

BUCKEYE BRANCH 78

BULLETIN

Columbus and Central Ohio



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REYNOLDSBURG

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PICKERINGTON

JULY 2021



VOL. 41 NO. 7

PRESIDENT'S PAGE



Todd Hornyak

For those members that have tested positive for COVID-19, or may test positive in the future, you need to be aware of a recent law. The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 was signed into law on March 11. The new law makes it easier for federal workers diagnosed with COVID-19 to establish coverage under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA). Section 4016 of the law provides that a federal employee who is diagnosed with COVID-19 while carrying out duties that required contact with patients, members of the public, or coworkers, or included a risk of exposure to the novel coronavirus during a covered period of exposure prior to the diagnosis, is deemed to have an injury that is proximately caused by employment. The impacts of this provision are as follows: Any COVID-19 claim filed under the FECA that was accepted for COVID-19 prior to March 12, 2021, is not impacted because coverage for benefits has already been extended. Any COVID-19 claim filed under the FECA that was denied or withdrawn prior to March 12,

2021, is eligible for review under the new eligibility requirements. Any COVID-19 claim filed under the FECA on or after March 12, 2021, will be reviewed solely under the new eligibility requirements.

What this means to you if you previously filed a COVID-19 claim under the FECA that was accepted by OWCP, you can expect no change. If you previously filed a COVID-19 claim under the FECA that was denied by OWCP based on a lack of federal exposure or a lack of medical evidence establishing a causal relationship, you can expect to hear from our OWCP in the next 30 -45 days. If you have never filed a COVID-19 claim under the FECA and you believe you have contracted COVID-19 because of your federal employment, you will need to file a CA-1 (Federal Employee's Notice of Traumatic Injury) and request for continuation of pay. The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) acknowledges that it is difficult to determine the precise moment and method of virus transmission. Therefore, when an employee claims FECA benefits due to COVID-19, federal workers who are required to have in-person interactions with the public on a frequent basis - such as letter carriers - will be in high-risk employment. Accordingly,

DOL has created new procedures to specifically address COVID-19 claims.

The new procedures will also call the OWCP adjudicator's attention to the type of employment held by the employee, rather than burdening the employee with identifying the exact day or time they contracted the novel coronavirus. If a COVID-19 claim is filed by a person in high-risk employment, OWCP will accept that the exposure to COVID-19 was proximately caused by the nature of the employment. The key evidence needed for a COVID-19 FECA claim as required by the law are establishing exposure and medical. For exposure, as high-risk employees, letter carriers should be considered as such and OWCP will recognize exposure most likely was the result of the individual's employment. For medical, you will need to provide evidence establishing a diagnosis of COVID-19. If you reasonably believe you were exposed to COVID-19 because of your employment you are encouraged to contact Compensation Officer Gary Porter or contact the Union Hall.

Branch 78 will be sending 20 delegates to the 70th Biennial

Continued on page 5

FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT



Mark Beach

In Article III of our National Agreement, management is entrusted to maintain the efficacy of the Postal Service and to hire, promote, transfer, assign and retain employees in positions. Management has clearly failed to do this in the Columbus Installation, Pickerington, Hilliard and to a lesser part Westerville. Seemingly instead of focusing on hiring, management has first focused on trying to cut off all absences, legitimate or otherwise. Some craft (and management) have taken advantage of the EF-EL leave and many others who have legitimate cases have had payment delayed, been harassed by management, and have even had to open Congressional inquiries to get their requests approved.

It appears management has intentionally backed up the grievance procedure to delay cases being held. The Columbus Dispute Resolution NALC representative has been assigned a partner out of Tennessee. Thus, the NALC representative is having to handle a massive amount of clerical work created because his partner is located over 350 miles away. Cases at the Formal A have been delayed and they continue to extend the cases one week at a time.

The clock ring audit process for the Columbus installation has been restarted, but management is using delay tactics again. They are not releasing the union representative when needed (except a day or two a week), thus the review is falling farther and farther behind.

Management continues to use the current staffing issues as an excuse to delay the process.

