

MOUND CITY CARRIER

Official Publication of Branch 343

2020 General Excellence
Award Winning Publication



St. Louis, Missouri
Chartered 1892

Volume 77, No. 7

"Diversity is our Strength and Unity is our Power"

July 2026

President's Article ... By John McLaughlin

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING CONFERENCE

President Renfroe enlightened branch presidents on the progress of negotiations on a new contract in Washington, D.C., June 1-3. Since our last contract expired on May 22 without a new agreement, we now enter into mediation until July 22. If, at the end of the 60-day mediation period there is a tentative agreement by the parties, the NALC will then mail it out for ratification from the membership. If there is no tentative agreement, we will then proceed to binding interest arbitration.

As negotiations for our next National Agreement (NA) progresses, President Renfroe has emphasized that economics will remain the primary focus. Approximately 85% of bargaining discussions center on wages and compensation. Before specific proposals can be developed, both parties will determine how much money is available to satisfy the union's economic priorities.

The discussion begins with the overall financial package and then moves to the priorities within that package. Key areas under consideration include:

- Increasing the starting salary, potentially beginning at a higher step.
- Reducing the waiting time between pay steps by reducing the time required to reach top pay.
- Increasing top-step compensation.
- Maintaining full cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) and extending COLA protection to all carriers.
- Eliminating the CCA classification and moving toward an all-career workforce.



ATTENTION!

Because of the NALC National Convention in Los Angeles, California, the week of August 3 through 7, **ALL** August meetings will move to the following days.

Retiree Meeting moved to **August 12.**

Shop Steward Meeting moved to **August 13.**

Regular Branch Meeting moved to **August 20.**

Historical contract costs provide some perspective. The 2016-2019 National Agreement cost approximately \$2.9 billion in wage increases and COLAs. The 2023-2026 Agreement cost approximately \$4.1 billion, although that figure did not include the cost of reducing CCAs from 43,000 down to 25,000 during that period. Preliminary discussions suggest the next agreement could approach \$5 billion if all the NALC economic improvements are secured.

Among the proposals receiving significant member support is reducing the time between pay steps from 46 weeks to 40 weeks. President Renfroe indicated that this change has been one of the most consistent requests received through member feedback.

The debate over career versus non-career employees remains central. While raising starting wages is generally less expensive for CCAs than for career employees, many members continue to advocate for eliminating the non-career workforce altogether. At the same time, retention of new hires remains a major concern. President Renfroe cited estimates that approximately 55% of new hires leave the Postal Service. Improving wages and working conditions could reduce this high turnover, which would also lower recruitment and training costs for the USPS while improving service.

The process of adjusting routes with relation to technology was discussed. The Postal Service continues to move toward more sophisticated route monitoring and evaluation technology. Pres. Renfroe noted that many of these technological changes could potentially be implemented unilaterally by management and that it would be better to join and monitor the adjustments of routes jointly.

Another topic generating discussion is the possibility of a four-day workweek consisting of four 10-hour days. NALC President Brian Renfroe indicated that management reacted favorably to the idea. A survey of approximately 1,300 members found that roughly 60% supported the idea, with younger carriers showing the strongest support.

However, significant concerns remain. Opponents point to the impact on carriers with medical restrictions, the increased physical strain of longer workdays, and concerns that routes would not be properly adjusted to 10 hours. Some members fear that 10-hour routes could quickly become 11-hour routes. Single parents and others with family obligations have also expressed a preference for maintaining traditional eight-hour schedules. T-6 assignments would consist of just two routes; two days on one route and the other two days on the other. The biggest problem with this proposal is that it would eliminate thousands of full-time assignments.

Members should also be aware of contractual language negotiated in the current NA. Article 8.5.G now provides additional protection regarding the 12-hour and 60-hour work limits. Under this language, carriers who reach those limits may leave work without fear of discipline and receive additional compensation automatically. Similar language concerning Article 8.5.F was reportedly very close to being finalized during the last round of negotiations and President Renfroe hopes to get this item agreed to by the USPS.

Additional improvements were made regarding signing the OTDL. Proposed language for newly converted full-time regular carriers would permit them to sign the OTDL during the two-weeks following their conversion. President Renfroe noted that many local branches had already negotiated procedures to accomplish this, but the new language standardizes the process nationally.

IF MEDIATION FAILS: INTEREST ARBITRATION

If the parties cannot reach a negotiated settlement, the dispute will proceed to interest arbitration. Unlike rights arbitration, which interprets existing contract language, interest arbitration establishes the terms of an entirely new contract.

The process originates from the Postal Reorganization Act and relies heavily on the principle of

comparability. Both NALC and USPS will present any evidence they believe supports their position. A three-member arbitration panel is assembled consisting of one member selected by NALC, one selected by USPS, and a neutral arbitrator.

The neutral arbitrator must consider all evidence presented by both parties. Unlike grievance arbitration, procedural disputes play little role. Negotiations may continue throughout the process, and settlements can still be reached before a final award is issued.

Preparation for interest arbitration is extensive. NALC's case typically includes testimony from letter carriers regarding the physical demands of the job, workplace hazards, exposure to crime, weather extremes, and management's lack of compliance with contractual obligations. Branch officers and stewards may also provide testimony concerning workplace realities and contract administration.

Expert witnesses play a critical role. Economic experts analyze wage trends, inflation, productivity increases, and compensation throughout the delivery industry. Studies examining the repetitive and physically demanding nature of letter carrier work are frequently introduced. The Postal Service presents its own experts, and both sides conduct extensive cross-examination.

Historically, the NALC has focused its arbitration efforts primarily on economic issues rather than work-rule changes. There are two major reasons for this approach. First, the union seeks to avoid trading away economic gains in exchange for non-economic changes. Second, arbitrators are generally reluctant to make detailed operational decisions about workplace procedures.

NOTICE: NOMINATIONS

Nominations for branch officers shall take place at the regular branch meeting on September 10, 2026. The term of office for branch officers shall be three years. Elections shall be held in November by mail ballot.

The selection of the neutral arbitrator is one of the most important early decisions. Both parties seek individuals whose decisions are predictable and whose understanding of postal operations is well established. Experienced postal arbitrators are often preferred because of their familiarity with the unique structure of the Postal Service and the collective bargaining relationship.

Ultimately, success in interest arbitration depends heavily on preparation. Economic evidence, wage comparisons, productivity data, inflation trends, and industry compensation studies form the foundation of the case. While compelling testimony from letter carriers helps illustrate the realities of the job, the economic arguments typically determine the outcome.

As negotiations move forward, members should expect the union's primary focus to remain on wages, career opportunities, and improvements that strengthen retention while protecting the value of letter carrier work.

Until next month, do your job safely and accurately. Show up to your union meeting — you might learn something. We don't write the rules; we just have to play the game. Sláinte

Armed, off-duty police security provided at every meeting at the Union Hall



MOVING?

WE NEED YOUR NEW ADDRESS!

If you have moved, please notify the branch office directly. Personnel does not notify us of your change of address.

Name _____
Address _____
City/State _____
Zip _____

MOUND CITY CARRIER
Published monthly by:
Branch 343, NALC
1600 South Broadway
St. Louis, MO 63104-3806

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Branch 343
1600 S. Broadway
St. Louis, MO 63104

Executive Vice President ... *By Brian Litteken*

POSTAL SERVICE NOT EXPECTED TO RUN OUT OF CASH NEXT YEAR

Last month, I wrote that President Renfro began his comments at the Committee of Presidents by verifying the financial crisis the Postal Service is experiencing. It was predicted that the USPS will run out of cash by February 2027. The Postal Service has stopped contributing to the defined portion of FERS for the rest of the fiscal year as a short-term fix.

The Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) agrees with this short-term fix. Robert G. Taub, the vice chairman of the PRC, told the Oversight Subcommittee on Government Operations that the suspension of payments to FERS "fundamentally alters the Postal Service's pronouncements that it could be out of cash in less than a year." Mr. Taub also testified that action holds off "the stated crisis of stopping mail delivery" for at least several years.

