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the

# Virginia Rural Letter Carrier

Your Post Office on wheels

Volume 28 No. 5

December 1, 2009

## President's Message



**LARRY ZIRKLE**  
VARLCA  
President

**W**e are bombarded daily with the latest economic news, and - according to the number crunchers - our economy is starting to recover slowly, but unemployment remains stubbornly high and wage gains are nil.

One can feel overwhelmed by all this negative news, so I want to offer a suggestion as to

what some of our members can do in order to receive a financial boost.

We are currently in Open Season for Postal Employees to enroll in a Flexible Spending Account (FSA) that can help pay for medical expenses not covered by insurance. The open season began November 9 and will continue through December 14.

Detailed instructions were mailed to all employees at their home address. All eligible, career Rural Carriers should carefully examine their out of pocket medical, dental and eye expenses based on their individual circumstances and contribute a portion of their salary to cover those expenses for the upcoming year.

The process for this is done through Postal EASE, so you will need your employee ID and PIN numbers. For each dollar you set aside for covered expenses you can expect to keep between 15 and 30 percent in your pocket, giving yourself a nice little raise.

If you are already participating, continue to do so. If you have never signed up, there is no better time than now. By not doing so, you are denying yourself an opportunity to keep more of your hard earned salary.

## One journey ends, another begins

Lambert offers final words upon retirement

**By DEBBIE HEARN**  
VARLCA Editor

**I**t was a session filled with emotion as long-time VARLCA Editor Anita Lambert presented her final report when the board convened in Lynchburg for the Fall Meeting.

Lambert, who has brought numerous awards to the VARLCA's newspaper, is already fulfilling part of her promise to remain active in the Association by agreeing to serve as Editor of the soon-to-be-published book on Rural Carrier history.

For the publication, Lambert's retirement means a number of things, perhaps the most significant being the change in the format of this publication. This month, as you can see, we are launching a magazine-style publication similar to those issued by our sister organizations throughout the country.

I'm looking forward to the challenge of bringing you the latest news as well as getting your questions, stories, etc., presented in a timely and efficient manner. I'm open to suggestions about the new layout, ideas for future articles, and just about anything that will bring VARLCA members the best publication possible.



VARLCA President Larry Zirkle presented Retiring Editor Anita Lambert a plaque in honor of her many years of service.

Look for "Anita's Final Report" on Page 3.

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### Training sessions for 2010 mail count

**T**he VARLCA is again preparing for a National Mail Count in the Spring of 2010.

As we have done in the past, we will hold localized trainings around the state to be conducted by the assistant state stewards and a board member. (See COUNT, Page 3)



**RAY AUBEL**  
VARLCA VP

## 2009-10 VARLCA ELECTED & APPOINTED OFFICERS

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 the April edition. 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 the April edition. These are limited to **125 words**.

**Candidate announcements are NOT edited. Those exceeding the word count will NOT be published.**

**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 yous" of any kind to members who may or have voted for them.

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

### ELECTED OFFICERS

#### President

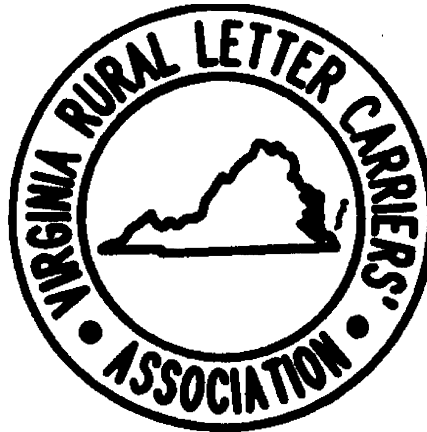
Larry A. Zirkle  
3513 Winsinger Drive  
Broadway, VA 22815  
Phone: 540-896-2567  
Email: zirklela@aol.com

#### Vice President

Raymond L. Aubel Jr.  
404 Prospect Pl. SW  
Leesburg, VA 20175-3526  
Phone: 703-771-8618  
Email: aubelfam@msn.com

#### Secretary-Treasurer

Debbie Atwell  
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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 Editor. Items for the next edition MUST be received NO LATER than FEBRUARY 1, 2010.**

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

#### Committeeperson

Connie Hale  
104 Maplewood Ave.  
Stanleytown, VA 24168  
Phone: 276-732-7681  
Email: czh1276@gmail.com

#### Committeeperson

Gary Stamper  
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#### Committeeperson

Joan Waterfield  
P.O. Box 7044  
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Phone: 757-426-2161  
Email: Twowaterfields@aol.com

#### Committeeperson

Debbie Weathersbee  
7372 Courthouse Road  
Spotsylvania, VA 22551  
Phone: 540-582-2314  
Email: DebbieWbee@aol.com

### APPOINTED OFFICERS

#### Assistant State Steward

**NOVA District**  
William (Bill) Gilliom  
15212 Crescent St.  
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Email: wmgilliomsr@verizon.net

Assistant State Steward  
**Appalachian District**  
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Blacksburg, VA 24060-1316  
Phone: 540-808-3267  
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#### Legislative Director & PAC Chairman

Cindy Chatneuf  
1743 White Rock Road  
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Phone: 540-763-9663  
Email: chatneuf@swva.net

#### Historian

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#### Editor

Debbie Hearn  
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Bealeton, VA 22712  
Phone: 540-219-2995  
Fax: 540-439-8252  
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#### Provident Guild

James Norman  
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Bedford, VA 24523-3063  
Phone: 540-586-3063  
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#### NRLCA INFORMATION

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

#### Assistant State Steward

**Richmond District**  
John Bradley  
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Heathsville, VA 22473-0058  
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#### Assistant State Steward

**NOVA District**  
Tom E. Sisk  
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Email: TESisk14@aol.com

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

#### Chaplain

Dan Jenkins  
1153 Desert Road  
Reva, VA 22735  
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 name, address and NRLCA membership number (found on the mailing label of the national magazine, one line above the name) to this newspaper's editor. Checks should be made payable to the VARLCA.

**Meeting notices**

**WINTER BOARD MEETING**

Sunday, Jan. 24, 2010, 9 a.m.  
 The Inn at Virginia Tech  
 Skelton Conference Center  
 1-877-200-3360 or 540-231-8000  
 \$80 Single  
 \$100 Double  
 \$10 Extra person  
 There is a \$3 per day parking charge  
 per room  
 Reservation deadline is Dec. 22, 2009

**SPRING BOARD MEETING**

Sunday, April 18, 2010  
 9 a.m.  
 Travelodge of Winchester  
 160 Front Royal Pike  
 Winchester, VA 22502  
 540-665-0685  
 \$75 Double Occupancy  
 \$10 Extra person  
 Tax included  
 Continental breakfast

**2010 EASTERN STATES CONFERENCE**

March 26-28, 2010  
 Grand Hotel  
 2100 Baltimore Ave.  
 Ocean City, MD  
 800-447-6779  
 Room Rates:  
 \$99 grand view  
 \$109 premier view  
 Double Occupancy  
 \$20 per night per additional person

**2010 STATE CONVENTION**

June 25-27, 2010  
 Travelodge of Winchester  
 160 Front Royal Pike  
 Winchester, VA 22502  
 540-665-0685  
 \$75 Double Occupancy  
 \$10 Extra person  
 Tax included  
 Continental breakfast

**2011 STATE CONVENTION**

June 24-26, 2011  
 Fredericksburg Hospitality House  
 2801 Plank Road  
 Fredericksburg, VA 22508  
 540-736-1006

**2012 STATE CONVENTION**

June 22-24, 2012  
 Alternate date: June 15-17, 2012  
 Location to be voted upon at the 2010  
 State Convention

**NATIONAL CONVENTIONS**

Aug. 17-20, 2010; Spokane, WA  
 Aug. 16-19, 2011; Savannah, GA  
 Aug. 14-17, 2012; Buffalo, NY  
 Aug. 13-16, 2013; St. Louis, MO  
 2014 - Texas; info to be announced

**ATTENTION LOCAL OFFICERS:**

To list your Local's meetings,  
 send date, time and place to:  
 Debbie Hearn  
 6846 Crescent Ridge Court  
 Bealeton, VA 22712  
 Phone: 540-219-2995  
 Fax: 540-439-8252  
 Email: rural\_editor@comcast.net.  
 Please include a name, phone  
 number and email address of the  
 local officer who should be contact-  
 ed for meeting information.

**Anita's final words (well, not really!)**

**Retired editor's final report**

This my final quarterly report as editor. As was the case over the last several years, this first quarter for the editor was extremely busy and expensive.

We published a 40-page newspaper in July and two sections, totaling 60 pages, in September. I attended both the state and national conventions. I am pleased to report that all of Virginia's delegates to the National Convention submitted reports for publication in the September paper, in accordance with Virginia state board policy.

As you know, Virginia's paper received an award at national. Among many complimentary opinions from the judges was their notation that they particularly liked the "Pull and Save" section which was printed in the August 2008 newspaper and repeated in our most recent paper. The 28-page "Pull and Save" section is the equivalent of one newspaper in itself; consequently we are \$2791.31 over budget this quarter. However, this is usual at this time every year since we publish two newspapers in the first quarter. The Fall and Winter papers are normally half the size (or less) than either the July or September papers, so costs are usually less and by the end of the year, we are usually able to come in pretty close to budget.

On October 6, Editor Debbie Hearn came to our home near Eagle Rock and I transferred all association equipment in my possession to her. My best wishes go to Editor Debbie and this organization for continued success in the difficult times ahead.



**ANITA LAMBERT  
 Editor (Retired)**

**Passport needed for cruise, Canada visit**

All attendees to the 2010 National Convention in Spokane, WA, will need to bring their passports if they intend to take the Alaska cruise or travel to Canada. If you do not have a passport, you should apply now, as the process sometimes can take a while. Passports may be applied for at many post offices, as well as online. Again, remember that if you intend to take the Alaska cruise after the National Convention, you will need to bring your passport (in some states, an enhanced driver's license will meet the criteria.) Information on the cruise is available at www.WARLCA.com.

**Count**

(From Page 1)

ber. These will be the only count trainings authorized by the state.

You will be receiving a letter in early January with the locations and the dates of these meetings, which will take place in the middle of January thru early February so as to have you be prepared for your pre-count conferences. I will be coordinating these meetings with the assistant state stewards. If you have any questions, please contact me or your appropriate assistant state steward.

**OOPS!**

In last edition's "Pull and Save" section, the work telephone number for Bruce Lohr, president of Local 12 and local steward in the Orange area, was listed incorrectly. Bruce may be reached at the Orange Post Office: 540-672-2868.

