

the

Virginia Rural Letter Carrier

Your Post Office on wheels

Volume 30, No. 4

September 19, 2011

Delegates represent Virginia at national convention

VA DELEGATES - The group at the right represented Virginia's rural carriers at the NRLCA National Convention in Savannah, Ga. The duties of delegates included writing an article about some portion of the convention for this edition of *the Virginia Rural Letter Carrier*. Look for those articles inside, along with other photos and stories about the convention.



VA DELEGATION - Front Row, from left - Deborah Godfrey, Joan Waterfield, J.D. Waterfield (auxiliary), Debra Atwell, Cindy Chatneuff, Susan Sours; Second Row - Tiffany Sullivan, Linda Hull, Roger Robinson, Tammy Gould, Cathy McGuffey, Cindy Clark, Larry Zirkle, Martha Newton; Third Row - Wanda Havens, Terry Love, Kelly Magalis, Donald Osborne, Cora Spence, Susan Zirkle, Jerri Gatewood, Bailey Wright, Luther Newton (auxiliary); Back Row - Gary Stamper, Marion Neighbours, William M. Gilliom Sr., Tom Sisk, John Bradley, Ray Aubel, Connie Hale, Jean Overstreet (non-delegate), James Pillow Jr., Debbie Weathersbee, and Renee Sullivan (non-delegate). Delegate Wayne Harrison was not present when the photo was taken.

Be sure to check out the special 'Pull and Save' insert inside!

Things I think



RAY AUBEL JR.
VARLCA
President

This month begins a new era for the publishing of *the Virginia Rural Letter Carrier*. You will notice that there are no quarterly reports in this issue since we are starting a bi-monthly publication and the first quarter of this fiscal year doesn't end until Sept. 30.

The magazine will be published in January, March, May, July, September, and November, which means you will start getting six issues a year.

Hopefully, you will find the information more timely and pertinent. The only glitch, as always, is the continued problems we have had with delivery delays, over which we have no control.

I enjoy putting together this 'Things I Think' column for each publication. It allows

me the opportunity to tell you - in a nutshell - what's on my mind and probably on the minds of most rural mail carriers. This time the list is short:

- Mail count - The USPS has decided to count each rural route in the nation. This has always been an option for them contractually, but this is the first time in my memory that they have opted to do so. The VARLCA provided four mail count trainings across the state. (We had a fifth scheduled but Hurricane Irene intervened.) These were strategically located so that no carrier would have to travel more than two hours to get to one. The state level stewards provided the instruction and all were well attended. Look for more count information in this publication.

- National convention - The national convention was held in Savannah, Ga., and once again I was honored to be selected to serve on the Resolutions Committee. I worked with officers and stewards from

(See 'Things', Page 14)

In this issue . . .

'A Touch of History'	3
Auxiliary news	21-22
Convention proceedings	5
Elected, appointed officers	2
Executive board	14-15
Meetings	3
PAC news	13
Steward news	11-12, 16

In addition to the regular features that are part of every publication, this edition is packed full of information gathered at the NRLCA National Convention. Written by the delegates you elected to represent you, some of the articles are so full of detail, you'll feel as if you were there, too!

The *Virginia Rural Letter Carrier* is mailed to regular, relief and retired carriers who are members of the VARLCA. The opinions expressed are those of the writer and do not necessarily represent those of this Association or its officers.

Permission is granted to other state and local RLCA affiliates to reprint articles from this publication, providing appropriate credit is given to the author and this publication.

Attention **State Association, Auxiliary & Junior Officer Candidates & National Delegate Candidates:** We MUST comply with U.S. Department of Labor rules regarding ALL candidate announcements. **Association, Auxiliary & Junior Candidates for state office** may submit announcements and photos for publication in Volume 31, No. 2, of 2012. All officer candidate announcements are limited to **250 words** and must be submitted only by the candidate, not his/her representative.

National Delegate Candidate announcements are welcome from all VARLCA members. Those seeking election as delegate to the National Convention may submit announcements for publication in Volume 31, No. 2, of 2012. These are limited to **125 words**.

Candidate announcements are NOT edited. Those exceeding the word count will be cut off at the point they reach the word count limit.

National Delegate Candidate Nomination Forms are published in the NRLCA magazine in February, March, April and May. Self-nominations are permissible. Nominations must be mailed to the VARLCA Secretary-Treasurer and received at least 40 days prior to the state convention.

Candidates (including incumbents) and national delegates (whether or not they are elected) may NOT mention within any of their other published reports, articles or "letters to the editor" that they are seeking election. In addition, they may NOT include 'thank you's' of any kind to members who may vote or have voted for them.

POSTMASTER: Please send change of address to 11100 Maiden Creek Road, Abingdon, VA 24210-9356.

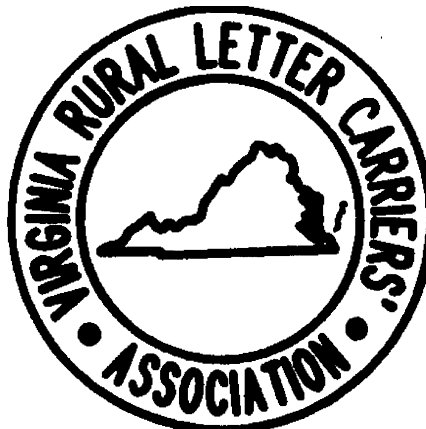
2011-12 VARLCA ELECTED & APPOINTED OFFICERS

ELECTED OFFICERS

President
Raymond L. Aubel Jr.
P.O. Box 621
Leesburg, Va., 20178-0621
Phone: 703-771-8618
Email: aubelfam@msn.com

Vice President
Gary Stamper
566 Hickory Lane
Galax, Va., 24333-3247
Phone: 276-233-8539
Email: gary.stamper1@gmail.com

Secretary-Treasurer
Debbie Atwell
11100 Maiden Creek Road
Abingdon, Va., 24210-9356
Phone: 276-944-4487
Fax: 276-944-4011
Email: deb.atwell@gmail.com



Material for this publication should be sent to the Communications Specialist. Items for the next edition MUST be received NO LATER than TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 1. All material submitted will be reviewed by the entire board prior to publication.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

4-Year Committeeman
Deborah J. Godfrey
2625 Pine Forest Lane
Chesapeake, Va., 23322
Phone: 757-421-0078
dij23322@yahoo.com

3-Year Committeeman
Thomas K. Turner
P.O. Box 645
Smithfield, Va., 23431-0645
Phone: 757-510-2607
Email: mailman3@gmail.com

2-Year Committeeman
Donald K. Osborne
2178 Peppers Ferry Road NW
Christiansburg, Va., 24073-6010
Phone: 540-381-9762
Email: dosborne2@verizon.net

1-Year Committeeman
Tammy K. Gould
675 Blundon Road
Reedville, VA 22539-4326
Phone: 804-453-9005
Email: tammykgould@aol.com

APPOINTED OFFICERS

**Assistant State Steward
NOVA District**
William (Bill) Gilliom
15212 Crescent St.
Dale City, VA 22193-1623
Phone: 703-939-5816
Email: wmgilliomsvr@verizon.net

**Assistant State Steward
Appalachian District**
Roger G. Robinson
201 Maywood St.
Blacksburg, VA 24060-1316
Phone: 540-808-3267
Email: RogerRobinson24060@msn.com

Legislative Director & PAC Chairman
Cindy Chatneuff
1743 White Rock Road
Floyd, VA 24091-3617
Phone: 540-763-9663
Email: chatneuf@swva.net

Historian
Jean Overstreet
306 Skyview Drive
Goodview, VA 24095
Phone: 540-890-4284
Email: JeanOverstreet1@aol.com

State and Assistant State Stewards

STATE STEWARD
Wayne Harrison
P.O. Box 651
Callao, VA 22435-0651
Phone: 804-529-7902
Email: statesteward@hughes.net

Other Appointed Officers

Provident Guild
James Norman
5836 Forest Road
Bedford, VA 24523-4143
Phone: 540-586-3063
Email: jbnorman40@hotmail.com

NRLCA INFORMATION
Phone: 703-684-5545
National Web site: www.nrlca.org
Virginia Web site: www.varlca.org

Communications Specialist

Debbie Hearn
P.O. Box 559
Cross Junction, Va., 22625
Phone: 540-219-2995
Email: rural_editor@verizon.net

Assistant State Steward Richmond District

John Bradley
P.O. Box 58
Heathsville, VA 22473-0058
Phone: 804-724-1582
Email: Bradleyj224@aol.com

**Assistant State Steward
NOVA District**
Tom E. Sisk
13303 Nickleson Drive
Woodbridge, VA 22193-4124
Phone: 703-939-5817
Email: TESisk14@aol.com

Auto/Home Insurance Representative

Martha A. Newton
138 Greenbank Road
Fredericksburg, VA 22406-6232
Phone: 540-286-0249
Email: Marthanewton1102@aol.com

Chaplain

Dan Jenkins
1153 Desert Road
Reva, VA 22735-3922
Phone: 540-923-4080

SUBSCRIPTION POLICY

The VARLCA offers complimentary subscriptions to other state editors, NRLCA Association, Auxiliary and Junior officers, as well as spouses of deceased VARLCA members upon request. Out-of-state regular, relief or retired rural carriers who are members of the NRLCA may request paid subscriptions at \$5 per year. Send a copy of the mailing label of the national magazine (which will have your name, address and NRLCA membership number) to this newspaper's communications specialist at the address above. Checks should be made payable to the VARLCA.

Memorial service: 'do the best we can with what we are given'

By **JOAN WATERFIELD**
Delegate

The memorial service at this year's national convention was appropriate to the changes and situations we are facing in today's world.

The service opened with Convention Chairman Jim Harrison welcoming us and then giving the invocation.

Dwight Brookshire of Georgia sang a very moving song called 'The Blood of Jesus', after which Georgia Auxiliary Chaplain Bettye Harrison read the poem, 'If I Could Relive Yesterday', to honor the auxiliary's program of support, Compassionate Friends'.

The lighting of the candles to remember the deceased members this year was done by NRLCA President Don Cantriel for the association, National Auxiliary President Barbara McAdams for the auxil-

iary, and Junior Auxiliary President Jonathan McCarthy for the Juniors.

The devotion was given by GARLCA Chaplain Jimmy Parker, whose topic was 'Facing Problems and Situations'. Parker remarked on how we are facing more than ever before. Times are changing and the way we do things is different, so we have to deal with things differently. He spoke on Dorcas from the Bible and explained that she did what others couldn't or wouldn't do, while she could. He stated that we need to do good work while we are here. Whatever the task, we need to do it well.

Parker closed the service by offering the benediction.

The song, the poem and the devotion were to remind us we are not alone and to take each day as it comes and do the best we can with what we have.

Retirees Club elects officers at breakfast meeting

By **CINDY CLARK**
Delegate

The NRLCA Retirees and Pioneer Club met for breakfast at B. Mathews Eatery in historic downtown Savannah, where an old-world atmosphere beckoned us to sit down and dine comfortably.

Breakfast was delicious, and the service excellent!

Our guest speakers were Larry Waligora, rural carrier health care manager, and Paul Swartz, NRLCA governmental affairs director. Swartz spoke of the danger of losing the USPS as we now know it, with the loss of possibly 120,000 rural jobs. We were encouraged to con-

tact our legislative representatives concerning the loss of 6-day delivery, the Issa bill, and other legislation that would destroy service.

Waligora brought us good news that our rural carrier health care premiums would not increase by more than a few dollars this coming year! He stressed that if you have a problem with the rural plan that you can't resolve, call him.

New officers elected were Cindy Clark of Virginia, president; Burl Webb of Oklahoma, vice president; and Glenda Huff of Tennessee, secretary/treasurer.

Here's hoping to see all retirees in Buffalo, N.Y., in 2012!

Meeting planner

FALL BOARD MEETING

Sunday, Oct. 16, 9 a.m.
Holiday Inn & Conference Center
3005 Linden Drive
Bristol, Va., 24202
Room rate is \$82 plus tax
276-466-4100
Reservation deadline is Sept. 21

WINTER BOARD MEETING

Sunday, Jan. 22, 2012, 9 a.m.
Holiday Inn Tanglewood-Roanoke
4468 Starkey Road SW
Roanoke, Va., 24018
Room rate is \$77 plus taxes
540-767-6450
Reservation deadline is Jan. 5, 2012

2012 STATE CONVENTION

June 22-24, 2012
Hampton Embassy Suites
Hampton, Va.
Details will be announced as they become available

NATIONAL CONVENTIONS

Aug. 14-17, 2012; Buffalo, N.Y.
Aug. 13-16, 2013; St. Louis, Mo.
2014 - Texas; info to be announced
2015 - Reno, Nev.; info TBA
2016 - Nashville, Tenn.; info TBA

o o o o o o o o o o o o o o o o

ATTENTION LOCAL OFFICERS:

To list your Local's meetings, send date, time and place to the communications specialist (contact information is listed on Page 2 of this edition). Include a name, phone number and email address of the local officer who should be contacted for meeting information. The deadline for the next edition is Tuesday, Nov. 1



MEMBER OF YEAR - Historian Jean Overstreet received her award from the NRLCA for being selected as Virginia's Member of the Year during the VARLCA State Convention in June. She's pictured with VARLCA President Ray Aubel.

A touch of history



JEAN OVERSTREET
Historian

(Editor's note: The following continues a series of short articles on the history of women as mail carriers. Look for more on this interesting piece of Virginia rural carrier history in future editions of *the Virginia Rural Letter Carrier*.)

The earliest known woman who carried mail on a contract or 'star' route was Mrs. Polly Martin, who drove a mail wagon from about 1860 to 1875 from Attleboro to South Attleboro, Mass. Martin carried the mail as well as express packages, telegraph messages and up to six passengers.

In the 1800s, when women were popularly regarded as delicate and fragile, women who carried mail were seen as larger-than-life legends in their own time. Carrying mail was not only physically demanding, but carriers - with their regular schedules - were often potential targets for thieves.

Martin told an interviewer from the *Boston Daily Globe* in an article published May 5, 1884, that driving the mail wagon 'was pretty tough sometimes, in the winter ... Many a time I ... got out and dug the horse out of the drifts.'

- Courtesy of the National Postal Museum Library

National Steward Program OK'd as constitutional amendment

By **TOM SISK**
 Delegate

At each National Convention, there are moments when you feel that something that you are fighting for will never come to pass - this year was no exception.

This year, 16 amendments to the NRLCA Constitution were proposed. The first dealt with the National Steward Program, which had been referred back to committee at last year's convention. The subject was once again thoroughly discussed for more than an hour by the delegates at the convention before a vote was called for. As constitutional changes require a two-thirds majority of the delegates in order to pass, it came down to a standing vote. This year the delegation cast the required number of votes, and the program did pass.

The next amendment was directed at the 'Appeals' section of the constitution, and dealt with changing the way appeals were to be sent. The amendment called for appeals to be sent by first class mail and the timeliness of the appeal to be determined by the postmark date on the letter of appeal. This amendment also passed.