The PRC is not pleased with the results of USPS's 10-year plan, "Delivering for America." Robert Taub says "Delivering for America" has not stopped ongoing financial losses and has consistently slowed mail delivery, specifically in rural areas.

The PRC is also not pleased with USPS's request to increase the price of a first-class stamp to \$1. Ann C. Fisher, commissioner of the PRC stated,

"The commission cannot simply allow the Postal Service to price its way out of structural deficit without seriously eroding the very mail volumes that still fund the universal service." The PRC did agree to an increase in first-class stamps from 78 cents to 82 cents starting on July 12.

The PRC recommends more supervision over the USPS because of the increasing prices and increasing mail delivery time. Ashley E. Poling, commissioner of the PRC stated, "It is likely time for Congress to consider authorizing additional oversight to ensure the Postal Service meets its statutory obligations to the American people." The USPS has hired restructuring advisors Alvarez & Marsal to help address its financial troubles.



DOG BITE AWARENESS MONTH

June is dog bite awareness month. The prevalence of dog bites is high in St. Louis and Missouri. St. Louis is the sixth highest locality with dog bite incidents and Missouri is the eighth highest state. Attached below is a table of the ten highest cities and states.

2025 DOG BITE/DOG INCIDENT DATA

Ranking	City	Number of Incidents		Ranking	State	Number of Incidents
1	Los Angeles	70		1	California	673
2	Dallas	50		2	Texas	358
3	Denver	45		3	Ohio	287
4	Houston	44		4	New York	269
5	Chicago	43		5	Pennsylvania	267
6	St. Louis	40		6	Illinois	260
7	Indianapolis	35		7	Florida	183
8	San Diego	32		8	Missouri	182
9	San Antonio	31		9	Michigan	174
10	Cleveland	30		10	Indiana	159

Recording Secretary ... By Richard Brown

The Postal Service has preached to any news outlet that would listen concerning the budgetary crisis we are in, over the past six months or longer. They have suspended their contributions to the pension plan as a means to preserve cash. They have minimized the amount of overtime issued to those on the overtime list, just to have those not on the list complete the overtime. When the latter fails to get all mail delivered, they just don't deliver the mail at all.

Violating the contract by issuing overtime to those not on the list, was ordered in more places than just St. Louis. As most of you have figured out, there have been many grievances filed due to this violation. Yes, the union has been successful in the majority of these filings, getting carriers paid overtime and penalty pay. Those who are not on the list are granted administrative leave equal to the amount of overtime worked.

How does management's violation of the National Agreement in issuing overtime to those not on the list preserve cash? The simple answer is, it doesn't. It certainly adds to our budgetary crisis in the long run.

By the way, the Postal Service is not in imminent

danger of running out of cash.

That is the latest news from Postmaster General David Steiner. I would imagine that our recent fortune is due in part to the cuts the service has made (not contributing to our pension and minimizing overtime). Financial security is of great importance, but I'm sure there are other money wasting practices that the service is engaged in, which are not being addressed.



In other news, the NALC and the Postal Service did not reach an agreement on a new contract. However, the word is they did agree on some issues, but the financial package is our biggest hangup. Well, I heard that before and the end result regarding the money didn't pan out to be that great. One area of concern is the four 10-hour workdays. This would eliminate about 7,000 positions and the people will still exist. What happens there? I haven't found an answer yet. Nonetheless, I remain hopeful that the arbitrator will rule favorably toward the items we put forward. Meantime, do your job in the most professional manner possible and make every delivery, every day.

Who is Responsible!

The following stations were represented at the June Shop Stewards Meeting

Carrier Square	Mackenzie Pointe
Clayton	Maryville Gardens
Creve Coeur	Normandy
Des Peres	O'Fallon
Ferguson	Sappington
Gaffney	South County
Gravois	Southwest
Harriet Woods	West County
Jennings	



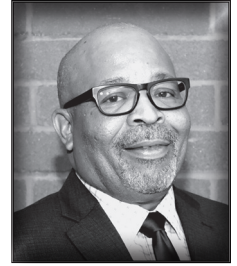
MARK YOUR CALENDAR

DON'T SIT ON THE SIDELINES ... GET INVOLVED!

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| July 9 | Regular Branch Meeting |
| July 12 | CSRS/FERS Retirement Seminar (see ad) |
| Aug. 3-7 | NALC National Convention, Los Angeles, California. |
| Aug. 12 | Retiree Meeting moved from Aug. 5 because of the National Convention |
| Aug. 13 | Shop Stewards Meeting moved from Aug. 6 because of the National Convention |
| Aug. 20 | Regular Branch Meeting moved from Aug. 13 because of the National Convention |

Vice President Financial Secretary ... *By Marvin Booker*

NALC CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS 2026: WHAT'S AT STAKE?



The NALC contract **expired at midnight on May 22**, without a new deal. Both sides are now in mandatory 60-day mediation. The existing contract remains in full force during that period — your pay and protections are unchanged. If mediation doesn't produce a deal by late July, the dispute moves to binding interest arbitration.

The NALC held its Collective-Bargaining Conference on June 2–3 in Washington, D.C. More than 250 branch and state association presidents attended. Day 1 covered the economics of the negotiations. Day 2 focused on NALC's potential arbitration case and proposed work rules changes — specifically Article 8 (Hours of Work) and Article 15 (Grievance-Arbitration Procedure).

Here's what's at stake and what we should be paying attention to.

WHAT THE LAST CONTRACT DELIVERED

The 2023-2026 agreement was widely criticized due to the fact it contained many items that were rejected by the rank and file in the tentative agreement. However, according to the NALC over its 36-month term, it delivered an average total increase of **19.5%** when you combine general wage increases, COLAs, and step increases. How that translates into real money was based on each individual's fact circumstances.

The Financial Elephant in the Room

The NALC walked into negotiations with a USPS management team that had just told Congress they lost \$9 billion last year and could run out of cash in less than 12 months. The postmaster general talked about raising stamp prices, cutting delivery days, and didn't rule out layoffs. This means management will push hard for cost containment, and hope if

negotiations go to arbitration, the arbitrator will weigh USPS's financial position.

KEY ISSUES TO WATCH

Wages and COLAs

The big question: Will the next contract be better than the last one? Who knows, given the financial pressure. But NALC must push hard to maintain full COLA protection — which APWU achieved in their 2024-2027 contract. Full COLA is the single most important pay protection against inflation, and carriers have had it for decades. Losing it would be a major concession.

Table 1 vs. Table 2 pay gap

The two-tier pay system remains a point of contention. Table 2 carriers (hired after 2013) top out significantly lower than Table 1 for the same work at the same step. While every contract narrows the gap slightly, it hasn't been eliminated. This must be a priority for the NALC, especially since Table 2 carriers make up the majority of the workforce.

CCA conversion and staffing

CCA conversion timelines, working conditions, and the balance between career and non-career staffing will be central issues. The postmaster general has said USPS is "moving toward more pre-career employees," which directly conflicts with NALC's push to convert CCAs to career faster or ultimately have an all-career workforce.

Overtime and scheduling

Mandatory overtime remains one of the biggest quality-of-life issues for carriers. The union must push for stronger protections regarding forced overtime, equitable distribution of hours, and limits on consecutive days worked. Management will resist anything that reduces scheduling flexibility.

Route evaluation and adjustments

With package volume shifting and mail volume declining, route structures continue to change. How routes are evaluated, adjusted, and consolidated will affect carrier workload and earnings. If 10 hours a day, four days a week delivery becomes a real possibility, route structures and pay would need to be completely rethought.

Safety and working conditions.

Dog attacks, extreme weather protocols, vehicle conditions, and scanner-based surveillance are perennial issues. The rise of package delivery has changed the physical demands of the job — heavier loads, more stops, more apartment access issues. The union must push for stronger safety language. We need more solutions to dog attacks than dumb ass, racists rap videos.

TIMELINE: WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

Under the Railway Labor Act process that governs USPS labor relations, here's the general timeline:

Bargaining phase (now through contract expiration) Both sides exchange proposals and negotiate. We are past this point!

