



Volume 40 Issue 4 Circulation 5000 Edited in Spring Lake NC January February 2024

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

Relief Carrier Appreciation Week February 3 – 9, 2024

The National Rural Letter Carriers' Association has designated the week of February 3-9, 2024 as National Rural Relief Carrier Appreciation Week.

Your North Carolina board wants to say **THANK YOU to all our Relief Carriers** for all you do!

We are encouraging all of our North Carolina carriers to please take the time to show our leave replacements how much you value them. Let them know that they are really needed and that their hard work has not gone unnoticed.

Actually, we hope that you appreciate them throughout the year, not just this one week. Our Relief carriers play a vital role in the craft. We need them. Treat them well and thank them whenever you can.

This year has been another exceptionally hard year on all of us. The extreme shortage of personnel plus the overwhelming amount of Christmas packages placed a tremendous strain upon the entire postal service.

We all know that our relief carriers seem to get the worst of it. Thrown on routes they don't know, sent to offices they have never even heard of before and working all hours of the day and night!

If you have RCAs & ARCs that survived all that and are still with us, then now is absolutely the time to thank them! Ask your Postmaster if they would be willing to show them some appreciation this special week. As we all know, a little recognition and acknowledgement can go a long way towards boosting the morale in an office.

Please send pictures of your RCAs, ARCs, PTFs and/or office appreciation party to Vicki Gray (address and email are on page 2), for possible publication in the next issue of the NCRC.

**INSIDE
THIS
ISSUE**

**More on
RRECS**

**Fall Booster
Roundup**

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Durham/Orange	12	Caswell/ Rockingham	14	Peach Belt	5
Sandhills	20	Central Carolina	16	Randolph/Montgomery/ Davidson	42
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Wake	24	Rutherford/Polk/Henderson/ Transylvania	47	Union	54
Tri-County/N Wayne	25				

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Smoky Mountain	11	Foothills	10	Southeastern	8
Yadkin River	26	Guilford	30	Cleveland/Gaston/Lincoln	29
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The *North Carolina Rural Carrier* is published bi-monthly as a benefit to the members of the NCRLCA. It is printed by Williams Printing of Fayetteville, NC and mailed at standard rate by permit from Fayetteville, NC. Articles and photos must be submitted to the editor by the 10th of the month prior to publication. Late submissions may or may not be printed.

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

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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 for all the latest news.

This month the password will be H@ppy_2024!

The password will be changed to the above on January 30, 2024.

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

Cover Photo

Sunset at Carolina Beach,
North Carolina

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President
Audrey Solomon

What's New in 2024?

Wow, it is hard to believe that 2023 is over. I know most of you are happy to see 2023 in your rearview; however, we are all **THANKFUL** that we have withstood all the changes. I would like to congratulate all the rural carriers that have retired and all the RCAs that made regular. Best wishes to you all.

Year 2024 will bring new challenges:

1. Two mini mail surveys in April and October,
2. March will start negotiations for the new contract.
3. The Postal Service is finishing a study on cutting/adjusting routes.
4. Deployment of new vehicles

Be ready and keep up with all updates.

Please do not forget to do your mapping. I know to some it is an inconvenience, but it is your right. I cannot keep stressing that scanning and mapping drives your pay.

UPCOMING EVENTS

South Atlantic Conference (SAC) will be in Atlanta, GA, Jan 27-29. Your entire National Board will be in attendance along with USPS upper management. This will be an informative meeting about the new directions of the postal service.

February is the month we celebrate our relief carriers; ARCs, PTFs & RCAs. **THANK YOU** to all of you, your contribution is invaluable.

As we set dates for Spring District meetings, Presidents, and Secretaries please insure you contact your assigned Board member and Steward. **DO NOT** set dates and times without confirmation that both will be in attendance.

I know it is early to be talking about the State Convention; however, if you plan to attend, please remember that to be paid you must complete two steps. They are:

1. be a elected as a delegate from your district and
2. send in your registration form to Vicki Gray before the deadline.

We will keep you updated (in the newsletter and on the NCRLCA.org website) on when you can start reserving your rooms.

Be Safe and have a Prosperous New Year.



Veterans Audrey Solomon and Debbie Bennett were the flag barriers for our North Carolina Fall Booster.

Kindness

“Nothing can make our lives, or the lives of other people more beautiful than perpetual kindness.” Leo Tolstoy

What is the meaning of kindness? According to the dictionary kindness, is defined as quality of being friendly, generous, considerate.

But kindness means so much more. Kindness can mean different things to different people. The meaning is in how YOU choose to show it. Be it through empathy, acceptance, kind gestures, thoughtfulness. The possibilities are entirely up to you. Kindness might look like being helpful or showing empathy. It may mean doing nice things without expecting nice things in return.

Kindness is more than being nice.

Kindness goes beyond merely being nice. Think about it, would you prefer people to describe you to be kind or nice? There can be a lack of sincerity in just being nice. There is often a perception of just doing the minimum. Whereas, being kind is doing intentional, voluntary acts of kindness. Not only when it is easy to be kind, but when it is hard to be.

Kindness is a movement.

Has anyone ever done something kind to you and all you wanted to do after was pay it forward? That’s because kindness has a chain reaction. It’s a wave that keeps rolling, and all it needs is one person to start it. One kind act can cause a ripple effect that impacts an entire community. If we are all focused on being kind, we are creating a movement of change. You know that famous *“Be the change you wish to see in the world”* quote? That quote isn’t just about change. It isn’t only about one person being able to change the world. It’s bigger, it’s about movement that can be started from one person acting with intention.

Kind is love; love is kind.

Think about what love entails, and what it means to love someone. Well, that’s kindness. It’s being selfless, caring, compassionate, and unconditionally kind. Like love, it takes practice to understand and fill it. We share love with others through kind acts such as a smile and a nice word, and unexpected deed, or a plain, surprise. When offering these acts to others, we make people

Chaplain’s Message

Pamela Stanley
Chaplain



feel good; we pass along hope and we promote peace. We show the power of kindness.

Kindness is grace.

As we are humans, we make mistakes. We can be kind in our response to ourselves and others when those mistakes do occur. This means that thinking before speaking, forgiving before seeking revenge and thinking about long-term relationships instead of a short-term pride. If we could all remember that none of us is perfect. We will be a lot kinder to each other. Offer grace, be kind.

Practice, Practice, Practice

Now that we know what kindness is, how can we encourage more of it? Here are a few ideas. Be kind to yourself. It is in our nature to learn by watching others. People and kids especially learn kindness, just by seeing what you do!