The next six amendments dealt with a biennial national convention. This topic has come before the delegation every year for a number of years, and year was probably the closest it has ever come to passing. As it also requires a two-thirds majority to pass, it, too, came down to a counted standing vote, and failed by 52 votes. More than 600 of the delegates voted for the biennial convention, but over 400 did not. This is an issue that will probably come up again at the next convention. Because this amendment failed, the next five amendments were not considered.

Only three other amendments to the constitution passed:

- One for making June 30 the cut-off date for the number of members used to determine the number of delegates to the con-

vention for each state;

- One that provides that delegates do not have to bring a paper copy of their credentials to the convention and would only have to present valid photo identification in order to be seated; and
- One that dealt with making it more difficult for members who take manager positions of some type to become delegates to the convention.

All of the other amendments put forward by the Constitution Committee were not passed by the delegation. Any constitutional changes that would have come up under New Business were 'referred to committee' to come up at next year's national convention.

Virginia sees its resolutions passed by national delegation

By **RAY AUBEL**
 Delegate

I was asked again this year, by President Don Cantriel, to serve on the Resolutions Committee for the 2011 NRLCA National Convention. So, on Aug. 13, - four days before the official start of the convention - I arrived in Savannah, Ga., to work on the resolutions submitted by the state associations.

Out of the 16 resolutions passed at Virginia's state convention in June, one was binding and therefore was referred to the Constitution Committee. The other 15 were non-binding resolutions - three of which were not reported out of committee since they had been passed in one form or another at previous national conventions.

This left 12 that were reported out of committee. Of those, nine of our resolutions passed at the national convention and three were voted down by the delegation.

Sergeant-at-Arms Committee kept busy during proceedings

By **WAYNE HARRISON**
 Delegate

As a delegate to this year's national convention in Savannah, Ga., one of my duties is to write an informational article about something that took place at the event. For the past three years, I have been on the Sergeant-At-Arms Committee, so I will try to provide some information on what this group does.

To begin with, I am required to serve on a committee, because I am paid to attend the convention by the national association. I, along with everyone else assigned to the Sergeant-At-Arms Committee, was obligated to attend a meeting on Monday before the convention officially began.

My day to serve this year was Tuesday. So, as required, I reported to the Headquarters Meeting Room 30 minutes prior to the start of the opening of the day's session. I was given my yellow vest and an arm badge to identify me as a



MULTI-TASKING - Delegate Debbie Atwell found ways to multi-task at this year's national convention. She's shown above wearing her sergeant-at-arms vest, but still managed to find time for her duties as the VARLCA secretary-treasurer, and saw to it that the delegates were paid.

sergeant-at-arms. (Each day, there are about 25 delegates assigned to serve.)

Here are some of the duties of the position:

- See that the delegates are in their seats prior to each opening session of the convention. (We usually start clearing the halls 15 minutes prior to the start of the session.)
- Maintain order and quiet around the doors and entrances and in the meeting halls. Try to limit exiting and entering to one or two doors.
- Respond to and carry out instructions as directed by the national president or presiding officer.
- Hand out material to the delegates and others as directed.
- When requested, escort guests and/or dignitaries to the podium, etc.
- When requested, serve on additional days as may be needed.

I served on Tuesday from the opening until the close of business on that day.

A delegate's view: The convention through their eyes

TUESDAY MORNING SESSION
 By **LARRY ZIRKLE**
 Delegate

The 107th annual convention of the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association began at 9:15 a.m. on Tuesday, August 16, in Savannah, Ga.

The Call to Order was given by Convention Chair Jim Harrison of Kite, Ga. Prior to the Joint Opening Session, a memorial service was held for deceased members of the association, auxiliary and Juniors.

Next on the agenda was the advancement of colors by the 3rd Infantry Division Color Guard. This was followed by the introduction of state presidents, singing of the National Anthem, the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance. A warm welcome and greeting was extended by Otis Johnson, mayor of the City of Savannah, and Linda Welch, vice president, Southwest Area operations, USPS. Responses were offered by NRLCA Executive Committee Chair Steve Traylor and Auxiliary Executive Committee Chair Kay Carter.

The highlight of the Tuesday morning session was the address of the keynote speaker, USPS Inspector General David Williams, and the address of USPS

Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe. The morning session also included introduction of the NRLCA board and their spouses, national auxiliary officers and national Junior officers. Recognition of the Outstanding Members of the Year for the association and auxiliary brought the morning session to an end at 12:35 p.m.



United States Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe addressed the delegates during the opening session of the NRLCA National Convention.

TUESDAY AFTERNOON SESSION
 By **TERRY LOVE**
 Delegate

The Tuesday afternoon session marked the start of business for the national convention. The session began with a presentation by the president of the Atlantic Postal Credit Union, who promised direct deposit plus interest.

This was followed by John Mahoney, the vice president of national accounts for GMAC insurance, who was clad in the '6 Day is the Right Way' t-shirt and promised the agency's commitment to rural carriers. In addition to GMAC's continued good service to rural carriers the agency also donated \$15,000 to Compassionate Friends (the national auxiliary's fund raiser) and another \$20,000 to the Shirley Corno fund to benefit rural carriers.

We then heard the initial report of the Credentials/Mileage & Per Diem Committee and, after some minor debate on time extensions, delegates adopted the standing rules that govern the convention.

The highlight of the afternoon was the legislative report by the NRLCA Director of Government Affairs Paul Swartz and his assistant, Kevin Talley. Each gave a separate report and stressed that we are in for a big fight to save our jobs and retain 6-day delivery. If the USPS defaults on the pre-funding payment for the fiscal year ending September 30, it could be considered insolvent without legislative changes. That is why the national association is launching a new grass roots program called E-Network to mobilize members as needed on important issues before Congress to bring a strong unified message. Current Bill S353 by U.S. Senator Susan M. Collins (R-Maine) restores funds on overpayment and protects 6-day delivery, although it does take the financial condition of the USPS under consideration and converts workers compensation to retirement upon age without choice. U.S. Senator Tom Carper (D-Del.) also has a bill - S 1010 - that gives the ability to close post offices. Carper's bill also removes the 6-day language. The proposed legislation also considers financial conditions, even more than Collins' bill but also returns funds overpaid to the USPS.

It was HR 2309, though - sponsored by U.S. Rep. Darrell Issa (R-Calif.) - that

'A TALE OF TWO POST OFFICES'
 By **JAMES PILLOW**
 Delegate

It's not exactly like Oliver Twist. I don't think anyone reading this would try to make the argument that this is the 'best of times' for the United States Postal Service. But on Tuesday morning, USPS Inspector General David Williams painted a completely different picture of the agency than the previous speaker, Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe.

After hearing Donahoe's message of doom and gloom, delegates were in dire need of good news. And we got it from one of the last sources you would think of - the head postal inspector.

Donahoe spoke of the need to eliminate 120,000 employees, take over our health care, close thousands of post offices and plants, optimize retail access, re-do city delivery routes, and, of course, to reduce service to 5-day delivery.

Williams, on the other hand, painted a different picture. The USPS had \$67 billion in revenue last year, he said. He also stated that the USPS is projected to lose somewhere between \$7 and \$8 billion this year, lower than the \$9 to \$10 billion projection of Donahoe.

Both men agreed that the USPS has overpaid into the prefunding of the retirement plans (Williams' numbers were \$75 billion into CSRS and \$7 billion overpayment to FERS). Each agreed that Congress should return the money that rightfully belongs to the USPS.

But the similarities ended there. Donahoe stated that we need retirement help, 5-day delivery and the money back to be profitable. The inspector general saw it differently, saying the USPS has set aside \$300 billion for pension and health care, with only \$55 billion more needed for 100 percent pre-funding.

Currently, of the five bills in Congress that deal with postal reform, four of them address the overfunding issue; the fifth - from U.S. Rep. Darrell Issa (R-Calif.) - would have government control the USPS.

Service, and how much of it, also was presented differently in the two speeches. Donahoe talked of how USPS employees do a great job, but technology has hurt us. He continued that we need to implement 5-day delivery to save costs. Williams painted it another way. He spoke of an agency on the verge of solvency, using a progressive approach to solve the problem. In his words, 'to optimize, simplify, innovate, and find a place in the digital age.'

(Continued on next page)

Proceedings

(Continued from previous page)

TUESDAY

(Cont'd.)

drew boos from the crowd. Issa's legislation would reorganize the USPS, basically destroying the agency as we know it by eliminating 6-day delivery and negatively affecting our health care costs, wages and undermining union negotiations. On the plus side, HR1351 - which protects 6-day delivery and has long been supported by NRLCA - now has 183 co-sponsors. This grass roots call to action needs every rural carrier across the nation to pull together, united and strong, to fight for our jobs and retirement!

We then shifted gears to our own finances with the Finance Committee's report. Total expenses exceeded what was taken in for the third straight year, but less than any other year - for a net loss of \$28,363. The committee, however, did not recommend any changes. Next came Secretary-Treasurer Clifford Dailing, who read his 10-page financial report. While very lengthy, the report is important, and included pie charts that showed expenses (including the fixed cost of \$1.7 million for last year's national convention in Spokane, Wash., and accounted for 13 percent of the association's total budget). Dailing reported that this year's audit came out very clean and had the best, tightest, highest report, showing no difficulty in internal controls. He made it clear that our number one priority is Duty of Fair Representation. The USPS wants to bring back highway contract routes in the M-38, something that would impact us very, very badly. The national association will fight this immediately after the convention; a letter is also being sent to urge all non-members to join the union. Part of the decline in our membership numbers is due to retirees not re-upping, holding of vacant routes and stagnant growth - we lost 712 members just this last quarter, Dailing said, stressing that we need everyone to win the war that the postmaster general and Congress is waging on our jobs!

The Tuesday afternoon session also included presentation of awards for Membership Honor Roll, PAC, Task Force and state publications. Delegates suspended the reading of the officers' reports since they are printed. Vice President Jeanette Dwyer concluded the afternoon with announcements and President Don Cantriel reminded us to purchase our union made "6-Day is the Right Way" t-shirt, so we could all wear one at Thursday's session.



GO FORTH PROUDLY - VARLCA President Ray Aibel proudly carried the state's flag during Tuesday morning's Joint Opening Session.

WEDNESDAY MORNING SESSION

By **CATHY MCGUFFEY**

Delegate

Virginia's own James Norman, Provident Guild president, opened the Wednesday morning session with his report. Norman explained the Provident Guild, noting that the guild's death benefit is not tied up in one's estate but is available right away.

Michael Gan, NRLCA general counsel, opened his address by paying tribute to retiring NRLCA President Don Cantriel, then talked about the 'grass roots' campaign that is being launched by the NRLCA. Gan recommended writing to legislators in the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate, and urged everyone present to get involved and take the message back to their home states.

He also gave an update on the contract.

The final report of the Mileage & Per Diem Committee was given.

The morning ended with nominations for national officers, which remained open until Friday morning.

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON SESSION - A PERSONAL POINT OF VIEW

By **CONNIE HALE**

Delegate

On Wednesday afternoon, it was a serious crowd waiting and listening to everything and everyone. The state banners were hanging and we had recognized our national board, members, committees, armed forces, deceased, PAC, etc. We had heard speakers from Savannah, the NRLCA board, legal counsel Michael Gan, vendors and even the postmaster general.

The next order of business was the constitution. Our first topic: the National Steward System.

There was a tone in the convention center - we were here to do business. Yes, there were numerous time extensions, discussions, proposed language changes, division, paper ballots, etc. Robert's Rules of Order was referred to and adhered to. Votes were cast and we moved forward with the decisions of pass or fail for each item.

The Virginia delegation impressed me so much during this convention. There were lots of long hours spent in the convention center, plus all the constitution, resolutions, appeals, and reports submitted that had to be read in

our spare time. Our delegates helped each other with understanding the procedures on the floor and understanding the 'why for's of everything. The Virginia delegates were diligent and prepared to represent to the best of their ability. One very interesting thing about these delegates: no matter where we were or what was going on, the conversation always came back to the business of our members.

Savannah was a great experience, from the history, sights, people, food, and most of all, the privilege to represent our state at the 2011 NRLCA National Convention.

**Proceedings from the
107th NRLCA
Convention continue
on next page.**

Proceedings

(Continued from previous page)

THURSDAY By MARION C. NEIGHBOURS Delegate

Thursday morning, bright and early, I put on my black t-shirt to show support of 6-day delivery. (As a note of interest, we had to deal with this issue a number of years ago, and I was called upon to go to Washington, D.C., to testify in support of 6-day delivery before a Congressional Committee.)

I rode the ferry over to the convention center. As always, Thursday is set aside for amendments to the constitution and by-laws and resolutions. There were 15 amendments - sent by the various states for our consideration. Two of interest were the national steward system and changing the convention to a biennial event. After much deliberation, the amendment for the national steward system passed; following discussion, the biennial conventions amendment failed.

Of the 89 resolutions brought before the delegation for consideration, 41 were rejected; the others passed with some amendments and discussion. It would take up too much space to list all of these here, so please watch for the convention issue of the national magazine and take special note of all this information.

May I take this opportunity to say 'thank you' to Virginia members for electing me to go to this convention in Savannah, Ga. I endeavored to represent you in the very best way possible. If you ever have an opportunity to attend a national convention, I urge you to attend - so much information is gathered there.



IN SUPPORT OF 6-DAY DELIVERY - From left, delegate Tiffany Sullivan, non-delegate Renee Sullivan, and delegate Cora Spence wore their t-shirts proudly in support of keeping 6-day delivery. Delegates were asked to wear the t-shirts during Thursday's session.

FRIDAY MORNING SESSION By SUSAN ZIRKLE Delegate

The Friday morning session began with inspirational words from Kevin D. Holloway of Missouri, NRLCA chaplain. His words of wisdom were simple: When we make mistakes, we should admit to them, try to correct them, and then move on.

Election of officers was next on the agenda. With NRLCA President Don Cantriel retiring, Jeannette Dwyer became the first female to hold the top position, beating opponent Darrell Livengood by a margin of 1,045 votes to 54 (554 votes

were needed to win). Dwyer thanked Cantriel for training her and for the sacrifices he and his family have made over the years, and pledged that she will do what she can do for this union.

Ronnie Stutts, the current NRLCA director of steward operations, ran unopposed for the position of vice president, vowing to 'pick up the sword' to fight for our benefits.

In the race for secretary-treasurer, incumbent Clifford Dailing garnered more votes that challenger Joseph Duschl, winning the election 732 - 373 (again, 554 votes were needed to win). In his thank you speech, Dailing remarked how he was looking forward to working as a team, right along with 'mommy Dwyer'.

Joey Johnson, NRLCA director of labor relations ran unopposed. He gave a heartfelt speech full of gratitude.

Another race ensued - this time between 2-year Executive Committeeman Robert Horne and Steven Traylor, both of whom wanted the position of NRLCA director of steward operations. Horne won the seat, with 663 votes to Traylor's 437. As he eagerly resigned

his seat as a committeeman, Horne stated he was glad to see the National Steward System voted in and that he was looking forward to the challenges it would bring.

Several votes were needed before a 4- and 2-year executive committeemen were elected. In the end, Traylor won the 4-year position, and the 2-year seat went to David Heather.