If there is no agreement: A mandatory 60-day mediation period will follow, as required by statute. Either side can request mediation through the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS). If mediation fails, the dispute goes to binding interest arbitration.

If it goes to arbitration: A neutral arbitrator (or panel) issues a binding decision on all unresolved issues. This has happened multiple times in NALC history. The last arbitrated contract was the 2013-2016 agreement (the Das Award).

If an agreement is reached: It goes to NALC members for ratification vote.

This is the contract that will define carrier pay and working conditions for the next three years — it's worth following closely.

Until next time, stay safe and be professional.

CSRS/FERS RETIREMENT SEMINAR

SUNDAY, JULY 12, 2026

10 A.M. TILL 2:30 P.M.

LETTER CARRIERS' HALL
1600 S. BROADWAY
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI 63104

ALL MEMBERS AND SPOUSES WELCOME

Training will be conducted by
former National Business Agent Mike Weir

**Please RSVP to Mike Weir
at 314-348-8722**

Lunch will be provided

BRANCH LEGAL PLAN

Advice and Consultation on
General Practice and Civil Actions.



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Health Benefits Plan/OWCP ... By Barry Linan

Warm July greetings to all of the brothers and sisters of NALC Branch 343. This summer is going to be hot, so every carrier needs to take the necessary time to work your assignment **safely** and **accurately!** You owe it to yourself and your family to work **safely**. Don't be bullied by management into working unsafely in extreme heat. You have a right to take extra comfort stops to cool down as needed. As Richard says, **"water, rest, shade!"** You also owe it to our customers to **accurately** deliver the mail. Don't be bullied by management into running off your route and misdelivering mail. You should always verify the name and address of each mail piece before delivery. **We need the support of our customers to preserve a future USPS and a customer that constantly gets misdelivered mail is not likely to support us later on!**

HBP NEWS

I wrote last month about the **"Wellness and Other Special Features"** section beginning on page 100 of our 2026 HBP brochure. Take advantage of the many **"Wellness"** programs that the NALC HBP offers at no cost to you and your covered family members. A member recently asked me how to get a no cost glucometer and test strips for diabetes care. I referred him to the **"Transform Care" diabetes management care program on page 101**. You can enroll in this program to get a connected glucometer, unlimited test strips, unlimited lancets, medication therapy counseling from a pharmacist, two annual diabetes screenings at a CVS Minute Clinic, and a suite of digital resources through the CVS mobile app. All of these are available to you at **no cost** by enrolling with CVS Caremark at 855-238-3622.

OWCP NEWS

As I have previously noted, you can file your injury claim in writing by requesting a Form CA-1 from your supervisor or by creating an ECOMP account with the DOL (Department of Labor) and then filing your Form CA-1 online there. To file online you would first need to set up an account with a user name and password at **ecomp.dol.gov**. If you have already filed a written claim with your supervisor, **do not file a duplicate**

Form CA-1 claim on ECOMP as it will cause confusion and the DOL will likely process it as second new claim.

Next per **ELM 544.111 f**, your supervisor is responsible for the **"Prompt completion and forwarding of Form CA-1 or CA-2 to the control office or control point on the same day it is received from the employee."** The supervisor must complete their portion of the Form CA-1 and then send it to their HRM Injury Comp (control office) along with any medical received and any other information pertaining to your injury. Also, per **ELM 544.12** the supervisor must **"provide the employee a copy of the completed Form CA-1"** and **"advise the employee whether COP will be controverted and whether pay will be interrupted."**

You will not immediately receive a claim number from the DOL. If you filed your claim online thru ECOMP, a temporary ECN # will be assigned to your claim and you should see a notice on ECOMP that your claim is **"pending review by supervisor."** Once the completed Form CA-1 is received by the DOL, they will assign your claim a permanent number (ex. 5506XXXXX). The HRM Injury Comp (control office) has 10 days to send it to DOL **Once received, all future communications with DOL and billing for medical treatment needs to reference that claim number.** Once your claim number is assigned, you will be able to directly upload documents to your claim on ECOMP by using your name, claim number, birthdate, and date of injury. When uploading documents to ECOMP, **it's best to scan the documents to your home computer as a pdf file first and then upload that pdf file to ECOMP.** Taking pictures of documents with your cell phone will work, but uploading those jpeg pictures to ECOMP can sometimes become unreadable. After uploading documents to ECOMP, verify they are received and readable by selecting the appropriate case (claim) number and then **"case imaging"** to review all of the documents in your case file. Keep in mind that it will usually take a day for those new documents that you just uploaded to appear in your file. More on ECOMP next month!



Notes from the Managing Editor ... By Tom Schulte

VOTER FRAUD RAMPANT — STATISTICS PROVE OTHERWISE



Despite the fraudulent claims from the current administration concerning blatant voter fraud in the 2020 and 2024 elections, 73 cases that were brought before federal courts across the country were summarily dismissed in every court because not a shred of evidence was presented.

Evidence be damned, the president issued an executive order in March which aims to severely limit mail-in ballots nationwide. This order gives the Postal Service new responsibilities outside of its constitutionally mandated operations. The order grants USPS the authority to reject and refuse delivery of ballots unless states comply with newly established federal eligibility lists. The order tasks the Department of Homeland Security with building these state lists of American citizens.

As a quasi-federal agency of the federal government the USPS is governed by a bipartisan board of governors which has the power to appoint the postmaster general and exercise postal power. It cannot regulate elections or refuse to carry state-issued mail ballot envelopes at the direction of the president. The president's order is in direct conflict with the Postal Service's mission.

In fact, the Postal Service delivered nearly 100,000,000 ballots for the November 2024 general election and took extraordinary measures to ensure timely delivery of election mail in 2024. It will need to take action in the 2026 election cycle to again ensure timely delivery of election mail, including state-issued mail ballot envelopes.

The president's action has prompted Congress to intervene and introduced the "Absentee and Mail Voter Protection Act," (S.4369). This legislation notes that the Constitution of the United States clearly demonstrates that the power to make or alter any regulations regarding the time, place, and manner of elections lies with the Congress of the United States, not the president.

All 50 states, including the District of Columbia allow absentee voting. More than 28,000,000 Americans voted by mail or absentee ballot in 2016, over 66,000,000 in 2020 during the COVID pandemic, and over 48,000,000 Americans voted by mail in the 2024

general elections. The president has voted by mail on at least three occasions by his own admission, including in New York in 2018, Florida in 2020, and again in Florida in 2026.

Is voter fraud rampant? The Brookings Institute a non-profit think tank that conducts nonpartisan research investigated the accusations of the Heritage Foundation a right-wing think tank famous for pulling together the controversial Project 2025, which detailed evidence of alleged widespread election fraud in the United States.

Scrolling through the Heritage database at first glance offers the impression that there's a lot of fraud, but a more careful look reveals just the opposite. Heritage staff had to go back decades in time where there have been hundreds of millions of votes cast and found a very small number of cases, none of which affected election outcomes.

The reported cases of fraud over the last 13 to 38 years is less than 0.00001%.

	Years Analyzed	# of Elections	Total Ballots	Report Fraud Cases	Percentile
Arizona	25	36	42,626,379	36	0.0000845%
Georgia	27	34	62,742,598	23	0.0000355%
Michigan	17	26	64,520,604	19	0.0000294%
Nevada	13	14	8,506,824	8	0.0000940%
N. Carolina	38	39	81,677,000	58	0.0000710%
Pennsylvania	30	31	100,526,098	39	0.0000388%
Wisconsin	20	28	45,329,695	69	0.0001522%

As the table indicates, there were a handful of reported cases of fraud amongst millions of ballots cast, and none of them shifted the election outcome.

The president has long sought to restrict mail-in voting following his loss in 2020. He has repeatedly claimed, without providing evidence, that the election was stolen from him due to fraud in mail-in voting. Evidence proves otherwise.