Another way to teach kindness is by being intentional about it. Volunteer, complement, donate to a charity. Hold the door open for someone. There are so many ways to show kindness to others. And lastly, say thank you!

People are continually learning right and wrong through associative language. When we see someone being kind or notice it from a family member or friend, make sure to tell them we appreciate what they did. Positive reinforcement helps promote people to do more good deeds and remind people to act with intentions.

Don’t be conformed to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Be kind!.



Obituaries

Everette Ney Haigler, age 98, peacefully went to his heavenly home surrounded by his family on July 22, 2023.

Everette is now reunited with many beloved friends and family members. Everette was born May 21, 1925 near Marshville, North Carolina as the sixth son of John David Haigler and Bertha Green Querry Haigler.

He grew up as a farmer's son in the hard times of the Great Depression. Everette was a Hospital Corpsman in the U.S. Navy during World War II. After the war, he finished high school and married Geraldine Thomas in 1949. They moved to Charlotte to find jobs and start their family, later relocating to a rural property near Matthews where his farming skills were again put to use. He also worked various jobs, including with Fruehauf Trailer Company, until he became a Rural Letter Carrier with the US Postal Service.

After retirement, he kept busy working at home and with part-time jobs for many years. He especially loved helping with lunch at Queen's Grant Community School in Mint Hill, where a bonus was seeing his grandchildren and other young friends daily.

Everette had a servant's heart. He drove a bus to take children to church; served as a youth leader and deacon in Briar Creek Baptist Church (formerly Commonwealth) in Charlotte; grew, preserved, and gave away vegetables for over 90 years; mowed lawns for the elderly; sustained life-long friendships; sat with and cared for the sick; supported his daughters through their college educations; and spent time with his grandchildren, as well as many other kindnesses. Later, he was a member of Arlington Baptist Church in Mint Hill where he enjoyed meeting new friends.

Remaining to honor Everette's memory are his wife and strong partner of seventy-four years, Geraldine Thomas Haigler; daughter Candace Haigler and husband Larry Blanton; daughter Sheila Craft and husband Ron Craft; and his beloved grandchildren, Andrew Craft and his wife Tiffany, and Grace Craft.

Everette loved his extended family and is fondly remembered by his surviving brothers and their wives: Floyd Haigler (Pat), Avery Haigler (Kay), Louise (wife of Charlie), as well as many nieces,

nephews, cousins and their families. Most of the Haigler brothers and their wives predeceased Everette.

The family is grateful to: all the friends and family members who loved Everette over many years.

Sandra (Sandy) Henrietta Dennis Wilson was called Home on Sunday November 19, 2023 to be with her Lord and Savior. She was 80 years old, having just celebrated her birthday on November 9.

She was born in Brunswick County, NC to Charlie Calvin Dennis, Sr. and Ora Elizabeth Redwine Dennis, in 1943. She attended Waccamaw High School in Ash, NC and played basketball, one of her favorite passions, and her favorite team was NC State.

After finding the love of her life and marrying him on March 5, 1960, she and her husband Frank moved to Thomasville, NC shortly thereafter in order to find work in the factory mills. She did various and sundry things such as working in their children's school cafeteria and driving a bus.

Eventually though, she found her career in being a mail carrier for the Lexington Post Office in Lexington, NC, first as a substitute in 1972 and then as a full-time carrier from 1982 until retiring in 2005. That was her dream job, even as a little girl.

She volunteered in many organizations but her favorite was the Pilot Lion's Club and Camp Dogwood for 25 plus years. She was a member of Fairview Church since 1973 and served in many roles there, attending many conferences at Lake Junalaska.

She dearly loved her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren and will be greatly missed by her family and friends.

She is predeceased by her husband Franklyn (Frank) Jonas Wilson, Sr., parents Charlie Calvin Dennis, Sr., and Ola Elizabeth Redwine Dennis, stepmother Mabry Ward Dennis and by big sister, Norma Nell (Big Nell) Redwine Harrelson. Grandparents William Henry and Ora Malettie Milliken Redwine and Charles Martin and Henrietta Morton Dennis, also predecease her.

Survivors include her brothers Charlie Calvin Dennis, Jr., Douglas Dennis (Pam) and Jeffery Dennis (Sheryl); sons Franklyn (Hank) Wilson, Jr. (Peggy); Randall Wilson (Cindy); Billy Pullum (Debbie); grandchildren and great-grandchildren.



Safety

Brian Hamlett
Executive Committeeman

Winter Blues

So, we have made it through another peak season. The Christmas revelry has passed, gifts opened, we've rung in a New Year. You would expect that all of us carriers would cheer up after peak season has ended and things have regained a little normalcy but that's not always the case. Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is experienced by millions of people annually though many may not even realize it's anything more than just a case of the "winter blues."

The following information was taken from the National Institute of Mental Health and the Mayo Clinic websites.

SAD is a type of depression characterized by a recurrent seasonal pattern, with symptoms lasting about 4–5 months out of the year. The signs and symptoms of SAD include those associated with depression as well as disorder-specific symptoms that differ for winter-pattern versus summer-pattern SAD.

Not every person with SAD experiences all the symptoms listed below. Symptoms of depression can include:

- Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" mood most of the day, nearly every day, for at least 2 weeks
- Feelings of hopelessness or pessimism
- Feelings of irritability, frustration, or restlessness
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities
- Decreased energy, fatigue, or feeling slowed down
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions
- Changes in sleep or appetite or unplanned weight changes
- Physical aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems that do not have a clear physical cause and do not go away with treatment

- Thoughts of death or suicide or suicide attempts
- For winter-pattern SAD, additional symptoms can include:
- Oversleeping (hypersomnia)
- Overeating, particularly with a craving for carbohydrates, leading to weight gain
- Social withdrawal (feeling like "hibernating")
- For summer-pattern SAD, additional symptoms can include:
- Trouble sleeping (insomnia)
- Poor appetite, leading to weight loss
- Restlessness and agitation
- Anxiety
- Violent or aggressive behavior

Winter-pattern SAD should not be confused with "holiday blues"—feelings of sadness or anxiety brought on by stresses at certain times of the year. The depression associated with SAD is related to changes in daylight hours, not the calendar, so stresses associated with the holidays or predictable seasonal changes in work or school schedules, family visits, and so forth are not the same as SAD.