**EFT Authorization for PAC withholding**

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: **Cindy Chatneuff  
 "Virginia PAC"  
 1743 White Rock Rd  
 Floyd, VA 24091-3617**

# Fall Board meeting minutes; poster brings smiles



**DEBBIE  
ATWELL  
VARLCA  
Secretary-  
Treasurer**

**VARLCA Fall Board Meeting  
Sunday, October 18, 2009  
9:15 a.m.  
Kirkley Hotel, Lynchburg, VA**

The meeting was called to order by **President Larry Zirkle**. Present at the meeting: **Vice President Ray Aubel, Secretary-Treasurer Debbie Atwell, Executive Committeemen Connie Hale, Joan Waterfield, Gary Stamper, Debbie Weathersbee.**

Also in attendance, **Editor Debbie Hearn, State Steward Wayne Harrison, Assistant State Stewards Bill Gilliom, Tom Sisk, John Bradley, Roger Robinson.** Members

in attendance: **Historian Jean Overstreet, Anita Lambert, Deborah Godfrey, Jerri Gatewood, James Pillow, Bill Wilkins, Jim Simmers, Susan Sours, Terri Love, John Long, Marion Neighbours.**

A moment of silence was observed for the members of the Armed Services who work to keep our country safe and preserve our freedom and American way of life.

Debbie Atwell read the minutes of the post-convention board meeting held June 21, 2009 in Hampton, VA. Joan Waterfield made a motion to accept the minutes as read. The motion was seconded and passed.

Elected officers exchanged written reports previously and there were no questions.

State Steward Wayne Harrison gave a brief report on grievance activity in the state over the past quarter.

**PAC/Legislative Director Cindy Chatneuff** gave a report on current legislation action and PAC activities.

Historian Jean Overstreet gave a brief report on her efforts to organize and catalog our historical materials.

Secretary-Treasurer Debbie Atwell gave a brief overview on the finances of the Association and the membership numbers.

Finance Committee Chairman Connie Hale gave a brief overview on the finance committee work - they are looking at ways to save money.

SCOBBE Committee members are Chairman Debbie Weathersbee, Jean Overstreet, Anita Lambert, Cindy Chatneuff, and author **Ethel Born**. The Committee moves that the author and book editor be authorized to negotiate a firm contract with ImageMasters of Salem, VA, not to exceed \$5,000 to publish the Virginia Rural Heritage Book. The motion carried without objection. The Committee moves that rather than pay the printer



**RETIRED EDITOR ANITA LAMBERT, center, was clearly surprised to receive a poster from the National Convention from Secretary-Treasurer Debbie Atwell. Looking on is President Larry Zirkle.**

\$40.00 an hour to do the layout for the book, that we pay the book editor \$25.00 an hour, not to exceed 80 hours. The motion carried without objection. The Committee moves that they be authorized to register the Virginia Rural Heritage book with the copyright office upon publication. The motion carried without objection.

The SCOBBE Committee gave Larry Zirkle a letter to sign requesting authorization from the NRLCA to use the National Logo in the Virginia Rural Heritage Book. A copy will be on file in the VARLCA Official Correspondence File.

## MEETINGS:

2010 Winter Board Meeting - Jan. 22-24, 2010, Blacksburg, VA.

2010 Eastern States - March 26-28, 2010 in Ocean City, MD

2010 Spring Board Meeting - April 16-18, 2010, Winchester, VA

2010 VARLCA State Convention - June 25-27, 2010,  
Winchester, VA

2011 VARLCA State Convention - June 24-26, 2011,  
Fredericksburg, VA

15-minute break

Past Editor Anita Lambert was presented with a plaque of appreciation and a poster from the National Convention.

Mail Count Trainings are going to be planned for January in the event the postal service opts in all routes for the Spring Mail Count beginning February 27th.

Debbie Weathersbee made a motion to add to our VARLCA Guidelines and SOP the following: "In the event the State Editor is an RCA, the pay will be at the current hourly rate, up to 40 hours per edition of the State Paper. The motion was seconded and passed without objection.

Connie Hale made a motion for the secretary-treasurer to apply for a periodical permit to be used for our state publication. The motion was seconded and passed without objection.

Deadlines for future state publications:

Paper 4 - February 1, 2010

Paper 5 - March 29, 2010

Joan Waterfield moved to adjourn the board meeting. The motion was seconded and passed. The meeting adjourned at 11:10 a.m.

## Did you know ... ?

- As a Federal Agency the USPS is Governed by Congress
- Mail Routes belong to the USPS
- NRLCA Negotiates Compensation for Rural Routes
- Rural Carriers are Federal Employees
- As Federal Employees we enjoy FEHBP Health Insurance
- As Federal Employees we enjoy Federal Retirement
- Congress Governs the Terms & Conditions of our Employment
- PAC (Political Action Committee) opens Congressional Doors to change Federal Law

-- Submitted by Committeeperson Connie Hale

**National / Virginia Rural Letter Carriers' Association**  
**Statement of Financial Position**  
 As of September 30, 2009

	Sep 30, 09
<b>ASSETS</b>	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
Checking Accounts	52,676.32
Savings Account	6,414.89
Total Checking/Savings	59,091.21
Total Current Assets	59,091.21
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>59,091.21</b>
<b>LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Credit Cards	
Atlanta Postal Credit Union	-16,410.65
Total Credit Cards	-16,410.65
Other Current Liabilities	
Payroll Liabilities	160.18
Total Other Current Liabilities	160.18
Total Current Liabilities	-16,250.47
Total Liabilities	-16,250.47
Equity	
Opening Balance Equity	258,648.35
Unrestricted Net Assets	-103,600.80
Net Income	-79,705.87
Total Equity	75,341.68
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	<b>59,091.21</b>

*A Touch of History*

**5-day delivery tried before, once**



**G. JEAN OVERSTREET**  
**Historian**

Postmaster General Arthur E. Summerfield tried to save some money.

The outcry of customers was so fierce that the change only lasted one week. In fact, after that week President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed legislation

There has been a lot in the news lately about over-throwing the six-day delivery for the money-saving five-day delivery option.

This happened once before, in 1957, when

for money for the Post Office Department to return to - and sustain - the six-day delivery system!

I agree, every Saturday off would be nice. But, our leave security of having "one sub for every carrier" would be in jeopardy. We would have to share subs like the city craft. So, yes, we'd have Saturdays off, but maybe not get sick or annual leave days granted so easily.

This is something we have always taken for granted and it could become a thing of the past.

Plus, every Monday would be like the day after a holiday ... OUCH!!!

**National / Virginia Rural Letter Carriers' Association**  
**Statement of Activities**  
 July through September 2009

	TOTAL
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
GMAC Insurance	3,250.84
Interest / Dividends	359.99
Membership Dues	134,439.40
Sales	-50.00
Miscellaneous (Revenue from occasional or non-material activities)	0.00
Total Income	138,000.23
Gross Profit	138,000.23
Expense	
New Peoples Bank	15.00
APCU	24.00
Reconciliation Discrepancies	0.00
Awards and Recognition	655.00
C & B Committee	1,494.67
Education & Training	33,983.37
Employee Benefits	186.25
Equipment Rental - Steward	461.23
National Convention Expense	52,116.70
Office Expense - Steward	44.76
Payroll Expenses	7,153.24
Per Capita Dues	1,055.00
Postage - Admin	0.00
Postage - Steward	242.60
Printing - Steward	110.38
Rent (Expenses related to office, storage, and other space)	400.00
Salaries - Admin	19,969.15
Salaries - Steward	69,842.93
Sign Purchases	2,177.35
State Meetings	4,199.68
State Paper	4,761.95
Telephone - Admin	84.82
Telephone - Steward	2,990.58
Travel - Admin	2,092.12
Travel - Steward	13,645.32
Total Expense	217,706.10
Net Ordinary Income	-79,705.87
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>-79,705.87</b>

*Auxiliary News*

The Auxiliary Officers and Board members met Saturday,

October 17, 2009, at 9:00 am at the Kirkley Hotel in Lynchburg, VA.

In attendance were **President Linda Zirkle, Vice President Bonnie Norman, Secretary/Treasurer J D Waterfield** and Board Members **Betty Watts, Joyce Neighbours** and **Donna Wright.**



**LINDA ZIRKLE**  
**Auxiliary President**

Plans were made for the upcoming year.

The next Board meeting will be held Saturday, January, 23, 2010, at 10:00 am at the Inn of Virginia Tech, Skelton Conference Center, Blacksburg, VA.

**Junior News**

Juniors are reminded that Virginia Auxiliary Scholarships should be postmarked no later than March 1, 2010. Scholarship application forms for the Virginia Auxiliary and National Auxiliary may be downloaded from the following website: [www.varlca.org](http://www.varlca.org).

Please make sure the applications are filled out completely and all directions followed to prevent disqualification. If you have any questions or are unable to download these forms, contact me at: 540-896-2567 or [zirklelb@aol.com](mailto:zirklelb@aol.com).

Please send all Letters, Inquiries, Articles, Free Classified Ads, and any other items for this publication to the Editor, Debbie Hearn, at 6846 Crescent Ridge Court, Bealeton, VA 22712; email [rural\\_editor@comcast.net](mailto:rural_editor@comcast.net); fax: 540-439-8252. Remember, the deadline for the next edition is February 1, 2010.

## Executive board

### Job applications a cinch with new Web application process

As of October 31, 2007, the Postal Service no longer does hiring from hiring registers.

Persons interested in applying for a job with the Postal Service must go to

[www.usps.com/employment](http://www.usps.com/employment) and apply for a specific job listed. For example, to apply for RCA in Virginia, an application would click on Virginia, then click on Customer Service/Delivery, then click apply, fill out the application, and submit.

#### HOW THE HIRING PROCESS WORKS

1. Postmaster submits and gets approval for vacancy.
2. Postmaster submits request to post position online.
3. Applicant completes forms online and is given a pre-test.
4. Applicant is then scheduled for an exam within two weeks at a site that is within 100 miles of their home.
5. Personnel screens the applicants (conduct background checks) that have passed the exam (if applicable).
6. Postmaster, Review Committee, or selecting official (not necessarily the PM) are notified via email that applicants are ready for review.
7. Postmaster, Review Committee, or selecting official schedules these interviews.

**Question:** Does the PM have a deadline or any other follow-up to make sure he is getting the interviews and paperwork?

**Answer:** No, but the package will automatically close after 120 days with no selection. The road test, drug tests and physicals are done after the interviews are completed. Then the selected applicant is scheduled for driver training and orientation.

#### STEPS TO APPLY FOR EMPLOYMENT WITH USPS

**Step One:** Log on to [www.usps.com/employment](http://www.usps.com/employment).

**Step Two:** On the right, click on "Create your eCareer Profile" and complete the Registration section. Completion of your Candidate Profile is required to apply for USPS positions. After that, when you click on the Job Opportunities tab located at the top of your Profile, data about your work history, training, etc. will automatical-



**DEBORAH WEATHERSBEE**  
Executive Committee

**The website to apply for employment with the Postal Service is**

**[www.usps.com/employment](http://www.usps.com/employment)**

ly load into your application.

**Step Three:** To create your Candidate Profile you can click on "Show Roadmap" button at the top of the screen. You can click on the boxes at the top of the page to enter your Personal Data, Communications Data, Work Experience, etc. You can also click on the highlighted box with the right-facing arrow at the top left or bottom left to move from page to page. You may update your Candidate Profile at any time.

**Step Four:** After you have registered and completed your Candidate Profile you are ready to log in, and search and apply for job postings.