Region 5 NBA Report ... *By David A. Teegarden*

HEAT SAFETY

We are in that time of the year when you hear service talks about the heat, drinking water, Gatorade, eating correctly and taking breaks to protect yourself from the heat. The problem is that service talk is usually followed by a conversation at your case where local management states you have undertime. The service gives you these service talks during the hottest part of the year, but they send a mixed message daily when they tell you to hurry up and be safe. Speeding up, cutting corners, taking shortcuts with safety puts your life and your livelihood in jeopardy. Inattention or, "I was in a hurry," is the number one reason employees get injured. Make sure you protect yourself. If you need to get in the shade or air-conditioning to rest, do it! If you are exhibiting any of the signs of heat illness, call someone. Do not try and be a hero and finish your route. Heat stress is cumulative on your body. Pushing yourself across the finish line today may result in an injury you cannot recover from tomorrow. Do what you need to do to protect yourself and ensure that you return home safely for you and your family's sake.

NATIONAL CONVENTION

The 74th Biennial National Convention will be held in Los Angeles, California, August 3-7. Delegates will have the opportunity to attend training sessions on a wide variety of issues before and after the general sessions. Southwest Airlines is offering discounted airfare via a link on the NALC Convention webpage. Delegates will vote on amendments and resolutions that affect the NALC Constitution and official NALC collective bargaining positions. Most questions can be answered simply by going to NALC.org on the 2026 Convention page, but if you can't find what you're looking for, give us a call. Hope to see you all there.

ROUTE ADJUSTMENTS

My May report discussed route inspections including 271.G inspections. It has come to our attention that management individuals in the KS-MO District have taken the position that there should be no 271.G inspections due to low mail volume. Instructions have been sent to local management teams to try and break the six-week cycle for qualification for these type inspections and adjustment. In many cases the service has skipped over or, worse, intentionally ignored contractual language and adjusted routes to the numbers they think are appropriate, rather than according to the National Agreement. The reason most of the 271.G requests are being made by carriers is an overburdened route as the result of route, count & inspections (RC&I) done by the service. We have informed district route adjustment management that there have been serious breaches of the M-41 section 2 that need to be

corrected. Instead of fixing those mistakes, they have instead relied upon bad data and made carrier routes overburdened to the point that they cannot be carried. In many instances this is intentional. Even local management agrees the routes can't be carried, but they are adjusted by the RCI team.

The route adjustment experts we have placed in the field have filed grievances for all the full-blown inspections and adjustments. If you have a 271.G request that is denied, contact our office immediately and we will assist you in preparing and arguing the violation correctly. This will not get stopped until we start getting decisions from arbitrators and to do that, we need great grievances going forward.



REGION 5 TRAINING

I would like to thank the branches that have hosted training in their offices or branch halls and all the participants who took part in our training so far this year. We set the bar high in Region 5 and you have responded by being engaged, eager to learn, and then putting that knowledge to use in your stations and branches. We have upcoming training in Rolla, Missouri, for year 1 Steward College on July 12-15. There may still be a few spots open if you have a steward wanting to attend. Please reach out to Larrissa Parde at 314-985-8040 if interested and she can get you all the information you need. We have postponed year 2 steward college training in St. Louis and Kansas City, but we intend to conduct it later this year.

We are also trying to set up training for arbitration advocates this fall depending on scheduling conflicts with other events so that we can get more advocates to address the arbitration backlog.

DRT/ARBITRATION BACKLOG

I have written about our ongoing attempts to reduce our backlog at the DRT and arbitration in detail in my report and various other events across the region. At one point we reduced the backlog to under 100 cases in the Gateway District. It has now skyrocketed again. I plan to have a meeting with the branch presidents to discuss our strategy, what's worked and what hasn't, to reduce this backlog so that our members can get answers to their grievances in the next few weeks. I will send out an email inviting you to a meeting in the members only section. Please have your vice president and formal Step A representatives attend if at all possible so that we all have a game plan going forward. Given the service's intentions to rid itself of our current Article 15 process in collective bargaining, it is an uphill battle, but we must correct this issue.

Until next time be safe out there.

Retiree Report

... By Guest Recording Secretary Nicki L. Prado



JUNE 3, 2026

Chairman Tom Schulte called the meeting to order at 12:45 p.m. Chaplain John Haake led us in prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance. Tom provided the pasta lunch and desserts.

Volunteers: Rich Rhyner is providing lunch for the July meeting and Kevin Welby and Sandy Theismann will serve lunch at the August meeting which will be moved to August 12 because of the NALC National Convention the first week of August. Mike Chenot volunteered for September.

Introduction of new members: Rance Hope from West County was welcomed to the retirees.

Minutes from the last meeting: Minutes were read by guest Recording Secretary Nicki L. Prado from the April retiree meeting as there was no May meeting due to Ole Timers Day.

Treasurers Report: Mike Chenot reported a checking account balance after expenses of \$1,138.36 and cash on hand of \$555.

Presidents Report: With President John McLaughlin away at a meeting, Executive Vice President Brian Litteken reported on the ongoing collective bargaining going on in D.C. NALC is seeking pay raises and COLA continuation, a shorter time between steps, \$30 per hour starting pay and resolution of the problems with the current route adjustment process. Postal revenue is up 2.3% which translates to \$20 billion to \$22 billion. The government uses the Postal Service as a cash cow for other federal funding programs. That needs to stop.

V.P. Marvin Booker reported that while the May Food Drive was more successful than last year, (collecting over 115,000 pounds of food), it could have been more successful as several stations didn't deliver their Food Drive postcards.

Legislative Report: Mike Weir absent. Wild applause!

Health Benefits Report: Barry Linan thanked everyone who is currently enrolled in the NALC Health Benefits Plan. Check the plan for their wellness programs which include diabetes benefits program.

Richard Thurman spoke about a new health care program for veterans called Hero's Care, with a rehab center in Black Jack, Missouri.

Chairmans Report: Tom thanked everyone who volunteered their time setting up the hall and, helping with registration for the Ole Timers Day celebration. Special thanks to Geno Iberg and Charlotte Breakfield for the gift cards and bags given as attendance prizes. Tom announced that the August retiree meeting will be moved to the second Wednesday, August 12, because the NALC National Convention will take place the first week in August.

New Business: A motion was made and passed by brother Ken Meyer to sponsor a hole for \$100 for the annual VFW 3944 Golf Tournament on September 5.

Deceased Members: A moment of silence was held for Douglas Wessels, Sappington and Linette Cayetano-Boyd, Creve Coeur, both active.

50/50 Winner: \$18 won by Barry Thompson who donated it back to the retirees.

Closing Prayer: Offered by Chaplain John Haake.

Meeting Adjourned: 1:25 p.m.

REMEMBER

Retiree Meeting moved to **August 12** because of the NALC Convention.



Heat Illness Prevention Program

Safety Talk | HIPP
#2068

The purpose of the Postal Service's **Heat Illness Prevention Program (HIPP)** is to protect our employees against heat-related illnesses. A copy of the HIPP and Heat Illness Poster will be posted in a conspicuous place in every Postal Service facility and will be available for review by all employees. The Heat Illness Poster can be printed from SHMT and additional posters, vehicle stickers and badge cards can be ordered from the Topeka NDC.

The HIPP is triggered during the period of April 1 through October 31 and at any other time when weather reports issued by the National Weather Service (NWS) for a particular work location indicate that the outdoor heat index temperatures are expected to exceed 80 degrees Fahrenheit during the course of a workday or work shift.

To assist in recognizing the signs and symptoms of heat-related illness, all employees will be provided the below visual aids illustrating the various symptoms of, and proper first aid responses to, heat-related illness. These visual aids may be used to assist in identifying common signs of heat-related illness and provide appropriate actions to help guide decisions to seek medical attention.