While we waited for the Tellers Committee to report back with the results from the various elections, we worked on the remaining resolutions, and received the Appeals Committee report. Jeanette Dwyer told us that in 2016, the national convention will be in Nashville, Tenn.

Several officers had they would shave off facial hair if we raised \$100,000 dollars for PAC. We did, so Jeanette Dwyer's legs and Don Cantriel's mustache had a public hair removal. The other officers were going to have their public hair removal after they had their official pictures taken.

We also heard from past national officers Roger Moreland, Scottie Hicks, Brady Porth Jr., Gus Baffa and Randy Anderson. Anderson, the former director of labor relations, resumed carrying his route in West Virginia two years ago.



IN FAVOR OF - The Virginia delegation stood to have their votes counted.

(Continued on
next page)

Proceedings

(Continued from previous page)

FRIDAY AFTERNOON SESSION

By WILLIAM M. GILLIOM SR.

Delegate

The agenda for Friday, the last day of the NRLCA National Convention, starts with the election of officers. As the afternoon session began, the delegation was still attempting to elect the national board for the upcoming year. During the morning the positions of president, vice president, secretary-treasurer, director of labor relations and director of steward operations had been filled. One ballot had been taken for the position of 4-year executive committeeman, but because no single candidate received the required number of votes to be declared a winner, another vote was necessary.

The afternoon session began with the second vote. Four people remained on the ballot for 4-year executive committeeman - Steve Traylor, Barbara Callahan, David Heather and Robert Picklesimer, Thomas Keys, president of the Tennessee RLCA, had been a candidate during the first round of voting, but withdrew for the second vote.

It took several rounds of balloting to finally declare Steve Traylor winner of the 4-year seat. Traylor is a former member of the national board, having just completed a term as executive committeeman.

In order to reduce the number of names on the ballot before each vote was taken, one candidate either withdrew or the name of the person receiving the fewest votes during the previous count was withdrawn (in accordance with the national constitution).

Normally, only one committeeman seat on the national board is open, but because 2-year Executive Committeeman Robert Home resigned from the position (in the morning, he was elected the new director of steward operations), a second vacancy was created.

Nominations were made for the position of 2-year executive committeeman and the names of David Heather, Barbara Callahan, Robert Picklesimer and Dennis Conley were submitted. Heather was elected, with 569 votes; Conley received 203; Callahan, 195 and Picklesimer, 138.

Because of the language contained in the national constitution and/or convention standing rules, the election of officers must

continue uninterrupted until it is finished. Therefore, there was no lunch break on Friday. However, during the interim while votes were being counted after the casting of each ballot, the report of the National Appeals Committee was presented to the floor by the Janet Thomas, committee chair. The report contained five instances where the decisions of the national or state boards were being appealed. Following the reading of each of

the five appeals, delegates were given the opportunity to vote on accepting or rejecting the findings of the appeals committee. The national delegation upheld the findings of the National Appeals Committee in all five instances.

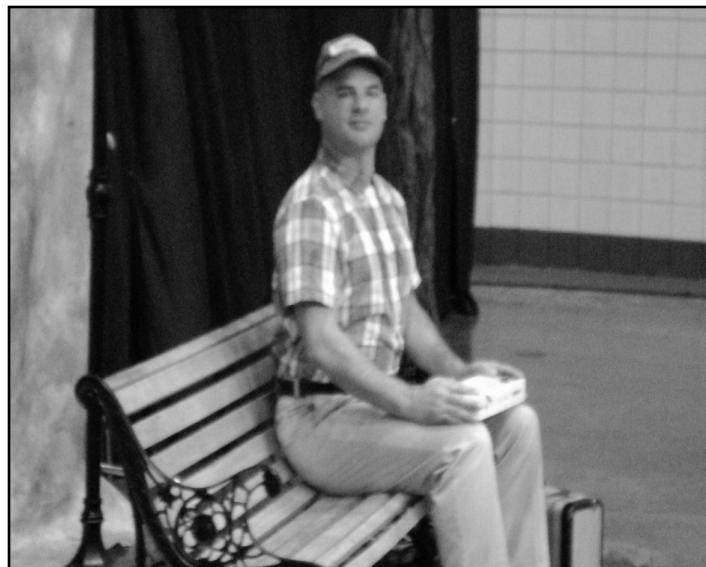
There was no unfinished business, so we moved on to new business. During new business several constitution changes and resolutions were submitted to the floor for adoption, but all failed.

Gus Baffa, former NRLCA president, installed the newly elected officers, noting that Jeannette Dwyer made history that day by being elected president of the NRLCA. According to Baffa, the NRLCA - or any other major labor organization - has never had a woman in the top position before.

Colors were retired and the 107th National Convention was declared adjourned by our new president.



REST WHILE YOU CAN - Delegate Marion Neighbours must have known it was going to be a long session and took the opportunity to take a break when he could!



CHOCOLATES, ANYONE? - No, it wasn't Tom Hanks, but this Forrest Gump lookalike sat patiently outside the convention rooms hoping someone would stop by and take a picture with him.



HEAR ME - Delegate Tom Sisk presented his point of view on an issue up for vote by the delegation.

Tournament mixes old friends, introduces new

By **ROGER ROBINSON**
Delegate

The first official event on the national convention program is the annual golf tournament, held Sunday morning. This year's outing was conducted at The Club at Savannah Harbor's golf course. This venue is the official host of a Senior PGA event known as The Legends of Golf, held every year in April.

The entire experience there was nothing short of exceptional. The course was in immaculate condition, the staff was hospitable, and the weather was even cooperative. There were 60 participants from all over the country who all seemed to enjoy the outing as much as I did. The scores didn't really seem to matter for most of the golfers as it was an opportunity to just get out and enjoy the golf and friends.

With that said, there were also a select few who were there simply for the golf and the score. The winning team consisted of Larry and Andy Dwyer (husband and son, respectively, of National President Jeanette Dwyer), who hail from North Carolina and have played in numerous convention tournaments together. This year they picked up a past champion of several national tournaments, Gary Williams of Florida (husband of Grievance Specialist Debbie Williams) and Ryan Conley (son of North Carolina State Steward Dennis Conley), who is a very accomplished golfer in his own right. There seemed to be a concerted effort in recruiting to create a team to be reckoned with. Well, they were successful as they shot an eight under par score of 64.

I had the honor of playing with two national committee mem-



FEARSOME FOURSOME - Virginia Assistant State Steward and Delegate Roger Robinson (second from right) wasn't on the winning team in this year's golf tournament, but he still came away a winner of some new friends. His teammates were, from left: Don Maston of California; Bob DeBroeck; and Robert Horne of Georgia, who during the convention gave up his seat as a national executive committeeman to become the VARLCA director of steward operations.

bers, Robert Horne of Georgia and Don Maston of California. Robert's father-in-law, Bob De Broeck, made up the fourth member of our party. We shot a score of seven under par (65) and finished tied for second place.

I would like to take this opportunity and let the membership know that our national committee members must be working very hard for us because it was pretty apparent from their game that golf is not what they are doing (ha ha!). I had a really good time, even though we were the bridesmaids, and I felt like I had formed some new friendships with my new teammates. This to me is what it is all about.

After the golf game, we all had a cookout lunch and sat around sharing golf stories and mail stories and laughing at each other's expense. It was a wonderful way to start the 107th National Convention and was enjoyed by everyone. We thanked the Georgia delegation - especially Jim Turner, tournament director - for a great event. We all will anxiously wait to gather again next year with our friends (old and new) and do it all over again.

Delegate inspired to learn more about Lady Carriers' Club

By **CORA LEE SPENCE**
Delegate

With 40 members present, the Ladies Carriers' Club 55th Annual Luncheon was held Tuesday, August 16. Items on the agenda included scholarships and election of officers for the upcoming year.

Scholarship Director Carlon Hollins announced that Amanda Arico, daughter of carrier Theresa Arico of New York, was the recipient of the Georgiana Peet-Miller Scholarship. It was noted that out of the 42 applications received, only 36 met the requirements and qualified.

Officers elected for the upcoming year are Jeanne Anne Landi of California, president; Debbie Matthews of Illinois, vice president; and Chris Pittman of California, secretary/treasurer.

During the luncheon, it was learned that one member had been attending for 24 years, while the newest member had only been there for two.

I also learned that in 1946, only five women attended the national convention, and it wasn't until 1996 that scholarships were offered for the children of carriers. The Ladies Carriers' Club also has men as members, but changing the name is always voted down.

I was made to feel very welcome at the luncheon, being asked to assist in the scholarship drawing and election of officers.

Thank you . . .

While attending the convention this year, Brenda and I received some devastating news from back home. Early Wednesday morning, we received news that our 20-year-old grandson, Cody Hobson of Richmond, had passed away during the night in his sleep. Of course, we immediately left the convention.

Brenda and I would like to take this time to thank everyone for their calls, cards, food, emails, Facebook messages and other acts of kindness during this difficult time. I would personally like to thank the delegation from the Virginia Auxiliary who were with Brenda which she received the call and stayed with her until I could get to her. I'm also very grateful to the state board and state level stewards for all they have done to cover for me while I was out of the office.

- Wayne Harrison

Financial seminars offer info on retirement, savings

RETIREMENT SEMINAR - CSRS & CSRS OFFSET

By BAILEY C. WRIGHT

Delegate

Retirement can seem confusing, but planning ahead is the secret to a successful life after years of work. A general rule when going into retirement is to plan for an approximate income of between 70 and 80 percent of your present salary. Factors that would influence a desired retirement income would be your children's education, parental care, and the type of lifestyle you desire in the future.

The big question is 'When can I retire?' You can retire if you have the correct creditable years of service. If you are 55 with 30 years of service, 60 with 20 years of service, or 62 with five years of service, the retirement window is open for you. Creditable service also can include military, federal civilian, and relief carrier time, if a deposit has been paid back to cover this time.

If this deposit has not been paid back to OPM, you need to weigh this issue and see if it will pay in the long run. Keep in mind the unpaid deposit has accrued substantial interest. This deposit is based on 7 percent of your salary earnings before Oct. 1, 1982, plus a 3 percent interest rate. After Oct. 1, 1982, this deposit will be computed at a different rate.

Now, if you choose not to make the back deposit payment your annuity will be reduced by 10 percent of the unpaid deposit, plus interest, so if you are planning to make this deposit payment, it has to be done before retiring.

The way OPM derives the amount of your annuity is by the length of all your creditable years of service plus unused sick leave. Only years and whole months are considered, with 30 days being one month. Your highest three consecutive years of basic salary is used to plug into the formula. Basic salary does not include any allowances, awards, and overtime that you have received.

For a quick estimate of your annuity, take your years and months of service, subtract two years, and then multiply that by two. Now take the sum as a percentage and multiply that with your high three average salary years. (Example: 32 years - two years = 30 x 2 = 60, 60 percent x average salary = annuity).

Your gross annuity can be reduced due to part-time service, unpaid deposit and providing a survivor annuity. Your annuity will have tax deductions, and - if you elect health benefits and life insurance - that will also be deducted.

(See 'CSRS', Page 17)

FERS RETIREMENT By TIFFANY SULLIVAN

Delegate

Though I'm not quite old enough to see retirement on the horizon just yet, I did attend a pre- and post- retirement seminar at the national convention. I found the seminar a bit more confusing than I thought it needed to be. Yes, the paperwork tells you that retirement can be confusing and there are good reasons to plan ahead and I agree.

The FERS retirement plan consists of both a defined benefit and contribution plan, FERS Basic, Social Security and the Thrift Savings Plan. FERS Basic Annuity offers a monthly income, surviving spouse and child benefits, COLA after age 62, continuing health and life insurance coverage into retirement, benefits such as FEDVIP and FLTCIP, and special supplemental annuity until age 62.

Under the FERS Basic Annuity, 50 percent of unused sick

Thinking of retiring? Already retired? Here are some resources to keep handy:

Office of Personnel Management

www.opm.gov

1-888-767-6738 or 202-606-0500

Social Security

www.ssa.gov

1-800-772-1213

TSP

www.tsp.gov

NARFE

www.narfe.org

703-838-7760

leave is computed as creditable service (100 percent if retiring on or after Jan. 1, 2014).

There are different types of retirements from which you may choose:

- Voluntary Immediate - minimum retirement age and 30 years, age 50 and 20 years, or age 62 and five years.
- Deferred - separated before reaching age for an immediate retirement, and age 62 and five years
- Early Voluntary {Early Out} - age 50 with 20 years, any age with 25 years, discontinued service {involuntary}
- Disability - 18 months of service at any age.

The FERS Basic Annuity Computation is done by the high three average salary multiplied by 1 percent times total years and months of service. Reductions are made to provide a survivor annuity and a reduction for age.

(See 'FERS', Page 17)

THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN By DEBBIE WEATHERSBEE

Delegate

The Thrift Savings Plan Seminar, held Monday evening, was well attended. It was conducted by Penny Moran and Greg Long with the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board (FRTIB). The FRTIB is an independent Government agency that administers the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), and the TSP is run according to law.

The TSP is a retirement benefit that is offered to employees of the United States government. It is similar to 401(k) plans available to many private sector employees. The TSP has 4.5 million participants and is the largest defined contribution plan in the world.

The TSP is an integral component of FERS, and is supplemental for CSRS. Regardless of your retirement system, participating in the TSP can significantly increase your retirement income, but starting early is important. Contributing early gives the money in your account more time to increase in value through the compounding of earnings. The TSP is especially

(See 'TSP', Page 17)

Steward News

Required information for mail count grievances



**WAYNE
HARRISON**
State Steward

Once the September Mail Count is over you will have the opportunity to compare the figures that management has against your own. If you agree with the totals, sign the form as being correct.

If you do not agree with the figures on the form, do not sign it! If you sign it, you are verifying that the figures are correct.

If you choose not to sign, you must submit a detailed statement advising why you have chosen not to. Simply stating 'I do not agree with the count' is not sufficient. If you signed the 'high option' election box, this has no bearing to signify that you are agreeing with the count data.

Once you have reviewed the form and have chosen not to sign it as being correct (making sure you have attached your disagreement statement), you now wait for the district to review the data. The district will respond with a prompt decision to the postmaster or designee in your office. That person will advise you in writing of the decision from the district.

If you are not satisfied with the decision, you have one option - to file a grievance on the disputed issue. This must be done within 14 days of you receiving the decision from your manager.

The next question that may come up is 'how long should it take for a decision to come back from the district?' While there is nothing in writing that gives a specific time, it does say the words 'prompt written reply.' This is just my opinion and can't be backed up in writing anywhere, but I would say if you have not received an answer within 30 days after you have reviewed your count data, then I believe a grievance should be filed to keep the issue timely.

After you have received the decision back and you are not satisfied, you may now begin the grievance process.

As with the disagreement form that you attached to your mail count form detailing why you were not in agreement, we will need detailed information for a mail count grievance. Just filing a grievance for the fact that you didn't think the count was fair, or reasons like 'I didn't receive any flats' or 'I received dated mail in after the count for my route' is not sufficient for winning a grievance.