One Columbus MCSO goes out and carries mail on a regular basis. One might be led to question if the MCSO's time would be better spent concentrating on hiring and retaining the 70+ city carrier assistants we are short in the Columbus installation. This leads to the union steward of that station having to file crossing crafts grievances on him for carrying mail before all carriers work 12 hours just to avoid a grievance. Management clearly cannot see the forest because of the trees so to speak.

It is clear to the leadership at the union hall that the current management in our area has no intention of working cooperatively to improve our workplace environment. This is terribly sad because it seems that their one and only goal is to flaunt some numbers based on skewed data and then get a promotion before the system catches up to address their misuse of power. Again, the one and only true solution in this situation is to properly staff first, then weed out the secondary issues. One example of disparaging treatment I know of, was at a station where a supervisor rammed a cart into a carrier intentionally. It was reported and several witnesses wrote statements. Instead of being placed on Emergency Placement immediately the supervisor is continuing to work while the grievance awaits being held at the various levels of the process. Yet at the same station a carrier tossed a package to the same exact supervisor telling her that it was not his and was placed

out on emergency placement immediately.

We have had more reports of carriers being asked specific medical information when calling off to the MCSOs. Many of these carriers fear retaliation if they file a grievance. Others have already written statements and asked the union to pursue the issue through the grievance procedure. Asking about specific medical information is a HIPAA law violation and can be reported to the Civil Rights Commission, especially if you fear retaliation like many carriers do. Other things like forcing carriers not on the list to work their SDOs, mandatory overtime on Sundays, removing CCAs from legitimate hold downs and not fixing air conditioning units in stations where people have had serious heat strokes. Blatantly breaking the contract has become the norm lately in the City of Columbus and a few associate offices instead of the exception.

One must wonder if some of these same issues and inequitable treatment were a factor in the Oak Hill, Michigan tragedy that resulted in the USPS JSOV memo. I truly hope and pray that something like that does not happen again in my lifetime. I was reminded yesterday how quickly things can go off the rails like they did in Dublin. The other day while visiting Dublin, I had to deal with a 204 B being very rude to carriers and myself. I made sure that the supervisor knew his actions were unacceptable. Instead of understanding the message, it seemed like management was more concerned on how to get back at a union. Many

Continued on page 5

MILLER'S MUSINGS



Yana Miller-Farney HYDRATE! It is a great idea to drink a lots of water but water or drinks like Powerade and Gatorade with added electrolytes are even better in the extreme conditions we've been experiencing. If you are feeling faint, confused, having seizures, dry, hot skin and high body temperature, these are signs of heat stroke. Heat stroke is considered a medical emergency. Call 911 if you suspect heat stroke; it can be fatal.

The early warning signs of heat exhaustion are nausea, light-headedness, fatigue, muscle cramping and dizziness. At the first sign of

heat exhaustion it is imperative to take these steps to lower your body temperature and cool your body: move to an air-conditioned place, take a cold shower or use cold compresses, drink plenty of fluids and remove tight or extra clothing.

Avoid sweet, caffeinated and alcoholic beverages in extreme heat. We don't want you to be a statistic. Advise the Union Hall if you have either of these illnesses so it can be reported to the National. They keep track of heat related health problems, the same as they record cold weather incidents. Advise management if you need help or additional time, as soon as possible, they should complete CA-1. If you are normally a speed demon, try to pace yourself in the heat so you don't deplete your body's resources.

You will notice the flyer for the Retiree Dinner in this issue, put it

on your calendar and get tickets as soon as available. Val has planned an event July 15, 12:30 PM to get Retirees back in touch with the Branch and one another. August will return to the regular meeting schedule for the first Tuesday of the month at 1 PM. There are so many newly retired members, it would be great for you to start participating on a monthly basis, maybe get some activities started. Val is open to suggestions. We have always relied on Retirees to assist with contacting legislators on behalf of carrier/postal issues. You are needed!

Hope you had a safe Fourth of July celebration.

Submitted by Yana Miller-Farney

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Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Branch.

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Carla Dematte, stopped by the Hall to pick up Retirement Watch; left Reynoldsburg the end of April.



Doug Sawyer, Reynoldsburg; receives Retirement Watch.

