

908 News

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

South Jersey Letter Carriers

Atco, Barrington, Bellmawr, Berlin, Blackwood, Bridgeton, Clayton, Deptford, Egg Harbor City, Gibbsboro, Gibbstown, Glassboro, Glendora, Gloucester, Haddon Hts., Hammonton, Lawnside, Magnolia, Mantua, Maple Shade, Marlton, Mt. Ephraim, National Park, Palmyra, Paulsboro, Penns Grove, Pennsville, Pitman, Riverton, Runnemede, Salem, Sewell, Somerdale, Stratford, Swedesboro, Voorhees, Wenonah, Westville, Williamstown, Woodbury, Woodstown

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Newsletter Com: Powell, Lipski, Spence Ph: 906-2838 Fax: 227-0516 www.nalcbranch908.com February 2014

Presidents Report

Well brothers and sisters, I can say this January was as tough a month that I can remember in a long time. What really concerns me is how some managers can constantly question our member's ability to do our job under such difficult conditions. Walking and driving under icy and frigid conditions makes it a very challenging job. The stuffed shirts who sit in their cozy warm offices make me sick when they question the extra time the carriers need to get the job done safely and efficiently. I won't dwell on their lunacy since we all know what it takes to get the job done professionally and efficiently. Please do not be intimidated to do something unsafe because of their unrealistic expectations. I am sure some of the accidents we incurred last month were because carriers were trying to rush to get back. Remember, you will never be disciplined for being safe. There is no way you can predict how long your route will take under some of these tough conditions. If you have a manager who insists on a time before you leave for the street, I suggest you give him a professional assessment and then call back half way through your route to update them on your progress. Another major issue we have uncovered in this district is the improper time card entries many, if not all managers are guilty of! We have seen four offices so far, who are putting carriers on improper codes, which in turn changes the times associated with their routes. The way we have found out these illegal maneuvers is through investigating grievances for overtime and one office that had a carrier just complete a special inspection. This is a very troubling occurrence in my opinion. We have a memo from the district manager dated August 19, 2013 that speaks specifically of this type of behavior from his managers. He states that, "the integrity of postal systems programs and supporting documentation should not be sacrificed for operating expediency." He also states that, knowingly recording incorrect time for another employee constitutes falsification of a report. Any employee knowingly involved in such a procedure is subject to **REMOVAL OR OTHER DISCIPLINE.**" These are his words, not mine. I hope he is serious in dealing with this rampant problem. I can bet all managers are guilty of this in order to make their numbers. Let us see if he addresses our concerns. My bet is he is aware of what they are doing and will not even acknowledge our concerns. By uncovering these improper entries, I would say all route inspections that are pending this year will now be scrutinized by us big time. I can now see why these inspection teams think they can take out routes in many of our offices. If there are improper entries on routes it would lead those looking at numbers to think there is a lot of "under time" in offices. The reality of the situation is there is phony under time. When carriers are put on 737, 731, 354 etc., it brings down the actual route time. This is why this type of managing has to be stopped. No one makes out on this kind of behavior. I will be having all my stewards requesting reports to see who is guilty. My guess is everyone is doing it. I hope they will be treated like we would be if we were guilty of the same infraction! Stay tuned to see how many rats start jumping ship!

Gary DiGiacomo- President

Phone Numbers to Remember

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

Attendance Prize Now At \$75

Had he attended the regular monthly meeting of the Branch on **Wednesday, January 15th, John Blazie**, a retired member from our Bridgeton Office, would have been the recipient of the **\$50** attendance prize. The prize now increases to **\$75** and will increase **\$25** per meeting, up to a maximum of **\$250**, until a member in attendance has their name drawn.

Next Meeting

The next regular monthly meeting of the Branch will be held on **Wednesday, February 19th @ 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 @ 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 @ **7:30 p.m.**, and the Executive Board @ **8 p.m.** The next meeting of the Board of Officers and Executive Board will be on **Wednesday, February, 12th @ 7:30 and 8pm** respectively.

Trustee Report

Brothers and Sisters, I would like everyone to know that our newest Trustee, **Pete DeSimone** will be overseeing and organizing the Branch kids Xmas party. Anyone needing info about party, or anyone who wants to help, may contact him at 609-680-3129. He also will be handling branch photography and assisting VP **Steve Rutkowski** with MDA fundraising. Anyone wishing to assist in any way, please contact him. The kids Xmas party is scheduled for December 7th at the hall from 1-3 pm. Our new Sgt at Arms, **Phil Haas** can be reached at 609-868-3285 and is in charge of the branch picnic and any other function the branch deems appropriate. This year's picnic at Clementon Park will be either September 7th or 14th, from 11 am to 9 pm and will include both parks and all food and drink for \$15 pp, kids under 2 are free. Finally, the Branch Social and Awards Banquet is March 29th from 7-11 pm at the Kelly Ann Ballroom in Gloucester City. All food and an open bar is included with a DJ for only \$20 pp, see your Steward or Branch Officers for tickets. We ask that you pay by check or money order. Finally, let's not forget our CCAs, the branch provides many benefits to dues paying members. One being free new or used uniforms available at the hall, contact me anytime for access. Thank you for allowing me to serve you.

James Comuso Sr, Chairman Board of Trustees - 609-932-9913

Don't Put Yourself in Danger in the Cold

The Postal Service has issued mandatory safety talks to be given to all employees regarding protection from cold temperatures. If management has not provided these safety talks, advise your supervisor, shop steward, branch officers or, if necessary, your National Business Agent. **Bottom line:** Do not put yourself in danger.