Here are some examples of information that may be required in a mail count grievance file:

- Copy of PS Form 4241
- Disagreement statement that was attached to your mail count form
- Management's written decision
- Any directives from management relating to the issue
- A physical description of the mail piece in dispute
- How was the mail given credit
- Copies of PS Form 4239 for the day or days in dispute
- How was the mail received when it came to you
- If it was brought to the counter's attention and what his/her response was
 - Diagram of work area, work room floor in dispute
 - Diagram of loading area
 - Type of loading equipment
 - Type of case and casing methods
 - Actual time recorded by carrier versus counter's time
 - Copies of mail count directives
 - Copy of 4241-A

- End of Run Report for DPS/FSS
- What you want out of this grievance

These are just some examples of what may be needed for a mail count grievance; more documentation may be necessary, depending on the issue.

If you are filing an individual grievance, you, the carrier - not the steward - need to file the grievance at the discussion with management. If you are unable to resolve the dispute, then you notify your steward in your office or the area or state level steward assigned to your office. They will then schedule a Step 1 meeting to discuss the grievance.

If the issue involves more than one carrier with the same issue or dispute, then it becomes a class action grievance and the assigned steward will file the grievance.

I hope this information will assist you if there is a need to file a grievance. Again, we want to help you to achieve what is due you but we need your help.

I cannot stress this enough - you have 14 days to file a grievance once you become aware of the decision from the district. Don't let your grievance die because it was untimely.

Online job application is easy



**WILLIAM M.
GILLIOM SR.**
Full-time
Assistant
State Steward

I received a request from a rural carrier to provide details of how to apply for a job as a Temporary Relief Carrier (TRC) or Rural Carrier Associate (RCA) online, which is now the only way to seek employment in one of these positions. I decided it might be interesting to go through the process myself - here's what I learned:

Obviously, you need access to a computer and the Internet and, of course, a valid email address. Once you are connected to the Internet:

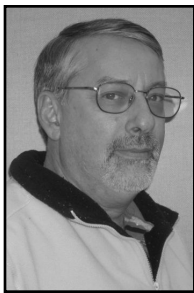
1. Go to the Web site:
<http://about.usps.com/careers/>
2. On the right side of the screen there will be several links - click on the link 'Search our latest job openings'
3. The next screen that will appear will ask you to provide some search criteria. In the block labeled 'Keyword', enter the word 'rural'.
4. From the drop-down menu for 'Location' select Virginia.
5. From the drop-down menu 'Functional Area', select 'Customer Service/Delivery'
6. You can further refine your search by entering City and/or Zip Codes in the appropriate block(s).
7. After entering the necessary information click 'Start', which is located in the bottom left of the screen.
8. A screen will be displayed showing the results of your search. The screen will show all current rural-related postings (RCA, TRC, PMR and PSE) for the state of Virginia, if the zip code and city search criteria are not used.
9. Click on the position in which you are interested.
10. A copy of posting for the position that you clicked on in the previous step will be displayed. This posting will provide all the required information relating to that particular position.

(See 'Application', Page 16)

Steward News

NOVA District

Management getting tough when it comes to safety violations



TOM SISK
Assistant
State Steward

In case you haven't noticed, management is upping the level when it comes to issuing discipline for safety infractions. In an attempt to bring safety to the forefront of everyone's mind, management is giving what the union believes is overly severe discipline for even the first minor infraction. Where a carrier used to get an Official Discussion or a Letter of Warning, management is now issuing 7- and 14-Day Paper Suspensions, even if it is a first offense.

So what can we, as carriers, do to help defuse this situation?

First of all, we can know what the safety rules are for our particular station. While the USPS is supposed to be run the same way in every office, we know this is not the case. Differing districts and managers like to put their own stamp on every situation. Some want you to use the flashers all of the time and others only want you to use them in certain circumstances. If you are uncertain as to what your office's particular rule is on any circumstance, ask your manager!

And remember - even if the postmaster does not enforce a rule made by the district, it doesn't mean that if a district official catches you breaking said rule you will not receive some sort of discipline from your manager. After all he/she has to cover his/her own rear, too.

Secondly, report any unsafe working condition to your manager immediately. Make them do their jobs too. This is not only for your protection, but also for the protection of the others in your office. Just because you saw there was water all over the floor by the water fountain does not mean that the next person will see it in time to avoid having a slip-and-fall accident.

Thirdly, look out for one another and pay attention to what is going on around you. If you know that management is going around looking for certain infractions, let people know to be on the lookout and to avoid making the error in the first place. If you know that management is planning on doing driver observations on a particular day, let the other carriers know that they are out there with their PS Form 4584s just looking to write up a carrier for not wearing their seat belt or not securing their vehicle properly when getting out.

And last but not least, grieve every disciplinary action even if it is just a Letter of Warning. It is not uncommon now for management to try to build a case to remove carriers. I have seen carriers start with a Letter of Warning and progress to a Removal all within a 3- to 4-month period.

As we all have heard, the USPS is looking to downsize its workforce by 220,000 employees by 2015. What better way do they have than to fire as many as they can whenever they can. Do not make it easier for the USPS to get rid of you by not grieving any discipline that you may receive.

So remember - know the rules, follow the rules, report any hazards, look out for one another, and use the grievance procedure to protect yourselves.

Have a safe day.

More Steward News is on Page 16. See the Pull and Save section of this publication for a complete list of local and area stewards.

Appalachian District

Using the Family Medical Leave Act, sick leave for dependent care



ROGER ROBINSON
Assistant
State Steward

The Family Medical Leave Act covers every USPS employee who has worked at least 1,250 hours during the previous 12 months preceding the start of the FMLA absence. If this requirement is met, a job will be protected for up to 12 work weeks for absences covered under FMLA.

All serious health conditions are covered, such as - but not limited to - hospital care, pregnancy, chronic conditions, multiple treatments, etc. Furthermore, if a carrier has an on-the-job injury that results in a serious health condition, the time off under Continuation of Pay or injury compensation is counted as part of the 12-week per leave year for FMLA.

Any type of leave may qualify for FMLA coverage. This includes annual leave, sick leave, and leave without pay. All existing regulations and rules apply to the approval of any type of leave by a USPS employee.

If a carrier has a serious illness that qualifies under FMLA, upon his/her ability to return to work, the attending physician should give notice that the employee is 'fit to return to duty.' Under the FMLA, management cannot delay one's return pending a medical evaluation by a USPS-designated physician. The employer also cannot take disciplinary action against any employee whose absence is covered by the FMLA. However, they may discipline individuals for non-FMLA absences, if appropriate.

There should be a Form 1420 posted in all USPS facilities and a Form 71 must be presented to employees when an absence is designated as FMLA. Form 3971 does not inform the employees of their obligation; therefore, Form 71, which contains the obligations of USPS employees, must be given to employees.

Under the FMLA, employees cannot be required to provide access to their medical records as a condition to return to duty. Management may require a fully completed Department of Labor Form 380, which meets the medical information required under the FMLA. A medical representative may request the employee's permission to seek clarification of medical information provided on the form, but if an employee denies this request, they may not contact the employee's physician except for an on-the-job injury.

Under the contract, carriers who earn leave may use up to 80 hours of sick leave for dependent care. Some sick leave used for dependent care may qualify under the FMLA and other usage would not. A dependent is defined in the Employee and Labor Relations Manual, Section 515.2, and includes the son or daughter, parent, spouse, and others as defined in that section.

Utilizing sick leave under the dependent care provision is very much like using ordinary sick leave. If one of a carrier's dependents had a condition in which - if the carrier had the same condition - sick leave would normally be granted, then he/she may use up to 80 hours in a calendar year.

An example would be if a dependent had a sore throat and a fever, and/or had a doctor's appointment, it would be proper to take sick leave for dependent care to attend to the dependent or attend to the medical appointment. This day would not constitute

(See 'FMLA', Page 16)

PAC News

PAC legislative seminar focus on USPS finances



**CINDY
CHATNEUFF**
PAC/Legislative
Chair

Money, money, money - that was the main theme of Monday's Legislative Seminar at this year's national convention.

VARLCA Committeeman Don Osborne and I spent the morning listening to presentations from NRLCA Legislative Staff Members Paul Swartz, Kevin Talley, and Ken Parmelee. Much of the congressional work has been directed at returning the \$50 billion overpayment made to OPM back to the USPS and providing relief from the \$5+ billion yearly payment required to pre-fund retiree health benefits.

U.S. Senators Tom Carper (D-Delaware) and Susan M. Collins (R-Maine) have introduced bills that would accomplish exactly this. Unfortunately, both bills contain anti-labor language requiring an arbitrator to take the financial condition of the USPS into consideration upon rendering a decision. Additionally, Carper's bill authorizes the USPS to determine its delivery schedule.

From there it goes downhill on the House side. The Government Reform Committee oversees the USPS and federal employee issues. Chairman Darrell Issa (R-Calif.) has introduced legislation that would repeal 6-day delivery language and set up a commission to take over the USPS Service upon default of any payments. Equally worrisome is that Issa has continually failed

to schedule a vote on HR 1351, sponsored by U.S. Rep. Stephen Lynch (D-Mass.). Lynch's bill would credit the \$50 billion overpayment to the USPS.

As no financial relief can be provided to the USPS without passage of bills in both the House and Senate, Issa is forcing default on the mandated payment due this fall. On September 30, the USPS will be insolvent.

Just how far Issa has gone is illuminated by his harsh grilling of Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe and APWU President Cliff Guffey, blasting their negotiated labor agreement. The postmaster general is now proposing to pull postal employees out of both federal health and retirement systems. If we are no longer federal employees, can privatization be far off? Or is that the precise goal Issa has in mind?



MAKING A DIFFERENCE THE PAC WAY -
PAC/Legislative Chair Cindy Chatneuff and VARLCA Executive Committeeman/PAC Liaison Donald Osborne learned something at the legislative seminar they've known for a long time - that PAC's efforts really do make a difference. The picture is from a video taken at the event.

PAC: Shouldn't we all be giving?

By **DONALD OSBORNE**
Delegate

The PAC Chairs Seminar was held Monday at this year's National Convention. Featured presenters were Elliot Friedman, NRLCA PAC manager; with Paul Swartz, NRLCA director of governmental affairs; and Kevin Talley, NRLCA assistant director of governmental affairs.

The initial emphasis of the seminar was, of course, raising funds for our union's Political Action Committee, better known as PAC. Covered at the seminar were strategies in raising money, and the proper accounting of these funds to satisfy governmental regulations administered the Federal Election Commission (FEC).

The most exciting part of the seminar dealt with a new program PAC is coming out with to recognize members who make the commitment to have donations withheld from their paychecks, or an electronic funds transfer (EFT) each month from their checking account. Persons who donate in this manner will become part of the Sustaining Donor Society (SDS) and will receive a distinctive pin and be eligible for special drawings during the year.

An emphasis was placed on letting our members know that the NRLCA's PAC is the way for our union to gain access to government and educate its members about how legislation affects us and our families.

The seminar concluded with a reminder for everyone that supporting PAC is important to the preservation of our jobs and our rights as union members.

PAC donors start new year off the right way

The NRLCA PAC year runs from August 1 - July 15. Virginia's total for the 2010-2011 PAC year was a terrific \$21,753, and at the national convention delegates kicked off our new 2011-2012 year with nearly \$4,000 in donations!

Withholding and Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) are a great way to support our PAC effort, and it's easy. Sustaining PAC Club members are denoted with **.

- | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Debra Atwell | Wanda Havens | *Don Osborne* |
| Ray Aubel | *Cindy Henry* | *Jean Overstreet* |
| *Cheryl Bauserman* | *Mary Herman* | Gary Quesenberry |
| *John Bradley* | *Jeffrey Hinton* | Barbara Lynne Ray |
| *Cindy Chatneuff* | *Carolyn Holcomb* | Roger Robinson |
| Cynthia Clark | *Tammy Howard* | *Tom Sisk* |
| Sherry Collins | Linda Hull | Gary Stamper |
| *Jerri Gatewood* | *Terry Love* | Debbie |
| Bill Gilliom | Kelly Magalis | Weathersbee |
| *Deborah Godfrey* | *Liz Maynard* | Bailey Wright |
| Tammy Gould | Cathy McGuffey | Larry Zirkle |
| John Greene | Joyce McIntyre | Susan Zirkle |
| *Connie Hale* | *Martha Newton* | |

- Submitted by Cindy Chatneuff, PAC Chair

Executive committee

'Owney' the Postal Dog newest in Forever stamp lineup



**DEBBIE
ATWELL
VARLCA**
Secretary-
Treasurer

The following is copied from the www.usps.com Web site. I love browsing the site - there is so much information to be had on topics that range from the history of rural mail delivery to the story behind the issuing of certain stamps.

As the selection of 'Forever' stamps continues to expand, more and more designs are being offered to please customers with varied tastes. The following is sure to be a favorite of dog lovers everywhere!

With this Owney the Postal Dog (Forever®) stamp, the U.S. Postal Service™ commemorates Owney, the canine mascot of the Railway Mail Service. Beloved of clerks on mail-sorting trains at the end of the 19th century, Owney was hailed as a symbol of good luck. Today he is an icon of American postal lore whose story highlights the historical importance of the Railway Mail Service.

The stamp art features an original illustration of Owney, with many of his famous tags and medals gleaming in the background.

In the 1880s, during the height of the Railway Mail Service, clerks in the Post Office in Albany, N.Y., took a liking to a terrier mix named Owney. Fond of riding in postal wagons, Owney followed mail bags onto trains and soon became a good luck charm to Railway Mail Service employees, who made him their unofficial mascot. Working in the Railway Mail Service was highly dangerous - according to the National Postal Museum, more than 80 mail clerks were killed in train wrecks and more than 2,000 were injured between 1890 and 1900. However, it was said that no train ever met with trouble while Owney was aboard.

As Owney traversed the country, clerks affixed medals and tags to his collar to document his travels. When John Wanamaker, Postmaster General from 1889 to 1893, heard that Owney was overburdened with tags, he gave him a special harness to display them all. During his travels, Owney accumulated more than a thousand medals and tags. Today Owney is on display at the Smithsonian Institution's National Postal Museum in a case that includes some of his medals and tags.

Art Director Phil Jordan worked with veteran stamp artist Bill Bond to create this special symbol of the United States Postal Service.

The Owney the Postal Dog stamp is being issued as a Forever stamp. Forever stamps are always equal in value to the current First-Class Mail one-ounce rate.



'OWNEY' REMEMBERED - Owney the Postal Dog is one of the newest in the line of Forever stamps issued by the USPS. Visit www.usps.com to read Owney's story and learn about this and other stamps.



THE SIGHTS OF SAVANNAH - This flower cart on the streets of Savannah was one of many sights that pleased the eyes of delegates to the National Convention.

Clarification on time, scanning carrier pickup requests and pickup items



**GARY
STAMPER
VARLCA**
Vice President

I have had a lot of questions about PS Form 4239, Columns 21 and 22 (Carrier Pickup Requests and Carrier Pickup Items). The information printed in the mail count guide or the examples given on 4239 in the mail count guide is not clear.