**Step Five:** After you log in, click on "Job Opportunities" at the top of the page to see the Job Search page. The easiest search is by Location (State). You may also search by selecting a Functional Area using key words. Be sure to click on the "Reset" button in between searches. You may search for any jobs that are available throughout the United States.

**Step Six:** You have the option to apply for one or more positions. You will be asked to complete the Summary of Accomplishments. In this section you will tell about your knowledge, skills, and abilities as they relate to the position. If specific requirements are listed, you must tell how your past training or experience qualifies you to meet these requirements.

**NOTE:** Communication will be conducted via e-mail. Be sure your e-mail address is valid.

#### LOCATING YOUR TRAINING RECORD

**NOTE:** Your training record is only available from the Blue Page (USPS Intranet) on a postal computer at work or at the PEDC.

1. After logging on to the computer (in the PEDC, generic log-ons are available for employees who do not currently have log-on access). Click on the Internet Explorer icon. This will take you directly to the Blue Page by default.

2. In the upper right corner, under Employee Resources, click on Employee Self-Service.

3. On the right side of this page, under Employee Change of Address, click on Employee Training Report.

4. Click on "I Agree" when you see "Authorized User" message.

#### CANDIDATE PROFILE QUICK TIPS

**W**hen entering text as part of your profile, there is a maximum character limitation on certain tabs

- Work experience is limited to 1,500 characters
- Education is limited to 2,000 characters
- Special Skills/Associations is limited to 1,000 characters
- Summary of accomplishments is limited to 6,000 characters and should be entered when you are applying for a job

- When creating your training experience, remember to include relevant training within the past 15 years.

- The email stored on your profile will be the email address that receives ALL eCareer correspondences, even if you are a Selecting Official or Review Committee Member.

When entering your current work experience, leave the end date blank meaning that you are still in that position. When you leave that position, you can go back to that Work Experience tab and enter the end date.

Refer to the eCareer Candidate Profile Guide for additional information on completing the application process.

5. Click on Continue on the next page, noting that you need your Employee ID number and PostalEASE PIN number. If you do not have these, locate a pay stub to get your ID number and call 1-877-477-3273 and your PIN will be mailed to your address of record. You will need to have access to these numbers repeatedly as changes in Personnel occur, so put them where you can readily locate them - or commit them to memory. (Note: Your PostalEASE PIN and your Thrift Savings Plan PIN are not the same. Also note, there are only certain times and days of the week when you can access your training record.)

6. On the next page, enter your Employee ID and PIN and click Submit.

7. When your Training Record opens, click the Print button on the left under your name and Pay Location. You now have one of the resources you will need to create and enter your profile in eCareer.

8. You may also access Employee Self-Service through the PostalPEOPLE website on the right side of the page under Links.

## Executive board

### Is your package delivery up? Maybe a closer look is needed

**H**ow do you like all those big packages? Mr. Potter stated at the last National Convention that the USPS was aggressively going after all of the UPS and FED EX package business possible. I surely do know he made good on his promise! My packages are at least three times as many as before from these two shippers.



**GARY STAMPER**  
Executive Committee

I remember not too far back when we were instructed that it was against Postal policies for any USPS employee to work for any company - even part time - that

competed with the USPS. I do not know what the status of this is at this time but it seems we are now working for UPS and FED EX through the USPS!

I know the postal service is making money on all packages delivered on Rural Routes because we only receive 30

seconds per package in the mail count. I also wonder if I have the only route in Virginia that receives about 70 percent of these packages that are too large to fit the mail box. I have no problem lending a helping hand to the USPS for their survival, but I do think they need to share a little larger slice of the pie for our efforts.

My route and many others across the nation have many homes just at the

mandatory half-mile limit for delivery, which could mean you are traveling many miles a week without any time or mileage compensation for your extra effort. I will

**...it seems we are now working for UPS and FED EX through the USPS!**

admit that some packages do have scans on them but the scanners are now taking information so slowly that I seriously doubt if anyone is breaking even

on this also.

In my opinion, if we are to stay on the evaluated pay system packages must be looked at closely for a more fair time standard, as they are and will be making up a larger percentage of our work load in the future. As always if I can be of assistance to any of you feel free to contact me by phone at 276-233-8539.

### Don't cut safety out of your day



**CONNIE HALE**  
Executive Committee

**L**ately, I have been asked some things that have disturbed me - and they all involve driver safety.

Motor vehicle accidents are on the rise now, with the same type of accidents occurring over and over.

The most common types of accidents are caused by inattention - why are carriers not paying attention while driving; inability to see properly or not seeing an obstacle - are we not looking where we are going; misjudging - when in doubt why not get out and look' and "I didn't know

that" - isn't there a Virginia Drivers Manual and a Rural Carriers Duties and Responsibilities (603)?

December has the highest motor vehicle accidents for the Postal Service. With the colder weather coming there will be more dangers also. Each of us has responsibilities to ourselves and the Postal Service. Don't

#### Use these tips for safe driving every day

- Do not cut corners
- Remember the safe way and do it
- Pay attention
- Make sure to do a safety check on your vehicle
- Read the Rural Carrier Duties and Responsibilities
- Pick up and read the Virginia Drivers Manual

cut safety out of your day. Do your job correctly every day.

Because of the increase in motor vehicle accidents, Postmasters and Supervisors have been instructed to do monthly Driver Observations for carriers having had an accident. Let's do our job and be safe.

### Weather plays in safe deliveries

**I**t is that time of year when we all get frustrated with the weather. It should be getting colder and yet the temperature seems to be going in circles. First it's hot and then before the day is over it gets colder. Next thing you know that happens in reverse. We

**I told them the old saying, "Neither rain, sleet, snow or gloom of night" was not just a saying.**

always seem to have to deal with what to wear to work. One strategy I use is to dress in layers or just carry another piece of clothing to add if necessary. I always keep a raincoat the office so if it is sunny when I go to work and starts to rain before I go to the street, I am covered. One thing for sure, in Virginia the weather is unpredictable.

One week in early November was really a true test of unpredictable. It started out very nice. Then the Nor'easter came to visit. The water rose to almost impassable in a lot of areas I have to travel on my route to deliver mail. I drove through water that came in the step up on the truck. Rain beat in around every window and came in every crack it could to saturate the entire truck and me. However, I made it without incident and only missed delivery to one box - a box on a road near a bridge where the water was very deep. I drove through it, but if I had attempted to stop at the box, I would probably have been left sitting in the water.

The customers that I had to dismount for to deliver parcels or accountables were very nice. They could not believe we were out in that mess delivering mail. I told them the old saying, "Neither rain, sleet, snow or gloom of night" was not just a saying. We believe in it and will do whatever we must to see that their mail gets to them. It did not surprise me, though, when I was out the next day delivering, that I noticed only about 10 percent of my customers had been out to get their mail on the previous day due to the terrible conditions. Soon, winter weather will be approaching and we will have to deal



**JOAN WATERFIELD**  
Executive Committee

# Take time for yourself; know your duties & responsibilities



**WAYNE  
HARRISON**  
State  
Steward

**W**hen you receive this publication, the holidays will be right upon us. This is always a very busy time for rural carriers, as we deliver all those cards and packages to the customers on our routes. It's a time when we see smiles on the faces of the ones getting those Christmas gifts, and it seems to just be a happy time for most folks.

However, for rural carriers, this can be one of the most stressful times of the year. With the additional load of mail and packages - which can often mean longer days - it seems we have less time for ourselves and our families. So during this time, try and set some time aside for you and your family. It is my hope that everyone has a very Merry Christmas and

a Happy New Year.

Sometimes I receive calls and emails with questions about just

the everyday duties and responsibilities of rural carriers. I'm not sure if it's that carriers don't have time to read all the publications available to them - the national magazine, the state newspaper, Web sites, etc. - or that some have just gotten to the point where they don't care.

Rural carriers need to know what their duties are - what they are required to do and not required to do. So at this time, I want to just review some of the basic working rules for rural carriers. I'm taking these directly from the national agreement.

I hope you take the time to read through these and better educate yourself about your job description as a carrier. If you have questions, feel free to contact the local, area or state level steward assigned to your office.

I hope this will help clear up some of the questions you may have had regarding specific parts of a carrier's job. If there are other topics you would like to see addressed in the future, let us know and we will try to get you a timely response.

Again, best wishes for a happy holiday season. Be safe.

## What the contract says about driving, duties, leave replacement

### ARTICLE 29

#### LIMITATION ON REVOCATION OF DRIVING PRIVILEGES

##### Section 1. Employer's Right to Revoke

An employee's driving privileges may be revoked or suspended when the on-duty record shows that the employee is an unsafe driver.

##### Section 2. Revocation Considerations

Elements of an employee's on-duty record which may be used to determine whether the employee is an unsafe driver include, but are not limited to, traffic law violations, accidents or failure to meet required physical or operation standards.

When a revocation, suspension, or reinstatement of an employee's driving privileges is under consideration, only the on-duty record will be considered in making a final determination. An employee's driving privileges will be automatically revoked or suspended concurrently with any revocation or suspension of the employee's State driver's license and restored upon reinstatement. In the event such revocation or suspension of the State driver's license is with the condition that the employee may operate a vehicle for employment purposes, the employee's driving privileges will not be automatically revoked. When revocation, suspension, or reinstatement of an employee's driving privileges is under consideration based on the on-duty record, such conditional revocation or suspension of the State driver's license may be considered in making a final determination.

No installation will maintain a practice of revoking an employee's driving privileges without regard for the individual accident circumstances.

##### Section 3. Initial Certification

An employee shall receive Vehicle Familiarization and Safe Operation Certification when the employee has a valid State driver's license, has satisfactorily completed the Postal Service driver's training and has a satisfactory driving history.

##### Section 4. Employee Notification

An employee must inform the supervisor immediately of the revocation or suspension of the employee's State driver's license.

##### Section 5. Licensed Drivers Provided by Employee

In the event a rural carrier or a substitute rural carrier in a leave earning capacity loses his or her driving privileges and cannot be employed in the

installation, a licensed driver meeting the Employer's driving standards may be provided by the rural carrier or a substitute rural carrier in a leave earning capacity at the carrier's option and expense for a period not to exceed one (1) year. This paragraph is applicable to only the employee's personal vehicle.

### ARTICLE 30

#### WORKING RULES FOR RURAL CARRIERS

##### Section 1. General Provisions

##### A. Even Flow of Mail

During any mail count, the Employer shall make every effort to ensure that mail is processed as usual.

##### B. Space and Working Conditions

A reasonable amount of space and adequate working conditions consistent with the capacity of the facility shall be provided each rural carrier to prepare mail for delivery.

##### C. Non-Conforming Boxes

A rural carrier may not be required to serve a box which does not conform to the Employer's delivery standards. **D. Roads and Approaches** Rural carriers shall be required to provide service to all customers on their assigned routes. The Employer shall be kept informed of road conditions on rural routes and shall endeavor to obtain cooperation from highway officials and customers in keeping roads passable and in good repair and approaches to boxes opened.

##### E. Route Measurement

Rural routes shall be remeasured upon request of the rural carrier or when the Employer determines it necessary. The rural carrier assigned to the route has the right to be present in a non-duty status at the remeasurement.

