.

The announcement of the recipient of the award will be made at the banquet at the State Convention. The State Secretary shall report the name to the National Office and the award will be presented at the National Convention with State presentation at the Fall Booster.

This year the State Board has appointed the immediate past three recipients of the award to serve as the Selection Committee.

Please mail the name of the candidate, along with a resume to ALL members of the Selection Committee listed below, prior to the State Convention.

Brenda Johnson  
525 Brown Road  
Lillington, NC 27546-8804

Don Ayscue  
121 Skinners Road  
Hertford, NC 27944-9374

Roger Southern  
221 Renn Road  
Stokesdale, NC 27357-8234

**Nominations are  
being accepted at  
this time for  
this award.**

# Gift Offerings: USPS Guidelines for Workers

The Postal Service is reminding employees of the rules about accepting gifts from outside sources during the coronavirus national health emergency.

“As the men and women of the Postal Service deliver through this pandemic, we are incredibly proud and grateful for their dedication, but we aren’t the only ones. The American public also appreciates their service,” said Kristin Seaver, incident commander for the organization’s COVID-19 Response Command. “Many businesses, community organizations and other customers want to show their appreciation to our employees, so it’s important for everyone in the postal workforce to understand — and honor — the rules regarding the acceptance of gifts.”

Although the ethics rules ***generally prohibit the acceptance of gifts***, individual postal employees may accept free supplies, materials or services related to the COVID-19 crisis. This includes meals and restaurant or store gift cards — as long as the value of the gift is \$20 or less and the source doesn’t provide any single employee with gifts that exceed \$50 during a given year. In all cases — including during the current crisis — the ethics rules prohibit Postal Service employees from soliciting or asking for donations or gifts from customers, suppliers, vendors or any other outside source.

The Postal Service has “agency gift acceptance authority” — which means it is authorized to allow gifts and certain other items for the purpose of completing its work — and the Ethics Office has determined that postal facilities may accept donated COVID-19 supplies such as hand sanitizer.

However, USPS has not used its agency gift acceptance authority to accept donations of food or refreshments. If a business is proposing to drop off food for an entire facility, that type of gift would not be permitted.

If an employee receives COVID-19 supplies in excess of \$20 from an outside source, the employee should turn over the supplies to management for postal use.

If a donor requires a signed agreement or waiver to receive such supplies, the employee should politely explain that he or she lacks the authority to sign on the Postal Service’s behalf. If the donor won’t give the supplies to the employee without the signed agreement, the employee should decline the donation.

Employees who have questions should email the Ethics Office at [ethics.help@usps.gov](mailto:ethics.help@usps.gov).

## APCU Offers Assistance to NRLCA Members During COVID-19 Crisis

APCU (Atlanta Postal Credit Union) has developed several programs to assist members financially during the COVID-19 crisis.

For all NRLCA members who want to join the credit union to take advantage of these offers, APCU will cover the opening deposit on your behalf. Programs include:

Special Assistance Loans, allowing members to borrow up to \$1,500 unsecured, at a rate as low as 4.99% with up to 18 months to repay – and a 90-day delay for the first payment

Automobile refinancing with a 60-day delay to the first payment

Skip-a-Pay for existing loans – two months with no fee

Small Business Paycheck Protection Program

For additional details and to find out how to join the credit union online, visit <https://www.nrlca.org/News/1140> or <https://www.apcu.com/>

# We Still Have To Watch D.C.

First things first, to those of you that are going to work and continue to deliver the mail, I thank you from the bottom of my heart. I realize the current situation is even more stressful than usual and again, Thank You.

Even though our main concern of late has been the Covid-19 virus, other things are taking place in our Capitol. The Stimulus Bill contains \$10 billion for the United States Postal Service. Those at L'Enfant Plaza say that we need \$25 billion or the postal service will run out of money by June.

Because the original \$25 billion in the stimulus bill was cut back to \$10 billion, Representative Joe Neguse (D-CO) introduced the **Protect Our Post Offices Act (H.R. 6425)**, which would provide \$25 billion in emergency funding for the Postal Service to ensure continued service during the pandemic. The funds would remain available until September 30, 2022.