To get a clearer answer, I emailed Robert Horne, NRLCA director of steward operations. His reply is as follows:

'You are given 90 seconds to scan the Carrier Pickup Notification received through 'My Post Office', the 'yes' or 'no' questions need to be completed and, if the number of parcels collected is different, write in the correct number. You will be given 9 seconds for each qualifying package (Priority, International, or Express). Any non-qualifying items picked up should be entered in Column 20 or 23 as appropriate. If you are required to change screens on you scanner and scan each package, then enter the number of packages scanned in column 15 'Non-signature Scan Items'.

It is possible to receive 90 seconds for each Carrier Pickup Request (Column 21), 9 seconds for each qualifying package picked up (Column 22), and an additional 18 seconds per scan for Non Signature Scan Items (Column 15) if you are required to scan the package.

Things (From Page 1)

other states to prepare the resolutions that were sent to national. A thank you to the VARLCA state officers who helped keep the delegation in order while I served on the committee. This leads to the...

- National Steward System - This amendment to the national constitution, which changes the entire steward system, passed at this year's convention. How this will affect the VARLCA will be determined in the next year. You can rest assured that this state board will do whatever is necessary to make the transition go as smoothly as possible. The national system is set to start after the 2012 National Convention in Buffalo, N.Y. Please keep in mind that this will be a work in progress and we will be looking for input. This will not affect our Duty of Fair Representation!

Finally, as we move into autumn, remember that school is back in session. Be aware of your surroundings while on the route. Also, keep in mind that our furry friends are moving around, too.

Be safe and have a great autumn.

- Ray

Executive committee

PAC support important now more than ever



DONALD OSBORNE
Executive Committee

We are at war.' The phrase was used over and over again at the convention of the NRLCA in Savannah, Ga. We are not only at war with the United States Postal Service, but also with some in Congress. Some legislation has been introduced in Congress that is not only damaging to the rural craft, but to the USPS as a whole.

To combat we must go, but what weapons are we to use? The answer is the NRLCA Political Action Committee (PAC). More specifically, your NRLCA PAC funds are used to gain access to and educate those in power about the rural craft. It's important for those in power to know how legislation affects the jobs

of rural carriers and therefore their lives and the lives of their families.

I must admit that even though I have donated to PAC for years, I had always thought of it as more of a way to get 'chances' to win prizes or raffles than as an avenue that could help protect my job or standard of living. Now, as board liaison to Virginia's PAC, which means I help our PAC Chair Cindy Chatneuff any way I can, I've come to see PAC is our best protection.

Cindy has labored mightily at the task of raising PAC funds (as I'm sure those who attend local and state meetings know well). The fact that rural carriers from Virginia finished 11 out of the 50

states this year, both in total donations and donations per member, speaks volumes about her tireless efforts.

Yet I believe we can do more. Only 2 cents more per member will place Virginia in the top 10 - think how much good this would do in protecting our jobs and standard of living.

The members of this union need to pull together - PAC will take many small contributions and turn them into useful sums for our cause. To do this we need new donors and continued support from our long-time friends.

New donors are fantastic - we need all those who have a stake in what laws are passed to contribute. But long-time donors are also a key to our efforts.

So, if you have not contributed to PAC before, please consider it, and - if I may be so bold - do it! If you are a long-time donor, thank you and please keep on keeping on.

Now is the time and PAC is the way if we are going to keep our jobs and standards of living for ourselves and our families.

'Buckle up': Seat belt use a must for carriers



DEBORAH GODFREY
Executive Committee

Everyone knows to wear a seat belt when driving a vehicle. It keeps you from bouncing around or flying out of a vehicle and becoming severely injured in the event of an accident. And, in most states, it is the law.

The same goes for riding in or operating USPS vehicles. In PO 603, Section 171.5 states that 'Seat belts must be worn at all times when operating a Postal Service owned or leased vehicle. Carriers driving right hand drive vehicles equipped with both shoulder and lap belts may disengage the shoulder belt only in those situations when the shoulder belt prevents their ability to deliver or collect mail from curbside boxes.

The lap belt must be worn at all times the vehicle is being operated.'

Recently in my office, an LLV on a busy road was hit while the carrier was delivering the mail. The vehicle was spun around and eventually landed on its side, in a ditch. Thank goodness the carrier was wearing both his shoulder and lap belt. His ankle was badly broken and he was out of work for months, but the outcome could have been a lot worse had he not been wearing his seat belt.

Useful information when you file a grievance



TAMMY GOULD
Executive Committee

Hello everyone, I took this article from the handbook PO-603 and thought it would come in handy.

Article 15: Grievance and Arbitration Procedure

Section 1. General Policy: Grievances which are filed pursuant to this article are to be processed and adjudicated based on the principle of resolving such grievance at the lowest possible level in an expeditious manner, insuring that all facts and issues are identified and considered by both parties. In the event that a grievance is processed beyond Step 1, both parties are responsible to insure all facts, issues and documentation

are provided to the appropriate union and management officials at the next higher level of the grievance procedure. The parties further agree that at any step in the grievance procedure, the union representative shall have full authority to settle or withdraw the grievance in whole or in part. The employer representative, likewise, shall have full authority to grant, settle or deny the grievance in whole or in part.

Section 2. Definition: A grievance is defined as a dispute, difference, disagreement or complaint between the parties related to wages, hours, and conditions of employment. A grievance shall include, but is not limited to, the complaint of an employee or of the union which involves the interpretation, application of, or compliance with the provisions of this agreement.

Section 3. Procedure:

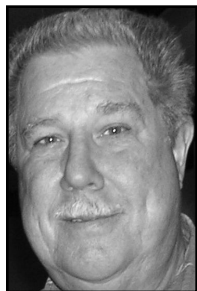
a. Any employee who feels aggrieved must discuss the grievance with the employee's immediate supervisor within 14 days of the date on which the employee or the union has learned or may reasonably have been expected to have learned of its cause. The employee may be accompanied by the

(See 'Information', Page 18)

Steward News

Richmond District

When a second can equal an hour - or less



**JOHN
BRADLEY**
Assistant State
Steward

When a second can equal an hour, or less. Hmmm ... now that I have your attention, let's see what I mean.

Pam K. (a fictional carrier) is preparing for the upcoming mail count. She is a 45K after the last mail count. When she checks her 4241-A from the last mail count she finds that her actual hours are 54:34. She thinks to herself 'It would be nice to gain another hour pay if I could just have one more minute'.

During the last mail count Pam noticed that her volume was way down and she did not know if this one was going to be any different. She asked the local steward if there was any way that she could protect herself from management's usual tricks to keep carriers' counts low. His reply was to have a stopwatch, and use it every time that management was timing her. How would that help her, she asked? The steward gave her an example of what could happen if she did not use the stopwatch:

During a 4-week count, 2 seconds per day not put on the count sheet adds up to 48 seconds. If management can do that to every carrier think about how much money the USPS saves on the mail count. It would also give Pam the minute she is looking for.

A stopwatch will provide you with the time it actually took to perform a certain function. If the manager knows that you are keeping the time for yourself, it might make him/her be more

careful. It would also give you a good argument in case of a grievance.

Remember though, that any discrepancy should be brought to management's attention, and be resolved, on the same day it occurs. If not resolved, you must keep track of it and have your steward help you resolve the problem before the end of mail count.

A stopwatch can also help you if you don't want to be in a situation where your route could be cut because you evaluated from a 46K to a 47K by going from 55:47 to 55:48 hours. That is all it takes to go from a 46K to a 47K - one minute. One minute can cost you three hours of pay a week because in normal circumstances, a 47K can be classified as overburdened and be cut as low as a 43K.

Remember, the only person that cares about your salary is you. Protect yourself with knowledge, and arm yourself with it and the tools necessary to perform your job. Don't let management take anything away from you that you should have.

FMLA

(From Page 12)

a 'serious health condition' so the employee would take sick leave for dependent care, using his/her own sick leave to care for the dependent but would not qualify under the FMLA, since the illness is not a serious health condition. The days taken off to attend to a dependent under these conditions would not count toward the 12-week provision of the FMLA.

If one's dependent had a serious health condition, which qualifies under the FMLA, an employee could take up to 80 hours of sick leave to care for that individual and that 80 hours would count toward the 12 weeks of absence covered under the FMLA.

Additionally, after using the 80 hours of sick leave for dependent care, an employee may need to use annual leave or leave without pay to care for themselves or a family member with a serious health condition and all of it would be covered under the FMLA until the 12-week allotment under the law is used by an employee. At the end of the 12 weeks of coverage under the FMLA in a calendar year, there is no further protection beyond the contractual requirements for job protection.

The contractual right to use up to 80 hours of sick leave for dependent care does not carry over from year to year, a new period of eligibility begins each year.

Note that sick leave for dependent care is a negotiated contractual right and the FMLA is a law covering employer/employee responsibility under the Family Medical Leave Act.

Application (From Page 11)

11. If you are interested in applying for the position, click 'Apply' in the upper left portion of the screen.

12. The next screen that appears will be a 'form' for you to fill out to create a profile. It is important to remember the information entered on this form - your first and last name, plus your email address. Your name and email address will be linked together for future use of the system.

13. Once you create your profile you will be presented with screens to complete the application process and provide personal data, work experience, etc.

I was not able to take the process any further without actually applying for a TRC or RCA position at some office in Virginia. I found the process to be rather simple and straightforward.

After creating your profile, a password and user name will be generated for you to use when you next access the system. That password and user name will be sent to the email address that you entered when creating your profile. You should save this information for future use.

Rural carriers should share this information with friends and relatives who are interested in applying for vacancies in the rural carrier craft. On Aug. 24, when I 'applied' for a position, there were 29 rural-related positions posted online. These postings will have expired by the time this edition of *the Virginia Rural Letter Carrier* reaches its readers.

Note that postings are for a 2-week period, and positions that aren't filled are normally posted again when the time has expired.

The deadline for the next edition is **Tuesday, Nov. 1. Please send your articles, 'For Sale' ads, mutual transfer requests, etc., to:**

**Debbie Hearn
P.O. Box 559**

**Cross Junction, Va., 22625
Email: rural_editor@verizon.net**

CSRS (From Page 10)

If you are a CSRS offset employee your coverage is both CSRS and Social Security. Your annuity will be computed in the same way as it is for a regular CSRS employee. However, when you retire and become eligible for Social Security, the CSRS annuity will be reduced. The sum of the CSRS annuity and the Social Security annuity will be close to what was being received under CSRS, if no other income facts are involved.

There are other factors to be considered when you are deciding to retire. Are you going to carry health benefits and life insurance coverage into retirement? If so, there is the 5-year rule, which means you must have had this coverage five years prior to retirement. Just a reminder: if you want your surviving spouse to receive health and/or life insurance coverage, you need to set up a survivor annuity when you retire. Also keep in mind this life insurance is only term insurance and will be more expensive the older you become.

The retirement process will move smoothly if your retirement documents and election choices are done with accuracy and with adequate time allowed for processing. Make sure you keep OPM informed about any address changes.

You will receive from OPM an acknowledgement and a claim number within three weeks of the office receiving your records. The first payment you receive will be in about three to five weeks after that, and will be an interim payment, which will be about 85 percent of your total annuity. The payment will have no deductions at this time except for federal tax. These deductions will be made up on a later payment, so be ready for one small payment since four months might elapse before OPM has completed your annuity. Your annuity could be adjusted on Dec. 1 due to cost of living increase, which will be reflected in the January payment.

Also effective each January is any change you have made during open season for health benefits and insurance. Also, remember there will be no more paper checks sent out - all funds are transferred by direct deposit.

FERS (From Page 10)

There is a special FERS Retirement Supplement. It is an amount added to the monthly annuity to make up for the fact that Social Security is not payable until age 62. You must not be receiving a disability retirement or a voluntary retirement at minimum age with 10 years of service. There is also an outside earnings limitation.

Another defined benefit is Social Security. It provides a monthly income, spousal and survivor benefits and is adjusted for inflation. Benefits are based upon earnings from Social Security employment and are subject to federal income tax depending on income. It is very important to read and keep every social security statement that you receive.

The Defined Contribution Plan is your Thrift Savings Plan. Your benefits are in large part in your control. The government will match up to 5 percent of your contributions. Contributions are pre-tax dollars and earnings are tax deferred until withdrawal. The TSP is an often neglected savings plan.

Health insurance and life insurance benefits can be continued into retirement.

There are good reasons to plan for your retirement. You could possibly be retired for as many years as you worked. You could have unexpected expenses in retirement such as children's college, elderly parent or grandchild care. A general rule to follow to make it through retirement is to have 70 to 80 percent of pre-retirement income.

TSP (From Page 10)

important to FERS employees because the formula used to compute your FERS Basic Annuity is less generous than the formula used to compute the CSRS annuity.

Saving for your retirement through the TSP provides numerous advantages, including:

- tax-deferred contributions and tax-deferred investment earnings
- automatic payroll deductions
- low administrative and investment expenses
- agency contributions for FERS employees
- a beneficiary participant account established for your spouse in the event of your death
- a variety of withdrawal options

TSP Tax Benefits:

- All participants receive a federal tax deferral on contributions made to the TSP
 - Contributions are deducted from pay before federal taxes are withheld
 - Federal taxes are computed and withheld from the reduced salary
 - Participants defer taxes on the TSP account until a withdrawal of the account is made
 - Tax deferral of TSP is determined by each state or county
- The Roth 401(k) feature is expected to be implemented by the second quarter of 2012.
- The Roth 401(k) feature is:
- after-tax contributions
 - qualified distributions of contributions and earnings are tax-free
 - a tax advantage for lower-salaried participants and those who believe their tax bracket will be higher in retirement
 - no income limits
 - TSP Roth balances are subject to the IRS required minimum distribution rules (unlike Roth IRAs)

The first contribution to the TSP establishes your account. If you are a FERS employee hired - or a FERS or CSRS employee rehired - on or after August 1, 2010, your agency has automatically enrolled you in the TSP, and 3 percent of your basic pay is deducted from your paycheck each pay period and deposited in your TSP account, unless you make a contribution election to stop or change your contributions. (You can request a refund of automatically enrolled contributions within the first 90 days of enrollment directly through TSP.)

There are three sources of TSP contributions: Employee Contributions; Agency Automatic (1 percent) Contributions; and Matching Contributions. There are two types of employee contributions: Regular Employee Contributions and Catch-Up Contributions.

Regular Employee Contributions are payroll deductions that come out of your basic pay before taxes are withheld. Catch-Up Contributions are payroll deductions that participants who are age 50 or older may be eligible to make in addition to regular employee contributions. These deductions are voluntary and are also taken from before-tax basic pay. To be eligible to make catch-up contributions, you must already be contributing the maximum allowed amount of regular employee contributions.