Complications

Take signs and symptoms of seasonal affective disorder seriously. As with other types of depression, SAD can get worse and lead to problems if it's not treated. These can include:

- Social withdrawal
- School or work problems
- Substance abuse
- Other mental health disorders such as anxiety or eating disorders
- Suicidal thoughts or behavior

Prevention

There's no known way to prevent the development of seasonal affective disorder. However, if you take steps early on to manage symptoms, you may be able to prevent them from getting worse over time. You may be able to head off serious changes in mood, appetite and energy levels, as you can predict the time of the year in which these symptoms may start.

One benefit we have as postal employees is access to the Employee Assistance Program. If you or a household member need to reach out for issues with depression, substance abuse, or a wide range of other issues you can call 800-EAP- 4-YOU (800-327-4968).

If you or someone you know is in danger of suicide Dial 988 for the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

Do You Have an Emergency Fund?

Everyone should have an Emergency Fund.

Having enough set aside for an unexpected car repair is a good place to start your emergency fund. Experts say just 45% of Americans would be able to cover a \$1,000 emergency expense without turning to a credit card or loan. And 25% of Americans have used money from savings or a retirement account to pay their bills within the last 12 months.

Do you have \$1,000 set aside for emergencies? If you already do, you could probably use another \$1,000 in that account. Experts recommend keeping at least three months of expenses in a reliable, liquid account – though even an extra \$1,000 can be a lifesaver. But finding \$1,000 to save isn't always easy.

Get Started with These Four Steps

1. Find a Safe Place to Save Your Money – You will want to save your money in an account that you can access easily in case of an emergency. But not so easy that you keep reaching in as fast as you are trying to build it. That means you should probably not keep this savings in a U.S. Savings Bond or in mutual funds. Choose a traditional savings account or a short-term certificate-of-deposit (CD). Consider opening a new account or sub-account for this money so you're not tempted to spend it. Most importantly, do not keep savings in a checking account, which pays no or low interest and is too easy to access.
2. Save \$100 a month – If you are already saving \$100 a month, great! Skip to step 3. If not, you need to either earn \$100 more a month or cut back in order to find that \$100 to save. It can also help

Reminder

Membership in the NRLCA terminates upon retirement. Retirees must reenroll to remain a member of the union.

Please complete PS Form 1187 R to remain a member.

Retirement

Jay Schreiber
Executive Committeeman



to pay yourself first and save the \$100 at the beginning of the month instead of waiting to see if you have money left over to save at the end of the month.

3. Automate Your Savings – Setting up an automatic way to save is one of the best ways to save. Once you set it up, then it happens without having to think about it. Here are two ways to automate your savings.
 - a) Go to PostalEase on LiteBlue and set up an allotment to deduct \$100 from your paycheck and transfer it to a savings account. Funds taken out prior to your deposit are not missed.
 - b) Ask your bank or credit union to transfer \$100 from your checking account to a savings account every month. Talk to your local bank, APCU or local credit union to set this up.
4. Watch Your Savings Grow for 10 Months – The final step is to sit back and watch your savings grow. How often do you look at the calendar and think it's halfway through the year already? The same will apply to your savings; Before you know the year is out you will have that \$1,000. The key is not to touch the money unless you have an emergency – that's what the money is there for after all. Once you have at least \$1,000 in your emergency account, continue your savings success and continue to build your emergency savings or apply that money to a new savings goal. Perhaps you have debt you need to pay down or want to save for a car or home.

No matter what you are saving for, it will happen sooner rather than later by starting now. And if you keep dipping into your retirement for emergencies, how much longer will you need to work?



Rural Carrier Health Benefit Plan

*Tracy Greer
Executive Committeeman*

2024, The Postal Service Reform Act; Changes Are On Their Way

As the title suggests, 2024 is here. This is the year we face changes with our Health Insurance. The Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) will be called the Postal Service Health Benefits Program (PSHBP) beginning January 1st, 2025.

I know many of you don't like this and to be honest it raises many questions. The PSHBP will continue to be administered by OPM and it appears our plans will fall in line with the FEHBP guidelines and initiatives. The biggest change in this cost saving effort of The Postal Service Reform Act is the Medicare Part B mandate.

If you are currently retired, you are exempt from the Medicare mandate. If you retire after January 1st, 2025 you will need to enroll in Medicare Part B to retain your Health Insurance. There are circumstances that exempt you from the mandates.

Am I an EXCEPTION to the PSHBP requirement to enroll in Medicare Parts A and B for future retirees?

Am I age 64 or older on 1/1/2025?	Do I reside abroad (other than Puerto Rico, Guam, Virgin Islands, American Samoa, or Mariana Islands)?
Am I covered by Indian Health Services or VA Services?	Am I retired as of 1/1/2025?
A YES to any of these questions means that you are an EXCEPTION to the PSHBP Medicare A&B requirement.	

There will be a Special Enrollment Period from April 1st, 2024 through October 30th, 2024 for retirees that wish to late enroll in Medicare Part B, without late penalties. I will keep the <https://www.ncrlca.org> website up to date as these key dates arrive.

I will gladly answer any questions you may have but I can't advise you of the decisions you should make. I encourage you to research and decide what is best for you. I did a presentation at the Fall Booster about this subject and it is available at www.ncrlca.org under the news tab.

I am aware there was a lot of marketing material sent out during open season for Medicare and SilverScript. If you are currently retired, you are exempt from having Medicare and SilverScript. You may opt out of SilverScript at any time and your Prescription Coverage will revert to your original Health Insurance Plan.

It is a very confusing time, and my door is always open. You may reach out to me for information or contact Lynn Paller at the National Office by calling 703-684-5545.

NCRLCA Dues for 2023-2024

- Regular, PTF...Cash.....\$829.00**
- 1187...Bi-Weekly.....\$31.88**
- Retired.....Cash.....\$115.00**
- 1187R...Monthly.....\$9.58**
- 73, RCA, RCR, ARC...Cash.....\$276.00**
- 1187.....Bi-Weekly.....\$10.62**

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.



Vice President

Elaine Althoff

Fall Booster Round Up

Fall Booster was set at beautiful Shell Island Resort at Wrightsville Beach.

We began with a tribute to our Veterans. A video of “Still a Soldier” by Trace Adkins was played and we recognized our veterans for their service. Sue Kelly, Auxiliary Secretary-Treasurer gifted challenge coins to all the veterans present.

The Auxiliary Project for the 2023-2024 is *A Program of Patriotism*. The coins are available to purchase from the Auxiliary to raise money for *The Hero Project*.