As this public health emergency worsens, our front-line postal workers remain vulnerable to the coronavirus and our post offices require immediate support to maintain on-time and consistent deliveries for customers who are quarantining or vulnerable. They rely on mail for essential supplies and food," said Rep. Neguse in a statement. "This legislation would ensure needed support for the postal service, our frontline postal workers and ensure all Americans can continue to take advantage of mail services while they remain in their homes."

The USPS will run out of funding by June if no action is taken. "Without this emergency funding to cover operating expenses, the Postal Service will no longer be able to operate. Corporations received financial aid in the recently passed stimulus package. Lawmakers should do the right thing and also make funding available to the USPS, which provides an essential service to Americans who would otherwise be unable to obtain necessary medication and supplies for their homes. I encourage everyone to contact their representatives and urge them to cosponsor this bill," said NRLCA President Ronnie Stutts.

As I write this in early April, the legislation has only two cosponsors in the House, neither of whom are from NC.

As you saw in the previous paragraphs, Our National President Ronnie Stutts has asked all of us to contact our members of Congress and ask them to support this bill. There is no form letter for this, just call them and ask them to support this bill.



**Legislative  
Representative**

*Van Heath*

There are several other bills still in the Congress that if you have not contacted your Representatives, it is not too late.

**S. 2965** is the bill to End the Pre-Funding Mandate. We need your support to end the pre-funding mandate so the USPS can focus on improving its service to all Americans. The House of Representatives passed the companion bill to S. 2965, H.R. 2382, by a bi-partisan vote that passed by more than two-thirds majority on February 5, 2020.

**H.R. 2478** is the bill to allow you to buy back your RCA time. Under this act, federal employees that gave their time and effort for years before achieving permanent status would be able to make catch-up retirement contributions so they may retire on time. This is not a new idea. Before the Federal Government changed to a new employee retirement system in 1989, temporary employees could make catch-up payments.

**H.R. 54** is for support of continued 6-day delivery, introduced by Rep. Gerald Connolly, which expresses "...the sense of the House of Representatives that the United States Postal Service should take all appropriate measures to ensure the continuation of its 6-day mail delivery service." By supporting this legislation, you will help to save over 50,000 Rural Carrier jobs.

**H.R. 33** is for opposition to Privatization, introduced by Rep. Stephen Lynch, which expresses "...the sense of the House of Representatives that Congress should take all appropriate measures to ensure that the United States Postal Service remains an independent establishment of the Federal Government and is not subject to privatization."

All of the above listed bills have form letters available on our National website and some or all of them are available on our State website.

It is still my opinion that if we do not get the Buy Back bill passed this year, there will never be another opportunity.

Regulars, RCAs, Retirees and family members need to get motivated to support these bills.

We need **'All Hands on Deck'** for this one.





**PAC CHAIR**  
*Robert Gurganus*

## PAC Needs You

Hello everyone! I hope that all of you are healthy and safe. These are difficult times we are living in...if you've ever wondered if the job we do everyday makes a difference, wonder no more. I've never been prouder to be a USPS employee and a rural mail carrier than I am today. Now that our fellow countrymen need us, we are stepping up and delivering the service that will help America survive this crisis and hopefully come out stronger when it's all over.

I hope you are all following the guidance given to us by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and are protecting yourself as best as you can.

Our NCRLCA family has already been affected by the Covid-19 virus and I pray that we and all of our families can stay healthy.

As I write this the USPS is struggling to stay afloat under the stress of the economic fallout of the Coronavirus pandemic. We had acquired relief through the \$2 trillion Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act, but President Trump had the USPS aid stripped out of the bill before he would sign it into law. A much smaller loan was included in the bill to

help the USPS keep the lights on and meet payroll for a few months, but Senate Republicans seem poised to use this crisis to privatize the USPS and destroy our right as a union to collectively bargain.

It is imperative that each of us contacts our two senators; Thom Tillis and Richard Burr and let them know that the USPS is an important part of our country's infrastructure and is **NOT FOR SALE**. We need them to support the USPS.

That the taxpayers were asked to bail out cruise lines (whose ships aren't even registered with the USA!) and the USPS, a vital part of our country's everyday economy, was left to die is criminal!

I know I say this in every column, but your PAC contributions are more important than ever. Please consider signing up to be a sustaining donor. We need to make sure that our viewpoint gets heard by "the people in the room". We aren't just fighting for our jobs ~ we are fighting for the people that we serve.