For FERS employees, beginning the first time you are paid, your agency will contribute an amount equal to 1% of your basic pay each pay period to your account. These contributions are

(See 'Savings', Page 26)

Final report of Elections Committee details ballots cast

The Elections Committee submitted the following report of the details of the balloting for delegates to the national convention. Voting took place during the 108th Annual Convention of the VARLCA, held June 24-26 in Fredericksburg. In addition to those included on the report below, votes were also cast for the following:

Name	# of Votes
33 Cora Spence	157
34 Peggy E. Carstens	155
35 Stephen O. Reed	150
36 Wanda G. Havens	142
37 Renee N. Sullivan	138
38 Sandra K. Maitland	135
39 Martin P. Farrier	126

Information (From Page 15)

steward or a union representative, if the employee so desires.

b. For other than disciplinary actions the union may also initiate a grievance at Step 1 in accordance with the above, and may initiate a class grievance at Step 1 when the grievance concerns the complaint of more than one employee in the office. If the union initiates a grievance, the steward or union representative is the only appropriate party to meet with the appropriate supervisor.

c. If no resolutions occur during such discussion, the supervisor shall promptly annotate a joint Step 1 grievance form, indicating briefly the issue and the date of the initial discussion, which constitutes the Step 1 filing date. The grievance will then be considered further by the installation head or designee and the steward or a union representative.

d. The installation head or designee will meet with the steward or a union representative at the local installation as expeditiously as possible to jointly develop the facts and the grievance file and to attempt to resolve the grievance. The parties shall cooperate fully in the effort to develop all necessary facts, including the exchange of copies of all relevant papers or documents in accordance with Article 31. In those cases involving discipline, the parties may mutually agree to jointly interview witnesses where desirable to assure full development of all facts and contentions.

e. The joint grievance file shall include, at a minimum: (1) the joint Step 1 grievance form; (2) a full, detailed statement of undisputed facts; (3) full, detailed statements from management and the union of any disputed facts; (4) contentions of the parties; (5) contractual provisions involved; (6) any written statements from witnesses or other individuals; (7) copies of all relevant papers or documents; and (8) remedy sought.

f. If the parties are unable to resolve the grievance within 10 days of the Step 1 discussion, the Step 1 grievance form will be annotated accordingly, and the union may appeal the grievance to Step 2 within seven days thereafter. Such appeal must include copies of the joint grievance file and the Step 2 appeal form. The parties may extend these time limits, as necessary, by mutual agreement.

Virginia Rural Letter Carriers' Association

Report of Elections Committee
Fredericksburg, VA
June 24-26, 2011

SUMMARY

Number of Ballots Printed:	2996
Number of Ballots Mailed:	2976
Difference:	20
Number of Ballots Returned for Non-Delivery:	135
Number of Ballots Re-Mailed with Correct Address:	108
Number of Ballots that could not be re-mailed:	27
Number of Ballots Received:	615
Number of Ballots Disqualified:	4
Reasons for Disqualification:	
Stray Markings on Ballot	0
Torn Ballot - Unreadable	1
Too Many Votes Cast	3
No Selections Made on Ballot	0
Number of Ballots Counted:	611

Respectfully Submitted:

Sherry Collins, Chair
Tonya Major
Michael Gibson Tammy Howard
Correna Pagach Mark Foglesong
DJ Love Hayes Bill Wilkins
Liz Maynard Mary Neville
Cindy Henry Tammy Prevatt
Wanda Havens Wanda Powell
Tiffany West Wendy Jones

Candidates by Votes Received

1. DEBRA B ATWELL	448
2. I WAYNE HARRISON	403
3. MARION C NEIGHBOURS	400
4. TOM E SISK	393
5. LARRY A ZIRKLE	379
6. CINDY A CHATNEUFF	376
7. RAYMOND L AUBEL JR.	342
8. SUSAN G ZIRKLE	331
9. GARY A STAMPER	330
10. JOAN T WATERFIELD	311
11. ROGER G ROBINSON	309
12. WILLIAM M GILLIOM SR	280
13. JOHN E BRADLEY JR.	273
14. TAMMY K GOULD	267
15. CONNIE S HALE	259
16. DEBORAH S WEATHERSBEE	245
17. CINDY S CLARK	243
18. DONALD K OSBORNE	239
19. BAILEY C WRIGHT	233
20. JAMES B NORMAN	227
21. DEBORAH J GODFREY	226
22. THOMAS K TURNER	224
23. CATHY D MCGUFFEY	223
24. LINDA M HULL	221
25. MARTHA A NEWTON	217
26. JAMES H PILLOW JR.	209
27. SUSAN K SOURS	207
28. KELLY D MAGALIS	195
29. JERRI M GATEWOOD	194
30. CHERYL L BAUSERMAN	193
31. TERRY L LOVE	175
32. TIFFANY L SULLIVAN	165

Your union works hard for you ... Have you considered working for it? Consider being a local steward in your office, attend local and board meetings, and learn as much as you can about the VARLCA. You'll be glad you did!

Daniels and band fulfill delegates' need to unwind

By KELLY MAGALIS
Delegate

After two full days of speeches and debating whether or not to adopt a national steward system and other changes to the NRLCA Constitution, attendees of the 2011 National Rural Letter Carriers' Association Convention were in the mood to party - and that's just what happened Wednesday evening at this year's Convention Banquet when the Charlie Daniels Band capped off a terrific meal with a high-energy 90-minute concert.

This year's banquet spread included salad, rolls, cornbread (cake, really), grilled chicken, steak, mashed potatoes, steamed veggies, desserts and beverages. The Virginia delegation of about 35 took up four tables in the large Savannah Trade and Convention Center, which for the evening housed an audience of about 1,500.

Just as everyone was finishing their meal, Charlie Daniels and his band took the stage. Playing a mix of his older hits and some newer music, the 74-year-old Daniels performed like a man half his age, playing both the fiddle and guitar. Crowd favorites included 'Long-Haired Country Boy,' 'In America', and of course, 'The Devil Went Down to Georgia'. Daniels also mixed in a moving version of 'Amazing Grace', and several songs dedicated to members of our military.

Several times during the show, Daniels thanked rural carriers for what we do, noting that he lives deep in the country, and no matter how bad the weather, we always get him the mail.

On a personal note, I stood in the second row of a crowd six to eight rows deep at the front of the stage. Next to me was a couple from North Carolina who had attended a Charlie Daniels concert on their first date in the early 1980s. They said they had seen Daniels perform more than 20 times, and even brought one of the performer's first LPs for him to sign, which he did during an extended instrumental performance by his band.

I think everyone in attendance would agree that the \$25 ticket was a bargain for this year's NRLCA Banquet.



ROCKIN' THE CROWD - Charlie Daniels and his band played a little of something for everyone during his performance at the NRLCA Convention Banquet Wednesday evening.

'Evening by the River' says it all

By TAMMY GOULD
Delegate

The Sunday evening Meet and Greet, hosted by the Georgia delegation and held at the River Concourse of the Savannah International Trade and Convention was titled 'An Evening by the River', and I have to say that name was right on the money.

The food was good and so was the entertainment. Huxsie Scott performed, singing selections such as 'Georgia on My Mind'. Someone in the large group of people in front of me said 'she sounds like an angel' - in my opinion, they spoke the truth! The Georgia delegation then surprised us with a performance by Leon Jacobs Jr. All the delegates, auxiliary members, and guests were made to feel right at home and welcomed to Savannah with open arms.

At the Meet and Greet, I got the chance to catch up with some old friends I'd met at the Texas Convention; I also made a lot of new ones. This was a great night to sit, chat and enjoy the view of the river.

It was a real treat when two very big dolphins with their calves showed up. They were playing in the water and it was almost like they were laughing at us.

Overall, it was the perfect way to kick off the convention.



MEET THE SINGER - Delegates Debbie Weathersbee (left) and Linda Hull (right) got the chance to meet singer Huxsie Scott during a break at the Meet and Greet. Scott wowed those in attendance with songs like 'Georgia on My Mind'.

Be sure to keep the Pull and Save section included with this edition of *the Virginia Rural Letter Carrier*! It's filled with everything you need to know about the VARLCA and how it works for you!

Armed Forces Club elects officers, awards scholarships

By JOHN BRADLEY
Delegate

The Armed Forces Club was called to order by President Larry Pratt at 7:30 a.m. on Wednesday. After breakfast was finished, the introduction of members was conducted. The oldest member attending was from World War 2, and was discharged in 1947; the youngest member attending participated in the Iraqi War.

Election of officers followed. All of the officers were re-elected by acclamation except for vice president and 3-year executive committeeman. Those elected were: Larry Pratt, president; Doug Atwood, vice president; Dale Coleman, secretary-treasurer; Robert Keyes, 1-year executive committeeman; James Sullivan, 2-year executive committeeman; and Adam Harrington, 3-year Executive Committeeman.

The minutes of last year's meeting were read and approved, followed by approval of the financial report, which showed a balance of \$2,440 before payment for breakfast. The secretary-treasurer then read us the current numbers that would be applied to our book scholarship fund, estimating that \$650 would come from the membership dues for this year, perhaps \$810 from the silent auction, and \$1,300 from our raffle and other sources. Needless to say, that would only give us enough for 34 scholarship awards. Thanks to the generosity of everyone on the convention floor, we got approximately \$3,000 more from our bag drive, enough for us to award 46 book scholarships of \$150 each. The Armed Forces Club is grateful to all of those who donated so generously to our scholarship fund.

The Texas RLCA also donated \$250 to the veterans club, and again, the Armed Forces Club appreciates its generosity.

Remember, if you have children that are going to go to college, and you or your spouse are veterans, you can join the Armed Forces Club, and submit the name of a relative that is continuing their education for a chance for a book scholarship from your local club. You may contact James Norman, Roger Robinson, or myself for membership information. Contact information for each of us is listed in every edition of the state publication, or you may contact anyone else you know who is a member of the club. In addition to state scholarships, there are national awards. This year, 46 names were drawn, of which two were alternates at the national convention.

Pratt also brought up that each state in the club should bring something to sell at our table. He suggested going to your local recruiting office and ask for any items such as banners, badges or anything honoring the branches of service.

We are still encouraging everyone to write to the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee since once again the stamp to honor the service and sentry dogs was not approved. These dogs saved lives and guarded the service men and women during many wars. The club believes they are heroes and should be



VIRGINIA'S BANNER - Delegate James Pillow Jr. seems to be keeping watch over Virginia's banner during a break in session at the national convention. In the background is the wall of flags of each of the states in attendance.

recognized by having a postage stamp printed for them. At the end of this article the address for the committee is listed. Please write a letter to the commission showing your support.

The people who received book scholarship awards were:

- Michael Clayburg, Alyssa Evans, Erica Britner, Sandy Levenduski, Jasmine Patterson, Lance Biggie, Dylan Tice, Jacob E. Dabashinsky, Nick Young, Christie Simonson, Zackary Britner, Stephanie Biggie, Augustus Patterson and Joshua Hooke of Pennsylvania
- Zack Smith, Jared Peters, Alex O'Dell, Emily McCormick, Lauren A. Parkenson, Eric Peterson, Dylan Cummings, Steven Presley, Jayci Jeremiah, Jerrod Aud and Elizabeth Bronke of Illinois
- Glen McKenzie, David Sullivan, Saul Mendoza and Taylor Strickland of South Carolina
- Al Bolinger of North Dakota
- Mark Kappenman, Nick Emmans, Sarah E. Smith and Shelly Chestnut of Indiana
- Abigaile Avery and Garyn Tate of New York
- Tyler Reimers, Caleb Garrigan and Ashley Piehl of Iowa
- Cory Newton of Texas
- Tasha Brown of Tennessee
- Jake Bruner of Nebraska
- Derek M. Ricketts of Missouri
- Ashley Eby of Michigan

Under new business, Mississippi was added to the club, and we approved the organization of the Golden Star. A group photo was then taken.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 a.m.

As promised, here is the address for the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee:

Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee
United States Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza, SW, Room 4474E
Washington, DC 20260-2437



One of the beautiful views of downtown Savannah

Auxiliary News

Auxiliary sets projects for upcoming year



LINDA ZIRKLE
VARLCA Auxiliary
President

Greetings to auxiliary members, rural carriers and Juniors! The convention in Savannah, Ga., was wonderful. The Georgia delegation did a wonderful job with hosting the convention and extending a true 'southern' welcome. Virginia auxiliary members attending the national convention were: President Linda Zirkle, Vice President Bonnie Norman, Secretary-Treasurer Joyce Neighbours, Board Chairman Donna Wright, David Godfrey (who helped with the Juniors), and Brenda Harrison.

Two Virginia Juniors attended the national convention this year: Daniel Godfrey and Savannah Miller.

Barbara McAdams, NRLCA auxiliary president, reported that over \$83,000 was raised for the 'Compassionate Friends - Supporting Family After a Child Dies' project.

Lucretia Nobles was elected national auxiliary president for the upcoming 2011-12 year. She chose as her program 'Sealed With a Sound: Delivering Solutions to the Hearing Impaired'.

The following is a list detailing President Nobles' upcoming project:

- Project:** Sealed With a Sound: Delivering Solutions to the Hearing Impaired
- Motto:** 'From Silence to Sound'
- Symbol:** Cardinal on a mailbox
- Americanism:** American Red Cross
- Safety:** Safety Behind the Wheel
- Flower:** Holly and carnation
- Song:** 'Wind Beneath My Wings'
- Inspirational Music:** 'Written in Red'
- Inspirational:** 'You may have to fight a battle more than once to win it''

Lucretia has chosen the following items to sell for her project:



Pins
\$10



Money Clips
\$10



Tote bags
\$12



Collapsible vases,
\$5

**Tie tacks will also be available for \$10 each

The Americanism Part of President Nobles' project will be The American Red Cross - Become a Blood Donor.

Please contact any auxiliary officer or board member if you would like to place an order for any of the above project items. We will be more than happy to ship these to you.

Juniors: Please be sure and check out the Web site - www.vaaux.net - for the three Virginia scholarships that will be available for 2012. Applications for these scholarships need to be postmarked by March 1, 2012. Applications for the national scholarships are also available on our Web site.

Please be sure to submit these scholarship applications correctly - answer all questions, circle all fields that need to be circled and submit with the necessary documentation to the listed caretaker by the required deadline. Unfortunately, many national scholarships were incorrectly submitted and disqualified due to the required information not being provided.

Please check and then double-check your applications.

Hope everyone has a safe and happy autumn!

- Linda

2011-12 VARLCA AUXILIARY OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Mrs. Larry (Linda) Zirkle
3513 Winsinger Drive
Broadway, Va., 22815
Phone: 540-896-2567
e-mail: lindazirkle1229@verizon.net

VICE PRESIDENT

Mrs. James (Bonnie) Norman
5836 Forest Road
Bedford, Va., 24523-4143
Phone: 540-586-3063
email: bnorman60@yahoo.com

SECRETARY/TREASURER

Mrs. Marion (Joyce) Neighbours
P.O. Box 54
Windsor, Va., 23487-0054
Phone: 757-242-6865
joyceneighbours@verizon.net

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Chairman

Mrs. Bailey (Donna) Wright
4732 Crab Orchard Road
Keysville, Va., 23947
Phone: 434-736-9608
email: wricolefarm@hotmail.com

Mrs. William (Betty) Watts
6095 Cabbage Patch Road
Keysville, Va., 23947
Phone: 434-736-8143

Mrs. James (Betty) Simmers
343 Coper Drive
Broadway, Va., 22815
Phone: 540-896-8630

JUNIORS

President

Kaitlyn
Whitehead
504 Lee St.
Franklin, Va.
23851

Secretary

Renay Aubel
404 Prospect Pl.
Leesburg, Va.
20175

1st Vice President

Destiny Hubbard
3155 Horton
Ridge Rd.
Swords Creek,
Va., 24649

Treasurer

Daniel Godfrey
2625 Pine
Forest Lane
Chesapeake, Va
23322

2nd Vice President

Savannah Miller
9 Community Dr
Windsor, Va.
23487

Sponsor

Joleen Neighbours
9 Community Dr
Windsor, Va.
23487

Auxiliary News

'Wow': Juniors exhibit range of talents

By **LINDA HULL**
Delegate

In the four years that I have attended national conventions, this was the first time that I was able to attend the talent show. Even though no Juniors from Virginia participated in the talent show - which took place Monday evening - there were many Virginia delegates and their families in attendance to watch.