##### F. Lunch Break

1. Rural carrier craft employees may stop for not more than thirty (30) minutes for lunch. If carriers stop for lunch, the exact time used must be recorded.

2. Lunch may be taken in segments of less than thirty (30) minutes,

(See CONTRACT, Page 15)



## Steward News

From the State Steward

Richmond District

### Let's Row the Boat Together; Rough Waters Ahead



**WAYNE  
HARRISON**  
State  
Steward

There doesn't seem to ever be a dull moment in the steward business from what goes on in my office and from what I hear from the other stewards around the state. As changes come about with the postal service these changes also affect the rural craft in the way they perform their duties as rural carriers. I see many changes coming that will affect the rural craft within the next year or so. These are changes that we as a craft have never had to deal with before. It

will cause the jobs of stewards to become more challenging in the near future as I see it.

The first quarter started out with some changes at the state level. Charles Morningstar and Scyrethia Mullins stepped down as state level stewards from their areas for personal reasons. I appreciate the work that Charles and Scyrethia have done for the association over the years. Bill Gilliom was appointed as the full time assistant. John Bradley, Roger Robinson and Bill Gilliom have picked up the areas that they were covering.

I stayed busy for the past quarter with office visits, grievance appeals, district meetings answering emails, phone calls, etc. We had two arbitrations scheduled in September and one for October. Two of the arbitration cases were pre-arbed and the other one was settled on the day of arbitration. All three of these carriers that had been issued removals are back to work. This is due to the hard work that the local, area and state level stewards did along with Debbie Williams and the attorneys for the association. At the time of this report we do not have any scheduled arbitrations to be heard in Virginia.

Removals still seem to be the driving force with the postal service. This past quarter I appealed 18 grievances to Step 3 of the grievance process. Of those grievances 9 were disciplinary and 9 were contractual. Of the disciplinary 7 were removals. Following is a list of my activities as state steward for this quarter:

#### JULY

- Make office visits out in the western part of the state
- Attend steward meeting in Fredericksburg to make reassignments for local and area stewards
- Visit offices in NOVA and Richmond Districts. Introduce Bill Gilliom to managers in the Richmond District
- Conduct steward certification training in Lynchburg
- Step 1 Meetings in various offices, Step 3 Appeals

#### AUGUST

- Attend Labor/Management Meeting in Fairfax
- Attend National Convention in Grapevine Texas as an elected delegate

- Travel to Merrifield for arbitration
- Attend meeting with HR Manager in Richmond
- Step 1 Meetings, office visits, appeal grievances to Step 3

#### SEPTEMBER

- Attend arbitration in Merrifield
- Attend district meeting in NOVA
- Make office visits regarding issues

(See REPORT, Page 12)

### Not grieving discipline can have serious consequences

The other day, I had the misfortune of trying to protect one of our brothers from a Letter of Discipline (14 day suspension) for a minor problem.

This should have been an easy task except for two glaring problems with minor offenses that had not been grieved in the past - had the employee grieved those letters we would have most likely gotten them thrown out because of no substantiation.

The Postmaster (a strict disciplinarian) followed Article 16 of the contract and cited both of those letters as showing progressive discipline. (Progressive discipline starts with an official discussion and progresses to a Letter of Warning, then a 7-day paper suspension, a 14-day paper suspension, and then a proposed removal.) As you can see, a carrier could lose his or her job over just about anything that a Manager, Supervisor, or Postmaster wants to write you up for if you do not grieve them when they happen.

There are time limits that must be followed when you feel that you have been aggrieved. Article 15.4.B of our contract states that the failure of the employee, or the Union at Step 1, or the Union thereafter, to meet the prescribed time limits of the Steps of this procedure, including arbitration, shall be considered as a waiver of the grievance. The starting time for any grievance is outlined in Article 15 Sec3.a. as follows: 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 steward or a Union representative, if the employee so desires. If you follow these steps and grieve even what you might consider minor infractions you will make it harder for the Post Office to take your job.

One other thing that you might want to consider is never submit to any discussion - no matter how trivial it may seem - without Union representation. When you are asked questions, answer truthfully but do not incriminate yourself. Your steward can advise you on what and how to answer during the interview.

When you receive a letter of discipline, you should notify your Steward that you need a Form 8191, so that you can fill out 1 thru 1e, and then take it with you to the discussion with your immediate supervisor. If there is no resolution at this step, ask your supervisor to annotate the date of the incident, the date of the discussion, and whether the grievance was timely. You have 14 calendar days to do this. You will inform the supervisor that you want to grieve this action, and, at this time, you will tell the steward that there was no resolution at the discussion. The steward then has 10 days to meet with the next level of Management to try to resolve the problem. Make sure you give the steward Form 8191 so that he has the timeline to keep the grievance timely. I hope all employees take this to HEART, as the job you save may be your own.



**JOHN  
BRADLEY**  
Assistant State  
Steward

## Steward News

### NOVA District

#### The Pre-Disciplinary Interview- a First Step Towards Discipline



**TOM SISK**  
Assistant  
State Steward

I don't know how many times I have been called by a carrier who has been issued discipline and that is the first time I have heard from them on the matter.

I always ask them if they were given a Pre-Disciplinary Interview (otherwise known as a PDI) and most of the time they were. The conversation usually goes like this:

**Me:** "Did you ask for Union representation during the PDI?"

**Carrier:** "No, I didn't think it was a big deal. I figured I didn't really need anyone. Now I just got a Letter of Suspension."

Carriers need to remember that when Management goes to the trouble of conducting a PDI, then discipline is sure to follow and they have the right to have a Union representative with them during the PDI if they request one. That is the key element - you have to request one. It is not automatic. If you don't have a local steward, an area steward will be contacted and the PDI should be postponed until he/she can attend.

Carriers need to remember that a PDI is an interview conducted by Management. It is their time to ask questions and write down your responses to those questions. It is not the Union's interview and management may not allow the steward to ask questions during the PDI. We can, however, advise carriers of their rights and ask to speak the carrier privately to talk about this advice with them.

The way carriers conduct themselves during the PDI can greatly influence the amount of discipline issued or even if discipline will be given. Remember to remain calm and respectful because they are still your boss. Answering the questions truthfully is always the best policy. If you get caught in a lie, it only makes it worse. If you don't know the answer to a question, say you don't know. Under no circumstances make up some answer that you think might help your case because most of the time it winds up hurting you instead. **THINK BEFORE YOU ANSWER.** Phrase the answer in your head before you speak. This gives the steward time to write the question down before you answer so that he/she can concentrate on your answer. Take notes of the questions and answers. That way you might catch something the steward missed.

Carriers should also beware of the type of questions that management is asking. One of management's favorite is the narrative or leading question. They start by telling you what happened and then ask you why you did it or can you explain how it might have happened. If their version of the events does not match yours, then you need to let them know up front that you disagree on what happened. Whatever you do, don't start speculating on what might have happened. Either you know what happened or you do not. Remember, management bears the burden of proof in disciplinary actions. If you start out with "I might have done....." this or that, you are taking the responsibility for whatever did happen.

Stewards may not be able to ask questions during the PDI, but they can help set the tone and make sure you don't wind up shooting yourself in the foot in the process. Please exercise your rights to have one present during any PDI.

#### The federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and you

The Family and Medical Leave Act was enacted in 1993. This Act, very simply put, offers job protection for eligible employees who are off from work for extended periods, by requiring covered employers to provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave for certain family and medical reasons.

To be eligible for FMLA, employees must have worked for their employers for a period of one year and must have accumulated 1250 work hours for that employer over the previous 12 months. The FMLA permits employees to take leave on an intermittent basis or to work a reduced schedule under certain conditions.

(Working a reduced schedule for FMLA covered conditions probably would not apply to regular rural carriers, since we must take leave in increments of 8 hours.)

An employee does not need to use their leave entitlement in one block. As previously stated, the leave can be used intermittently when it is necessary. Employees must make reasonable efforts to schedule leave for planned medical treatments so as not to unduly disrupt the employer's operation.

At the employee's option, certain kinds of paid leave can be substituted for unpaid leave. Note that employees may choose or the employer may require use of accrued paid leave while taking FMLA leave. In order to use paid leave for FMLA, the employee must comply with an employer's normal leave policies, like submitting a PS Form 3971 indicating whether the absence is to be covered by sick/annual leave or LWOP.

The following are reasons/conditions for unpaid leave being granted:

1. Incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care or child-birth
2. To care for the employee's child after birth, or placement for adoption or foster care -entitlements for this condition expire one year after birth
3. To care for the employee's spouse, son or daughter, or parent(s) who has a serious health condition
4. For a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform his/her job. A serious health condition is an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either an overnight stay in a medical care facility, or continuing treatment by a health care provider for a condition that either prevents the employer from performing the functions of his/her job, or prevents the qualified family member from participating in school or other daily activities. Chronic Conditions requiring treatments fit into this category. Chronic conditions are conditions that:
  - a. Require periodic visits for treatment by a health care provider, or by a nurse or physician's assistant under direct supervision of a health care provider.
  - b. Continue over an extended period of time (including recurring episodes of a single underlying condition); and
  - c. May cause episodic rather than a continuing period of incapacity (e.g. asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, etc.)

Supporting documentation is required for your absence request to receive final approval. Documentation requirement may be

(See FMLA, Page 12)



**WILLIAM M. GILLIOM SR.**  
Assistant State  
Steward

## Steward News

### Appalachian District

# Christmas Pay Procedures for Rural Carriers



**ROGER G. ROBINSON**  
Assistant State  
Steward

The 2009 Christmas period for rural carriers begins Saturday, December 5, 2009 (Week 1, Pay Period (PP) 26-09), and ends Friday, December 25, 2009 (Week 1, PP 09-10).

During this period, certain timekeeping and pay rules apply. Everyone should become familiar with Article 9.2.K, Christmas Allowances and Procedures, of the 2006 USPS/National Rural Letter Carriers' Association (NRLCA) Agreement. This article describes the types of compensation to which rural carriers are entitled during the Christmas period. It also describes related timekeeping procedures and regulations for the Christmas

period, as well as special rules that begin with the start of the Guarantee Year (October 24, 2009) and continue through the end of the Christmas period.

#### Overtime During the Christmas Period

During the Christmas period, regular carriers are eligible for two types of overtime -- FLSA overtime and Christmas overtime.

##### FLSA Overtime

FLSA overtime is paid at all times of the year, not just during the Christmas period. Regular rural carriers are paid FLSA overtime under two circumstances.

a. Hours worked in excess of 12 in a day. If a carrier works more than 12 hours in a day, the amount over 12 is entered in the Daily Overtime block on PS Form 1314 (green timecard).

b. Hours worked in excess of 56 in a week. These hours are calculated automatically when the total weekly work hours are greater than 56, so no separate entries are required.

##### Christmas Overtime

Christmas overtime is paid only during the designated Christmas period.