Thanks to all of you and may God Bless our Country!

**YOUR PAC DONATIONS  
 ARE NEEDED NOW  
 MORE THAN EVER!**



**I hereby authorize my bank to deduct from my checking account the monthly sum of: (circle one)**

**\$45    \$25    \$20    \$15    \$10    Other: \$\_\_\_\_\_**

**Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_**

**Employee ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_**

**State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Please attach a voided check**

**Send to NRLCA-PAC 1630 Duke St, Floor 2, Alexandria, VA 22314**



## Auto-Home Insurance

*Tracy Greer*

### Are You Maximizing Your Insurance Benefits??

As we are under challenging times and staying at home, most of us aren't thinking about our homes and vehicles.

It's a great time to take a moment to get a quote from National General Insurance Marketplace. and maximize your insurance savings by bundling home and auto insurance.

You will get a \$10.00 gift card for receiving a quote; plus if you send me your information I will enter you in a drawing for an additional chance to win a \$100.00 gift card. Don't delay call 1-888-325-7727.

You are eligible for substantial discounts on your home, RV, motorcycle and more, just for being an NRLCA member.

Mention code R/RP for your exclusive NRLCA insurance savings and benefits!

### Frequently Asked Questions

- Q** How often can I receive a quote from the NRLCA Insurance Marketplace?
- A** You may receive a quote every 6 months and also receive a \$10.00 gift card.
- Q** I have golf carts, ATV's, and other recreational vehicles. Will they insure those?
- A** Absolutely!! Not only will they insure those, they have great savings for bundling and specialize in finding the best rate for your RV.
- Q** I have great credit and no speeding tickets, will I get a better rate?
- A** YES!! Good credit and a safe driving history lowers your rate and risk assessment from all insurance agencies.

### You Are Essential!

By now, you've received the written confirmation that **YOU**, a Rural Letter Carrier, are an Essential Employee.

The work you do is critical. North Carolina needs you. America needs you. Nobody else does what you do, and I think the public at large is beginning to realize this.

You, and I, and all rural letter carriers are in this together, and the information we need is often changing on a daily, if not hourly, basis. Are you receiving the stand-up talks? Handouts? Hand sanitizer? Disinfecting wipes? Gloves? Masks? Do you know what to do if you aren't?

Was your District Meeting canceled? Can you find the Auxiliary Scholarship forms? Do you need a Steward or need to know how to contact your District Representative?

Are you aware that legislation concerning the USPS and all its employees has been introduced in Congress? If so, do you know where to find the letters to send to your Representative requesting their support

### Webmaster

*Renee Johnson*



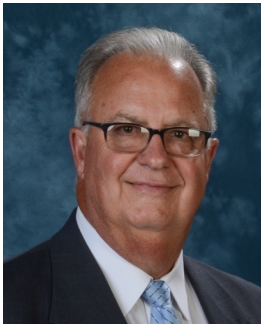
on issues concerning USPS?

Did you know that our National President, Ronnie Stutts, has been interviewed in major news outlets? Would you like to read the articles?

The above issues are just a few of the things your NC State Board and I, as your Webmaster, are making accessible in a timely manner. It seems I am posting cancelations, additions, changes in procedures, and other useful information continuously.

Please check the Website regularly, and if you cannot find something you are seeking, the chances are good someone else is having that issue as well. Notify me, or any NCRLCA State Board Member, and clarifications, additions, or changes will be made so that the information you need is readily available.

Remember, **You** are Essential.



## Provident Guild

*Dale Sain*

No one wants to think about it, but we are all going to pass on from this world at some point. To help your family at that difficult time, be sure you have all your documents in order. Also, make sure you let your family know where these documents are kept. A will, a letter of instruction and any trust documents are a must have.

This list of the 25 *Documents You Need Before You Die* is courtesy of the Wall Street Journal.

I have taken the liberty of adding #26, the Provident Guild Death Benefit Fund.

The Provident Guild is here to immediately help your family when that times comes. We are ready with

## The 25 Documents You Need Before You Die

some quick cash for your family as soon as we are notified of your death.

Please consider joining the guild today.