From Region II NBA Mark Camilli



Mark Camilli

Help wanted! Unfortunately, that phrase is popping up all over. From your favorite local restaurant, small businesses, large corporations and (most likely) at your US Post Office. Pundits and economists have wide ranging opinions on why there is a shortage of labor. Some say its due to the unemployment stimulus and others say it could be that potential employees are not ready to work in public facing positions due to the threat of COVID. Regardless, the USPS not only has to work an increasing its applicant pool, but they also need to focus on retention and culture within its walls. As they did through the pandemic, letter carriers have gone above and beyond and will continue to do so – management needs to recognize, appreciate, and cultivate an atmosphere where letter carriers are treated with respect, and we all need to take care of each other.

Local negotiations for your local memorandum of understanding (LMOU) have ended. Impasses are now being sent to the Postal Service and Regional offices. The Area/Regional level has until August 11, 2021, to discuss and attempt to resolve the impassed items. If the items cannot be resolved, appeals to Interest Arbitration will take place no later than September 1, 2021, with the goal of having these impasses scheduled and heard by December 30, 2021. For updates on your LMOU, please consult with your shop steward and/or branch president.

Water. Rest. Shade. That is the Occupational Safety and Health's (OSHA) mantra for heat illness prevention. Each year letter carriers suffer from heat related injuries regardless of age or physical condition. Especially susceptible, new and returning letter carriers from being off for a lengthy period need to "acclimatize" or build a tolerance for working in the heat. For a helpful tool on your smartphone, I encourage you to download (type in your app search) "OSHA-NIOSH Heat Safety Tool". It gives you an indicator of the current heat index and associated risk levels specific to your current location. It also gives you precautionary recommendations specific to heat index risk levels, hourly forecast of heat index values, risk levels, recommendations, signs and symptoms of heat related illnesses and related first aid information. Please share this information with your co-workers.

Can Postal Reform become a reality sooner rather than later? That is the hope with the "Postal Reform Act of 2021", H.R. 3076 and S. 1720. For the first time in a long time, there is a consensus of support from the unions, PMG, management associations, BOG and mailing industry. The NALC supports this legislation as it includes three important items. 1. It would repeal the mandate to pre-fund future retiree health benefits; 2. Include a provision to make six-day delivery of mail and packages a statutory obligation; 3. Reform the Federal Employee Health Benefits (FEHB) Program to create Medicare integrated

plans for postal annuitants. For more information regarding these items please see NALC President Fred Rolando's June 2021 "Postal Record" article and you can also find more information at NALC's "Government Affairs" tab at NALC.org. Stay safe this summer, remember to drink plenty of water; dress in light, loose fitting uniforms/clothing and seek shade when possible.

Water. Rest. Shade.

**GET INVOLVED!
HELP MAKE YOUR
UNION STRONG!
BECOME A
UNION STEWARD!**

Postal Employee Relief Fund

What is PERF?
PERF is a group made up of representatives from postal employee and management organizations, which help active and retired postal employees whose homes are completely destroyed or left uninhabitable for an extended period of time because of a major natural disaster or fire.

What do we do?
PERF provides small non-repayable, tax-free grants to assist qualifying victims of natural disasters such as hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, tornadoes and all home fires.

How can you help?
PERF is funded by postal employees' charitable contributions, primarily through the Combined Federal Campaign.

- Combined Federal Campaign (CFC):**
September 1-December 15, 2016.
Sign up using Postal Ease (Designate CFC #10268 during your six week CFC Open Season)
- Direct donations accepted:**
Send check or money order to
PERF
P.O. Box 7630
Woodbridge, VA 22195-7630
or contribute online by credit card at
www.postalrelief.com

PERF is a 501(C)(3) Charitable Organization. Your donation is tax deductible.

Visit www.postalrelief.com for more information

Logos: USPS, APWU, NALC, and other unions.

President Continued from page 1

NALC Ohio State Convention in Cleveland July 23 and July 24, 2021. There are training classes offered by Region 11 National Business Agent Mark Camilli's office and the delegates will be attending the training classes. The delegates from our branch were elected to conduct the business of the Union at the convention. We have scheduled a delegates meeting following the July Branch meeting. The delegates will be

reporting information from the convention at the August steward and branch meetings.

