

# 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, 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, West Berlin, 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 May 2011

### PRESIDENTS REPORT

Last month I mentioned we had a new District manager in place. His name is Joshua Colin, PhD, or as we will refer to him as "Dr. J." It appears the good doctor has come to south jersey with many new ideas to help cure whatever is ailing this district! I hope to fill everyone in at this month's meeting as to where he believes we are heading in south jersey as I have a meeting with him on May 11. From what I hear, he loves to have teleconferences daily with all the managers discussing his objectives and expectations. This must be killing the managers, because this cuts into their "busy time!"

The next issue we will be dealing with shortly is the consolidation of a few of our offices in our branch. The date this is to occur is June 16, 2011. One issue we are in disagreement with management is whether these consolidations are just that! Our position is these are consolidations and not a DUO, as management states they are. The business agent has communicated this to the area for clarification, and as soon as I hear what their answer is, I will let you know. The only real difference between these two situations is whether the local agreements will be renegotiated in the combined offices. Management does not want to open up new negotiations, but under a consolidation, they are required to do so. We shall see.

Another issue that surfaced recently was a letter dated April 6, 2011 that was sent to the national. The letter stated the Postal Service would be conducting a review of city letter carrier office activities beginning April 25, 2011. Supposedly, they will be videotaping certain carriers performing their office tasks to determine how much time they are spending on each activity! They state they are doing this to collect data in preparation for the upcoming collective bargaining! I have a lot of ideas I believe they are doing this, but will wait to hear from our National Leaders as to what this is all about. All I can say is this year is going to be quite interesting consider the contract the APWU agreed too! Any updated information I will relay to you at this month's meeting. Hope to see you there.

**Gary DiGiacomo- President**

### NEXT MEETING - MAY 18

The next regular monthly meeting of the Branch will be held on **Wednesday, May 18 , 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 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, May 11, 7:30 and 8 p.m.** respectively.

### ATTENDANCE PRIZE NOW STANDS AT \$125

Had he been in attendance at the regular monthly meeting of the Branch on **Wednesday, April 20, Arthur F England, out of our Penns Grove Office** would have been the recipient of the \$100 attendance prize. The prize now increases to **\$125** and will increase **\$25** per meeting, up to a maximum of **\$250**, until a member in attendance has their name drawn.

### DATES TO REMEMBER 2011

**June 1st-June3rd** - NJ State Congressional Breakfast  
**June 26-June 28** - NJ State Convention

### TRUSTEE REPORT

It is getting close to the Branch Scholarship time. If any member has a qualified family member and needs an application please contact Trustee Shawn McBride, at 856-649-9317. Or go to the Branch website and print out the application, fill it out and mail it to Shawn McBride, 1204 Huntingdon Mews, Clementon, NJ, 08021. Also any National Convention Delegate, who has not yet paid the Branch for last year's baseball game, in California, please do so immediately. Contact Mike Powell or me. Finally, I was asked by our Health Benefits Officer and his wife to pass along to the membership that they are both very thankful for all of the cards, phone calls, letters and flowers, from everyone. It has meant so much to them both, and they thank you all from the bottom of their hearts. From Fred and Jeannie Mendel!

**James Comuso, SR Trustee Chairman**

### NALC HEALTH BENEFITS

Anyone that has an optical bill please send it to Health Benefits Officer Bob Behm at the following address: 590 Lower Landing Rd Apt 79G Blackwood, NJ 08012. If any member has any questions feel free to contact me at 856-553-3354 or you can email me at [bobbehm84@aim.com](mailto:bobbehm84@aim.com). Please include your name and phone number. Thank You.

**HBR Bob Behm**

### GRIEVANCE LOG STEP B DECISIONS

**Paulsboro-** Management **did not** have just cause to issue a 7-Day suspension for Conduct Unbecoming of a Postal Employee. As a remedy, the suspension shall be rescinded.

**Paulsboro- Management** violated Article 10 of the National Agreement and the LMOU when they denied grievant 3 hours of grievant's request for 6 hours of annual leave. As a remedy, the grievant will be provided the opportunity to take 6 hours of annual leave outside of prime time, at his discretion.

**Paulsboro-** Management failed to maintain an atmosphere of mutual respect during a verbal incident on the workroom floor and back dock area. As a remedy, management will cease and desist and reminded of their individual responsibilities as outlined in section 115.4 of the M-39 Handbook.

**Westville-** Management was in violation of Article 15 when the grievant was not returned to duty or kept in a pay status following a Step B decision rescinding his letter of removal. As a remedy, management will process pay adjustments of 8 hours per day (40 hours per week) for the period January 12 through February 4, 2011.

**Westville-** Management **did not** have just cause to issue grievant a letter of warning for Failure to Follow Instructions/ Extending Street Time by using time wasting practices. As a remedy, the Letter of Warning shall be rescinded.

### PHONE NUMBERS TO REMEMBER

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

**PROUD TO BE UNION!**

## **BRANCH SCHOLARSHIP**

Applications are being accepted for the "Branch 908 Scholarship" drawing. The drawing will be held on Wednesday, June 16 at the regular Branch meeting. The scholarship is open to all children, grandchildren, stepchildren (living with Member) and adopted children of all active or retired branch members. The entry form is available on our branch website, [nalbranch908.com](http://nalbranch908.com), at our meetings or by contacting our new scholarship coordinator: **Shawn McBride, 1204 Huntingdon Mews, Clementon, NJ 08021**

### **\*ATTENTION\***

Any Branch member who is not registered as an e-activist please see your steward or contact Recording Secretary, Mike Powell for a registration form. It is very important that we all be registered. The National will send you via e-mail important updates on Legislative and other issues they want us to support.