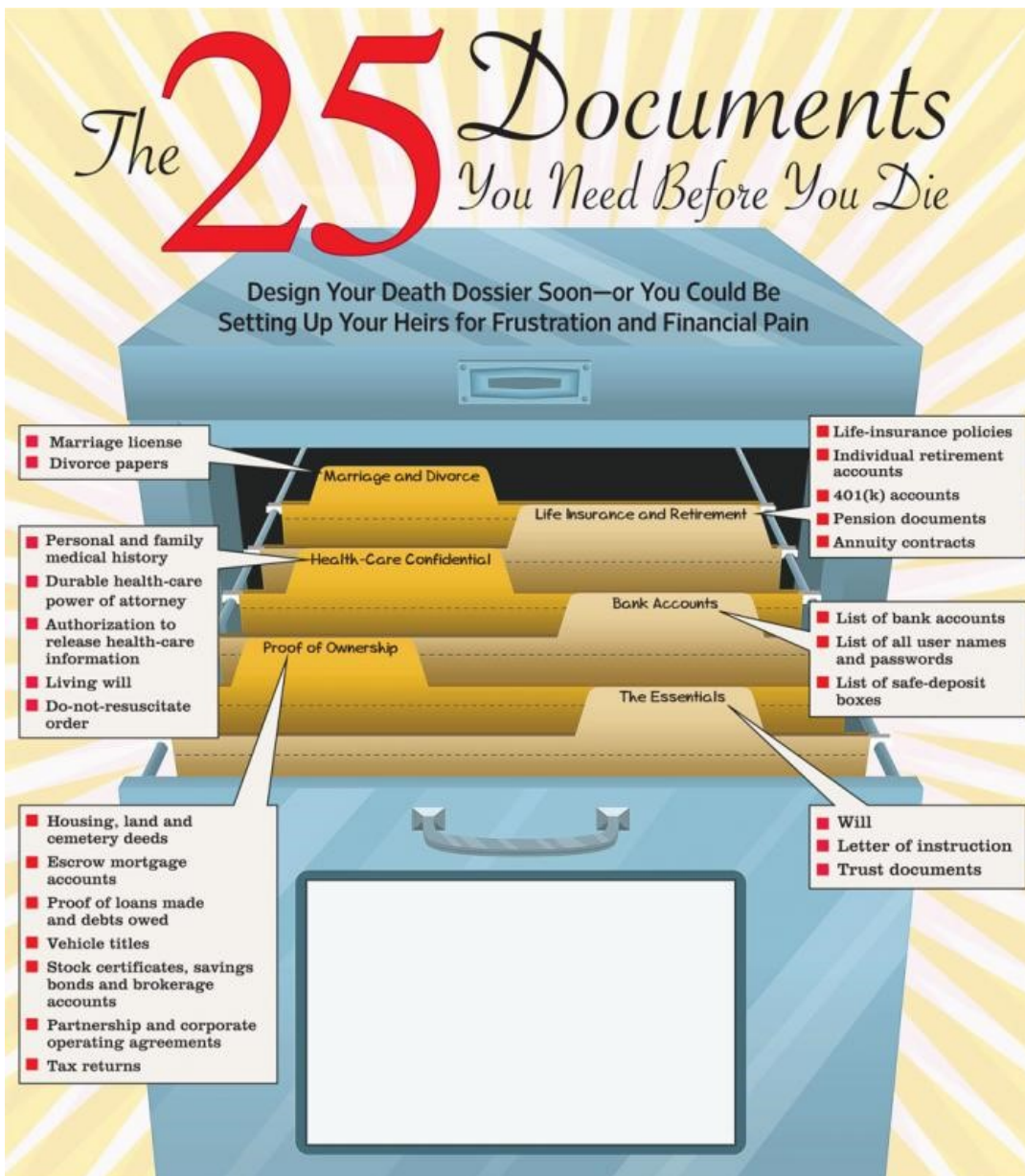
Let me know if you have any questions My contact information is on page 2.

