

908 News

NALC Branch 908
AFL-CIO
PO Box 150
Pennsville, NJ
08070

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, Paulsboro, Penns Grove, Pennsville, Pitman, Riverton, Runnemede, Salem, Sewell, Somerdale, Stratford, Swedesboro, Voorhees, Wenonah, Westville, Williamstown, Woodbury, Woodstown



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Newsletter Com: Spence, Lipski, Powell Ph: 906-2838 Fax: 227-0516 www.nalcbranch908.com March 2020

Presidents Report

I just returned from our regional training seminar in Atlantic City with many of our stewards and officers and got the latest news from our National President Fred Rolando on what is happening with some of the issues we are waiting on. First and foremost, the Consolidated Casing Initiative, which is still active in our Marlton office, was my main issue I was hoping to get some good news about. It appears there must be something going on concerning this case, since president Rolando has stated the arbitrator has requested more time to review this case, which seems odd to me. I am hoping this delay in getting a decision is more a positive than a negative, since they have stopped putting anymore offices on this disastrous program. I am hopeful there is talking amongst the parties to get this resolved, since there is nothing being leaked out about the arbitration. In early January I was told we would get a decision in February, but we are now in March and I am being told we may not hear anything until April! I am getting bad vibes about this whole mess, and can only hope I am reading this all wrong, and we will prevail with a make whole remedy where everything is put back to the original state it was in. Listening to president Rolando leads me to believe there is something coming that maybe neither party will be happy with. I am basing this opinion on nothing but my years of being around this organization and how things work! I could be totally wrong on my assessment, which I hope I am, because our brothers and sisters are really getting abused with this work method. The next issue he updated us on was our contract negotiations. We have agreed on a neutral arbitrator and he states they are continuing to have good talks with the postal service while preparing for the arbitration hearing. There is always a possibility we could come to an agreement before allowing the panel to decide our contract. Our president hopes to have a decision on a new contract by the time our convention occurs in August. Locally, we have a new District Manager, Le Gretta Ross-Rawlins, who replaces James Drummer, who comes in from Baltimore to run the operation in our district. As many of you know, I can be very critical of the leadership in the district, but Jim Drummer was the best DM we have had in a long time and will be a huge loss in south jersey. I can only hope our new DM will continue the same approach Jim Drummer had with the employees of our district. Lastly, it appears we are having a number of safety issues in our district with carriers leaving their vehicles running unattended and being caught on camera by customers doorbell ring cameras. We are seeing carriers driving with their doors open and no seatbelts on while making deliveries. I can only reiterate to everyone the importance of working in a safe manner. The postal service is issuing letters of removals for these offenses as they are no longer going to tolerate this behavior. Please stop worrying about saving a minute because you feel pressured to get back to the office in a certain time. There is no excuse for leaving a truck running when you get out of it. We can do a lot for you, but when you work in an unsafe manner it will make saving your job very difficult. Please be careful!

- Gary DiGiacomo – President

Next Meeting

The next regular monthly meeting of the Branch will be held on **Wednesday, March 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 @ 8 p.m. The Executive Board and Shop Steward meetings are held on the 2nd Wednesday of the month. The Executive Board meets @ **7:30 p.m.**, and the Shop Stewards @ **8 p.m.** The next meeting of the Executive Board and Shop Stewards will be on **Wednesday, March 11th @ 7:30 and 8pm** respectively.

Comments From the VP

The Annual Branch 908 Retiree and Award Banquet will be held on Saturday March 28 from 7pm-11pm at Elizabeth's Ballroom located in Gloucester City. This year we will be honoring sixteen retirees. There will be no tickets sold at the door, so if you plan to attend please see your steward or call me for tickets. Tickets are \$20 for active members and \$10 for retirees. I want to remind everyone of a very important fact, Management is required to maintain an atmosphere of **Dignity and Respect** when dealing with you, and if they don't please request to see a steward and file a grievance. Here's a nice tidbit of info, in the last 10 months or so, our steward, Allen Muff, has had approximately 530 hours of union time and if you include the union time used by some of the other stewards and officers that have gone to Sewell to assist Allen in the Sewell cesspool, that number is probably close to 1000 hours. I think some retraining is in order for the Management running the cesspool!!!!