	Symptoms	First Aid*
Heat Stroke	- Confusion - Fainting - Seizures - Excessive sweating or red, hot, dry skin - Very high body temperature	Call 911 While waiting for help: - Worker should rest in a shady, cool area - Loosen clothing, remove outer clothing - Use a fan and place cold packs in armpits, if available - Wet worker with cool water, apply ice packs, cool compresses, or ice, if available - Drink fluids (preferably water) as soon as possible - Stay with worker until help arrives
Heat Exhaustion	- Cool, moist skin - Heavy sweating - Headache - Nausea or vomiting - Dizziness - Light-headedness - Weakness - Thirst - Irritability - Fast heartbeat	Call 911 While waiting for help: - Sit or lie down in a cool, shady area - Drink plenty of water or other cool beverages - Use cool compresses or ice packs, if available - Do not return to work that day
Heat Cramps	- Muscle spasms - Pain - Usually in abdomen arms or legs	- Have worker rest in shady, cool area - Worker should drink water or other cool beverages - Wait a few hours before allowing worker to return to strenuous work - Have worker seek medical attention if cramps don't go away
Heat Rash	- Clusters of red bumps on skin - Often appears on neck, upper chest, folds of skin	- Try to work in a cooler, less humid environment when possible - Keep the affected area dry

*Remember, if you are not a medical professional, use this information as a guide only to help workers in need.

**Before an employee who has been absent due to heat-related illness may return to work; management may request medical documentation clearing the employee to work. ELM §§ 865.1 and 865.3.

Prevent Heat Illnesses. Know the Signs and Act.

HEAT EXHAUSTION	OR	HEAT STROKE
Faint or dizzy		Throbbing headache
Heavy sweating		Excessive sweating or red, hot, dry skin
Cool, pale, clammy skin		Very high body temperature
Nausea or vomiting		Nausea or vomiting
Rapid, weak pulse		Rapid, strong pulse
Muscle cramps		May lose consciousness
CALL 9-1-1 • Get to a cooler, air conditioned place • Drink water, if fully conscious • Take a cool shower or use cold compresses		CALL 9-1-1 • Take immediate action to cool the person until help arrives

SAFETY DEPENDS ON ME!

**Seek Immediate Medical Assistance for Heat Related Illnesses.
Call 9-1-1.**

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Poster 328
February 2025
PSN 7660-13-000-7004

Employees should report any signs or symptoms of heat-related illness to their supervisor, who should then call 9-1-1 immediately if it is determined that medical attention is necessary. However, if the employee determines that medical attention may be necessary prior to calling the supervisor, the employee should not hesitate to call 9-1-1 first.

Always Remember: Safety Depends on Me!



National Association of Letter Carriers



Initial Heat Injury Report

Date of Injury: ____/____/____

Employee Name: _____ FTR PTF CCA Seniority ____/____/____

Contact#: ____-____-____ Email address: _____
(cell preferred)

Work Location: _____ State: _____
Installation and Station

Branch President: _____ Branch: _____

Contact#: ____-____-____ Email address: _____
(cell preferred)

Events leading up to the injury(date/time/location/weather conditions/symptoms)

Please send a copy of this form to:

NALC Director of Safety and Health, Manuel Peralta at NALC Headquarters
or email to "peralta@nalc.org"

NBA Dave Teagarden, 1828 Craig Rd, St. Louis, MO 63146
or email to "teagarden@nalc.org"

President, Branch 343 John McLaughlin, 1600 S Broadway, St. Louis, MO 63104
or email to "johnnymac@branch343.com"

West County Retiree ... By Pam Stepney

Greetings, sisters and brothers of Branch 343. I hope everyone is doing well. Can we talk for a moment about our responsibilities as letter carriers?

Let's get back to the basics — carriers reporting to work on time and working our routes as if we're being inspected. Perhaps management should look at their own stations, branches, and plants. Too many supervisors arrive whenever they please, head straight to the desk, and spend their time talking with one another instead of doing their jobs. That's precisely why open routes aren't being covered daily — there's no one walking the floor to identify them, count the mail, or track who has called in or failed to report for duty.

Yes, the 8:30 a.m. start time is a problem. Our competitors are halfway through their routes before our carriers even hit the street. I understand why supervisors end up working the mail — we simply don't have enough clerks, and a 7:00 a.m. start, like we used to have, isn't currently possible. Automation will continue to reshape our industry, but one thing is certain: delivering parcels and mail will always be there.

CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

Negotiations are underway, and there are some encouraging proposals on the table. One would reduce the step increase interval from every 46 weeks to every 40 weeks, allowing carriers to reach top pay faster. Another proposal would raise starting pay for new hires to \$30 per hour, which would go a long way toward improving retention.

The NALC recently sent a letter and pin to letter carriers. The letter

addresses our ongoing contract negotiations, so I'm sharing it here in full:

"In late February, NALC opened negotiations with the Postal Service for our next collective bargaining agreement. Negotiations are ongoing, and every single day we are fighting like hell to achieve the best possible outcome for you. I hope you will proudly wear the enclosed button to show solidarity in our unified fight for a fair contract and higher wages. We know how hard you work. We know what we deserve. So, let's show that we're unified — and keep fighting like hell to get it."

— *In Solidarity, President Brian Renfroe*

Right now, stop what you're doing, pull out your phone, and download the **NALC app at NALC.org**. When updates about your contract are posted, you'll be able to log in immediately. Important announcements have gone unnoticed in the past simply because members didn't have the app. Stay informed, stay connected.

MDA

National has also released an app for MDA donations to support our local branch. We are currently in first place, but Clearwater, Florida, is right on our heels. Earlier this year I suggested hosting a Saturday 50/50 raffle or selling breakfast sandwiches to raise additional funds. It's simple to organize; you just have to take the first step.

WATERMELON WEDNESDAYS

I've reached out to all stewards and encouraged them to launch Watermelon Wednesdays in each office. It's a fun, easy way to get carriers talking, show management that we are united, and let our newer employees know they're part of a

family. I know everyone is busy casing routes and sorting parcels but taking a slice while you load your vehicle counts as hydrating before your first stop. So enjoy it!



UPCOMING EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Labor Day: There will be no Labor Day parade in Florissant this year, as organizers were unable to obtain a permit. Visit **Branch343.org** for updates on all upcoming union events.

Retirement: Congratulations to my sister Vickie Hughes on her retirement! Wishing you a long, happy, and healthy retirement — and breakfast or lunch is on me.

Belated Holidays: Happy (belated) Juneteenth and happy Independence Day to all!

Political Action Fund: Consider contributing to the political action fund locally or nationally. Make the decision to get involved today.

Monthly Retiree Meetings: It's wonderful to see new retirees joining us at our monthly meetings, held the **first Wednesday of each month at 1600 South Broadway**. Lunch served at noon.

Regular Branch Meetings: Are on the second **Thursday** of each month. 7:30 p.m. at the Union Hall.

Long-Service Milestones: Congratulations to **Rance Hope** on 45 years of union membership, **Dave Maloney** on 50 years, and **Jimmy Clements**, who will receive both his 40- and 45-year pins. Well deserved, all!

Do your best, leave the rest, don't stress — God bless. Register to vote, exercise your right, and thank you for all that you do.

"Catcher in the Ryebread" ... By Mike Laury, Retired Letter Carrier

A few years ago, during the holiday season, my sister-in-law held a get-together with a Cardinal baseball theme to it with Cardinal tableclothes, napkins, and other knick-knack Redbird items. Wainwright and Pujols bobble-heads were displayed near the dessert section, and a curiously placed miniature plastic Yadi Molina, in full catcher's gear, secured with a toothpick and placed precariously close to the edge of the rye bread with a cutout dip section. So, like a smart-ass, I said to my sister-in-law, "Oh look (pointing to Yadi) it's a 'catcher in the rye ... bread.'"