### The 25 Documents to have prepared

1. Marriage license
2. Divorce papers
3. Personal and family medical history
4. Durable health care power of attorney
5. Authorization to release health care information
6. Living will
7. Do-not-resuscitate order
8. Housing, land, and cemetery deeds
9. Escrow mortgage amounts
10. Proof of loans made and debts owed
11. Vehicle titles
12. Stock certificates, savings bonds, and brokerage accounts
13. Partnership and corporate operating agreements
14. Tax returns
15. Life insurance policies
16. IRAs
17. 401(k) accounts
18. Pension documents
19. Annuity contracts
20. List of bank accounts
21. List of user names and passwords
22. List of safe deposit boxes
23. Will
24. Letter of instruction
25. Trust documents

**PLUS**

**26. Provident Guild Death Benefit Fund**



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**Mid-Carolinas**  
District Representative

*Bethany Small*

**Greensboro**  
District Representative

*Jeff Essick*



## **Joint Statement from Your North Carolina District Representatives**

We understand that we are living in very uncertain times. You may have questions regarding COVID-19 and how that impacts your life, both personally and professionally. We are here to help.

The USPS has adopted a lenient leave policy to assist employees in dealing with the effects of the pandemic. If you find that you need to be absent from work, please remember that the leave submission policies have not changed. Leave slips should still be submitted to management and the leave type specified on your 3971. Documentation may be required, so please follow instructions given to you by your manager in accordance with the regulations established.

Please remember to be safe and to practice good hygiene, sanitization and social distancing. In doing so, you are not just protecting yourself from COVID-19, you are also protecting every one you come into contact with every day.

Be kind to yourself during this time, a lot is being asked of you as an essential employee. Please remember to reach out to your steward if you have any questions or need assistance. Remember, we will make it through this together and there are better days coming.

The latest information regarding leave and the Family First Coronavirus Response Act can be found at [WWW.NRLCA.ORG](http://WWW.NRLCA.ORG).

Wishing you all safety and health.

### **Stress and Coping with the COVID-19 - CDC Guidelines**

The outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) may be stressful for people.

Fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children.

Coping with stress will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger.

Things you can do to support yourself:

- **Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news** stories and social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting.
- **Take care of your body.** Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate. Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep, and avoid alcohol and drugs.
- **Make time to unwind.** Try to do some other activities you enjoy.
- **Connect with others.** Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.
- **Call your healthcare provider if stress gets in the way** of your daily activities for several days in a row.
- **If you, or someone you care about, are feeling overwhelmed** with emotions like sadness, depression, or anxiety, or you feel like you want to harm yourself or others call:
  - o **911**
  - o Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) Disaster Distress Helpline: 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746. (TTY 1-800-846-8517)

**Remember that as USPS employees we also have access to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at 1-800-327-4968.**

As always, please feel free to contact your steward or any of your North Carolina Representatives of your District with any questions or concerns.

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# IS YOUR OFFICE PROVIDING COVID 19 SUPPLIES?

It is the responsibility of each post office, station, and/or branch to provide adequate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). PPE items consist of disinfectant cleaning supplies, gloves, masks and hand sanitizer. There should be no reason why carriers do not have PPE items available to them.

If your office is failing to provide you with these items please contact your District Representative. Your DRs are having daily teleconferences with District Postal personnel and should be able to get this corrected.

**Protect yourself. Take care. Be safe, and stay healthy!**

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## Mid-Carolinas District Representative

*Bethany Small*

### Relief Day Work List

The Relief Day Work List (RDWL) signup has wrapped and the new list should be posted in offices now.

Those on the RDWL will be utilized after all available leave replacements and prior to requiring anyone not on the RDWL. The Relief Day Work List is the name of what is often incorrectly referred to as the "Overtime Desired List or ODL". These terms refer to the city craft. In accordance with Article 8.5 of the National Agreement:

*"the relief day work list at each delivery unit shall be established twice during the guarantee period. The relief daywork list will be posted for a two-week period. Each time the new relief day work list is established it shall supersede the previous list. All regular carriers, regardless of route classification, desiring to work their relief days shall place their names on the relief day work list."*

If you become a regular carrier after May 1<sup>st</sup> (the last day to sign up for this RDWL), then you will have to wait to sign the list until the next opportunity in the fall prior to the beginning of the new guarantee period.

This new list will go into effect on May 9<sup>th</sup> and carriers should be worked in order of seniority on a rotating basis. If you have leave (including an approved X day) adjacent to your relief day you will not be required to work. If you would like to work that relief day adjacent to your leave, you must indicate this desire in writing to your manager prior to the relief day.

Article 9.2.C.5.f outlines how relief days are paid.