The Juniors who performed ranged in age from 5 to 19 years old. There were six singing acts - what amazing voices! One young man played the guitar and sang a song he wrote and a young woman sang a song she wrote about her dad. There were two young ladies that played the piano, a 10-year-old from Georgia who clogged across the stage, and several skits. Two of the Junior officers performed Abbott and Costello's 'Who's on First?' and the Junior officers acted out Charlie Daniel's 'The Devil Went Down To Georgia.'

The Juniors most certainly have talent and a good sense of humor. The best word to describe them is 'Wow'. They definitely know how to put on a good show.

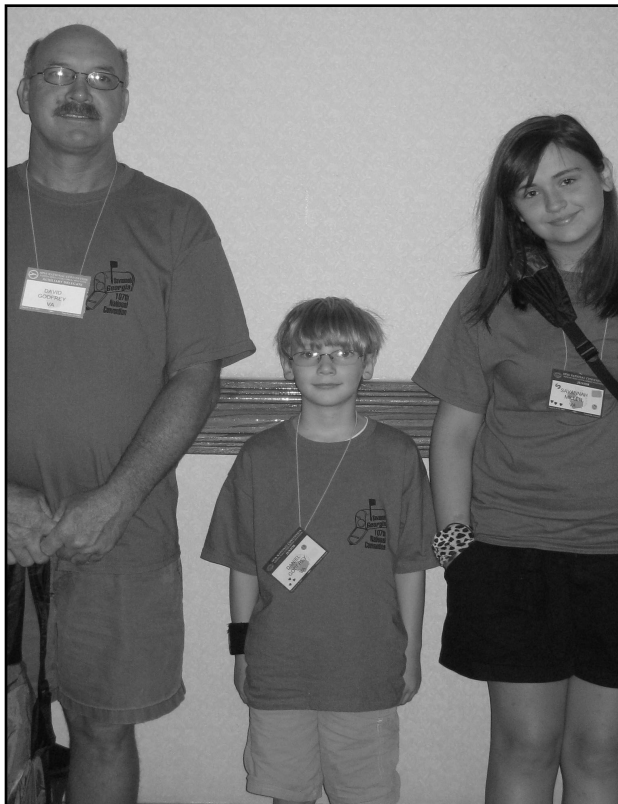
After the Talent Show, the Auxiliary Auction was held to benefit 'A Program of Compassionate Friends'.

There were four auctioneers during the evening, all of whom were quite amusing. It seemed like each one talked faster than the one before! When they weren't up on stage auctioning stuff, they were out in the audience coaxing people to bid higher for items, sometimes even assisting some of the national officers and their wives with raising their hands to up the bids.

It was fun to see and maybe next year I will even do some bidding myself. According to my calculations, a little over \$7,000 was raised.



OUTSTANDING MEMBER - Donna Wright (left), this year's Outstanding Member of the Year for the VARLCA Auxiliary, displays the certificate she received at the National Convention. She's pictured with Virginia Auxiliary President Linda Zirkle.



VIRGINIA'S JUNIORS - Representing the Juniors of the VARLCA Auxiliary at the National Convention were Daniel Godfrey (middle) and Savannah Miller (right). They are shown with David Godfrey (left), who assisted with transportation to events for the youth, and other projects.

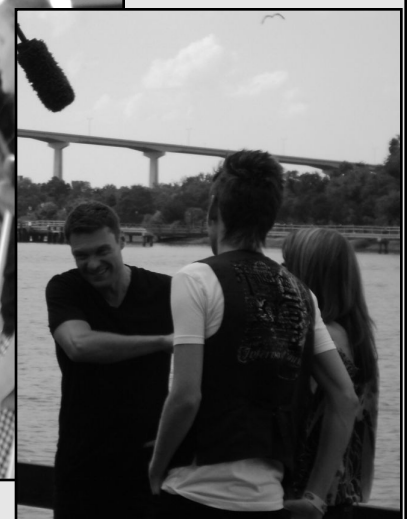
Celebrities seen on Savannah streets

Yes, that WAS Steven Tyler seen on the streets of Savannah during the week of the NRLCA National Convention!

Tyler (at left, below) and 'American Idol' host Ryan Seacrest (in the inset at right, below) were in the city for a filming of the popular show, and stopped to chat with passersby. Retired VARLCA Auxiliary

Secretary-Treasurer J.D. Waterfield just happened to have his camera in the right place at the right time.

Too bad he didn't think to invite them to judge the Juniors' Talent Show!



Tybee Island rich in Savannah history, sun and fun

By **SUSAN SOURS**
 Delegate

Located 15 miles east of Savannah, Ga., Tybee Island is rich in history as well as sun and fun. 'Tybee' is the Native American word for salt, and the island has been a popular vacation place for over a century, with six miles of public beaches, a popular fishing pier, and an abundance of wildlife ranging from dolphins and pelicans to loggerhead sea turtles (which - by the way - happen to nest on the beaches between May and October with each female, laying more than 100 eggs).

While I was on the pier, someone had reeled in a baby shark. It was kind of scary, considering the pier extends out only about 20 feet from the beach front, but it was still interesting to see.

With no high-rise buildings, Tybee Island has remained an authentic southern beach town.

Through the years, Tybee Island has flown the flags of several different countries. Spain, England, France and the Confederacy all at one time claimed Tybee Island as its own.

In the late 1800s, when ocean breezes were recommended as an all-natural remedy for a large array of ailments, Tybee Island - also known as Savannah Beach - became a popular vacation destination. Early beachcombers came to the island by steamship following the Civil War. The railroad came in 1998, and by the 1920s US Highway 80 had been built and connected Tybee Island with the mainland. This, in turn, offered easier access for travelers.

Tybee Pier and Pavilion opened to the public in 1996. The original Tybrisa Pavilion had been destroyed by a fire in 1967. With its expansive dance floor, popular musicians ranging from Duke Ellington to Cab Calloway (if you're old enough to know who they are) often performed here.

Built in 1773, the Tybee Island Light Station is one of the tallest and oldest lighthouses in the United States. You'll be huffing and puffing once you've climbed to the top - 178 steps and no drinks allowed. That's right, no drinks. Not even water, but as soon as you climb back down and reach the bottom step you'll see a soda machine dead ahead - be sure to have cash on hand. You can also tour the oldest building on Tybee Island, which housed the head light keeper. Its recent renovations were reconstructed by using old photos from days gone by. They also offer a video (in an air-conditioned room) for a better understanding of the duties, responsibilities and the importance of the light keeper. One can even get married on the grounds by the lighthouse - a honeymoon suite is available!

Within a short walking distance is the Tybee Island Museum,

which is housed in an 1898 coastal artillery battery at Fort Screven. It depicts artifacts and exhibits of the wars and makings of Tybee Island and how it came to be. This is a must see if you're a history buff. One story is that Tybee Island - along with the rest of Savannah - was even offered to then-president Abraham Lincoln as a Christmas present from General William Tecumseh Sherman. Some Christmas present, huh?

As you can see, Tybee Island is something one must do when in the Savannah area. It offers everything for the whole family. There are streets lined with shops, restaurants, a pier for fishing, viewing or just relaxing. You can also grab a bite to eat right

there on the pier. There's kayaking, parasailing, surfing, paddle boarding, jet skiing and power boating right along the beach.

Also, every May Tybee Island hosts the Beach Bum Parade to kick off summer with one of the nation's largest water-gun battles; come October, there's the Pirate Fest with swashbuckling. Of course, I mustn't forget to mention the awesome sunrises and sunsets on the horizon, as you can see in the postcard at the left of this article, which shows the lighthouse in all its glory.

Yes, Tybee Island - and Tybee Time, as it's called by the locals - is

definitely something to put on one's to-do list. If I get the chance, I'll go there again!



The lighthouse at Tybee Island



ENJOYING THE VIEW - Delegate Cindy Chatneuff took in the breathtaking view of the beach at Tybee Island.

Editor's seminar an opportunity to share information, review publications

By **GARY STAMPER**
 Delegate

Committeeman Deborah Godfrey and I attended the Editors Seminar at the National Convention. I was amazed to learn of all the legal issues associated with producing our publication. Michael Gan, lead attorney for the NRLCA, went over a lot of these and took some questions from the attendees.

Election of officers was held and the results were: Jeff Oakley

of Iowa, president; Carlton Hollis of Louisiana, vice president; and Becky Schlagel of Kansas, secretary.

After the presentation of awards, we were treated to lunch and had another chance to mingle with editors from across the nation.

To sum it up, this was a very informative and worthwhile meeting for all editors.

Insurance seminar looks at brand versus generic drugs

By **DEBORAH GODFREY**
Delegate

The Insurance Program Seminar was full of valuable information about the Rural Letter Carrier Benefit Plan. Larry Waligora, manager of insurance plans, and Missy Grantham of CVS Caremark Pharmacy, conducted the seminar, which included a brief overview of generic drugs.

Waligora started by informing every one of the changes in the Rural Carrier Benefit Plan for 2012:

- Small increase in prescription drug co-payments
- Improved hospice care benefit
- Add coverage for prescription vitamins (pre-natal & after bariatric surgery)
- Improve benefit for non-PPO medical emergency care
- Reduce age to 50 for osteoporosis screening
- Improve nutritional counseling benefit to \$500 per person

Grantham, a pharmacist for CVS Caremark Pharmacy, conducted a brief review of generic drugs. According to Grantham, generic drugs make up a majority of all prescriptions. Their use has increased from 46 percent in 2004 to 69 percent in 2010. Key brand drugs such as Lipitor are expected to have generic alternatives this year and the drug Plavix should have a generic equivalent in 2012, she said.

The generic form of the drug must have the same ingredients as the brand name drug but trademark laws do not allow generics to look exactly like the brand name drug. They have to have a different shape, size or color but by law must have the same strength, purity, quality, and stability as the brand name drug.

A generic drug is the same as a brand name drug in:

- dosage
- safety
- strength
- quality
- the way it works
- the way it is taken (liquid, tablet or injection)
- the way it should be used

A question/answer session was held at the end of the seminar, and Waligora enthusiastically answered all questions.



AT THE BANQUET - This group from Virginia were more than happy to smile for the camera while they enjoyed the dinner at the annual convention banquet. They are, from left: Delegates Connie Hale, Gary Stamper, and Tammy Gould; and Tammy's husband Don.

Norman once again will lead Provident Guild

The board members of the National Provident Guild met on Sunday at the Savannah Trade and Convention Center, prior to the start of the NRLCA National Convention.

We went over the yearly financial report and approved it, including the audit report. There was discussion on the nominations for the officers that would be open the following day. Members were assigned to man the Provident Guild table during the days the convention would be in session. Also discussed were the items that would be put up for silent auction on the table, and it was also decided to hold a 50/50 drawing daily.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

On Monday, we met with all the state representatives for the Provident Guild. Awards were given to the three state representatives who signed up the most new members. They were Susan Robinson of Florida (40 new members), Janice Wiechman of Texas (14) and Flora Isenberg of Pennsylvania (11).

Elections were held for the 2011/2012 officers. They are: James Norman of Virginia, president; Ruth Ann Webb of Kentucky, vice president; and Diana Hausfeld of Ohio, secretary-treasurer. James Tucker of Tennessee and Susan Robinson of Florida were elected to the board.

Pictures of the newly elected officers and the three award winners were taken at the meeting, which was adjourned at noon.

Norman spoke to the National Convention on Wednesday morning, urging carriers to stop by the Provident Guild table to update their information as to address changes, be sure they have a beneficiary named, to get more information about the guild and to join if they are not a member yet. Also, he reminded them to be sure they are up to date on their dues and if not to be sure to get them up to date so they would not lose their membership.

Norman also spoke to the NRLCA Auxiliary, after a short passenger ferry ride across the river to the Marriott Hotel where they were meeting.

Useful handout obtained at OWCP seminar

I attended the OWCP Seminar presented again this year by Mike Watson & Associates, along with Devin Cassidy, our national director of worker's compensation. The seminar covered the forms and time frames required by OWCP, what both the injured employee's and the USPS' responsibilities were, what the guidelines are for limited duty, and a very informative Q/A session.

It should be noted that this same information can be accessed at any time on the NRLCA Web site.

At the seminar, I also received a special handout that included a sample appeal request for those employees who have had their CA-7s denied due to the national reassessment program. We have had many rural carriers told that there is no longer limited duty work for them or had their hours reduced. This handout contains legal arguments as the means to - hopefully - reverse the denials.

If any of you need this document or have any other OWCP questions, you can call Cassidy at 703-684-5545. Upon my return from the national convention, I had a personal issue regarding an OWCP matter, and received a phone call back that very same day. It may not have been the answer I wanted, but it was the information I needed. I have spoken to other crafts in the USPS and they do not have this service available to them. I am truly grateful to see that our dues money is put to good use in this regard!

- By Jerri Gatewood, delegate

Delegates meet the candidates on caucus night

By **DEBBIE ATWELL**
Delegate

Caucus night on Thursday evening is a required attendance for the delegates. Our first candidate was not scheduled until 6:15 p.m., so after the call to order our Eastern States Conference President Pete Laflamme spoke on his plans for the direction of the Eastern States Conference (ESC) meetings.

Laflamme said he would like to see participation from the state presidents in making decisions for the Eastern States Conference.

After that, ESC Vice President Ray Aubel gave the treasurer's report, because ESC Secretary-Treasurer Joseph Duschl was visiting other caucuses as a candidate for the position of national secretary-treasurer. Aubel reported our current balance of all accounts was \$4,571.95.

The 2012 ESC is scheduled for March 30 - April 1, 2012, in Erie, Penn. The 2013 ESC is scheduled for March 22 - 24, 2013, in Corning, N.Y.

The following candidates then spoke during their allotted times:

- 6:15 p.m. - Ronnie Stutts, candidate for NRLCA vice president. Stutts has served the past six years as director of steward operations. He gave no speech but instead fielded questions from the audience, most of which were about the implementation of a national steward system.

- 6:30 p.m. - Jeanette Dwyer, candidate for NRLCA president. Dwyer has served as an executive committeeman and vice president. She gave no speech but instead fielded questions from the audience, most of which dealt with preparation for binding interest arbitration.

- 6:45 p.m. - David Heather, candidate for NRLCA executive committeeman. Heather is currently the state steward in Missouri. He spoke on his talents and abilities and how he would like the opportunity to work for the association on the national level. He said he is convinced he would be an invaluable asset on the national board.

- 7 p.m. - break

- 7:15 p.m. - Thomas Keys, candidate for NRLCA executive committeeman. Keys, who is from Tennessee, has served in numerous positions. His message - 'Stay united and fight!'