Carl Kelly presented our Member of the Year, Mitch Reese, with a plaque from the North Carolina RLCA. “I never thought it would happen, it’s an honor.” He went on to state “Everyone can be a Member of the Year. Get involved.”

Member of the Year for the Auxiliary, Janice Fulwood, was unable to attend. Sue Kelly will deliver her award to her. Congratulations to both Mitch and

Janice for their hard work and dedication to this Union. Sue Kelly also awarded nine scholarships from the Auxiliary this year. Congratulations to each of the scholarship winners.

The day went on with presentations from:

Brian Hamlett, Safety Officer - On Arrow Key Security. Letter carrier robberies for our Arrow keys, Awareness of your surroundings and the Pilot Program as a two-step process linking the locks with the scanner. See his July/August article for more information.

Jay Schreiber, Retirement- Spoke on Roth and TSP. See the State website by going to NCRLCA.org Home page under Current News Required Minimum Distributions from TSP.

Tracy Greer, Rural Carrier Health Benefit Plan- a PowerPoint presentation that touched on open season, new premiums, and solutions for RCBP

(Continued on page 11)

North Carolina Member of the Year Mitch Reese with his wife Christine Reese.





ADRs Kelly
Kenny Futch and
Eddie Moss
addressed carrier
duties under
RRESC and other
issues at the Fall
Booster.

(Continued from page 10)

members with Medicare primary, Postal Service Health Benefit Program, supplemental plans, and Non-Career Benefits. You can find more information on our website NCRLCA.org home page under Current News. Click on *2024 NRCLA RCBP FALL BOOSTER PRESENTATION* to view the presentation.

Van Health, Legislative Rep. spoke on what's new in Washington DC. The **Buy Back Bill** is back! On October 19th Derek Kilmer (D-WA) submitted H.R. 5995 into the record of the 118th Congress.

Keep informed and help us by writing your Congressional representative and ask that they co-sponsor this bill, HR. 5995 "Federal Retirement Fairness Act (FRFA)" we have links on NRLCA.org website, click on the "Legislative Updates" under Congressional Record you will see Postal Issues H.R. 3721 "USPS Shipping Equity Act", H.R. 5995 "Federal Retirement Fairness Act" and Under Retirement H.R. 82 "Social Security Fairness Act of 2023"

Brenda Gibbs, PAC Chair- explained what PAC is and what your PAC dollars do for us. She also spoke on being a sustaining donor. To become a sustaining donor, see your current magazine under the PAC Chair article in most of our magazines or call Brenda Gibbs or Celeste Britt.

ADRs Eddie Moss and Kelly Kenny-Futch were on hand to go over your duties on the RRECS Mapping. This is to be done every month. Mapping is part of the "End of Shift Duties". If you are doing this in the A.M., you should be on 8127 time.

The carrier must be present. If you miss a month, file a grievance. You must add in your new boxes every month. The Radar Report must be available every day. The Mini mail survey will be every six months to fix the bugs.

Please let your stewards know if you are having any new issues as they arise.

They took questions from the members and then the Fall Booster was concluded.

I would like to add a **HUGE** Thank you to my RCA Russ Edwards and all our RCAs & ARCs. Not only during the RCA appreciation week, but all year thru. Thank you Russ Edwards for all you do when I'm not on the route. Hang in there, we greatly appreciate all your time and dedication to the craft.

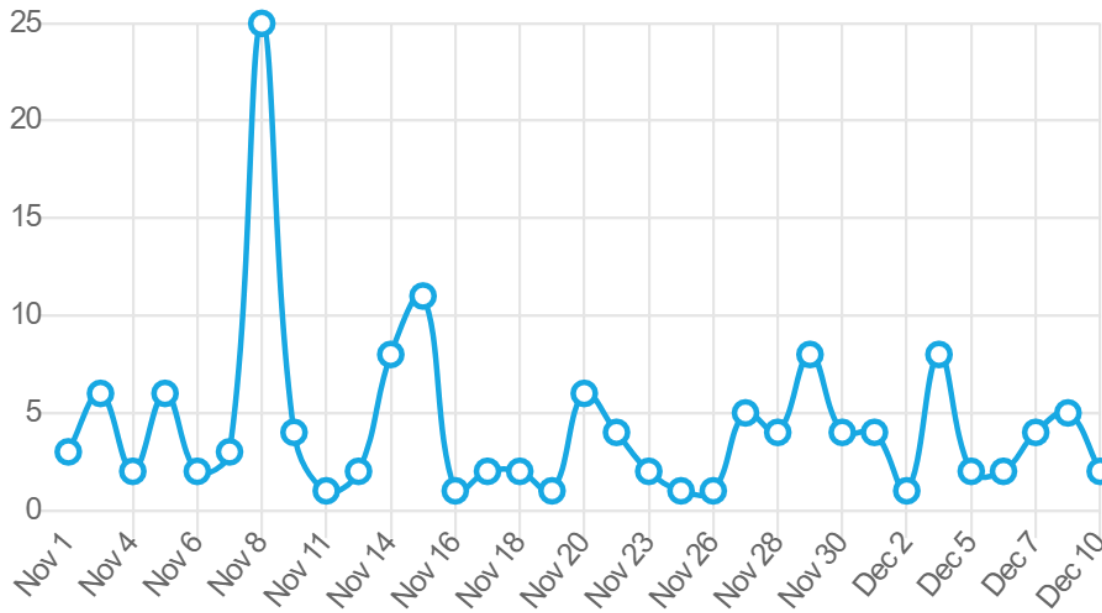
Happy New Year!

What's Happening on the Website

Webmaster
Renee Johnson



Nov 1, 2023 - Dec 12, 2023



USERS 123 -2% **PAGEVIEWS** 574 +127%

During the six-week period from November 1, 2023 to December 12, 2023, the website statistics have gone up and down in a new and interesting manner, represented by the graph.

While the users have dipped by 2%, the pageviews are up by 127%.

We've had fewer visitors, but each spent more time using the home tabs, visiting more pages, or reading more articles.

A major time frame occurred between November 7, 2023, and November 11, 2023, coinciding with the NCRLCA Fall Booster. During this time, we also posted information regarding changes to the MDD menu screen, district meetings, the new newsletter, and Open Season.

The next jump in viewership happened between November 13, 2023 and November 17, 2023. A look at the data coincides with articles on wage increases and TSP-required minimum distributions.