We just got back from the Region 12 Seminar and it was disheartening to say the least to hear that it may not be till the end of March till there is a decision by the arbitrator on the Consolidated Casing fiasco. In the meantime, my heart goes out to our brother and sisters who are enduring this totally failed test. At the Camden, aka, Hellhole, it's the same bullsh#*, fake numbers, intimidation etc. What amazes me is management wants to save money by cutting overtime hours, but they have three level 24 managers running this office at the rate of I'm guessing, \$75-80,000 a year a piece. How in the hell is that saving money? Just Sayin!! If any active member, CCA or retired member needs my help on any issue please contact me anytime at **(856)-906-2026 or 908vp@comcast.net**

Proud to Be Union
Mike Powell – Vice - President

Attendance Prize Now at \$75

Had she been in attendance at the regular monthly meeting of the Branch on **Wednesday February 19th, Barbara Ricci**, a retired member out of the Marlton 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.

Easter Ham Drawing

At the regular monthly meeting of the Branch on **Wednesday March 18th**, there will be a drawing for an Easter Ham, donated by branch retiree **Joe Foreman**, in honor of former Branch COLCPE Chairman **Norm Task**.

Health Benefits, MBA, FMLA, Optical

Hello brothers, and sisters. CCAs HEADS UP! Just a reminder to those CCAs affected with converting to FTR, and PTF Career on March 14, 2020, this is, and constitutes a Qualifying Life Event (QLE). This means you are now eligible for more benefits, such as the Federal Employee Health Benefit Program,

Life insurance, and Thrift Savings Plan Retirement. Once you are converted to a career position you have 60 days to enroll in a FEHB health plan. You can no longer be in the USPS Health Plan so if no choice is made you will be without health insurance. If a letter carrier was enrolled in the USPS non career health benefits plan and converted to a career position that enrollment is terminated on the last day of the month that falls 28 days after conversion to a career position. To avoid a gap in coverage, newly converted letter carriers should enroll in the FEHBP as soon as possible. The fastest, and easiest way to do so is through the USPS LiteBlue website, and Postal Ease. Coverage will begin on the first day of the first pay period after signing up online. I encourage all CCAs being converted to look at your (Union Owned) NALC Health Benefit Plan. Three options are available to you with our plan, all at very low cost for excellent coverage. To make any changes you must have your employee ID number, and a password setup to get into the system. Don't put it off in case there are any difficulties when changing. Find out more about the NALC Health Benefit Plan at <https://www.nalchbp.org/> Any questions on the plans, or any of the above information please feel free to call me anytime at 856-304-8665. Also, I strongly encourage you to read the "Letter Carrier Resource guide" on the NALC web page at nalc.org. Don't miss your chance...Saturday, March 14th.

MBA-Still no word on the disability insurance programs release date. When I get the date, I will notify everyone ASAP. Don't forget the other policies offered through Mutual Benefits. Life insurance, Hospital Plus, Retirement Savings, and CCA retirement savings. All benefits programs are listed <https://www.nalc.org/member-benefits/mutual-benefit-association>

All members in good standing with Branch 908 are entitled to one per member/or member dependent optical reimbursement of \$20 per year. To receive yours mail to me a paper copy of your optical expense with your name, office/retired, and mailing address to George Greenwood, 1083 Chews Landing Rd., Laurel Springs, NJ 08021....Any questions on the above, or any related material please give me a call at 856-304-8665.

- George Greenwood, HBR

Ozzie's Corner

As Active and Retired City Letter Carriers, every day we rely on our personal vehicles to go to work, take our kids and grandchildren to school and conduct important matters. In addition, working in the Postal Service has given many of us the opportunity to own our homes as well, that is why we need to pay close attention to House Resolution Bills S-2144, A-3850 and A-4293. In early February, I received a letter in the mail from my vehicle insurance company: NJM Insurance Group from President and CEO Mitchell A. Livingston. Mr. Livingston explains that these 3 HR Bills if passed on the senate floor, would drastically increase a policyholder's automobile and homeowners' insurance in the garden state. The supporters of the bills claim it provides the claimants right to challenge the way an insurer handles and insurance claim. However, Mr. Livingston states that a claimant under existing laws already has the right to challenge an insurer's actions. NJM believes this is a way to create in the long run unnecessary lawsuits, which in turn will show higher costs and legal fees. An independent study performed by an actuarial firm estimated that the legislation would increase in the state of New Jersey by over \$2.5 billion a year in insurance premiums. In a nutshell, residents would see an increase in \$300 per policy for automobile insurance and \$100 per policy for homeowner's insurance. I applaud Mr. Livingston and NJM for keeping their customers in the loop with what is going on and not thinking about just a dollar sign. In addition, NJM is one of the few insurance companies in the state that gives discounts on insurance policies to Letter Carriers. As New Jersey residents we are at the top of the list in terms of the highest insurance costs.... does it need to be any higher? To vote no on these 3 bills contact your local legislator or go to www.NJM.com/advocacy for information to identify the local legislator in your district.