Regular rural carriers are paid Christmas overtime under two circumstances.

a. Christmas Assistance. This is assistance provided by the regular carrier on her or his relief day. Christmas assistance work hours are entered in the Xmas Assist Work Hours block on PS Form 1314.

b. Hours worked in excess of the route's evaluation. This is based on the total actual work hours for the week, not on individual days. For example, if a route has a daily evaluation of 9 hours and the regular carrier works 10 hours on 2 days and 8 hours on the other 3 days, no overtime would be paid. Even though the carrier exceeded the daily evaluation on 2 days of the week, he did not exceed the weekly evaluation. The weekly evaluation is 45 hours; the carrier worked 44 hours. These hours are calculated automatically, so no separate entries or calculations are required.

Christmas assistance is additional service provided on a rural route during the Christmas period. For regular carriers, Christmas assistance applies ONLY to assistance given by the carrier, on his/her relief day, while a replacement carrier carries the full route. For replacement carriers, it applies to any assistance provided on a regular auxiliary route during the Christmas period.

Christmas assistance is reported in the Xmas Assist Work

#### During Christmas Overtime Period:

- Christmas overtime is paid only when the weekly evaluation is exceeded, not the daily evaluation
- Daily overtime (over 12 hours worked) hours are included in Actual Weekly Hours
- Christmas Assistance hours for regular carriers are not included in Actual Weekly Hours
- Auxiliary carriers are paid for actual hours worked, not the route's evaluation
- DACA Code R and 3 must take an X day in the same pay period as the relief day that it is worked
- Regular carriers may only work on their assigned routes
- Regular carriers may not work December 25 or January 1

Hours block on PS Form 1314 (for regular carriers) or PS Form 1314-A (for replacement carriers). Regular carriers can perform Christmas assistance ONLY on their relief day. Therefore, only regular carriers assigned to J and K routes may report Christmas assistance.

Note: There are no provisions for paying a regular carrier for working on a Sunday, on an actual holiday, or other than on the assigned route. These situations should be avoided!

##### Overtime Rate

The overtime rate paid to regular carriers is 150% of the carrier's regular rate. The regular rate is determined by dividing the total compensation received for hours actually worked by the carrier since the beginning of the Guarantee Year (not including overtime), by the total number of hours worked since the beginning of the Guarantee Year (not including overtime). This overtime rate is used for both FLSA overtime and Christmas overtime.

Replacement carriers (Designations 70, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, and 79) are entitled only to FLSA overtime. For these employees, FLSA overtime is paid for hours worked in excess of 40 in a week.

Auxiliary route carriers are compensated at the hourly rate for actual hours worked during PP 26-09 and week 1 of PP 01-10. During this period, carriers are not paid the evaluation of the route. Overtime is paid only when the carrier exceeds 40 for the week.

#### Work on Relief Days and Use of X Days

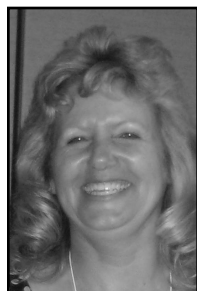
During the period from the beginning of the Guarantee Year (October 24, 2009) through the last day of the Christmas period (December 25, 2009) carriers who work a relief day during this period and who are entitled to a future day off (X day) must be given that X day in the same pay period. This applies to DACA Code R or 3 for the relief day that is worked.

If an X day is not taken in the same pay period that relief day is worked, or if the carrier is on the relief day work list and selects the option for 150% compensation, then DACA Code 5 applies and the carrier does not receive an X day. Carriers may not use any X days that were earned in previous pay periods during this period.

Happy Holidays to you and yours! Be safe out there!

# Steward News

## Keep watchful eye on paperwork after RCA conversion



**TAMMY GOULD**  
Local Area  
Steward

The rural craft is starting to grow again and - coupled with new territories, high growth areas and the adjustment of overburdened routes - more RCAs are being converted to regular status.

This often causes questions about annual and sick leave. Let's say your day has finally

arrived, after you've been an RCA for five, six, or even in some cases 10 years or longer. There are some things to consider and be aware of.

Those who have been working an auxiliary route are a Designation 79; those working a vacant route are a Designation 74. At least two weeks before you convert to regular status, Management should complete a new PS Form 50, changing you back to a Designation 78. After this paperwork goes through, Management should complete another PS Form 50, converting you to Designation 71 and making you a Regular Rural Carrier. This

schedule must be followed carefully so your pay will be correctly calculated. Getting corrections made to our paychecks can be very difficult.

So what happens to the annual and sick leave that has accumulated while you were working that auxiliary or vacant route? The good news is: the leave does not disappear! However, the annual leave is cashed out to you, because the USPS doesn't want to pay annual leave on a route that is likely evaluated at a higher rate than the auxiliary or vacant route you had been carrying. Since rural carriers take leave in increments of eight hours, not in the actual hours of the route, you are charged for eight hours when you take a day off, even if your route is evaluated at, for example, 9.6 hours per day. For some reason, the USPS just chooses to cash you out when

you convert to regular.

Sick leave is a different story, though. Any sick leave earned will be rolled over and retained for use by you on your new regular route. Make sure you check every pay stub to see that the sick leave appears, and if it does not appear within TWO pay periods, check with your supervisor so that this may be corrected.

To those RCAs who have become Regular Rural Carriers, let me be the first to congratulate you!

### Report (From Page 9)

-- Travel to NOVA District to visit offices being counted under FSS for the first time.

-- Step 3 appeals

#### WELCOME NEW STEWARDS; MORE NEEDED

I also want to take this opportunity to recognize four new local stewards that were certified in July.

At the present time we have 71 local stewards, 27 area stewards and 5 state level stewards. This is to cover the entire state of Virginia. We need more carriers that would be

willing to step up to the plate and be willing to be the local steward in your office. Not having a local steward in every office and the amount of activity that goes on throughout the state puts the stewards under a great deal of stress in providing representation to our craft along with the enormous cost associated with it that is passed on to the membership by the way of dues. Will you consider helping out and keeping our cost down by becoming a local steward in your office?

Within a year most of the state will be under FSS with the offices that are to be impacted. This could cause some major changes with routes, consolidations, etc. If Congress allows the postal service to go to five day deliver this could bring about major changes for our craft.

We need to all get in the boat and row together, rough waters are ahead.

#### New Stewards Certified in July include:

- Dwayne Griles/Clover
- Cora Lee
- Spence/Copperhill
- Mark Jeffery/Leesburg
- Eric Kea/Oakton

### FMLA

(From Page 10)

waived by your supervisor in specific cases. However, failure to provide requested medical or other documentation could result in a denial of FMLA-protected leave and/or paid leave. Necessary document could include:

1. For qualifying condition 1 or 2, the birth or placement date.
2. For qualifying condition 2 or 4, documentation from the health care provider - see USPS Publication 71 for additional information on this subject.

The employee may be required to provide advance leave notice and medical certification. Taking of leave may be denied if requirements are not met.

\*The employee ordinarily must provide 30 days advanced notice when leave is "foreseeable." When the 30-day notice is not possible, the employee must provide notice as soon as practicable and generally must comply with employer's call-in procedures. Employee must provide sufficient information for the employer to determine if the leave may qualify for FMLA protection and the anticipated timing and duration of the leave. It is the employer's responsibility to inform employee requesting leave whether they are eligible under FMLA. If they are, the notice must specify any additional information required as well as the employees' rights and responsibilities. If they are not eligible, the employer must so notify the employee.

\*An employer may require medical certification to support a request for leave because of a serious health condition, and may require second and third opinions (at the employer's expense) and a fitness for duty report to return to work. For the duration of FMLA leave, the employer must maintain the employee's health coverage under any "group health plan." Upon return from FMLA leave, most employees must be restored to their original or equivalent position with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms. The use of FMLA leave cannot result in the loss of any employment benefits that accrued prior to the start of an employee's leave. FMLA makes it unlawful for any employer to:

- interfere with, restrain, or deny the exercise of any right provided under FMLA.
- discharge or discriminate against any person for opposing any practice made unlawful by FMLA or for involvement in any proceeding under or relating to FMLA.

The U.S. Department of Labor is authorized to investigate and resolve complaints of violations. An eligible employee may bring civil action against an employer for violations. Know your rights under the FMLA. Department of Labor, Wages and Hour Division, WH Publication 1420 is a good source of information pertaining to your rights under FMLA.

## PAC News

### FERS sick leave credit law big victory



**CINDY  
CHATNEUFF  
PAC/Legislative  
Director**

Legislation was passed on October 28, 2009, providing federal/postal employees who retire under FERS (Federal Employee Retirement System) the ability to receive retirement credit for unused sick leave.

Beginning on January 1, 2014, FERS employees will receive 100 percent retirement credit for unused sick leave. Until December 31, 2013, it will be rolled in with a 50 percent credit on unused sick leave for those who retire under FERS. As employees under Civil Service already had the ability to credit unused sick leave, this provision was a matter of fairness.

Also included was a provision making it easier for the Postal Service and other federal agencies to rehire retirees on a temporary basis with no reduction of their retirement annuities.

The FERS Sick Leave bill was introduced by Virginia Rep. Jim Moran (D) and co-sponsored by Virginia Rep. Frank Wolf (R). After a roller-coaster ride of several passages and defeats, the FERS amendment was attached to the Defense Authorization bill, which was passed by the House. It was withdrawn in the Senate when Sen. Tom Coburn (OK) threatened a filibuster. Then Sen. Daniel Akaka (HI)

worked to have the amendment included in Conference Committee. (When the House and Senate pass different versions of a bill, the bill is referred to a conference committee. The compromise bill from the conference committee then has to be voted on in both the House and Senate chambers.) The House adopted on October 8 and the Senate on October 22. Legislation was signed into law on October 28, 2009 - a victory for sure!

### Rural Delivery Heritage Book

**G**ood News! Our rural delivery heritage book project is under way. Even better news is that the book is being done as a PAC project, alleviating the necessity of State Association funding. PAC benefits, members benefit, the State Association benefits, and our rural carrier history will be recorded for posterity.

This is an exciting undertaking, but we need your help. A Rural Heritage account has been established for the purpose of publishing the book and we are asking for your generous support. Donations are a "gift-in-kind" PAC contribution.

Donors will receive PAC credit for all book fund donations. As a thank you for supporting the rural delivery heritage book project and helping our PAC effort, donations of \$50 or more also will receive a signed First Edition!

Virginia has never had such an opportunity to chronicle rural carrier stories. Be a part of this once in a lifetime undertaking! Become a Friend of the Book today by sending in your most welcome donation! (A Clip & Send Coupon may be found on the back page.)

### 2010 VA PAC Donors

The contributors listed below kicked off the new PAC year. A \$ sign in front of your name denotes a sustaining member on PAC Withholding or Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT). Virginia has already taken in over \$5,000! Super job! Thank you!!!!

