

908 News

NALC Branch 908
AFL-CIO
PO Box 375
Gloucester City,
NJ 08030

South Jersey Letter Carriers

Atco, Bellmawr, Blackwood, Bridgeton, Clayton, Deptford, Gibbstown,
Glassboro, Gloucester, Haddon Hts., Hammonton, Lawnside, Magnolia,
Mantua, Maple Shade, Marlton, National Park, Paulsboro, Penns Grove,
Pennsville, Pitman, Riverton, Salem, Sewell, Somerdale, Stratford,
Swedesboro, Voorhees, Wenonah, Westville, Williamstown, Woodbury,
Woodstown

Prsrt First Class
Postage Paid
Permit # 967
Bellmawr, NJ
08031

Return Service
Requested



BUY AMERICAN - BUY UNION



Newsletter Com: Powell, Comuso, Lipski Ph: 906-2838 Fax: 227-0516 www.nalcbranch908.com April 2012

Presidents Report

I know I am sounding like a broken record, but everyone has to understand that our future is in jeopardy if we don't all pull together and get out the word to the general public about what is going on with the Postal Service. I am totally amazed at how many of our employees are not aware of what is going on with their job! The Postal Service, led by PMG Pat Donohoe, is continuing to beat the death drum that if we don't cut service and close down Post Offices, we will not be able to survive going forward. Again, this is the complete opposite of what has to be done. He has been trying to get Congress to think this is the best path to take to stay afloat. Thank God we have many congressmen who are not buying this bull crap and understand what has to be done to keep us going. I just returned from DC after attending our Congressional breakfast, and am glad to report our members of Congress from NJ are overwhelmingly in support of our plight, and have given us their word they will try to stop the Issa crowd from trying to destroy the postal service. They do admit there is a lot of pressure to dismantle the service, but have said they need all people to be educated on the truth of what is going on. They want us to start informing everyone we come in contact with and explain the real reason the postal service is in the red, not the created reason they are portraying in the media. This is why **everyone** and I mean everyone needs to sign up as an **e-activist** immediately so you can get the facts. There are still those carriers out there that think dropping Saturday delivery isn't such a bad idea! Wake up! Once we give up Saturday, you can be dam sure another day will follow suit. Stop thinking about yourself and look what is best for the masses. Another issue that needs to be addressed is the inspection teams that are out in force once again creating havoc on our members. It appears the "L" brothers are starting their nonsense again by harassing our carriers while out on a street inspection. The latest concerns I have received is coming out of our Bellmawr office, which is involved in the caser/streeter program. One carrier, who is 62, reports he has been questioned about his use of comfort stops. They are telling him since he took 3 comfort stops during the day, which is now 8 hours on the street, that it is unreasonable, and terminated his inspection! He only used 19 minutes, but I guess that is a waste in the new "streeter world." This is one of the big pet peeves of the "L" brothers. They can't understand why carriers have to go to the restrooms! If they were walking for 8 hours and not sitting at a computer all day, they might understand. They also had the carrier illegally park while doing business deliveries and stated that our competitors do it, so why shouldn't we do it? Who in the world is training these clowns? Are they serious? Another carrier who was walked with stated he was being followed so close by his examiner that he was actually being cut off in order to try and take a shorter path to his box. He was also told he was walking too slow! Boy that is different! This is an absolute disgrace, and these people should be ashamed of their treatment to our carriers. I will have more to report and will expose these creeps for what they really are! Hope to see you at this month's meeting

Gary DiGiacomo- President

Branch Cell Phone Numbers

President- Gary DiGiacomo - 856-906-2838
Vice- President- Steve Rutkowski- 856-906-2026

Next Meeting

The next regular monthly meeting of the Branch will be held on **Wednesday, April 18th 8 p.m.**, at the American Legion Hall, 502 Colonial Ave., North Woodbury. The regular monthly meetings of the Branch are held on the **Third Wednesday of each month at 8 p.m.**, **The Branch Board of Officers and Executive Board meetings are held on the 2nd Wednesday of the month.** The Board of Officers meet at **7:30 p.m.**, and the Executive Board at **8 p.m.** The next meeting of the Board of Officers and Executive Board will be on **Wednesday, April 11th, 7:30 and 8 p.m.** respectively.