I would like to congratulate Tim Tackett from South Columbus Station, Connie Thayer from Northwest Station, Carla Dematte and Doug Sawyer from Reynoldsburg Post Office, Carrie Parsons from Delaware Post Office, Joe Williams from Westerville Post Office on their recent retirements. I wish them the best on their retirement. Please

attend our July Branch meetings via ZOOM. Information regarding the meetings can be found on our Branch 78 website www.nalc-branch78.org. The Executive Board discussed resuming in person meetings starting August 2021. We will continue utilizing ZOOM, too.

**Fraternally
Todd Hornyak**

Vice President Continued from page 2

of our current employees, including current management did not have to endure this tragedy or its fall out directly. Maybe if they had they would be able to separate the problem employees from the good employees instead of treating everyone like they are beneath them and that they themselves do not have to play by the rules because they are management. We as union leaders will keep standing up for letter carrier rights, regardless of management's threats and we will continue to do the right thing regardless of the retaliation and threats from management. Hopefully, an intervention with the Business Agent's office and Area Labor will deal with nonsense so the focus is on the real issue, staffing. There needs to be sufficient hiring to bring CCA complement to above allowed levels.

I would like to leave you with a positive thought and something for management to think about. Among our carriers, is one of the highest ranked Non-Commissioned Officers in the Ohio National Guard. The carrier is in charge of a state-wide project and oversees a nearly

million dollar budget. During a recent conversation he stated disbelief in some postal manager's actions and the lack of effective leadership with the USPS in our area. He continued that military expectations are extremely demanding, they are reasonable and he is

given the proper tools to complete his tasks. Think about that and let it sink in as to why we need a union now more than ever. ***United we stand; divided we will fall.***

Mark Beach, VP Br 78

Annual Retiree Dinner

Attention All Members You're Invited

When: SATURDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2021
Where: VILLA MILANO BANQUET CENTER
1630 SCHROCK RD
COLUMBUS, OHIO 43229

**COME HONOR OUR NEWEST GOLD
CARD RECIPIENTS
HAVE A GREAT MEAL**

Time: Social Hour 6:00-7:00 PM
Dinner: 7:00 PM
Tickets: Retirees and Guest \$7 each
Active and Guest \$10 each

**SPECIAL GUEST
NALC National Officer**

For Reservations Contact
Branch 78

614-279-2778

or contact your shop steward

JUNE 2021 BRANCH MEETING MINUTES

Meeting called to order by President Hornyak over ZOOM at 6:32. Minutes read and accepted (read April rather than May minutes). Deviated from the regular order of business for NBA Mark Camilli. Openings for carriers sent through Every Door Delivery, Indeed website and Ohio Means Jobs. Drive thru applications in Cincinnati 06/13/21. Mark has discussed circumstances in Columbus, with District Mgr. Jean Lovejoy, regarding retention of CCAs. Discussed HR 3076 and S 1720 Postal Reform, 10 Republican co-sponsors: legislation requires OPM to establish postal health benefits with Medicare Integration to sign up for A and B, remove 10% penalty; repeal \$5.5 billion prefunding of future retirees health benefits; could reap \$50 billion in savings for USPS; need investment in postal service; RIF in October for Management. Eighteen FSS being dismantled. Senate confirmed Anton Hajar to Postal Board of Governors, finally a full board. NALC and USPS extended all COVID memos to August (7:01 rule, SLDC, Social Distancing, signing ODL list and liberal leave use). NALC Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive officially cancelled for 2021. Annual Leave for Holiday Pay from new contract begins July 4, employees who work their holiday, at their option, may elect to have their annual leave balance credited with up to eight hours of annual leave or receive the holiday pay. Other crafts have had this option. President Rolando sent a letter regarding national conventions, Hawaii has been officially cancelled. The Chicago Convention in August 2022 will be the 72nd Biennial National Convention.