These numbers also tell us that our membership is using the website for specific details regarding meetings and basic career changes and staying online to view additional articles they maybe had not planned to read or had not known they could find on the website, such as the form letter to their representative regarding buying back their time before becoming regular rural carriers.

We also received feedback from some of you regarding a more user-friendly letter and a few milestones. Thank you for sharing your needs and special moments, and if you have others, please send them along. We have posted your requests and will continue to serve you to the extent we can within the NRLCA guidelines.

You can email me at NCRLCAwebmaster@gmail.com.

Rural Carrier Moments

Rural Carrier Retirements!

Shirley McClain has retired from the Waxhaw Post Office.

Shirley carried her route for the final time on November 30th.

Coworkers took the time to wish her well on her final day.

Shirley began her service with the Post Office in 2001.

Congratulations Shirley!

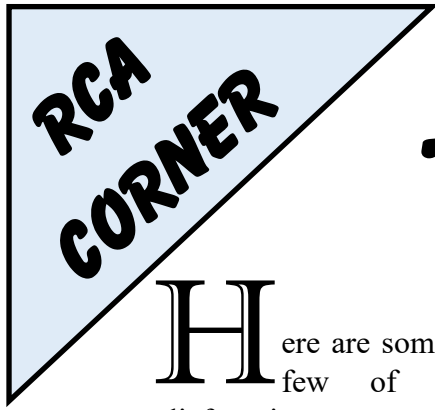


Salena Burr (left) with Lumberton Postmaster Angel Jones.

Salena began working for the USPS in 1989. She became a full time regular carrier in 1996.

Co-workers and fellow retired carriers gathered in October to celebrate and send her off into retirement.

Congratulations Salena! We all wish you well.



THANK YOU!

Here are some pictures of just a few of North Carolina's awesome relief carriers.

Local steward Heather Whitener sent in the photo of the Hampstead RCAs. She stated, "I'm glad to see RCAs getting the recognition they deserve."

Heather also stated, "Our office is ridiculously overburdened and our amazing RCAs are working their tails off to help us get it all done".

Angela Morrow sent in the photos from the Waxhaw Post Office. She wrote, "We couldn't do this season without them."

Lastly, the photos from the Raeford Post Office (page 16) are from their local steward, Telisha Locklear. Their office embraced the season with many donning Christmas sweaters and holiday outfits. They also enjoyed a Christmas dinner party.

Please send your photos to NCRLCAsSecTreas@gmail.com for possible publication in future issues. The deadline for the next issue is February 15th.



Hampstead Post Office RCAs; left to right, Front Row: Katie Gallagher, Miranda Lahue, Barbara Cheesman, Melissa Mabe & Allan Webster. Back Row: Zach Surratt, Alex Sandor, Cody Knowles, Marcus Potter & Rainey Walker. Not Pictured: Rob Tripp & Kim Lawton.

Waxhaw Post Office; left to right, Picture 1, Kevin Jones & ARC Karen Rosga.
Picture 2, ARC Matthew Cruz, RCA Tracy Johnson & ARC Leesa Kelly.
Picture 3, Ramero Mejia, ARC Andrew Renninghoff & Nicolas Mangiapanella.
Picture 4 ARC Melvin Klingensmith & RCA Marilyn Griffin.
Picture 5 Christmas Hampers in the parking lot.



WORK, WORK, WORK!

(Continued on page 16)

Raeford Post Office

The Raeford Post Office embraced the Holiday Season with festive attire and a wonderful holiday dinner for everyone. Even Santa attended!



(Continued from page 15)

**AND
HAVE
A
LITTLE
FUN.**





Legislative Representative

Van Heath

Since my last article, we have had our Fall Booster in Wrightsville Beach, Thanksgiving, the Christmas Season, and the New Year. Congress finally passed a budget and they have continued to work.

As for the bills that we are watching.

HR 82/S 597, The Social Security Fairness Act.

We still have 6 NC cosponsors for this bill, and the total cosponsors count is up to three hundred, an increase of two in the past two months. Neither of our Senators have signed on for this bill. There are forty-nine cosponsors in the Senate, an increase of 3.

The six cosponsors from NC are Representatives Adam (NC12), Ross (NC2), Manning (NC6), Davis (NC1), Jackson (NC14) and Foushee (NC4). If you are represented by one of the other members from our state, we really need to write letters and make phone calls to make this bill happen.

HR 3721, The United States Postal Service Equity Act. This is the bill that finally repeals Prohibition in the Postal Service and would allow us to deliver alcohol just like our competition. In the past two months, two cosponsors have withdrawn leaving us with only seventeen. This bill may be a lost cause. It is beyond my understanding.

Now for the really big news. If you do not ever visit our State Website, you may have missed that our Buy Back bill has been reintroduced. On Thursday, October 19th, Derek Kilmer (D-WA) submitted H.R. 5995 into the record of the 118th Congress. The bill is titled as the "Federal Retirement Fairness Act." Its purpose is "to provide that civilian service in a temporary position after December 31st, 1988, may be creditable service under the Federal Employees Retirement System, and for other purposes." We like to call this the "BUY BACK BILL," its back!

That defines what we have been looking for in a bill to get credit for RCA time worked since 1988.

Our biggest task is to write and or call our

Happy 2024

members of Congress and ask that they co-sponsor and vote to pass this bill, H.R. 5995.

The original co-sponsors were Representative Derek Kilmer (D-WA), Gerald Connolly (D-VA), David Valadao (R-CA), and Don Bacon (R-NE). Since submission, our bill has garnered an additional forty-two cosponsors. Of the forty-six cosponsors, nineteen are Republican and twenty-seven are Democrat. That is about as close to bipartisanship as we can get!

As I write this; a couple of weeks before Christmas, no member of the NC Delegation has cosponsored our bill. I have written to my member twice with no response yet.

The pre-written letters are on both the National and the State websites. I also have a list of all the addresses of our members of both the House and the Senate. This includes the addresses for their offices in Washington DC and every office they have in our state. Often it is quicker to mail a letter to the nearest in-state office than to send a letter to Washington because of all the security mail must go through there.

Until and if this bill is passed and becomes law, we will not know exactly how Buy Back will work. The actual text of the bill states: "The Director of the OPM shall notify agency Chief Human Capital Officers or other appropriate agency officials for purposes of providing notice to employees and Members who are eligible to make a deposit for service."

"No work is insignificant. All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence."

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Sustaining Donors Have Another Chance at Winning \$200!