Trustee Report

I just want to clarify for all members the Sick and Welfare and Death Benefit Funds. We use the Sick and Welfare Fund for the following : The Branch sends a spray of flowers when an eligible Branch member or family member dies. That is handled by Mike DiGiacomo, 19 Madison ave Laurel Springs NJ 08021 , phone (609)-682-0420. The Death Benefit Fund is used when a Branch member passes away. The Branch sends the members family \$200.00. This is handled by James Boyle 1003 Glendora ave Glendora NJ 08083, phone(856)-952-6107. Also George Greenwood is the Branch Health Benefit Officer and he handles the Branch Eye Glass Fund. He can be reached at 1083 Chews Landing Rd Laurel Springs NJ 08021, phone (856)-304-8665. On to other news, the Branch will be having the Branch picnic at **Clementon Lake Park this year on September 9th 2012.** Keep this date open. More details will follow, in May and Junes newsletters. An estimated cost per person will be around \$15.00 a ticket and that would include both the water and amusement parks, food , drinks and beer for the adults. Jim Livingston will be handling the event and tickets, . So stay tuned.

James Comuso, Sr. Trustee Chairman

Attendance Prize Now Stands At \$100

Had he attended at the regular monthly meeting of the Branch on **Wednesday, March 21st** , **Earl Breslin**, a retired member out of our Wenonah Office would have won the **\$75** attendance prize. The prize now increases to **\$100** and will increase **\$25** per meeting, up to a maximum of **\$250**, until a member in attendance has his/her name drawn.

Health Benefits

NALC health benefit plan has a free quit smoking program. For information, call 1-866-784-8454, or visit www.quitnow.net/nalc. In addition, anyone who is in the FEHBP, and in need of additional dental, or vision insurance is eligible during open season to take additional coverage through the (FEDVIP) Federal Employees Dental/Vision Insurance Program.

George Greenwood -HBO

Dates to Remember 2012

April 14 – Branch Retiree Banquet
May 20-22– NJ State Seminar
July 23-27 – National Convention

PROUD TO BE UNION

Branch Scholarship

In May we will be drawing the winner of this year's Branch Scholarship. The winner of the Scholarship will receive a fund of \$ 2000.00 (\$500.00 a year for four years). Applications are available at every monthly meeting , on the web site or you can contact **Trustee Shawn McBride**. All previous winners that still receive Scholarship payments must submit any updated info to Shawn by the May monthly meeting. This would include the student's current college and where he or she will be attending in the upcoming fall semester. Remember all students must be a full time student. All payments for the upcoming fall semester will be sent to the colleges in June. If you have any questions, Trustee Shawn McBride can be contacted by phone at 856 649-9317 or email smcbride1@comcast.net

Shawn McBride

The U.S. Postal Service is a Toxic Work Environment

Prior to my retirement from the USPS, at a former district I worked for, there were three suicides within a two year period that I concluded were contributed to in significant part by how these employees were treated in the workplace. The third employee, a city letter carrier, fatally shot himself in a postal jeep and left a letter stating that he could no longer take the job. The night before he committed suicide he told his wife he did not know if he would be able to handle his job anymore. How do I know? His wife told me this one day after his suicide. He was one of the best employees in the office. The District Manager and I interviewed his coworkers after his death, and they stated he would urinate in a bottle while on delivery route for fear he would not meet an artificial deadline set by postal management. During the interviews, one of the postal supervisors told the District Manager and me that the day before the suicide she gave a letter to all the city letter carriers in the station, noting that any future over time used for their routes would be considered unacceptable performance. The suicide at the Gastonia postal facility was the second since December 2005. Many people have asked: Why is there so much stress and workplace tragedies in the U.S. Postal Service? The answer to these questions is because the postal culture embraces and reflects core values that center on achieving bottom-line results with little or no regard for employee participation, respect, dignity, or fairness. Additionally, there is little or no accountability for the actions of top management in the Postal Service. Many postal facilities consequently have toxic work environments, and they can be a catalyst or trigger for serious acts of workplace violence, including homicide and suicide. The associated rewards system for behavior consistent with the postal culture core values, moreover, enables systemic organizational and individual bullying of employees at all levels of the organization. I define a toxic workplace environment as a workplace where there is a high incidence of stress-related illnesses. These stress-related illnesses are manifested by psychological and physical deterioration. In other words, these types of environments seriously erode employees' health and well-being. The primary factors contributing to a toxic workplace environment are high job demands, low job control, and low social support. Low social support generally entails a lack of respect and validation of employees' dignity by their "superiors". It also oftentimes includes organizational practices and methods that encourage the bullying of employees to meet corporate goals.