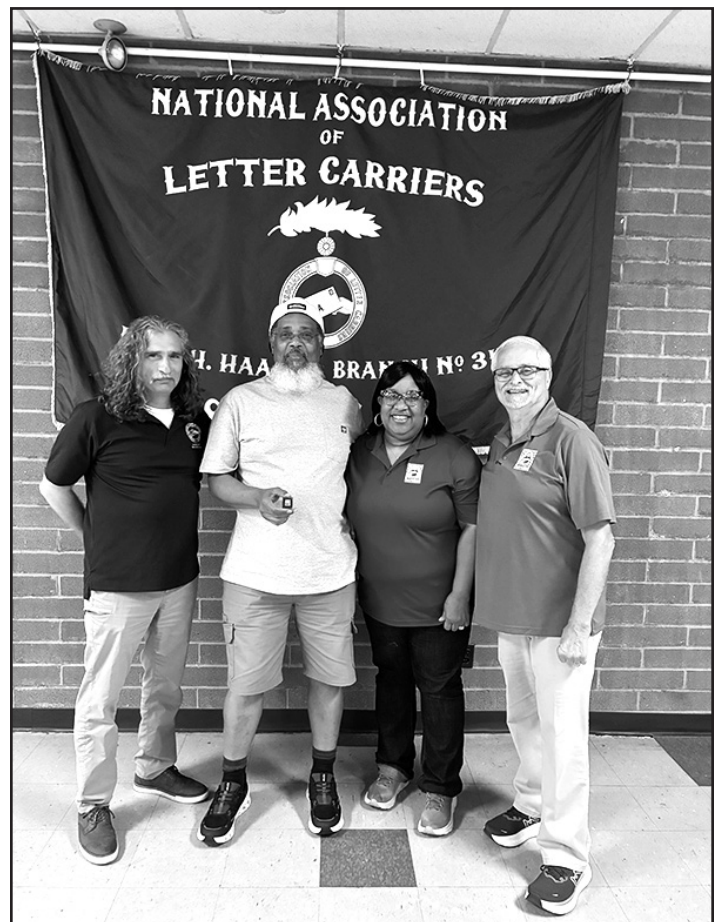
Many years ago, and on a more serious note, two catchers, one with and one without rye would later display extraordinary talent on the battlefield, baseball field and on the pages of a literary masterpiece.

Before he became a legendary New York Yankees catcher, 19-year-old Lawrence Peter "Yogi" Berra was a Seaman Second Class in the U.S. Navy. Berra volunteered for a secret mission involving a 36-foot long LCSS boat. On D-Day, his six-man crew sat 300 yards off Omaha and Utah beaches. His crew fired machine guns and launched heavy barrages of rockets to suppress German machine-gun nests. In later interviews, Berra admitted he didn't grasp the danger that first morning of the D-Day attack. "Being a young guy, I thought it was like the 'Fourth of July.'" In a later battle, a bullet grazed Yogi's left hand and he refused a Purple Heart, concerned that a telegram sent to his parents on "The Hill" by the military, may initially worry or scare his mother.

U.S. Army staff sergeant J.D. Salinger landed in the second wave on then blood-stained Utah Beach with the 4th infantry division that fateful D-Day morning. Salinger carried the first six chapters of his iconic manuscript, "The Catcher in the Rye," inside his backpack. It is said that he continued writing it, sometimes in a foxhole, during idle moments between battles. Salinger was fluent in French and German, with his primary job being to interrogate

captured Nazi soldiers and townspeople. The creator of the Holden Caulfield character physically survived D-Day, the Battle of the Bulge, and the liberation of the Dachau concentration camp, but the psychological toll deeply impacted his life after military service, inspiring the skeptical and embittered themes of his future literary works.

There is no type of grand salute or compensation that will ever pay retribution to the souls of those who gave everything, including their innocence. I want to thank every veteran who ever served, allowing us, the American people, to celebrate 250 years of freedom, with many paying the ultimate price.



West County retiree Rance Hope receives his 45-year union pin from Executive Vice President Brian Litteken, with Pamela Stepney and Retiree Chairman Tom Schulte.

Safety & Health ... *By Richard Thurman*

The Missouri statutes outlined below establish clear criteria for identifying a dangerous dog. It is essential to follow specific procedures to safeguard letter carriers through your Article 14/EL 809 processes. Carriers must act immediately on each close call or upon becoming aware of a hazard. Missouri law strictly defines a dangerous dog as one that has previously bitten a person or domestic animal without provocation. Throughout the animal control process, from inspection to installation in the Postal Service, we have failed to act responsibly in safeguarding the carrier's efforts. The responsibility is deferred to the carrier, and not to act on correcting or preventing the event from escalating.

The first obligation is letter carrier safety above all else! Management, including the initial-level supervisor, is responsible for preventing accidents and controlling resulting losses. Just as the line organization is responsible for attaining production levels, ensuring the quality of performance, maintaining good employee relations, and operating within cost and budget guidelines, supervisors and managers must likewise accept their share of responsibility for the safety and health of employees.

Is Publication 174 posted on the safety board?

- a. Tell carriers to report any non-delivery of mail immediately because of animal interference.

Are dog bite policy letters posted?

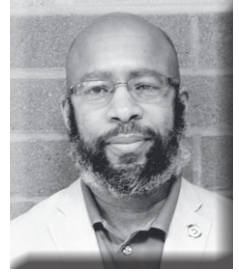
Is management using RIMS for hazard warnings? How many hazard warnings are entered in RIMS?

Who made the entries? When were entries made?

Do the hazard warnings have corresponding dog warning cards (Form 1778) at the case or vice versa (dog warning cards at cases have corresponding entries in RIMS)?

1. Does the route book contain supporting letters to the customer?

2. Do the entries for the most recent Route Hazards assessment 3999 or JSA indicate there was an animal problem at the address in question?



Was a PS FORM 1767, Reporting a Hazard completed? Are there notes regarding a conversation with the carrier/actions taken to fix it? Just as you, the carrier, are responsible for filing reports of hazards, management has to promptly (within your tour of duty) investigate the alleged hazard and respond by using the blue copy of PS Form 1767. Management responsibilities are to resolve the hazard, unsafe condition, or practice issues if possible. Complete a work order and attach it to the top copy of PS Form 1767. Follow up to see that the hazard, unsafe condition, or practice has been corrected. Notify the employee of the results.

Has delivery been halted to the address if there was a dog bite? Has a PS Form 1571 been completed and signed with the supervisor's signature? Is there a copy of the dog bite control agreement signed by the customer? Is there a copy of notes from the conversation with animal control and the customer? Were the animal's shot records provided? Is the special instructions page in the route book updated with notes? Do the dates on the dog warning card, the letters to the customer, the dog bite control agreement, and the notification (notes) to animal control all match up as the exact date or dates

Immediately following the bite, was the bite entered into the safety and health system as an accident/injury? Was the carrier taken off duty immediately and sent to a doctor? (The carrier cannot refuse medical treatment for an animal bite).

Do the postmaster and supervisor(s) know the procedure for when a customer with a dog warning card moves and submits a change of address? (Two copies of 1778 are to be forwarded under cover to the post office where the customer moved to. One copy

for management and one copy for the carrier.) Have they received any 1778s under cover when a dangerous dog moved to their area? If so, did management meet with the customer to ascertain the safety of/danger to the carrier?

Can the postmaster and supervisor(s) locate the dog bite letters, policies, and procedures on the computer? (Open Safety Toolkit, click on Resources, A to Z index, Dog Bite Prevention)

The Postal Service's position is that: a. Any injury can be prevented. This goal is realistic, not just theoretical. Supervisors or managers having primary responsibility for the well-being of employees must fully accept this principal. Owners of aggressive dogs will face severe penalties, ranging from misdemeanors to felonies, especially if their dog causes serious injury or death to a human or breaches bite quarantine laws.

KEY BEHAVIORAL STATUTES & CLASSIFICATIONS.

State Law Definitions & Penalties (578.088): A person commits keeping a dangerous dog if they own a dog that has previously bitten a person or domestic animal without provocation, and the dog bites someone again. This portion is generally a Class B misdemeanor, escalating to a felony if the attack results in serious injury or death.

Impoundment and Euthanasia: State statute allows for the immediate seizure and potential destruction of a dog that has bitten a person twice, or a dog that has not previously bitten but causes serious injury or death in a single attack. Owners have the right to file a written appeal in circuit court to contest this.

Quarantine Requirements (RS Mo Chapter 215 for Localities): If an animal bites a person, it must immediately be quarantined, typically for 10 days, to monitor for rabies. Failure to comply or concealing the animal carries heavy fines.