## **IS UPS STARTING A TREND BY OPENING STORES IN AREAS WHERE POST OFFICES WERE CLOSED?**

The Postal Service is closing post offices across the nation in an effort to save money. But it seems a trend is starting by UPS Inc. to open up stores in places where USPS is shutting down. If UPS opens stores in areas where the Postal Service has shut down—USPS could possibly lose many of the customers it once enjoyed at the closed Post Offices. A reader told [PostalReporter.com](http://PostalReporter.com) that one of their stations will more than likely be closing soon. Recently UPS opened a store that will be closer than the Post Offices that USPS will recommend customers to take their business. UPS even provided donuts to the postal window clerks working at the station pending closure. UPS is so happy about USPS possibly closing this station they are celebrating in advance. On another note, it would be interesting to see USPS revenue reports in cities where Post Offices closed with UPS OR Fedex nearby. Take a look at this story from the [Oregon Daily Herald](http://OregonDailyHerald.com) about UPS opening store in Oregon. UPS Inc. fills role of outgoing Postal Service in EMU

The Postal Service officially made the decision to consolidate its Eugene offices on Jan. 14, after a closure announcement made last October followed by an unsuccessful appeals process. Students in the ASUO and International Student Association protested the decision to no avail, and the EMU post office shut down. The new business will take up the space formerly occupied by the Postal Service, but the senator said the UPS Store would refurbish the current office to fit its needs and use the existing mailboxes. "Their main goal is to provide services as soon as possible so they're going to try to move in ASAP and keep the move-in period short," Lange said. Postal Service media spokesperson Ronald Anderson said the public postal service had no comment on the new private courier.

## **THE REAL FINANCIAL HEALTH OF THE POSTAL SERVICE**

Yes, U.S. Postal Service revenue has declined, but the Postal Service remains one of the largest businesses in the world. Last year it generated \$67 billion in revenue. It is the central pole of a trillion-dollar industry that employs almost 9 million people at a time when job creation is critical to our economy. Taxpayers are not at risk for postal pension and health-care liabilities — the Postal Service does not need or want tax dollars. The Postal Service has set aside more than \$300 billion for this purpose, funding obligations at more than 80 percent. This is not counting \$82 billion of overcharges my office has documented, which if returned, would fund the obligations at more than 100 percent — an uncommon feat anywhere. If the Postal Service went out of business tomorrow, its real estate holdings, worth tens of billions of dollars, would more than cover remaining liabilities. The government has grown addicted to overcharging the Postal Service to rescue itself. It demands \$11 billion more every year. A good question is whether the Postal Service is losing money or whether these overpayments represent an unauthorized tax on the American people, endangering a historically successful enterprise.

**David C. Williams, Arlington,**

The writer is inspector general for the U.S. Postal Service.

## **MAINTAINING HEALTH BENEFITS AFTER RETIREMENT**

The issue of maintaining health insurance coverage is very important for federal employees getting close to retirement. Those who carry insurance under the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program into retirement enjoy annual health benefit open seasons, continued government contributions toward the cost of premiums and coverage for family members. To be sure, you can continue your valuable FEHBP coverage into retirement, it is important to know the program's rules regarding retirees.

**The Basics-**According to the Office of Personnel Management, when you retire, you are eligible to continue health benefits coverage if you meet the following requirements:

1. You will retire under a qualifying retirement system for federal employees.
2. You will receive a retirement benefit that will begin within the month after you leave, or you are eligible for a reduced MRA+10 retirement under the Federal Employees Retirement System but you choose to postpone receiving the benefit to avoid some or all of the reduction. (In this case, your health insurance can be reinstated when you begin receiving this annuity.)
3. You have been continuously enrolled (or covered as a family member) in any FEHBP plan for the five years of service immediately before the date your annuity starts, or for the full period of service since your first opportunity to enroll, if less than five years.

Note that you are not required to have been the one paying for FEHBP coverage continuously. You simply must have been covered by an FEHBP enrollment. This includes time as a family member under another person's FEHBP enrollment or time under the Uniformed Services Health Benefits Program (also known as TRICARE or CHAMPUS), as long as you were covered under an FEHBP enrollment at the time of your retirement. (You must enroll in FEHBP within 60 days after you lose coverage under the Uniformed Services Health Benefits Program for that time to be considered as part of continuous FEHBP coverage.) Coverage under Medicare does not count in determining continuous coverage. Neither does service as a non-appropriated fund employee. Employees who leave federal service, then return later and reinstate their FEHBP coverage, do not necessarily need to be re-employed for five years in order to carry the coverage into retirement. Coverage in their prior appointment counts toward having five years of continuous service as long as they re-enroll within 60 days of being rehired.

## **FOOD DRIVE MAY 14 TH**

Stamp Out Hunger fans: Do not forget to start using your coupons to support @CouponingforCommunity's effort to donate non-perishable food items for the 2011 drive! <http://on.fb.me/fgVtOL> Stamp Out Hunger fans: Don't forget to like Valpak's Facebook page! For every new like they get, they're donating a dollar (up to \$5,000) to Feeding America in support of the drive. <http://www.facebook.com/Valpak>.

## **IN MEMORY OF OUR DEARLY DEPARTED UNION BROTHER FRED MENDEL!**

Fred was a dedicated and loyal Branch Officer, Shop Steward, Union Brother and Friend. We will miss him dearly!

**HAPPY MEMORIAL DAY TO ALL OUR DEDICATED AND LOYAL VETERANS!**

**GOD BLESS AMERICA!**