In other news, February's Postal Record showed Branch 908 for the second straight year record 26% of its members contribute to LCPF for 2019. I want to personally thank all 196 brothers and sisters who donated and understand the importance of our national pact. Remember, we have to protect door to door delivery, a 6 day a week work schedule, maintain our pay (including our COLAS) and have health benefits. For as little as a \$1 per pay, you are standing up and showing you care about all these Letter Carrier platforms. I want to thank March's Contributors: Astra Berrell (Maple Shade), Retirees: Phil Haas

(Westville and current Sgt.of Arms), William Morris (Salem) and David Neushafer (Life Member: Salem). Also, the first recipient of a LCPF shirt: Juan J Lopez-Gonzalez (Bellmawr). My phone number is (856) 220-8658 if you need my assistance with any information, questions or issues in our branch.

Ozzie Lecky - Letter Carrier Political Fund Chairman

**(By making a contribution to the LCPF, you are doing so voluntarily with the understanding that your contribution is not a condition of membership in the NALC or of employment by the USPS, nor is it part of union dues. You have a right to refuse to contribute without any reprisal. The LCPF will use the money it receives to contribute to candidates for federal office and undertake other political spending as permitted by law. Your selection shall remain in full force and effect until cancelled. Contributions to the LCPF are not deductible for federal income tax purposes. Federal law prohibits the LCPF from soliciting contributions from individuals who are not NALC members, executive and administration staff, or their families.)*

NALC Lapel Pins Earned

At the regular monthly meeting of the Branch on February 19th, we were honored to present Branch Trustee Chairman **Jim Comuso** with his 35-year lapel pin. Also, this month, Branch Gold Card member Warren Reid earned his **60-year** lapel pin!! Congratulations and thank you to both dedicated union Brothers.

Branch Scholarship Drawing

We will be drawing the winner of this year's Branch Scholarship at the regular monthly meeting on **May 15th**. 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 Branch web site, or you can contact Trustee **Jim Boyle**. All previous winners that still receive Scholarship payments must submit any updated info to Jim 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 **Jim Boyle** can be contacted by phone at 856-952-6107

Annual Branch Banquet – March 28

The 13th Annual Branch 908 Banquet will be held on **March 28, 2020** from 7:00 – 11:00pm at Elizabeth's Ballroom located at Highland Blvd. & Sylvan Ave., Gloucester City N.J. This is a great night to eat, drink, dance, and socialize with good friends and specially to honor those members who have retired in the past year as well as those who have been selected to receive Branch Awards.

All Branch Members, family and friends are encouraged to attend at a cost of \$20 pp. The cost for current Branch retirees is \$10. Tickets may be picked up from Branch Vice President, Mike Powell at any Branch Meeting, or by mailing the form below with a check or Money order made out to NALC Branch 908 by March 20th to 136 New Jersey Rd. Brooklawn, NJ 08030. The following Branch members have retired in the 2019 pay year and will be honored at this year's banquet.

- Vince Castagna** – Blackwood
- Joanne Lamplugh** – Riverton
- Leroy Blount** – Marlton
- Edgar Cantiveros** – Marlton
- Janice Murray** - Marlton
- James Hiltwine** – Marlton
- Annette Rodriguez-Rivera** – Pennsville
- Gregory Byrnes** – Hammonton
- Vincent Lombardo** – Sewell
- Shari Owen** – Riverton
- Arlene Schwartz** – Marlton
- Dawn Cain** – Marlton
- William Bryson** – Voorhees
- April DiRocco** – Marlton
- Matthew Maher** – Marlton
- Michael Olson** – Sewell

Name: _____ <div style="text-align: right; margin-top: 5px;">Print</div>
Check One: Honoree (<input type="checkbox"/>) Retiree (<input type="checkbox"/>) Other (<input type="checkbox"/>)
Total number attending _____
Total remittance \$ _____