Local Ordinances (St. Louis County Area: Because Missouri allows municipalities to implement their own animal control measures, residents of Blackjack

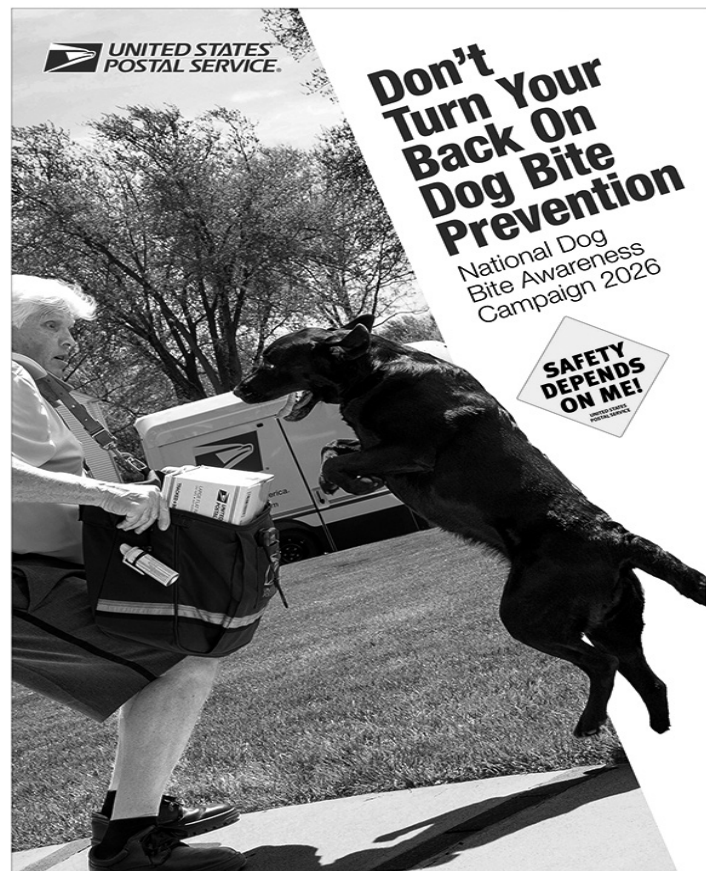
and St. Louis County are governed by specific local ordinances in addition to state law:

Public Safety and Nuisance: Animals that display threatening behavior (such as jumping or lunging at people on public streets) can be classified as nuisances or dangerous depending on the municipal code.

Confinement: Vicious or dangerous dogs must be kept in secure, escape-proof enclosures and are explicitly prohibited from being kept on porches or patios where they can escape on their own.

Restraint Requirements: When off the owner's property, dangerous animals are typically required to be muzzled and restrained by a short leash under the control of an adult.

Dangerous Dog Registry: Many municipalities require aggressive dogs to be registered locally, wear specific identification (such as a fluorescent collar), and have visible warning signs posted on the property. [1] **Enforcement and Reporting is the actual mechanism that protects the letter carrier if is done correctly and concisely.**



ROLLING HILLS GOLF CLUB

REGISTER YOUR TEAM TODAY!



39th NALC Br. 343 Golf Tournament for Muscular Dystrophy **ENTER NOW!**

WHEN: 8 A.M. OCTOBER 11, 2026

WHERE: ROLLING HILLS GOLF CLUB
5801 Pierce Ln.
Godfrey, IL 62035

COST: \$100 PER PERSON (\$400 PER TEAM)
Price includes 18 holes of Golf, Electric Cart,
Prizes, Refreshments, Buffet Lunch

FORMAT: Best Ball Four Man Scramble
"Shot Gun Start"

HOW TO ENTER: A check or checks totaling \$400 with the
names and addresses of team members must
be received ASAP (Please list at least one
phone number and email)

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:
MDA Branch 343
1600 S. Broadway
St. Louis, MO 63104

REGISTRATION INFORMATION:

1. Registration will start at 8 a.m.
2. Shot Gun Start – 9 a.m.
3. There will be a cutoff at 36 teams due to time restrictions. Money will be refunded to any team who enters after the cutoff.
4. Teams must arrive 30 minutes prior to tee time.

If you have any other questions about the tournament that have not been answered here, contact:

Brian Litteken
Letter Carriers Hall
314-241-4297, Ext. 2

Clip and Mail

.....
PLEASE PRINT:

EMAIL

1. NAME PHONE

2. NAME PHONE

3. NAME PHONE

4. NAME PHONE

BRANCH MEETING

BRANCH 343, ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

JUNE 11, 2025

Summary of Branch Action

- MSC To pay the branch bills.
-
- MSC That the branch pays CMIT to decommission our server and set up Intune at one-time cost of \$2,960
-
- MSC That the branch write a check for \$300 to Dr. Barbara Anderson for selecting the John H. Haake Scholarship winners.
-
- MSC That Branch 343 takes Dr. Barbara Anderson, her husband and the John H. Haake Committee to dinner and pay the expenses.
-
- MSC That Branch 343 sponsors a hole at the VFW 3944 Golf Tournament, at a cost of \$100.

New Members

Lautha HarveyGaffney6/4/2026
 Monique JacksonNorth County5/15/2026
 Dontel JenkinsGravois5/15/2026
 Jerris KirkwoodNormandy5/29/2026
 Jeremy LangO'Fallon5/22/2026
 Kristopher MorganNormandy5/15/2026
 Amanda ParkMackenzie Pointe5/15/2026
 Marshallonus Perkins..Affton5/29/2026
 Tiron SaddlerCreve Coeur5/29/2026
 Falaka Wiley.....North County5/15/2026

Recently Retired Members

Phillip Brown.....Maplewood5/31/2026
 Vickie HughesWest County2/28/2026

Deceased Member

Douglas WesselsSappington5/31/2026
 Linette CayetanoCreve Coeur5/29/2026

HELPFUL APP



Did you know that you can track the "heat index" in real time on your cellphone by downloading the OSHA-NIOSH Heat Safety Tool.

It's free and easy to download from your App Store.

St. Louis Cardinal Baseball Tickets Still Available

The Union Hall still has an excellent selection of unsold St. Louis Cardinal Baseball Tickets for purchase.



Great Seats (Behind Home Plate)
 Section 249
 Row 6
 Seats 5 and 6
 \$135 for the pair



Contact Executive Vice President Brian Litteken at 314-241-4297 [ext. 2]

Branch Meeting Attendance Prizes

1. Cardinals vs San Diego Padres
2. Cardinals vs AZ. Diamondbacks
3. Cardinals vs Milwaukee Brewers
4. Muny: Shrek the Musical
5. Muny: South Pacific

June 16
 June 23
 July 8
 June 30
 July 7

Michael Goheen, Creve Coeur
 Shonna Randle, Carrier Square
 Pamela Stepney, Retired
 Hannah Lockette, Kirkwood
 Barry Linan, Retired



\$63

Hannah Lockette, Kirkwood

Highlights

The meeting was called to order at 7:34 p.m. The invocation and Pledge of Allegiance were led by Pamela Stepney, and the minutes were read and accepted.

Retirees Report, Tom Schulte: There were 37 in attendance at the June retiree luncheon. The August meeting will be moved to August 12 due to the National Convention.

Labor Council Report, Frank Enlow: The Labor Council has been without a president for a while. They are supposed to have a whole new team come in and take over St. Louis Labor Council. The vice president is filling in until then. July 8 is the deadline to register to vote.

Health Benefit Report, Barry Linan: The NALC health benefits brochure contains about a dozen plans you can enroll in for free, such as the "Transform Care" which is a diabetes care management program that allows you to get many items at no cost.

OWCP Report, Barry Linan: Keep an eye out for those new employees that may get injured, to ensure they get the proper forms for medical treatment. Make certain that all forms are filled out correctly, especially for their continuation of pay (COP).

Mound City Carrier Report, Tom Schulte: The cover of the MCC is from Ole Timers Day, where we honor those with 40 years or more. Coverage of the Food Drive is in the back of the paper. If you have any new photos from the Food Drive, please send them to Tom. There is a retirement seminar on July 12 at the Union Hall, hosted by Mike Weir. The branch website, (branch343.org) has lots of information so please check it out.

Haake Scholarship Report, Pam Stepney: The John H. Haake Scholarship winners will be presented at the July regular branch meeting. Marian Harris had two family members win the Haake scholarship, in 1993 and 2022.