Retiree Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA)

There was **no accumulation** toward the 2015 cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) for both Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) and Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS) following the Jan. 16 release of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for December 2013.

Health Benefits

Cold stress/stroke. Yes that is what I said. Just like in summer when you must protect against heat injuries the same holds true in winter. Extreme cold places much added stress on your heart to warm the body. This added stress can, and will lead to cold stress/stroke. To combat this you must warm yourself as you need whether it's in your truck, a business, or someone's home. Eat small meals often, and although it is difficult drink water. This and dressing for the weather in layers and a hat will help combat the stress. New CCA'S keep in mind after your initial probation if not covered elsewhere, you must have health insurance. This is offered to you through the USPS by law. Go to Liteblue.usps.gov. NALC-HBP questions/concerns, contact me at 856-346-1177 . Send your optical claims receipt to George Greenwood, 1083 Chews Landing Rd., Laurel Springs, NJ 08021.

Grievance Log Step B Decision

Blackwood- Management **did not** have just cause to issue a Letter of Warning for Failure to Follow Instructions when he was charged with not notifying management he would be late on numerous occasions. The file shows grievant did call and verbally inform management he would need assistance. As a remedy, the Letter of Warning shall be rescinded.

Blackwood- Management **did not** have just cause to issue a 7 Day Suspension for Failure to Follow Instructions when he was charged with being belligerent and refusing to work. Based on the file management has not proved grievant acted as charged. As a remedy, the 7 Day Suspension shall be rescinded.

Gibbstown- Management violated Article 17 of the National Agreement when they refused to provide the steward time and access to interview 3 carriers on the clock, which resulted in the interviews being conducted off the clock. **As a remedy, the steward will be paid 1.33 hours at the overtime rate, 1 carrier .33 hours OT and 2 carriers .50 hours OT.**

Stratford- Management violated Article 19 of the National Agreement, specifically Section 432.712 of the ELM, when they disallowed overtime worked by the grievant. As a remedy, management is instructed to inform the carrier and the union of any time disallowance in the future prior to disallowing time it may believe to be warranted. No monetary remedy is appropriate in this case because the amount of work time is de minimis.

Stratford- Management violated Article 19 of the National Agreement when they improperly edited carrier's time cards by placing them on incorrect Management Operating Data Systems Codes in violation of the M-39 Section 126.42 and the M-32 Handbook. **As a remedy, since the integrity of the data has been compromised, specifically MODS code edits, this data shall not be used for any route analysis purpose. Management is also instructed to cease and desist.**

Stratford- Management violated Article 19 of the National Agreement, specifically Section 432.712 of the ELM, when they disallowed overtime worked by the grievant. As a remedy, the DRT will pay grievant for .19 units at the overtime time rate.

Stratford- Management violated Article 8.5.G of the National Agreement when they forced work assignment carriers to work overtime on other routes when the ODL carriers and a CCA were available to do this work. **As a remedy, 5 carriers will each be paid .50 hours at the overtime rate.**

IMPORTANT NOTE

In 2014, both of the deferred 2013 COLAs, \$146 annually and \$541 annually, will be added to the Step O pay rates in Table 2 of the Pay Schedule, which applies to City Carriers hired in career positions on or after January 13, 2013. The pay rates of Steps A through N of Table 2 will be increased proportionally, as provided by the contract. For example, Step A is set at 61.5% of Step O, so the COLA for Grade 1, Step A is \$333 annually.

New COLCPE Contributor

Koursh Najimi has become Branch 908's most recent COLCPE contributor. Koursh also is the new shop steward in our Voorhees Office.

PROUD TO BE UNION

7th Annual Branch Banquet-March 29th

The **7th Annual Branch 908 Banquet** will be held on **March 29th, 2014** from **7:00 – 11:00pm** at **Kelly Ann Ballroom Highland Blvd. & Sylvan Ave. Gloucester City N.J.** This is a great night to eat, drink, dance, and socialize with good friends and especially to honor those members who have retired in the past year as well as those who have been selected to receive Branch Awards. If you have retired since the last banquet or you will retire before **March 29th** contact Branch Recording Secretary, **Mike Powell** at 908recordingsec@comcast.net. All Branch Members, family and friends are encouraged to attend at a cost of **\$20pp**. **The cost for current Branch retirees is \$10**. Tickets may be picked up from Branch Recording Secretary **Mike Powell** at any Branch Meeting, or by mailing the form below with checks made out to NALC Branch 908, to PO Box 375, Gloucester City, NJ 08030.

Name: _____		
(Please print)		
Check One: Honoree () Retiree () Other ()		
Total	Number	Attending:
Amount of remittance enclosed:		

Send to PO Box 375, Gloucester City, NJ 08030 by March 21, 2014. Members of the Branch who have retired since our last Banquet will be honored and presented with tokens of our appreciation. **If you have retired since the last Banquet or you will retire before March 29th, 2014, please contact the Branch Recording Secretary, Mike Powell @ 856-287-8768 or 908recordingsec@comcast.net.**

Nominations for Shop Steward of the Year

The Shop Steward of the Year Award will be awarded at the Branch Retiree's Banquet. Simply write on a piece of paper the following information: Name of Steward being nominated, Office, Person making nomination (must be from Steward Office), and statement including accomplishments, knowledge of contract, ability to deal with co-workers and management, and dedication to the NALC and 908. All submissions must be received by February 28th, 2014. The winner will be selected by the Awards Committee and kept confidential until the presentation at the Banquet.

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. Alternatively, send changes to **Mike Powell, Recording Secretary at P.O. Box 375, Gloucester City, NJ 08030 or 908Recordingsec@comcast.net.**

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