When a carrier on the RDWL works their relief day, they have 3 options as to how they are paid:

**\*An X day** (a day for working a prior relief day): to be immediately scheduled by **mutual** agreement between the carrier and the Employer. The scheduled X day must be within the next 12 weeks. A leave slip (PS Form 3971) will be completed for the mutually agreed X day and the scheduled X day will be given the same consideration as approved annual leave.

**\*DACA 3:** Compensation at 50% of the Carrier's daily rate of pay, in addition to receiving an X day within twelve (12) weeks as **scheduled by the Employer..** This means that it is up to your manager when you get your X day. We are not entitled to have our wishes honored. As per the Andrea Wilson letter dated January 29, 2001, Management must provide three (3) working days' notice to a regular carrier when assigning an X day.

**\*DACA 5:** Compensation at 150% of the carrier's daily rate of pay. The carrier will not receive an X day.

If you have signed up for the RDWL and later find that you no longer wish to be on it, you can remove your name at any time.

You will be required to work your relief day if you requested to remove your name from the list if you have already been scheduled to work the upcoming relief day. Your request will be effective for any future, unscheduled relief days. If you are not on the RDWL, you will be compensated a DACA 3 for working your relief day and will be required to work by juniority, not on a rotating basis. This means that if regulars carriers not on the RDWL are needed to work their relief day, the most junior available regular carrier will be required to work each time.

*(Continued on page 29)*

(Continued from page 28)

## Sunday/Holiday Parcel Delivery

In accordance with the MOU for the Sunday/Holiday Parcel Delivery Work List, this list should also have been updated during the same time period as the RDWL.

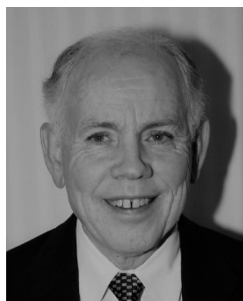
## Safety

Spring is in full swing and with the temps increasing, it is a reminder of the many pests that come with it. I'm sure that anyone that has made it through the warmer months as a mail carrier has had their fair share of bites and stings. Please remember that we are not responsible for pest abatement in mail receptacles. Please do not spray anything or attempt to remove/kill nests of any kind. Your manager and the customer need to be made aware of the hazard and the customer needs to remove it. This may also be a good time if you have an allergy to make sure that your personal medical supplies (such as an EPI pen) are functional and unexpired. Please be prepared!

## Greensboro

Assistant  
District Representative

*Danny Caudle*



## 2080/2240 Work Hours

There is no doubt that if a rural carrier is expected to exceed the 2080 benchmark, then management has been "talking" to the carrier. Once a carrier is on the list of carriers possibly exceeding the 2080 – 2240, then management is required to follow certain guidelines – notifying the carrier and arranging a meeting to discuss any action that is deemed necessary to keep the carrier from exceeding 2,080 actual work hours.

Judging from the calls that stewards receive regarding 2,080 work hours, it is obvious that many managers are also unsure of how to deal with this issue. The language found in Article 9.2.C.7.b (2) is very clear that route adjustments, or taking away the high option, are not normally necessary.

A carrier may also be asked to commit to using an-

nual leave to prevent exceeding 2,080 hours, but management cannot require you to submit to specific annual leave requests. Rural carriers have signed that they will use sufficient annual leave to keep work hours under 2,080 during the guarantee period, so it is not an absolute requirement to commit on a 3971 to future dates.

Article 10.2 states that annual leave is granted to rural carriers in accordance to their personal wishes, provided a leave replacement is available. However, if efforts fail in getting a commitment that will assure that you will not exceed 2,080 work hours, management may take necessary actions to prevent you from exceeding the 2,080 benchmark. BUT, they cannot require you to use leave without pay.

The other benchmark we hear about is the 2,240 rule. The Fair Labor Standards Act, Section 7 (b) (2) states "No regular rural carrier may actually work in excess of 2,240 hours within the 52 consecutive week guarantee period." This means that no carrier can be required, or allowed, to exceed the 2,240 benchmark.

How is it possible for a carrier to not exceed the 2,080 benchmark and still be in danger of exceeding the 2,240? Any time a carrier is on the RDWL and chooses DACA Code 5, those hours are paid at 150%. The hours paid at 150% do not count as hours accumulated toward the 2,080 because they have already been paid at the overtime rate.