- |                       |                               |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Debra Atwell          | \$ Linda Hull                 |
| Ray Aubel             | \$ Michelle Laign-<br>Robbins |
| \$ Cheryl Bauserman   | Anita Lambert                 |
| \$ John Bradley       | Wanda Malik                   |
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| \$ Mary Herman        | Debbie Weathersbee            |
| Jeffrey Hinton        | Bailey Wright                 |
| \$ Carolyn Holcomb    | Larry Zirkle                  |
| \$ Tammy Howard       |                               |

PAC Withholding and EFT is the easiest way to support our PAC effort. To date, 21 members have taken advantage of this effortless way to contribute. PAC Withholding is done through Postal Ease either by phone or online. For those who would like to donate through EFT, just complete the form that's on Page 3. Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) is a monthly deduction that occurs on the 5th of each month.



### Half the take

**PAC/LEGISLATIVE  
DIRECTOR CINDY  
CHATNEUFF presented  
State Steward Wayne  
Harrison his share (\$75)  
of the half-the-take drawing  
at the Fall Board  
Meeting.  
Committeeperson  
Connie Hale was the  
recipient of the \$75 cred-  
it.**



## When choosing auto insurance, consider all that's offered



**MARTHA A. NEWTON**  
VA Auto Home Insurance Rep

**H**ow do you know which auto insurance company is right for you as a Rural Letter Carrier?

When choosing an insurance company, price is certainly important. But in order to understand which company is the best value, you need to consider what is really being offered for that price. A price that sounds too good to be true probably is. Here are some important things to consider.

### Coverage

Is the coverage a company is quoting the same as the coverage quoted by the competition? Is the quote based on "bare bones" coverage to reduce the rate? If so, will you be pressured into upgrading your coverage at a later time?

Make sure the coverage you are getting is adequate to protect you and your assets, and then make sure all of the quotes are for those same coverage levels. Also, look for the extras that some companies will offer, like free towing and new car replacement coverage.

### Claims Service

Great rates don't do you much good if you can't count on the company when you have to file a claim. Does the company treat customers fairly? Can a representative be reached at any time? How quickly are claims processed? How much paperwork is required? Do your homework, ask around, and look for independent resources online that can guide you in your decision.

### Claims Paying Ability

In both 2000 and 2001, more than 30 insurance companies declared bankruptcy! If a company goes under, it may not have to pay your claims. It's extremely important that the company you choose has a strong financial rating from an independent agency. The leading independent insurance rating agency is A.M. Best Company. Stick with companies that have at least an

"A" rating from A.M. Best.

### OEM Parts vs. Aftermarket

Many companies balance low premiums by cutting the costs of repairs on your vehicle. The most common way to do this is by using less expensive (and often lower quality) aftermarket parts. Ask your insurance company if they will guarantee to use OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer) parts for repairs.

### Renew ability

Some companies will cancel a policy after you file an expensive claim. Look for providers that have a company policy against canceling coverage based on claim history.

Of course, you could make things simpler by just going with the one company that offers the coverage needed by the Rural Letter Carriers and their family members. GMAC Insurance is your inside connection for auto insurance. We can offer you special discounts and knowledgeable advice for all of your vehicles, no matter who built them. Rural Letter Carriers should never have unanswered questions when it comes to auto insurance. If you have questions about your current policy, or would like a free quote from us, just call 1-888-325-7727.

Remember the New Year is coming - change the batteries in your smoke detectors and have a flashlight handy in case your electricity goes out.

## First-class insurance at prices that can't be licked!

Get great protection from the only vehicle insurance plan endorsed by the NRLCA!



■ Tort Claims Act expertise

## NLRCA Life & Long-Term Disability Open Enrollment Update

### Submitted by BILL JUDGE & ASSOCIATES, INC.

**T**he deadline for the NRLCA Life & Long Term Disability Open Enrollment has been extended to February 2, 2010, due to the overwhelming response from the NRLCA members that attended the convention.

Mailing of the enrollment packets will be delayed a few more weeks. Time will also be added for processing your allotment changes that could cause your effective date of coverage to go well beyond the date you submit your application.

It is highly recommended that all members complete their enrollment forms and send them in as soon as possible, instead of waiting until the new deadline.

Bill Judge & Associates, Inc. has

been working on alternatives for eligible members to submit their enrollments now. While sending or collecting the information over the internet and via email is an instant option that is available to you now, we feel that using only electronic means of communication would take business away from the USPS, and ultimately, the NRLCA and YOU as a member.

Every regular and PTF rural carrier member of the NRLCA will receive a brochure and enrollment form in the mail before February 1st, 2010.

If you would like to enroll earlier, please visit [www.bja-associationbenefits.com](http://www.bja-associationbenefits.com), and click on the Long Term Disability & Term Life Insurance link on the top of the page. This page contains information regarding these voluntary benefits, and a link to enroll now.

*If you would like to enroll earlier, please visit [www.bja-associationbenefits.com](http://www.bja-associationbenefits.com), and click on the Long Term Disability & Term Life Insurance link on the top of the page.*

**Important reminder:** During the 2009 Long Term Disability & Life Insurance Open Enrollment, the life insurance that is being offered is on a guaranteed issue basis. There are no health questions or exams needed. If you choose not to enroll during this time, but wish to apply for life insurance in the future, evidence of insurability will be required. Please take the time now to evaluate your and your family's life insurance needs.

## Contract (from Page 8)

at the carrier's option, provided the time taken does not exceed thirty (30) minutes. Segments may be taken in the office or on the route, provided the normal schedule is maintained to the extent possible. The parties agree that the lunch time taken by the carrier is not compensable.

3. Rural carrier craft employees may be permitted to travel a reasonable distance off their prescribed line of travel to and from an authorized lunch stop.

### G. Scheduling

Scheduling is the responsibility of the Employer. Schedules shall be realistic, based upon the receipt and availability of the mail, the route evaluation, and other related service considerations. The rural carrier will receive reasonable advance notice when the schedule is to be changed. When the Employer changes the relief day of the regular carrier in accordance with Article 9.2.C.5.d.(2) and 9.2.C.5.e., the carrier will receive notice of the change no later than the Saturday of the service week preceding the effective week of the change.

### H. Acts of God

When Acts of God prevent an employee from performing the employee's duty, the Employer may authorize administrative leave. Equipment Maintenance Allowance will be paid for each service day a rural carrier reports to the post office and is scheduled to perform delivery. If the carrier fails to serve all or any portion of the route due to lack of proper endeavor or any failure for which the carrier is responsible, appropriate deductions from salary and Equipment Maintenance Allowance will be made based on miles omitted.

### I. Turning in Mail and Funds

Rural carriers will turn in all mail and funds upon their return from the route. Normally, the Employer will arrange for hand-to-hand transfer of accountability. However, the Employer may provide other suitable methods for relieving the carrier of accountability. In either event, the rural carrier's liability shall be determined as specified in Article 28, Employer Claims.

### J. Carrier's Rights in Route Adjustments

The regular rural carrier assigned to the route shall be notified in advance of any route adjustments and afforded the opportunity to submit comments in writing. The comments will be considered as a factor when such adjustments are under consideration and before any decision is made. Substantial route adjustments must be approved at a level higher than the installation and, if requested in writing, will be reviewed at the district level, except for adjustments to avoid actual work hours in excess of 2,080 during the guarantee period.

### K. Affixing Stamps

During the month of December, the rural carrier shall not be required to affix stamps to letter mail and greeting cards placed in a rural box for collection. During the remainder of the year, every effort shall be made to urge rural customers to affix stamps to letter mail. The rural carrier shall not be required to affix stamps to more than a reasonable number of pieces of letter-size mail from a box.

### L. Roster of Customers

When the rural carrier is required to maintain a roster of customers, this roster shall be maintained, at the carrier's option, on either a loose-leaf binder form on a card index form.

### M. Driver Certification

When an employee in the rural carrier craft is required to be absent from duty to receive Vehicle Familiarization and Safe Operation Certification, the carrier shall be in a pay status and shall not be charged with leave for the day. The Employer's current national policy on the use of seat belts by rural carriers will be continued unless changed pursuant to the provisions of this Agreement.

### O. Identification Badges

Identification badges are issued for security control of access to postal premises and operations and to identify individuals as Postal Service employees. An identification badge shall be provided to each rural carrier to be displayed on the outer garment over the left breast during official duty hours. When this is not practicable, the identification badge is worn in plain view on the belt or as prescribed by the installation head.

### P. Other Route Assignments

A regular rural carrier shall not be required to serve all or part of any rural route other than his or her assigned route except as provided in



**STATE STEWARD WAYNE HARRISON (center), was joined by assistant state stewards (from left) William "Bill" Gilliom, Roger Robinson, Tom Sisk and John Bradley for a question-and-answer session following the Fall Board Meeting.**

ELM, Section 546.

### Provisions for Part-time Flexible Rural Carriers, Substitutes, Rural Carrier Associates, Rural Carrier Relief Employees and Auxiliary Rural Carriers.

#### A. Appointments

1. Rural carrier associates (RCAs) are selected by the Employer from a register of eligibles established as the result of an open competitive examination, except that the Employer may appoint a former regular carrier in accordance with Memorandum of Understanding #10 on page 66. RCAs shall be appointed only to fill leave replacement vacancies on regular routes or auxiliary routes as defined in Article 30.2.F.1. In addition, a part-time flexible rural carrier may be appointed as an RCA provided there is a leave replacement vacancy in the office in which the part-time flexible rural carrier seeks appointment. The part-time flexible rural carrier must resign his or her career position at least six (6) days prior to the effective date of the RCA appointment.

2. The Employer shall make every effort to expeditiously fill leave replacement vacancies when they occur. Regular rural carriers shall have the right to require that a leave replacement be assigned to their route.

3. The establishment of a part-time flexible rural carrier assignment is at the discretion of the Employer. There is no requirement to establish such assignments. If the employer decides to establish a part-time flexible rural carrier assignment, it shall be posted at the post office, including stations and branches, for all substitute rural carriers and RCAs that have completed their probationary period. **The posted notice shall clearly state the method(s) to be used for eligible rural carriers to submit bids, e.g., written, telephone, computer and/or other automated method. Where the Postal Service has implemented telephone, computer or other automated bidding, it is mandatory that rural carriers submit the required bidding information, using their Employee Identification Number and the bidding method stated on the posting.** The notice shall state that a part-time flexible rural carrier cannot decline conversion to regular status. The notice shall be posted for ten (10) calendar days. **Bids may only be withdrawn during the 10 day posting period. (See Memorandum of Understanding #18, page 71 and Memorandum of Understanding #7, page 61.)**

a. The assignment will be awarded to the substitute rural carrier applicant having accrued the longest period of continuous service as a substitute rural carrier and auxiliary route carrier in that office, unless another substitute rural carrier is deemed to be substantially better qualified. Such continuous service is that which occurred immediately prior to the appointment.