**Dr. Steve Musacco
Beyond Going Postal**

Dr. Steve Musacco is a Ph.D. in organizational psychology, a M.S. in Counseling, and a B.A. in psychology. He's been licensed as a Marriage and Family Therapist and completed Coach's coaching program. He also worked for the postal service for 30 years

Getting Retirement Counseling

For active carriers, the local Postal Service personnel office is responsible for providing individual retirement counseling. You can get information through the Human Resources Shared Services Center by calling 877-477-3273 and selecting option 5. Group sessions are also available at many offices. We encourage letter carriers to attend. Bring your spouse to both individual and group retirement counseling sessions, as both of you will need the information. Contact your local postal personnel office for assistance and information.

Annuity Estimates

The Postal Service has implemented the National Retirement Counseling System to ensure that all employees who become eligible for retirement are provided with in-depth information and counseling to make informed decisions to prepare for retirement. A computer-generated report called the annuity estimate is mailed twice each year to the home address of those employees currently eligible for retirement. Employees who are within 3 years of retirement eligibility may request annuity estimates by contacting their personnel office. The Postal Service has an excellent CSRS Retirement Guide. Ask them for Handbook EL-502.

S.1789 Lacks Vision, Won't Solve USPS Problems

In a speech at Rutgers, NALC President Fredric V. Rolando called on Congress to take the time to draft comprehensive reform instead of pushing through flawed legislation, saying that Postal Service legislation pending before Congress lacks any long-term vision and fails to provide for the creation of an effective business plan for a vital American institution. "What the Postal Service needs most is a new business model," Rolando said, "built from the bottom up, one that looks above the immediate financial and structural problems to find opportunities to meet the evolving needs of the American people in the 21st century."

FSS Machines Running Far Slower Than Planned

Flats Sequencing System machines continue to run much slower than their target speeds and are not getting any faster. However, they also are not breaking down as often as they were last year, according to a Postal Service presentation. From October through mid-February, the average number of pieces sequenced hourly ranged from 7,000 to 10,000 per week, well below the target of nearly 12,000. Throughputs so far this year have stabilized in the range of 8,000 to 9,000 per hour with a slightly downward trend, according to a [presentation](#) Megan J. Brennan, USPS's Chief Operation Officer, made at a recent Mailers Technical Advisory Committee (MTAC) meeting. But the "Mean Time between Failure," a measure of how frequently the machines break down that was at about 10 for most of August and September, has been consistently above 13 recently. And the time it took to get a machine back online dropped by about one-third in a six-month period. Postal officials reported that rapid deployment of the huge machines -- 89 during Fiscal Year 2011 -- led to service challenges and a "learning curve for technicians." USPS has updated FSS-related training, instituted more diagnostic maintenance, and revised various procedures to improve efficiency and reduce extensive delays in the delivery of flat mail, such as catalogs and magazines. It is also working on ways to reduce the frequent damage to mail pieces that has earned FSS the nickname "Flats Shredding System". Increasing the machines' reliability may be more important than increasing their speeds. FSS' erratic performance wreaked havoc during the busy fall mailing season, especially for letter carriers whose routes were "adjusted" (expanded) under the assumption that FSS would enable them to spend more time delivering the mail. Many reported that they still had to sequence more than half of the flat mail they deliver, sometimes on their laps during "street time."

Phillies Raffle

I would like to take this time to thank all our stewards, officers and members who sold their tickets. We sold 924 tickets of which Donna Villec sold 165, Norm Spence 100 and Mike Powell 100. We did not have a winner this year.

Mike Powell Recording Secretary

Attention

Please remember to give any changes of address to your **Steward** so that you can continue to receive the Branch Newsletter and other important information. Or send changes to Mike Powell, Recording Secretary at: 908recordingsec@comcast.net or P.O. Box 375, Gloucester City, NJ 08030

Name: _____
Current Address: _____ _____
New Address: _____ _____
Phone Number: _____
E-mail: _____