If a carrier finds that he / she is nearing the 2,240 threshold, then they may consider taking Option 2 (50 percent pay plus a future X day), or Option 1 (an "R" day, which means that the carrier and management have mutually agreed upon an X day).

If the carrier is on the RDWL and management is requiring the carrier to work his or her relief day, then it is the carrier's option to choose the DACA Code they desire. Sometimes management will tell carriers that they must work and must choose Option 2. If the carrier is in danger of exceeding the 2,240 benchmark, management has the right to bypass that carrier on the RDWL. If management works the carrier on their relief day, the carrier can choose which option to take. Management is responsible to track each carrier's work hours and to take corrective action to avoid allowing the carrier to exceed the 2,240 benchmark.

If a rural carrier's actual work hours exceed the 2,240 hours benchmark, they should never be required to pay money back as a result of those calculations. Always contact your steward if repayment is attempted.

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## **June 1st Deadline For North Carolina Scholarships**

## **Auxiliary News**

*From*  
*Sue Kelly*  
*Secretary/Treasurer*

As I write this it is a bright and sunny day in April. I hope that you all are safe and well. We are certainly in unsure times with the current situation.

We are coming down to the final days of preparations for the North Carolina scholarship applications. With this in mind I would like to remind you that State scholarships applications are due by June 1, 2020.

Even though we can not have our State convention this year we are still going to award scholarships. The scholarships will be awarded at the Fall Booster meeting in November 2020. If for any reason the Fall Booster is cancelled the winners we receive their check in the mail in November 2020.

Due to the current situation some students are experiencing difficulties with the letter of recommendation. The students that are having difficulties with the recommendation letter (**this year only**) are allowed to have the person who writes it send it to the following email: [msueky117@gmail.com](mailto:msueky117@gmail.com). We want all students to have an opportunity to apply.

We are also accepting poster contest folders. These are due by June 22, 2020. Please send them to the **Auxiliary Secretary/Treasurer** at the address listed to the left of this article.

**Junior Contest Outline**-All essays and posters must be on, or attached to, a letter-size manila folder. There is no requirement as to how many sides of the folder you use, but you must be able to fold the folder. All entries will be judged on originality, neatness, grammar and spelling. Each entry must have the following information legibly written on the back of the folder.

Name and address of Junior

Name of parent or grandparent (Union Member)

State in which dues are paid.

Date of birth and age as of 8/1/2020

## **Contest Categories**

Ages 6-7: Design a poster: **How my Family Recycles**

Age 8-9: Design a poster: **How Donating Items Helps Others**

Age 10-11: Design a poster: **Make Your Home Poison Safe**

Age 12-14 Design a poster: **Be a Volunteer**

Age 15-17: Write an Essay: **Poison Proof Your Home**

Age 18-20: Write an Essay: **How Volunteering Makes a Difference**

Special Education: Design a poster: **Items to Recycle**

It would be to everyone's benefit to keep up with current news on the North Carolina website since this is where the new information will be.

Keep safe and well.

# JUNE 2020

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6 PP-13</i>
<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>12 Pay Day</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>14</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>20 PP-14</i>
<i>21</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>26 Pay Day</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>28</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>30</i>				



**State Convention**  
**CANCELED**

# JULY 2020

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4 PP-15</i>
<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10 Pay Day</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>12</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>18 PP-16</i>
<i>19</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>24 Pay Day</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>26</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>31</i>	



## Important Dates

May 25	Memorial Day	July 4	Independence Day
June 21	Father's Day	August 18	Opening Day, National Convention
June 21	State Convention Meet & Greet	August 21	National Convention Ends
June 22	Opening Day, State Convention	September 7	Labor Day
June 24	State Convention Ends	September 11	Patriot Day
July 3	Independence Day Holiday observed	September 13	Grandparents Day



**NCRLCA**  
**424 WAPITI DR**  
**SPRING LAKE NC 28390-1562**

## Address Service Requested

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION  
US POSTAGE PAID  
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28302



Mid-Carolinas District Manager Leslie Johnson Frick had this Heroes sign hung off the building at the USPS Processing & Distribution Center in Charlotte, NC.

More  
**THANK  
YOU**  
on page 14