(See DUTIES, Page 16)

## Duties

### (From Page 15)

b. If the vacant part-time flexible rural carrier assignment still exists, it shall be awarded to the non-probationary RCA applicant having accrued the longest period of continuous service as an RCA in that office, unless another RCA is deemed to be substantially better qualified.

c. **Should a substitute or RCA on the rolls (non-pay status) pursuant to Article 16.4, be awarded a bid under Article 30.2.A.3, (including district postings) the RCA's or substitute's conversion to career status will be processed after disposition of the employee's case either by settlement with the Union or through exhaustion of the grievance-arbitration procedure, provided the employee is returned to the rural carrier craft. The effective date of any such employee's conversion to career status will be the pay period of the employee's return to work unless otherwise indicated in the disposition of the employee's case.**

d. The posted assignment shall be awarded within ten (10) days. The employee shall be placed in the new assignment within twenty-one (21) days of being designated the successful bidder.

e. If the vacant part-time flexible assignment still exists, post the vacancy, **using the posting criteria as outlined in item 3 above**, within ten (10) days for all part-time flexible rural carriers, substitutes and non-probationary RCAs within the district. The notice shall be posted for fifteen (15) days at each office within the district. Bids may only be withdrawn during the 15-day posting period.

f. The order of consideration shall be the same as stated in subsections a. and b. above and awarding the assignment shall be the same as stated in subsections c. and d. above.

g. **If the part-time flexible rural carrier assignment was not filled as a result of the district posting referenced above, management may fill the assignment in accordance with Handbook EL-312, Employment and Placement. This includes, but is not limited to, the reassignment of a qualified regular rural carrier, part-time flexible rural carrier, substitute or RCA.**

### B. Probationary Period (See also Article 12.1)

1. The probationary period for a rural carrier associate shall be 90 days actually worked or one calendar year, whichever comes first. All other applicable provisions of Article 12.1, shall apply.

2. A change from rural carrier associate to regular mail carrier shall not interrupt or otherwise change the running of the time counted toward completion of the probationary period.

3. A change from substitute or rural carrier associate to part-time flexible rural carrier shall not require a new probationary period.

4. A change from substitute, rural carrier associate, or part-time flexible rural carrier to regular carrier shall not require a new probationary period.

5. A change from rural carrier relief employee to rural carrier associate shall not require a new probationary period.

**6. A change from part-time flexible rural carrier to rural carrier associate shall not require a new probationary period.**

**7. A change from regular rural carrier to rural carrier associate shall not require a new probationary period.**

**8. A change from regular rural carrier to part-time flexible rural carrier shall not require a new probationary period.**

### C. Assignment to or Utilization on More Than One Regular Route

1. Part-time flexible rural carriers may be assigned as the primary leave replacement on more than one regular route. The part-time flexible may also be utilized on any regular route where the primary leave replacement is not available and any auxiliary route where the assigned leave replacement is not available.

2. When necessary or desirable, a substitute, rural carrier associate, or rural carrier relief employee who is assigned to one route may be utilized on up to three routes. However, the employee's prime responsibility is to the assigned route.

3. Not more than one part-time flexible rural carrier, substitute, rural carrier associate, or rural carrier relief employee will be assigned for each regular rural route.

4. When a regular rural carrier is on extended leave without pay for National Rural Letter Carriers' Association official business, the person serving the route of such a rural carrier shall be entitled to a leave replacement.

### D. Unavailability of a Leave Replacement

1. A leave replacement assignment list showing the primary leave replacements assigned to each route and the second and third leave replacements to be utilized on each route, if any, will be posted in each office. Qualified substitutes, rural carrier associates, and rural carrier relief employees will be designated as the second and third leave replacements for each route based on the longest period of continuous service in the office. In no instance will these employees be shown as leave replacements on more than three routes on the assignment list.

2. Whenever the leave replacement assigned to serve a route is temporarily unavailable or no leave replacement is assigned to the route, the Employer may require a part-time flexible rural carrier to serve the route prior to requiring those substitutes, rural carrier associates, or rural carrier relief employees who are the second or third leave replacements designated for that route on the leave replacement assignment list.

3. If the second and third leave replacements designated for the route are unavailable, and a part-time flexible rural carrier has not been designated to serve the route, the route shall be assigned to qualified substitutes, rural carrier associates, or rural carrier relief employees assigned to that delivery unit in the order of the longest period of continuous service in the office. Qualified is defined for Subsection D.1. and 3. As having received training on or been utilized on the route.

Delivery unit is defined for this purpose as a physical location containing one or more five digit zip codes under the control of one postmaster or station/branch manager. This does not include annexes, stations or branches under the control of a different postmaster or station/branch manager.

4. If no qualified substitutes, rural carrier associates, or rural carrier relief employees within the delivery unit are available, the Employer may designate any other leave replacement prior to selecting a regular rural carrier to work in accordance with Article 8.5.

5. In emergencies, when the services of a substitute, rural carrier associate, or rural carrier relief employee are not available, another qualified employee may be designated by the Employer.

### E. Filling a Leave Replacement Vacancy

1. When a vacancy occurs in the leave replacement ranks, management may add it to a part-time flexible rural carrier's assignment or it shall be offered, at the time of the initial vacancy, to qualified substitutes, rural carrier associates, and rural carrier relief employees in that office in the order of the longest period of continuous service in the office, without regard to classification. If the vacancy continues to exist and the route has been substantially changed (i.e., classification, relief day, or assignment of vehicle) or the regular carrier assigned to the route has been on an extended absence for more than 30 calendar days, the assignment(s) shall be offered again to qualified substitutes, rural carrier associates, and rural carrier relief employees in the office in the order of the longest period of continuous service in the office, without regard to classification.

2. If a part-time flexible rural carrier vacancy exists, the Employer will have the option of eliminating the part-time flexible rural carrier position or posting the assignment in accordance with Article 30.2.A.3.

### F. Reassignment (Transfer) to Another Office

1. A substitute, rural carrier associate, or rural carrier relief employee, who has completed the probationary period and then submits a written request for reassignment, may be reassigned from one office to another, provided a vacancy exists in the leave replacement ranks in the office to which reassignment is requested. A vacancy exists if a regular route does not have an assigned leave replacement or the only route in the office is an auxiliary route and there is no assigned leave replacement. Such reassignment shall be considered an in-service placement.

2. When a regular rural route is transferred from one office to another, the substitute, rural carrier associate, or rural carrier relief employee designated to serve the route being transferred shall be privileged to transfer with the route to the new office. If the employee transfers with the route, the transferring employee retains seniority gained at the original office, and the employee's seniority is merged with the seniority of all substitutes, rural carrier associates, and rural carrier relief employees assigned to the same finance number in the new office.

### G. Filling an Auxiliary Route

1. In offices where it becomes necessary to change the relief day of one or more regular routes in accordance with Article 9.2.C.5.b., all auxiliary routes will be six-day assignments. Those substitutes, RCAs, and RCRs assigned to auxiliary routes and continuing to serve as the primary leave replacement on the assigned regular route, must make an election



to serve the auxiliary route six days per week or to relinquish the auxiliary route and serve as a leave replacement. This election must be effective within 30 days of the date on which the Employer implements the formula outlined in Article 9.2.C.5.b.

a. If the employee elects to continue to serve as the leave replacement on the assigned regular route, the auxiliary route will be filled in accordance with Article 30.2.G.2.

b. If the employee elects to serve the auxiliary route six days per week, any relinquished leave replacement assignment shall be filled in accordance with Article 30.2.E.1. The residual leave replacement vacancy shall be filled by a temporary relief carrier.

c. If the employee elects to serve the auxiliary route six days per week, the employee will not serve on any other auxiliary route or as a leave replacement on any regular route.

d. The employee assigned to an auxiliary route may accept a subsequent leave replacement vacancy in accordance with Article 30.2.E. However, upon accepting another leave replacement assignment, the employee will relinquish the route.

2. When an auxiliary route is to be filled, the route will be offered to qualified substitutes, rural carrier associates, and rural carrier relief employees in the order of the longest continuous period of service at that office, without regard to classification.

3. In offices that have changed the relief days of one or more regular routes in accordance with Article 9.2.C.5.b., upon accepting an auxiliary route assignment, the employee must relinquish the leave replacement assignment and serve on the auxiliary route six days per week. The relinquished leave replacement assignment shall be filled in accordance with Article 30.2.E.1. If the residual leave replacement vacancy is not assigned to a part-time flexible rural carrier, it shall be filled by a temporary relief carrier.

4. In offices that have not changed the relief days of one or more regular routes in accordance with Article 9.2.C.5.b., upon accepting an auxiliary route assignment, the employee must make an election to serve the auxiliary route six days per week or continue to serve the auxiliary route and only on the assigned regular route as the primary leave replacement. An employee serving the auxiliary route and serving on the assigned regular route as the primary leave replacement may subsequently elect to serve the auxiliary route six days, if mutually agreeable to the carrier and the installation head. Upon this election Article 30.2.G.1.b. and c. will apply. An employee serving the auxiliary route six days may accept a subsequent leave replacement vacancy in accordance with Article 30.2.E. However, upon accepting a leave replacement vacancy, the employee will only serve on the assigned auxiliary route and as the primary leave replacement on the assigned regular route.

5. When the leave replacement assigned to serve the auxiliary route is unavailable, the Employer may require a part-time flexible rural carrier to serve the route or the assignment shall be offered to other substitutes, rural carrier associates, and rural carrier relief employees in the office in the order of the longest period of continuous service in that office, without regard to classification. If there are none available, the Employer shall select a temporary relief carrier or another qualified person to serve the auxiliary route.

6. When an auxiliary route is created in part or in whole from territory formerly served by another post office and no substitute, rural carrier associate, or rural carrier relief employee is available in the office from which the auxiliary route emanates, the route will be offered to the substitute, rural carrier associate, or rural carrier relief employee in the office from which the territory was taken in accordance with Article 30.2.G.2. The substitute, rural carrier associate, or rural carrier relief employee shall then be transferred to the new office where the auxiliary route was created.

7. When a substitute, rural carrier associate, or rural carrier relief employee is assigned to an auxiliary route and the employee's assigned regular route becomes vacant or the regular carrier is on extended absence, the employee must either select the auxiliary route assignment or the assignment on the regular route. If the employee elects to serve full-time on the assigned regular route, the election shall not be effective until (and may be revoked by the employee prior to) the 91st day of the employee's full-time regular route assignment, at which time the auxiliary route assignment shall be relinquished and then offered to other employees in accordance with Article 30.2.G.2. If the employee elects to continue to serve on the auxiliary route rather than serve full-time on the regular route, (or revokes an election to serve full-time on the regular route prior to the effective date), the employee shall relinquish the primary

leave replacement assignment at the end of the next full pay period, and the leave replacement vacancy shall be offered to other employees in accordance with Article 30.2.G.2. Upon relinquishing the primary leave replacement assignment, the employee shall accept another primary leave replacement vacancy in accordance with Article 30.2.G.4. If the office subsequently reassigns relief days in accordance with Article 9.2.C.5.b., the employee will be required to serve the auxiliary route full-time.

#### **H. Relief Day on Vacant J and K Routes**

When a substitute, rural carrier associate, or rural carrier relief employee is serving full-time on a vacant route or during the absence of the regular carrier, a relief day shall be granted, in the case of a J route or a K route, if requested by the employee and if a leave replacement is available, or if required by local management.

#### **I. Excess Substitute, RCA, and RCR Determination**

In the event a rural route at an office is eliminated for any reason, the determination of the excess employee shall be made in the following manner:

1. If there is a temporary relief carrier (TRC) serving as a leave replacement on a regular or auxiliary route in the office, that assignment will be offered to the substitute, RCA, or RCR whose route was eliminated.