PAC CHAIR

Brenda Gibbs



Happy New Year!

We have eight new sustaining donors since our State Convention. The winner of the \$200 gift card is Ralph Fernandez. Congratulations Ralph!

We have tons of fun and new prizes for 2024. Don't miss any of the meetings as you could be the BIG WINNER!

Celeste and I are looking forward to an amazing PAC year. We are continuing the sustaining donor contest and will be awarding \$200 to the winner at our State Convention.

There are four ways to sign up. You can attach a voided check to the form below, or if you do not use checks just include your bank routing number and your checking account number, You can also sign up online through Postal Ease and have it as a payroll allotment or you can call Postal Ease and sign up that way. You choose how much you can afford. Any amount helps PAC!

We are currently ranked tenth in the Nation in PAC contributions. We have a long way to go before we reach our goal.

See you at SAC, your district meeting, and the State Convention!!

If you have not yet contacted your Representative about H.R. 5995, the Federal Retirement Fairness Act please do so ASAP. Van Heath has listed all the Representatives by their district on the NRLCA.org website. He has included their local office address and phone number. You can download and print the letter from www.NRLCA.org to send to your Representative.

Please send PAC donations to:

NCRLCA PAC

Brenda Gibbs

5877 Turner Smith Road

Browns Summit, NC 27214

BECOME A SUSTAINING DONOR

Use this form for automatic PAC payments from your checking account.



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

\$50

\$25

\$15

\$10

Other: \$ _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name (print): _____

Employee ID Number: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____ Phone Number: _____

Please attach a voided check or include Bank Routing number along with your account number.

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

Signing up for PAC Withholding from your Paycheck

Active carriers may elect to use one of their three payroll allotments to donate every two weeks. You must sign up for withholding exclusively through PostalEASE.

Have readily available your **8-digit Employee ID Number** (on your paycheck stub) and your **4-digit USPS PIN or password**. If you don't have your USPS PIN you will need to call PostalEASE at: 877-477-3273. Press #1 for PostalEASE. When prompted, enter your employee identification number. When prompted for your pin, pause, and then press #2. Your PIN will be mailed to your address on the next business day.

Steps for signing up Online:

1. Add your Employee I.D. number to the end of the 9-digit NRLCA-PAC Account (**163055555**) to create your PostalEASE account number.
2. Now you are ready to log into: **liteblue.usps.gov**.
3. Enter your employee I.D. number and password, then click “log on.”
4. Click on “PostalEASE.”
5. Click on “I Agree.”
6. Enter your Employee I.D. and password again and log in.
7. Click on “Allotments/Payroll NTB.”
8. Click on “Continue.”
9. Click on “Allotments.”
10. Enter the following Financial Institution routing number: **051400549**
11. Enter your NRLCA account number, followed by your Employee I.D.#:**163055555** _____, (No hyphens, No breaks, 17 digits total).
12. Enter account type as “Checking.”
13. Enter the amount you want to be taken out **every two [2] weeks** — not the amount you want to give yearly.
14. Click on “Validate.”
15. Click on “Submit.”
16. Click on “print page” to see and print your confirmation number for your records.

Steps for signing up by Phone:

1. Dial 1-**877-477-3273 (1-877-4PS-EASE)**.
2. Press “1” for PostalEASE.
3. When prompted, enter your Employee ID Number.
4. When prompted, enter your USPS Pin Number.
5. When prompted, choose option #2 to select Payroll Allotments.
6. When prompted, choose option #1 to select type of Allotment. When prompted, press “2” to continue.
1. When prompted, press ”3” to continue to ‘ADD’ the allotment.
2. When prompted, add routing number: **051400549**.
3. When prompted, add the NRLCA-PAC account # followed by your Employee ID Number. It should look like: **163055555** _____. No hyphens, no spaces, 17 digits total. If correct, Press “1.”
4. When prompted, press “1” for checking.
5. When prompted for the dollar amount of the allotment, enter the amount of your choice to be deducted bi-weekly (**per pay period**) using the \$ __ 00 format. Press “1” if correct.
6. When prompted, press “1” to process.
7. Record the confirmation number given for your records and note the date the first allotment will take place. Press “1” to repeat, or press “9” to hang up.



Auto-Home Insurance

Carlton Crutchfield

HAPPY 2024!!

Now that the holidays are over and you received all those amazingly expensive and valuable gifts, now would be the perfect time to review and make adjustments to your homeowners policy to make sure you have the right coverage.

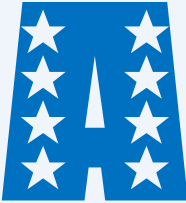
When adding valuable items to your home owners insurance, there are a few steps you can take to ensure they are properly covered:

1. Take an inventory: Create a detailed list of all the valuable items you want to add to your insurance policy. Include information such as the item's description, purchase date, and estimated value.
2. Get appraisals: For high-value items such as jewelry, artwork, or antiques, it's a good idea to get them appraised by a professional. This will help determine their accurate value and ensure you have the right coverage.


3. Review your policy: Contact your insurance provider and review your current home owners insurance policy. Make sure you understand the coverage limits and any exclusions that may apply to valuable items.
4. Add a rider or endorsement: Depending on the value of the items you want to insure, you may need to add a rider or endorsement to your policy. This is an additional coverage specifically for high-value items that exceed the standard coverage limits.
5. Provide documentation: When adding valuable items to your insurance, provide your insurance provider with any documentation you have, such as receipts, appraisals, or photographs. This will help support your claim in case of loss or damage.
6. Update regularly: As you acquire new valuable items, make sure to update your insurance policy accordingly. Keep your inventory list and documentation up to date to ensure proper coverage.

Remember, it's important to read and understand your insurance policy and consult with your insurance provider to ensure you have the right coverage for your valuable items.

So give National General Insurance a call today at 1-888-325-7727! Make sure you have the right coverage.



ARMED FORCES VETERAN'S CLUB



Wishing everyone a very Happy New Year!

REMINDER: Membership is open to not only veterans but to anyone supporting the organization. Dues are \$10. If you would like to become a member of the AFVC please send your \$10 for this year's dues to Mike Shue at 325 Ed Weavers Road, Salisbury, NC 28146-8570.

NCRLCA STATE CONVENTION

Junior Release Form

June 17-19, 2024

This is to certify that (**name**) _____

(**age**) _____ has my permission to take part in the North Carolina Rural Letter Carriers Junior Auxiliary Program and activities sponsored by the North Carolina Rural Letter Carriers Association and Auxiliary.