Resumed the regular order of business. Mark Beach read Communications: John J. Tatham Family, Payne Family; Bills List; six applications for membership. Help the new CCAs adjust to carrying. Mark Beach: Steward Training will be rescheduled, several new stewards need trained. Jason Fry read Article 1 Section 3 By-Law change on Policy Book Use submitted by Jeremy Hirschfeld, Alan Moore Sr. and Charles Sanders. Valerie Davis announced Retiree Food & Fun, 07/15/21, 12:30. Jason Fry read Treasurer's Report.

NEW BUSINESS

Local negotiations ended Friday May 28, 2021. Opened up all Local Agreements covered by our Branch, of the 17, fourteen reached agreements. Impasse on three LMOUs, sent to NBA and Eastern Area Labor; Columbus, Reynoldsburg and Canal Winchester. Ohio State Association Board Meeting, June 3 in Columbus. OSA Convention is July 23-24, 2021 in Cleveland. Election of Officers to State Board, Friday at 3:30 PM, discussion later on voting in block. Confirmed twenty delegates. Hotel reservations for Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. Delegates not attending the Banquet, let Todd know so Saturday night can be cancelled to save money. Requested ads for Convention Booklet. Mark Beach made a motion, seconded by Charles Sanders to spend \$400 to purchase a full page ad in the OSA Convention Booklet. **Motion Passed**

Two carriers were robbed in Columbus last week; at Livingston, demanded Arrow Key, carrier honked, suspects fled. At Oakland Park, thieves took Arrow Key and Vehicle. Luckily neither carrier was harmed; if accosted give them what they want, don't put your life in jeopardy. Call police and manager afterward.

Bids for Columbus were delayed 06/02/21 didn't come out till 06/09/21. Acting PM Brad Grubb, denying requests for information, unilaterally ended Clock Ring Audits. Carriers are frustrated about continually being forced to work OT. We are seventy CCAs under allotted complement, short staffed in Hilliard, Pickerington and other AOs. Still encountering issues with approval for EF-EL; finally approving quarantine and child care requests. Grievances are back logged. Branch Class Action on Call-In Policy appealed to DRT. Branch Class Action on Audit process will be appealed this week. Sent up Branch grievances without requested information to DRT.

Regional Arbitrator August, decision for Short North Station received May 25, awarded Administrative Leave. The Branch now has three regional Arbitration awards giving Non ODL Carriers Administrative Leave at Short North, Bexley and Westland. Pre-arb settlements for West Worthington and Upper Arlington. Arbitration decision for denial of a Special Route Inspection presented by Jeremy Hirschfeld, carrier awarded \$25 per day or over \$2500. Consolidated Casing decision on one of the cases returned, Arbitrator Barrett awarded \$125 for regulars; another case scheduled in August is for unilaterally changed bid assignments.

Computer Upgrade is progressing, ITT Call Tech has run wiring for computer hookup, installed network rack and network port panel. Stasis Services, Phase One installed network router, upgraded computers to Windows 10 Pro. Reviewed Retiree Drive-By 07/15 with refreshments; Retiree Dinner tentatively scheduled for 10/16/21 at Villa Milano. Governor Dewine removed health orders effective June 2, 2021. Executive Board discussed meetings, July will be ZOOM only, August will have an in person and ZOOM option.

The Proposed By-Law change to Art 1 Section 3 Policy Book. **PASSED**

Mark Beach made a motion, seconded by Debbie Guthrie, to spend \$720 for RICOH Cloud Workflow subscription through Ohio Business Systems to provide OCR Reader, scanning and searching capabilities. **Motion PASSED**

Mark Beach spoke with Clippers rep about using our tickets for the 09/04 game starting at 7:08 PM. These were purchased last year pre-COVID-19, members pay \$5 per ticket.

Jeremy Hirschfeld reminded members to get their COVID vaccine shots.

There was discussion regarding the Bibles doubling in cost. Val Davis presented an alternative, a Memory Plaque for the Branch to consider; non-denominational, clear acrylic with sympathy for loss text from Branch 78. Much more affordable, so requesting feedback from membership.

Meeting adjourned at 7:55.