Safety and Health Report, Richard Thurman: He asked if everyone received heat safety training this year? The post office stated in several litigation cases that they provide water and access to those supplies, to letter carriers. You should have had 32 safety talks regarding heat safety, and they are to be listed on 7300 form and/or Smith Tool. There has been another fatality in a postal facility in Atlanta. This is the third person.

Trustees Report, Shonna Randle: Books were not audited due to lack of number of trustees available. May and June will be audited in July.

Political Action Committee Report, Mike Weir: Mike read the names of contributors. The 2027 COLA projection is 3.6% for CSRS and 2.6% for FERS.

Legislative Report, Mike Weir: There are several pieces of legislation that may work out in our favor. The Absentee and Mail Voter Protection Act is very important, they are trying to stop vote by mail, so please contact your senators and representatives asking for their support. Recent Supreme Court decision on gerrymandering is significant to vote by mail. In Missouri, vote NO on Amendment 4 (changes procedure for approving citizen initiatives) and Amendment 5 (eliminate state income tax). Contribute to PAC and LCPF.

Vice President/Financial Secretary Report, Marvin Booker: Read his report for May. The number of pounds of food from the Food Drive is a little over 115,000.

President's Comments, John McLaughlin: NBA office will have steward training in Rolla, we will send someone from Salem, St. Clair and Rolla. The hall will be staffed during the National Convention. Call the hall first during that time for questions. Mac Pointe was robbed twice at gunpoint. If something like this happens at your office, please call the hall. At the Collective Bargaining Conference, NALC President Renfroe said 85% of the negotiations was about wages. If they agree, Renfroe is looking to get \$5 billion for carriers in the way of wage increase and COLA. If we can't get that, we will likely go to interest arbitration. We want to reduce the time between steps, increase top pay, and reduce the cost of training new hires. Renfroe spoke on four-day work week at 10 hours each. T-6 would have two routes (doing each two days in a row). When he presented this to management, they were ecstatic. This would eliminate 7,000 assignments initially. If CCAs make regular and want to get on the ODL list, they must do so within two weeks of making regular.

Respectfully Submitted,
Richard Brown, Recording Secretary

Highlights

The Attacks on Our Constitutional Democracy Continue! ... *By Mike Weir*

The increases in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) belie the Trump Administration's claim that inflation is under control or soon will be. The increase in March was .7%; in April it was 2%; in May it was 2.9%; and in June it was 3.6%. President Trump's economy (tax cuts and tariffs) is projected to provide massive average annual benefits to the upper 1% to 10% of earners. The **top 1%** of earners alone **will receive an estimated \$117 billion in tax cuts.** Meanwhile, the **bottom 80% to 90%** of us will see **limited financial gains or even experience average income losses.** The **poorest among us will fare even worse,** given higher consumer costs and proposed cuts to federal programs such as Medicaid & SNAP food stamps. The White House and their supportive lawmakers argue that the tax packages (including the corporate tax rate cut to 21% in the One Big Beautiful Bill), combined with deregulation will stimulate widespread private-sector investment, job growth, and blue-collar wage increases. In other words, Trickle-down Theory (an economic approach that never worked in the past and will never work now or in the future) is, once again, rearing its ugly head! This theory is simply a smokescreen for **taking care of the Republicans' billionaire donors,** whom they will **need more than ever** to retain power given President Trump's **low approval ratings** and current **projections of significant Democratic gains in Congress** during the mid-terms in November. Polls show that Americans are becoming increasingly disgusted with the president's policies and congressional inaction to thwart them on behalf of the average citizen. Hopefully, as we approach November 3, they will not be swayed by billion-dollar, white-washed ads to convince them to stay the course.

President Trump continues to promote his **bogus claims of election fraud,** particularly regarding the vote-by-mail process, without any proof or evidence that such rampant fraud exists. In a recent interview

on Meet the Press, he pushed the claims again with the elections in California where nearly 80% of voters used vote-by-mail. Obviously, it takes considerable time to tally said votes, particularly because election officials are being so careful to ensure that the election is fair and accurate. When pressed by the moderator to provide proof of his allegations, President Trump, of course, could not. So, he abruptly terminated the interview, took his ball, and went home. Unfortunately, the **Supreme Court** (or, more accurately, the Supremacist Court with their recent decision on gerrymandering which ushered in the return of the Jim Crow era) **may be prepared to help him out** with limiting the use of vote by mail by ruling in a pending case that mail-in ballots which are received after election day (even if they are postmarked on or before election day) cannot be counted. Such a decision would be yet another step toward undermining our constitutional democracy.

As noted in a previous article, the president's unconstitutional executive order on vote by mail is being challenged in the courts. In the Senate, legislation has been introduced to nullify that executive order as well. The Absentee and Mail Voter Protection Act (S. 4369) would block government agencies from sharing state voter lists, defund efforts to compel production of such lists, enforce the Privacy Act by barring federal agencies from improperly sharing voter data, and defund any future federal agencies from enacting partisan regulation of mail-in ballots. It currently has 40 cosponsors. Currently, there is no companion bill in the House. In addition, Senate Democrats sent a letter to the USPS board of governors urging it to reject the executive order. Please contact your senators and encourage them to cosponsor this extremely important piece of legislation and ask your representatives to initiate a similar bill as well.

In Missouri, two very important amendments to the state constitution will be on the ballot on August 4. **Vote no on both of them!**

Political Action Honor Roll

JOE POLITTE★★★★★	MARVIN BOOKER★★	JOHN S. CHUDY★	JOHN McLAUGHLIN★
JOE FITZJARRELL★★★★★	LAWRENCE McHAYNES JR.★★	BEVE CREELY★	NICKI L. PRADO★
RICH RHYNER★★★★★	KEN MEYER★★	JAMES T. GOHEEN★	SHONNA RANDLE★
ART BUCK★★★	LYNN RAY PRATT★★	SAMUEL GOODMAN★	IN MEMORY OF JOSEPH P. REGAN★
CATHERINE CIARAMITARO★★★	DEAN WERNER★★	NICK GRILLO★	TOM SCHULTE★
JOHN H. HAAKE★★★	RICHARD BOIEN★	GENO IBERG★	PAMELA STEPNEY★
TONY JASPER★★★	DAN BRAUCHLE★	LAURA KEIM★	DARLENE TATE★
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Amendment 4 changes the procedure for voter approval of citizen-initiated constitutional amendments **from a state-wide majority to require a majority in each congressional district.** This change would effectively make it impossible for citizen-initiated constitutional amendments to pass and become part of the Missouri Constitution. But Constitutional amendments proposed by the Missouri Legislature would still only need a state-wide majority of the voters to pass. Also, the amendment deceptively proposes to add language which is, in fact, already part of the Missouri Constitution. In other words, Republicans are once again attempting to silence the voice of the people.

Amendment 5 would **eliminate the state income tax** (which contributes about 60% to the state's total general revenue) and **replace it with hikes in sales**

and user taxes. As originally written, it was (as usual) very deceptive. A judge required a change. The reality is that this amendment will empower the legislature to raise sales taxes and fees (and add new ones) to any level they wish without a vote of the citizens, as currently required under the Missouri Constitution. The highest dollar amounts of income taxes are paid by **high-income earners**, who would again **get a break** they do not need. Sales taxes and fees would primarily **hit the poor and the middle class** who have less discretionary income. It would sure be nice if Republican legislators would actually represent all of Missouri's citizens for a change.

Speaking of change, we could certainly use it at both the state and federal levels. Please help us achieve it. Contribute to the Branch 343 PAC Fund & the Letter Carrier Political Fund.

John H. Haake BRANCH 343

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Published monthly by NALC Branch 343
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1600 S Broadway

1st Wednesday of the month.
Lunch at noon, meeting at 12:45 pm

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Deadline for articles for the AUGUST issue is JULY 13, 2026

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REGULAR BRANCH MEETING THURSDAY, JULY 9, 2026 7:30 pm

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SHOP STEWARDS MEETING THURSDAY, AUGUST 13, 2026 7:30 PM

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