T-shirt size for my child is _____

All children must wear the Junior T-shirt when participating in Junior activities. This helps us to easily identify the children in our group. This shirt is provided free of charge.

Medical conditions and any other information we should be aware of.

Please list below and give treatment plan and/or medicine to be administered during this time.

Examples: bee sting allergy, food allergies, asthma, nose bleeds, headaches.

We hereby waive and release any and all rights and claims for damage and/or injuries he/she may receive while taking part in the Junior program and activities.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Parent or Guardian's signature required for all participants.

Hotel: _____ **Room #:** _____

Hotel and room number can be completed on site after your arrival.

Parent/Guardian Cell Phone Number: _____

One form for each child. Child must be at least six years old & in the 1st grade to participate.

Mail to Heather Greer, PO Box 41, Vilas, NC 28692

Or Email form to HeatherGreer74@gmail.com ~ **Subject Line:** Juniors - State Convention 2024

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North Carolina District Representative

Bethany Small

Is Your Mileage Right?

Hello everyone! I hope everyone had a happy and safe holiday season. As we close the books on another record-setting Peak Season, I know that many of you are feeling burned out and overwhelmed. 2023 was a very difficult year for the rural craft. We have had some colossal growing pains, but I am hopeful that we can hit our stride in 2024.

2023 was a year of change for the Steward system. We had three of our part time ADRs retire – Renee Johnson, Bonnie Arsenault, and Brenda Prevatte. We added 11 Area Stewards - Celest Britt, Tamara Fisher, Tracy Greer, Brian Hamlett, Amber Morris, Angela Morrow, Kathy Roberson, Trent Rougeux, Josh Scariot, Jay Schreiber, and Brandi West.

Our new Area Stewards have done an excellent job stepping into their positions during one of the most difficult periods the rural craft has experienced in recent memory, and I am thankful for their commitment to our craft. We added several new Local Stewards, and we have four elected candidates awaiting their certification training.

We are kicking off 2024 with more change - I would like to welcome Amy Russo to the Assistant District Representative position! Amy has been a steward in the NC Steward system for several years and has fought hard for the rights of the Rural Craft in the western part of this great state. Amy was certified as a Local Steward in 2019, as an Area Steward in 2021 and now she will be joining the ADR ranks as a part-timer in January 2024. I am very pleased that she has accepted this position as her years of dedication and hard work have armed her with the knowledge and experience necessary to

succeed in her new role. She is already a highly respected member of our team and I know that she will continue to be an asset to the Steward System.

The second cycle of the Mini-Mail Survey and disputes has wrapped up and we should by now be getting very accustomed to the new RRECS practices that are expected of us. This last cycle we had roughly 750 disputes, down from about 3500 of the first cycle.

While we did a little better with the disputes, it seemed that my previous article outlining the requirements for a successful dispute was read and my tips used when framing your issues.

One of the major issues that we saw in the first and the second round of Disputes concerned route mileage. We know that the GPS measurement is often different than the odometer measurement when running our routes. Per Article 30.1.E, *“rural routes shall be remeasured upon request of the rural carrier or when the Employer determines it necessary. The rural carrier assigned to the route has the right to be present in a non-duty status at the remeasurement.”*

This clause of the contract entitles you to a **Physical Remeasurement** in a calibrated vehicle. If your actual route mileage is different on the 4003, you have the right, and should invoke that right, to have your route physically measured by management in a vehicle.

If you won your dispute the first cycle and expected it to be correct during the second cycle, you were probably disappointed that your mileage was again incorrect if you did not have a remeasurement done and management did not correct your route length on the 4003. If you are concerned about the route length, please request a remeasurement, and ask management to correct the mileage in LTM/DPM so that this is not a recurring issue. The mileage recorded with the scanner is not set in stone – it can be incorrect, and you must exercise your right to a remeasurement to have this corrected. RRECS and the use of scanner data did not change the contract, regardless of what your manager has told you.

We again had a very reasonable representative working on behalf of Labor for the Disputes, and provided we included documentation and filed the disputes correctly; we were able to resolve them. I did,

(Continued on page 24)

RRECS and the use of scanner data did not change the contract, regardless of what your manager has told you.

(Continued from page 23) **Mileage Right?**

however, get many disputes this cycle that contained no documentation at all. While we went through every single dispute and discussed the merits, where there was no documentation, we had to deem them ‘no action.’ Very few were sent to the Area as an ‘Impasse’, but all of those that were, were all for Route Coverage.

The ‘Impasse’ disputes from the first and second cycle are still being adjudicated at the Area level and I have no further update as to when we can expect a decision.

While it is the responsibility of Labor to disperse the Dispute Review sheets, Assistant District Reps will have access to the completed reviews.

A few things that I want to remind everyone of –

1. If you received a Letter of Demand for 2080/2240 issues, PLEASE GRIEVE IT!!
2. If your office is short on relief carriers, start asking management to hire now.
3. Dehydration can occur in cold weather – don’t stop consuming hydrating fluids during winter months.

Caffeine and sugar are dehydrating so try to stay away from those.

4. Please make sure that you continue to scan every possible scan on your route.
5. Please make sure that any changes to your edit book and line of travel are updated in mapping.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns – reach out to your Steward for assistance!

Lastly, the South Atlantic Conference will be at the end of January, the 27-29 in Atlanta, Georgia. If you have never been, it is a slimmed down version of the National Convention. Several members of the National Board will be in attendance in addition to Postal representatives. Throughout the course of the Conference there are many informative seminars hosted by the National Board and it is always a great time. I hope to see you there!

Procedure to File a Grievance

(See Example PS Form 8191 on next page)

You fill out the sections with red dots (# 1 – 4, except 3b & 3c). Management fills out the sections with the blue dots (#3b & 3c) when **you** actually file (discuss the issue) the grievance with them. (THIS DISCUSSION MUST BE WITHIN 14 DAYS FROM THE DATE IN 3a).

Once you have filed, let management make themselves a copy and you must get the original to the steward or representative immediately. The steward or representative **only has 10 days** from the date in 3b to setup a meeting with management.

Include a signed and dated statement telling your side of the issue. This statement is for the steward only. Management will not see your statement.

Never hesitate to call your steward or representative with questions if you need assistance. Never put your entire statement in #4 on the grievance form (PS Form 8191). Just state the issue in the form of a single question. Then, provide the steward with a statement explaining your side of the issue.