Submitted by Yana Miller-Farney

Retiree Back to Hall Event

07/15/21 at 12:30

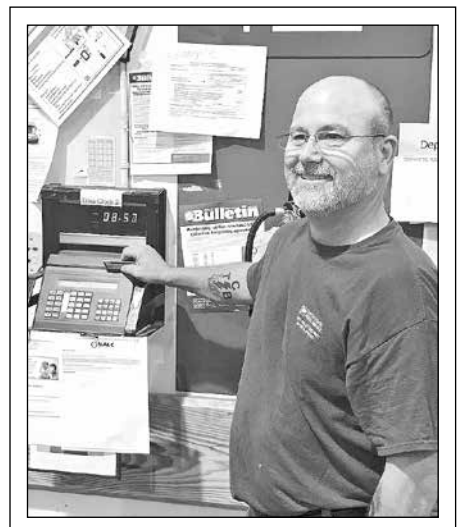
Parking lot or Inside the Hall, Food and Games, RSVP.



Northwest station, William (Bill) Penny and wife; planning to travel.



Bexley station, Lawrence (Larry) LeClaire and family; plans to work on Honey Do List.



(Joe) Joseph Williams, Westerville, retired 06/29/21. Last clock ring.

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 National Association of
 Letter Carriers
 AFL-CIO



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BW Beechwood	Doug Lawver/Alts. Scott Lloyd/Karlton Wilson	614-447-0146
BEX Bexley	Roderick Robinson	614-237-2830
Canal Winchester	Mark Beach	614-837-7953
CIR Circleville	Brian Tatham	740-474-3113
DEL Delaware	Mark Beach	740-363-1906
DUB Dublin	Mark Beach	614-889-6571
Eastland	Jeff Stiverson/Alts. Ramon Lawson/Mark Elkins/Jamal Grinston	614-237-1912
East City	Charles Sanders/Alt. Dilien Miller	614-469-4466
F German Village	Dean Peruzzi	614-449-9565
G South Columbus	Rob Arnold/ Alt. Zach Angles	614-444-0217
GAH Gahanna	Kirk Hilty/Brenda Stidams	614-472-0696
GP Groveport	Mark Beach	614-836-5452
GC Grove City	Mike Zeller/Alt. Tricia Douglas	614-875-6327
HILL Hilliard	Mark Beach	614-876-7021
LIV Livingston	Ramon Lawson/Alt. Kisha Moman	614-237-9570
LON London	Mark Beach	740-852-1881
MV Marysville	Dave Eblin/Alt. Adam Tullis	937-642-1961
MT Gilead	Joe Kegley	419-946-5846
NL Northland	Sammy Tonyemba/Alt. Larez Harper	614-890-1180
NW Northwest	Myron Miller Jr.	614-451-1502
OP Oakland Park	Dan Dillinger/Alt. Jeremy Starkey	614-476-1680
PIC Pickerington	Mark Beach	614-837-5793
PLN CTY Plain City	Mark Beach	614-837-4004
REY Reynoldsburg	Charles Miliken	614-866-6049
UA Upper Arlington	Jeffrey Williams/Alts. Joshua Anthony/Jacquelyn Mitchell	614-451-2302
West City	Allan Moore Sr./Heather Christy/Shawn Carter Alt./Richard Hannon Alt.	614-469-4465
WV Westerville	Mark Beach/Dee Dee Miller Alt.	614-882-2243
Westland	Samuel "Cory" Bailey/Eric Scarberry	614-351-0138
WJ West Jefferson	Mark Beach	614-879-9145
WW West Worthington	Jeremy Hirschfeld/Cornelius Scott/Alts. Jason Fry/Charles Schneider/ Jeffrey Freeman	614-793-9789
WH Whitehall	Gary Porter/Rob Gravely Alt.	614-237-1722

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 FOR THE
UNION
LABEL



**THE JOB YOU SAVE
 COULD BE YOUR OWN!**

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 1029 Harrisburg Pike
 Columbus, Ohio 43223-2524

STEWARDS MEETING-6:30 P.M.

First Wednesday of each month
OFFICERS MEETING-6:00 P.M.

The Monday preceding Steward
 Meeting

BRANCH MEETING-6:30 P.M.

Second Wednesday of each month
RETIREEES MEETING-1:00 P.M.

First Tuesday of each month

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