- 7:30 p.m. - Joey Johnson, candidate for NRLCA director of labor relations. Johnson is the incumbent and as of the time he spoke had no opposition for this position.

- 7:45 p.m. - Robert Picklesimer, candidate for NRLCA executive committeeman. Picklesimer is from Illinois and has been actively promoting a 'think outside the box' perspective for several years.

- 8 p.m. - Barbara Callahan, candidate for NRLCA executive committeeman. Currently serving as one of the NRLCA grievance specialists, she was formerly the state steward in Pennsylvania.

- 8:15 p.m. - break, following by roll call of states and number in attendance:

- Connecticut - 11
- Delaware - 8
- Maine - 10
- Maryland - 16
- Massachusetts - 15
- New Hampshire - 10
- New Jersey - 17
- New York - 36
- Rhode Island - 3

- Vermont - 5
- Virginia - 33
- West Virginia - 21

(Pennsylvania is part of the Eastern States Conference, but has a separate caucus.)

- 8:30 p.m. - Steven Traylor, candidate for NRLCA director of steward operations. Traylor has been on the national board since his election as an executive committeeman in 2007. He spoke on how he would improve steward training if he were elected.

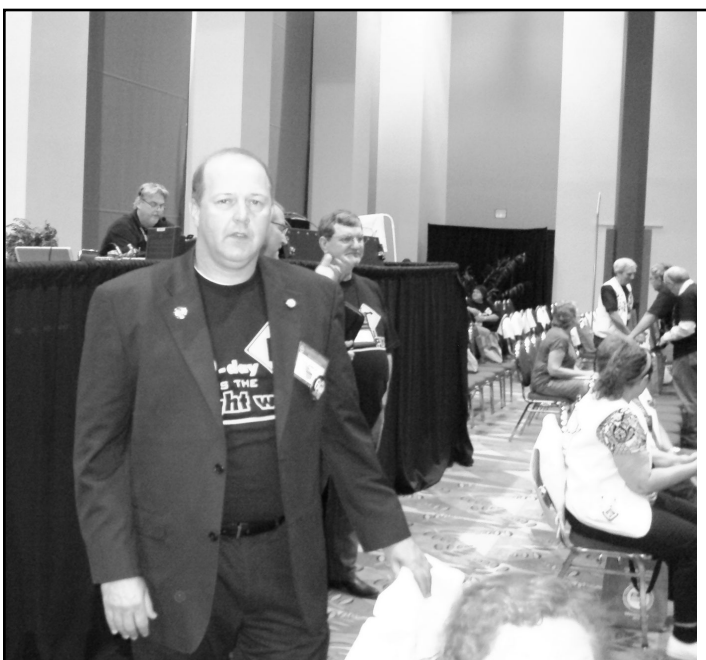
- 8:45 p.m. - Clifford Dailing, incumbent candidate for NRLCA secretary-treasurer. Dailing, who has been in this position for several years, spoke on the need to recruit from current active employees who are not members. Often the most effective way to reach these potential members is one-on-one contact at the local level, Dailing said.

- 9 p.m. - Robert Horne, candidate for NRLCA director of steward operations. Horne has served on the national board as an executive committeeman for the past two years. Virginia has been one of his assigned states and he attended two of our state conventions in recent years. He spoke about his plans for implementation of the National Steward System and that it would be a team effort by the entire national board.

- 9:15 p.m. - Joseph Duschl, candidate for NRLCA secretary-treasurer. Currently the full time state secretary-treasurer in Pennsylvania, Duschl serves as an assistant state steward. He said he feels he is qualified to serve in this position and wants the opportunity to be of service to the membership.

- 9:30 p.m. - Darrell Livengood, candidate for NRLCA president. Livengood came 'out of the woodwork' as a candidate for this position. While answering questions from the audience, he admitted he had never held an elected position at any level in our organization.

- 9:45 p.m. - The Eastern States Conference caucus was adjourned.



DRESS CODE? - VARLCA President (and delegate) Ray Aubel may have had to wear a suit for some of his appearances at the national convention, but that didn't stop him from wearing his t-shirt to support 6-day delivery!

Savings (From Page 17)

are called Agency Automatic (1 percent) Contributions. These contributions are not taken out of your pay, nor do they increase the dollar amount of your pay for income tax or Social Security purposes.

For FERS participants, you receive Agency Matching Contributions on the first 5 percent of pay that you contribute each pay period. The first 3 percent of pay that you contribute will be matched dollar-for-dollar; the next 2 percent will be matched at 50 cents per dollar. Contributions above 5 percent will not be matched. If you stop making regular employee contributions, your matching contributions will also stop.

(Note: CSRS participants do not receive matching contributions.)

The Internal Revenue Code places a number of specific limits on the dollar amount of contributions you can make to the TSP. These limits can change annually. The elective deferral limit for 2011 is \$16,500.

There are two types of investment transactions: A contribution allocation and an interfund transfer. A contribution allocation specifies how you want to invest money going into your TSP account. Your contribution allocation will remain in effect until you submit another one.

An interfund transfer moves the money already in your account among the TSP investment funds. When you make an interfund transfer, you choose the new percent you want invested in each fund. You cannot move specific dollar amounts among the funds.

For each calendar month, the first two interfund transfers can redistribute money in a participant's account among any or all of the TSP funds. After the first two, your interfund transfers can only move money into the G Fund.

There are no more open seasons. You can make either of these transactions on the TSP Web site or by using the ThriftLine.

There are 10 TSP investment funds:

- G Fund - Government Securities Investment Fund
- F Fund - Fixed Income Index Investment Fund
- C Fund - Common Stock Index Investment Fund
- S Fund - U.S. Small Capitalization Stock Index Investment Fund

- I Fund - International Stock Index Investment Fund
- Five L Funds - Lifecycle Investment Funds

To get started, first determine your approach to investing. You can manage your own account or put your money in one of the Lifecycle funds that are invested according to a professionally determined mix of the G, F, C, S and I Funds based on various time horizons. The objective of the L Funds is to provide the highest possible rate of return for the amount of risk taken.

Investing in the L Funds is not a guarantee against loss and does not eliminate the risk. If you decide to invest your entire account in one of the L Funds, you are done making decisions. The TSP will do the rest. If you choose your own investment mix from the G, F, C, S and I Funds, remember that the amount you contribute and your investment allocation are the most important factors affecting the growth of your TSP account.

Review your investments periodically. Quarterly statements are available at the end of each quarter. The statements can be viewed and printed from the TSP Web site. The first statement is mailed; subsequent statements are available online, or can be mailed if requested. The annual statements are mailed and are posted on the TSP Web site.

Because the purpose of the TSP is for you to save money for your retirement, there are rules that restrict when and how you

may take money out of your account while you are still employed. There are three ways to get your money out of the TSP: a loan; an in-service withdrawal; and a post-separation withdrawal.

Loans are available only to participants who are actively employed, who are in pay status, and who have contributed their own money to the TSP. When you take a loan, you are borrowing your own contributions and the earnings on those contributions. You repay your loan with interest. The TSP also charges a processing fee of \$50 for each loan. There are two types of TSP loans: a general purpose loan and a residential loan. You can only have one general purpose and one residential loan outstanding at a time.

In-service withdrawals are available to all active participants. The TSP does not charge a fee for making an in-service withdrawal. However, the overall impact on your retirement savings may be significant. There are two types of in-service withdrawals: financial hardship and age-based. In-service withdrawals are subject to federal income tax when they are paid directly to you.

There are two types of post-separation withdrawals: a partial withdrawal and a full withdrawal.

Visit the Web site www.tsp.gov, for more information about TSP investment options. The new TSP Web site was introduced in July 2010. You can get recent and historical rates of return, use the calculators to estimate the effect of various rates of return on your account balance, and read TSP Highlights articles about investing. Or you can call the toll-free ThriftLine at 1-877-968-3778.



Save America's Postal Service Rally

This fall, Congress will be making major decisions about the future of the Postal Service. Will Congress consider the concerns of USPS customers and hard-working postal employees? Whether you are a political junkie or avoid politicians at all costs, politics and legislation will decide the future of your job. Will you have anything to say about it?

Join us for the "Save America's Postal Service" Rally. Make your voice heard, do NOT miss this opportunity!

When: 4:00-5:30 pm, Tuesday, September 27
Where: Your Congressional Office

Questions? Please visit www.saveamericaspostalservice.org, www.nrca.org, or www.varlca.org for more information



Visit to Savannah will keep Georgia on her mind

By **JERRI GATEWOOD**
 Delegate

I just had the pleasure of serving as a national delegate for the fourth time. This year was very different for the delegates. Savannah was beautiful and did a fantastic job taking care of the delegates but, unfortunately, our host hotel and convention center were separated from the other hotels and downtown Savannah by a waterway, so we needed to rely on ferry boats that stopped working before midnight.

Because of this, the networking, socializing, and 'politicking'

activities that normally occur among the delegates were greatly hindered. Since I arrived in Savannah early, I was blessed to be able to take a few hours and go to one of the local beaches off Tybee Island. As I walked towards the surf, I was amazed by how soft the sand was. Seriously, it was like powder - nothing at all like the coarse, gravelly sand that we have in Virginia. The water also seemed much cleaner and clearer than ours.

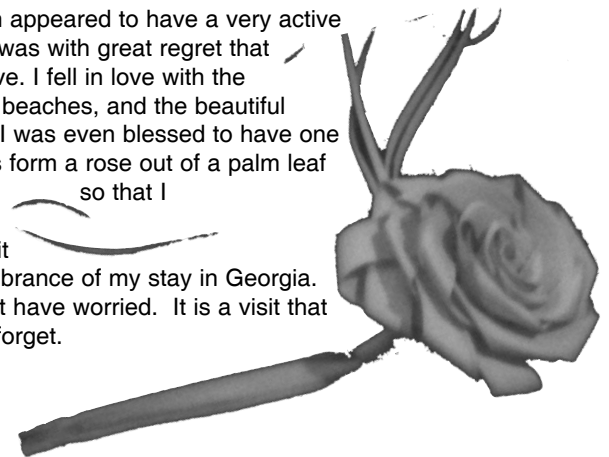
My group left the surf and sand with great reluctance and went in search of a local restaurant called Fannie's - an elderly local woman had told me that I could not leave Georgia without eating a shrimp burger and trying a local ale called 'Sweetwater'. I mistakenly thought the shrimp burger would be like a crab cake - boy, was I wrong! It was simply ground-up shrimp binding whole pieces of seasoned shrimp that was then grilled like a burger. The ale was good, too, but I was even happier to discover that they also served lemon-pepper chicken wings. I have not been able to find those since I moved from Portsmouth.

I also got to visit an authentic pirate house where they used to shanghai unsuspecting sailors. Their drink special was the 'Skeleton Skull Punch', served in a souvenir ceramic pirate skull mug. Of course we were also encouraged to try their famous shrimp and grits and spring rolls as well. The spring rolls were not Asian as we expected but were made with collard greens and pulled pork barbeque!

Whenever I had the opportunity, I did take the ferry over to River Street, which greatly reminded me of Mardi Gras. All of the seafood I ate in Savannah was prepared differently than how it's done in Virginia. A creole-type spice is added to most of the food. My favorite establishment was a bar called Wet Willies. You walked in and saw an entire wall of what looked like commercial dryers that you would see in a laundromat facing you. But inside were frozen blended drinks. The favorite among the delegates were the 'Call a Cab,' and the 'Attitude Improvement'. They also had karaoke for entertainment. If karaoke appeals to you then I would highly recommend the karaoke bar beside Tony Romo's restaurant.

Savannah appeared to have a very active night life. It was with great regret that I had to leave. I fell in love with the cuisine, the beaches, and the beautiful palm trees. I was even blessed to have one of the locals form a rose out of a palm leaf so that I

could keep it as a remembrance of my stay in Georgia. He shouldn't have worried. It is a visit that I will never forget.



Let the NRLCA Vehicle Insurance Plan work for you

By **MARTHA A. NEWTON**
 Delegate

On Tuesday, I attended the Automobile Insurance Representatives Breakfast / Seminar that was hosted by Shirley Corno. Her boss John Mahoney, vice president of national accounts, was also in attendance.

The NRLCA Vehicle Insurance Plan is listening to what you have to say - if you have questions call them at 1-800-325-1190. Ask for a policy review to make sure you are getting the best rate possible.

If you have a government- provided vehicle, the Rural Letter Carrier Vehicle Insurance Plan will apply the route discount to another vehicle on your insurance policy.

This year's scholarship winners were:

- **Shirley Corno** - Teryn Greer of Missouri, with alternate Maryssa Rook of Illinois; Kyle Griggs of Oregon with alternate Nicholas Young of Ohio; Andrew Reece of North Carolina, with alternate Lindsay Lyles; and Jennifer Klewe of Oregon, with alternate Jodie White.

- **GMAC** - Courtney Weatherly of South Carolina, with alternate Daniel Stewart of North Carolina.

If you are an academy trainer, please email me at Marthanewton1102@aol.com. Put VARLCA in the reference line and please include where you are an academy trainer and the mailing address of the academy.

For quotes, call:

- Vehicle insurance - 1-888-325-7727; use RLC Savings Code RCD
- Home insurance - 1-866-366-4607

Other important contact information:

24-Hour Claims Service
 1-800-325-1088

Glass Claims Hotline
 1-800-414-8844

RLC Vehicle Insurance Plan Director
 Shirley Corno
 13736 Riverport Drive
 Maryland Heights, Mo., 63043
 1-800-847-6442, ext. 38645
 Shirley.Corno@GMACInsurance.com

Customer Relations
 1- 800-847-6442, ext. 37977
 CustomerRelations@GMACInsurance.com

Did you know that having a good credit score is one way of getting a better insurance rate?

the Virginia Rural Letter Carrier

11100 Maiden Creek Road
Abingdon, Va., 24210-9356

Presorted Standard
US Postage Paid
Permit #339
Winchester, VA



Address Service Requested

In Remembrance

Fannie Lynn Spriggs, 57, of Gate City, passed away, Saturday, Aug. 20, 2011 at her residence.

She worked for the United States Post Office for 16 years, retiring at the age of 57.

She was a long-time member of Hale's Chapel United Methodist Church.

The Gate City Funeral Home was in charge of arrangements. Burial was in the Holston View Cemetery in Weber City.



CATCHING UP - Retired VARLCA Executive Committeeman Joan Waterfield caught up with State President Ray Aubel (left) and retiring NRLCA President Don Cantriel at the NRLCA Convention.

EFT Authorization for PAC

I hereby authorize my bank to deduct from my checking account monthly the sum of:

___\$5 ___\$10 ___\$15 ___\$20 ___\$25 ___\$Other

and forward that amount to the NRLCA-PAC. I make this authorization voluntarily and may revoke it at any time by notifying the NRLCA-PAC in writing.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name (please print): _____

Employee ID number (on pay stub): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State : _____ Zip: _____

Attach a voided check and mail to:

**Elliot Friedman, NRLCA PAC Manager
1640 Duke St., 2nd Floor
Alexandria, Va., 22314-3465**