NOTE: Just filling out a grievance (PS Form 8191) and sending it to the steward or representative is NOT filing a grievance. You must discuss the issue with management at the time you are filing the grievance and follow the proper procedure.

Management must fill out sections 3b & 3c.



USPS-NRLCA Joint Step 1 Grievance Form

1a. Grievant's Name (Last, first, middle initial) Your Name		1b. Grievant's EIN (Employee Id Number) Your EIN #
1c. Grievant's Title, Designation Code, and Route No. REGULAR, PTF, RCA or ARC, 71,74,76, 78,79 or 70-5 Your route #		1d. Telephone No. (include area code) Your Number for Steward to call if needed
1e. Grievant's Mailing Address Your COMPLETE address		
2a. Post Office	2b. Branch/Station	2c. Telephone No. (include area code) POST OFFICE Number
3a. Date of Incident Date discipline received or contract violation occurred	3b. Date of Step 1 Discussion with Supervisor's Initials (Filing date)	3c. Was Grievance Timely? (Explain) YES Supervisor's Initials
4. Issue (Complaint)		

ONE LINE in the form of a question.

Example: "Was there just cause for the Letter of Warning?" or "Did management violate the contract when ...?"

Include your Statement on a separate piece of paper to be given to your Steward. **This is not seen by Management.**

5. Contract Provisions (Articles at issue)

DO NOT WRITE ANYTHING IN #5 OR BELOW.

THESE WILL BE FILLED OUT BY THE STEWARD AND MANAGEMENT AT THE STEP ONE MEETING

6. Full, Detailed Statement of Undisputed Facts (Attachments, as necessary)

DO NOT WRITE IN

7. Management's Full, Detailed Statement of Disputed Facts (Attachments, as necessary)

THESE SECTIONS!

8. Management Contentions

(Sections 5-14)

9. Union's Full, Detailed Statement of Disputed Facts (Attachments, as necessary)

FOR STEWARD

10. Union Contentions

USE ONLY!

11. Remedy Sought by the Union

YOU HAVE ONLY 14 DAYS TO FILE A GRIEVANCE.

Blank Grievance forms (PS Form 8191) can be found on both the National and North Carolina websites or obtained from your Postmaster, Supervisor or Steward.

12a. Disposition (Check one) <input type="checkbox"/> Settled <input type="checkbox"/> Denied <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn <input type="checkbox"/> Sustained <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)		12b. Date of Disposition
13. Signature of Installation Head of Designee and Telephone No.		14. Signature of Union Step 1 Official and Telephone No.

NORTH CAROLINA AUXILIARY OFFICERS

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Roanokeh@embarqmail.com

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252-566-9290

Pjfrayparl@gmail.com

SECRETARY/TREASURER

SUE KELLY
4701 Main St.
Linden NC 28356
910-980-0820 or 910-890-2804

Msueky117@gmail.com

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Raleigh, NC 27610

MICHELE DARDEN

12 Blue Pete Ct.
Southern Shores, NC 27949

L.E. WHITE

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Elizabeth City, NC 27909

CHAPLAIN

NORMA WILLIFORD
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Phone 910-594-0433

JUNIOR OFFICERS

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Blanch, NC 27212-9257

VICE PRESIDENT

ALLISON HOLT
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Rural Hall, NC 27045

SECRETARY/TREASURER

EASTON SMITH
3694 Fieldstone Drive
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CHAPLAIN

KAYLEIGH CASE
459 Bane Road
Milks River, NC 28759

The Hero Company

Auxiliary News

*From
Pam Farmer
Vice President*

As you get older you realize the importance of gratitude. The definition of gratitude is the quality of being thankful: readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness.

The 2023-2024's National Program chosen by our National Auxiliary President Julie Houston, is "A Program of Patriotism". What better way to show our gratitude towards those who have served our country? This is dedicated to the NRLCA's Armed Forces Veterans Club.

The Humanitarian Project is "The Hero Company".

The Hero Company provides service and companion animals to veterans and first responders suffering with PTSD at zero cost to them. The link is <https://theherocompany.co> if you would like to learn more about this organization.

Keeping this in mind, this could be an opportunity for your children and/or grandchildren to become more aware of our veterans and first responders and ways we can show gratitude. Our Juniors have an opportunity to enter an essay or poster, according to their age category, which will assist them in learning more about those who serve and have served our country. There is also an opportunity for some age groups to learn more about our national bird, the bald eagle, and what it stands for in our lives and our country. Some age groups will have a great opportunity to learn the importance of helping and serving others. The older juniors will have an opportunity to learn about Americanism and about exercising their right as an American to vote. Special needs juniors will have the opportunity to design a poster about service and shelter dogs!

It is never too early to submit entries. Remember time flies and the entries will be due by June 1st for the first chance to win at our State Convention. Then a second chance of winning at the National level. The state scholarships will also be due at this time. The detailed information on how to complete the entries are as listed.


On the national level the scholarships deadline is coming up soon! All applications must be postmarked by March 1, 2024. The NRLCA National Auxiliary scholarship applications are available for download on the website: www.nrlca.org/Content/NRLCANationalAuxillary. These are college scholarships for spouses, children and grandchildren of NRLCA members. Please read instructions for each scholarship carefully, as the requirements differ for each one.

The pre registration forms for the Juniors at State Convention are in this issue.

Thought for today: The first National Auxiliary was created with the objectives to unite fraternally its members, create interest in the rural mail service and Association work, and to seek beneficial legislation. The heart of the Auxiliary is the humanitarian projects. Later, the Junior Auxiliary was created, which is for children and/or grandchildren of carriers, ages 6 through 20.

Remember: If a service dog without a person approaches you, it means the person is down and in need of help!

FEBURARY 2024

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2 Pay Day	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10 PP 5
FEBRUARY 3—9 RELIEF CARRIER APPRECIATION						
11	12	13	14	15	16 Pay Day	17
18	 20		21	21	23	24 PP 6
25	26	27	28	29		

MARCH 2024

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

Important Dates

January 1	New Year's Day	February 19	President's Day Holiday
January 15	Martin Luther King Holiday	March	Easter Sunday
January 27-29	South Atlantic Conference (SAC)		



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See You at SAC!

**45th Annual
South Atlantic Conference
January 27-29, 2024**

**Sonesta Atlanta Airport North
1325 Virginia Ave, Atlanta, GA**

**National Delegate
Nominations Forms are
now available in our
National Magazine.
Nominations must be
received by Monday,
April 29, 2024.**