2. If there are no such assignments available, and there are RCRs in the office, the RCR with the shortest period of continuous service in their position in the office shall be terminated.

3. If there are no RCRs in the office, the substitute or the RCA with the shortest period of continuous service in their position in the office shall be terminated.

#### **J. Financial Liability**

A part-time flexible rural carrier, substitute, rural carrier associate, rural carrier relief employee, or auxiliary carrier shall have any financial liability determined in accordance with Article 28, Employer Claims.

#### **K. Non-Discrimination**

Article 2 shall apply to part-time flexible rural carriers, substitutes, rural carrier associates, rural carrier relief employees and auxiliary carriers.

#### **L. Benefits for Substitutes**

Articles 10 and 21 shall apply to substitute rural carriers only to the extent of maintaining their current benefit levels, if any, except as provided in Article 10.5.

#### **M. Discipline Procedure**

Article 16, except for the day of reflection, shall apply to part-time flexible rural carriers, substitute rural carriers, rural carrier associates, and rural carrier relief employees.

In addition to the provisions of Article 16, the following actions shall constitute just cause for removal of rural carrier associates and rural carrier relief employees: repeated unavailability for work, failure to maintain the regular schedule within reasonable limits, delay of mail, and failure to perform satisfactorily in the office.

#### **N. Grievance-Arbitration**

Part-time flexible rural carriers, substitutes, rural carrier associates, rural carrier relief employees, and auxiliary rural carriers shall have access to Article 15, Grievance and Arbitration Procedure, to appeal an alleged violation of the applicable provisions of Article 30 or the applicable provisions of any other Articles in which they specifically named.

#### **O. Leave Replacement Working Evaluated Hours**

When a substitute, rural carrier associate, or rural carrier relief employee assigned to a route is working the route as a leave replacement or serving full time on a vacant route, or where the carrier is on extended leave, the employee is entitled to work at least the evaluated hours of the assigned route and then may be replaced to avoid payment of overtime or additional overtime. A part-time flexible rural carrier is only entitled, on a weekly basis, to a combination of leave and evaluated hours equal to the total of one day's evaluation of each of the assigned primary routes. A part-time flexible rural carrier may not use leave to generate overtime.

#### **P. Sunday Work**

An office-wide list will be established for substitutes, rural carrier associates, and rural carrier relief employees who desire to work on Sunday. When there is a need to work leave replacements on Sunday, the Employer may require a part-time flexible rural carrier work prior to selecting qualified employees from the list. The Employer will make every reasonable effort to avoid requiring substitutes, RCAs, and RCRs not on the list to work.

## Free classified ads for members of this Association

### FOR SALE

**Used overhead sign** with lights \$45 plus postage or best offer; 434-973-3404 (2)

**Two 1991 Subaru Legacy RHDs**, both run and drive great, both AWD, have great heat and AC; 205K on one, 157K on the other; must sell quickly, \$6,000 for both or best offer; 540-874-4906 (2)

**2000 Jeep Cherokee RHD** good condition; 96K miles; route assigned LLV; \$5,000 or best offer; for more information call Wendy cell 540-335-3057 or home 540-459-4092 (2)

**1977 DJ5D Postal Jeep**, \$2495. Route ready, runs great. Many like-new parts. Extra parts. Possess title. Call Ron at 540-562-4359 for additional info (1)

**2000 Jeep Cherokee FACI RHD**. Central VA. 6-cylinder, 4-door, power windows, AC. 74,000 original miles. Mail tray, cruise control, AM/FM/cassette/CD. 5 new tires. Well-maintained. \$8,300. 434-906-5339 (1)

**1983 RHD Postal Jeep**, 4-cylinder, rebuilt engine w/less than 1K, new rear brakes, tires, exhaust. Extra tires & parts. Rte. ready w/lights, back-up alarm, sign & radio. Very good condition. Located in Virginia. \$2,300. 540-471-7972 (1)

**2008 RHD Jeep Wrangler**, 24K, excellent condition, \$20,000. Also, **2005 RHD Jeep Wrangler**, 48K, \$12,000. Both white with hard top and half doors for easy delivery. One owner. 540-570-0201 or email 2ndnature@ntelos.net (1)

### MUTUAL TRANSFERS

From beautiful Shenandoah Valley (Churchville P.O.) to any beach location in NC or VA. 42K route, 32 mi. Small, friendly, post office. Email: rosemary.martin@rocketmail.com (1)

### RELIEF CARRIERS SEEKING MORE WORK

Relief carriers seeking additional work may list their names and phone numbers in this column. However, they must remember their first obligation is always to the route on which they are Sub-of-Record. Additionally, postal managers must first utilize relief carriers on their office's matrix.

Name	Offices Near	Phone
Carl L. Suthers	Dublin	276-620-7328
Ron Knott	Roanoke	540-562-4359
Crystall Sadler	Christiansburg	540-230-9067

#### Need to buy or sell a vehicle?

Want to transfer to another office?

Relief carriers: Seeking more work?

This association offers free advertisement to members. Send items for this column to:

Debbie Hearn  
6846 Crescent Ridge Court  
Bealeton, VA 22712  
Phone: 540-219-2995  
Fax: 540-439-8252

Email: rural\_editor@comcast.net

For Sale ads automatically run twice (unless renewed or canceled)  
Mutual transfer ads run three times (unless renewed or canceled)



### VEHICLE SIGNS

"CAUTION FREQUENT STOPS - U.S. MAIL" rear magnetic signs, \$18; rear fiberboard signs, \$12; magnetic door protector, \$18; overhead sign with lights, \$90; strobe light, \$80. Postage is included in all prices, and all prices are subject to change without notice. These items may be ordered by sending a check or money order made

payable to:

Debbie Atwell

VARLCA Secretary-Treasurer  
11100 Maiden Creek Road  
Abingdon, VA 24210

## Hot Mail

Members wishing to receive HOT MAIL via email may send their email addresses to: Debbie Hearn, editor at rural\_editor@comcast.net

For membership verification purposes only, please include your name and address as it appears on this publication's mailing label.

If you are currently receiving HOT MAIL and wish to be removed from the list, please advise the editor.

HOT MAILs that have been returned as "undeliverable" will be removed from the list after the third attempt.

### HOT MAIL address update requested

Since October 1, at least four HOT MAILs have been distributed to those members who have provided their email addresses to the editor.

Attempts to email several members on this list have been returned as "undeliverable" for various reasons.

If you provided your email address and have not received a recent HOT MAIL (since October 1), please update your information by emailing Debbie Hearn, editor at rural\_editor@comcast.net.

STATE STEWARD WAYNE HARRISON presented his report to those in attendance at the Fall Board Meeting.



**UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE  
AUTHORIZATION FOR DEDUCTION OF DUES**

Mail this form to Debbie Atwell, VAR-  
CLA Secretary-Treasurer, at 11100  
Maiden Creek Road, Abingdon, VA,  
24210-9356

Revised  
NRLCA Form 1187  
2006

(SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER)

OR

(USPS EMPLOYEE ID NUMBER)

**RURAL CARRIER  
CLASSIFICATION**

Regular  PTF  Relief

LAST NAME

FIRST NAME

MI

MAILING ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP CODE

POSTAL INSTALLATION WHERE EMPLOYED

ZIP CODE OF INSTALLATION

INSTALLATION FINANCE NO.

**SECTION A - AUTHORIZATION BY EMPLOYEE**

I hereby assign to the **NATIONAL RURAL LETTER CARRIERS' ASSOCIATION**, from any salary or wages earned by me as your employee (in my present or any future employment by you) such regular and periodic membership dues as the union may certify as due and owing from me, as may be established from time to time by said Union. I authorize and direct you to deduct such amounts from my pay and to remit same to said Union at such times and in such manner as may be agreed upon between you and the Union at any time while this authorization is in effect.

This assignment, authorization and direction shall be irrevocable for a period of one (1) year from the date of delivery hereof to you, and I agree and direct that this assignment, authorization and direction shall be automatically renewed, and shall be irrevocable for successive periods of one (1) year, unless written notice is given by me to you and the Union not more than twenty (20) days and not less than ten (10) days prior to the expiration of each period of one year.

This assignment is freely made pursuant to the provisions of the Postal Reorganization Act and is not contingent upon the existence of any agreement between you and my Union.

Contributions or gifts (including dues) to the NRLCA are not tax deductible as charitable contributions. However, they may be deductible under other provisions of the Internal Revenue Code.

SIGNATURE OF EMPLOYEE

DATE

PHONE

**SECTION B - FOR USE BY STATE EMPLOYEE ASSOCIATION**

**R - NATIONAL RURAL LETTER CARRIERS' ASSOCIATION**

SIGNATURE OF ACCEPTING UNION OFFICIAL

DATE

I hereby certify that the dues of this organization for the above named member, for the

applicable designation, are currently established at \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per pay period.

STATE SECRETARY

LOC. #	STATE
DATE	REMIT #

**SECTION C - FOR USE BY THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION**

Date of Delivery to Employer (For National Office use)

ANNIVERSARY DATE TO BE USED  
AT USPS PERSONNEL OFFICE

Employee submits all copies to state secretary.

**Important!**  
Be Sure To Include  
Postal Installation ZIP  
CODE Where Indicated.

Original - NRLCA  
Copy 2 - NRLCA  
Copy 3 - State Copy

Mail this form to Debbie Atwell,  
VARCLA Secretary-Treasurer, at  
11100 Maiden Creek Road,  
Abingdon, VA, 24210-9356

Original - NRLCA

50012

Submit Original and Copy 2 to NRLCA Membership Department, State Retain Copy 3.



# 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**

### Weather (From Page 7)

with snow, sleet and other potential hazards. There will be days that the power will go out and we will have to improvise to get our jobs done. However, we must remember to do what we can to get the job done. The holiday season is coming and we all know that we will be delivering a lot of Christmas presents. These are some of the most important packages we deliver all year, other than medicines and medical supplies. Customers pay attention to us at this time more than any other. If they are expecting something, we better have it for them! They are counting on us to help make this time of year special for their families.

We must continue to set the pace and make every attempt to do our job, no matter what the conditions are. We must do the best job we can and show that we are dedicated and we know that their mail is important to them. This will help get the message out that we are a necessary service and should not be thought of as costing the government money. We need to do all that is possible to show we take pride in doing our job and will go to any length to do it well. This will help preserve the Postal Service as an essential company and dedicated to serving the public.

Be safe this fall and winter season with all the road and weather hazards out there. Have a wonderful, happy holiday season.

### In Memory

**J**ohn Cook, 79, of Danville, passed away in October 2009. He is the brother of Mrs. Wayne (Brenda) Harrison.



### Friends of the Book Clip & Send Coupon

Send to: Rural Heritage Book Fund  
c/o Cindy Chatneuff  
1743 White Rock Rd  
Floyd, VA 24091-3617

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Make Check/Money Order to: Rural Heritage Book Fund  
Donation Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Remember, the deadline for the next edition is February 1, 2010!**