

908 News

NALC Branch 908
AFL-CIO
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South Jersey Letter Carriers

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October 2018

Presidents Report

It was nice to see so many new faces at last month's meeting. I hope we continue to see many more attend in the future as there are many important issues we will be facing in the near future. One of the important issues we are dealing with is time-card fraud that many of our members are facing and may not be aware that they are being shorted by some of your managers. As I stated in last month's newsletter, the national has bought in fully in trying to stop these violations, and as promised at the national convention this year, has sent me plenty of work hour tracker handbooks to be distributed to all of our members. I will be handing out these books to your stewards at this month's meeting, so be on the lookout for these trackers. Just to let you know these books will make it easy for you to track your daily hours and overtime hours. I urge all of you to take these books and keep track of your hours, so if we need to file a grievance for you, it will make it easier for the stewards to determine if you were paid properly. I am sure management won't be happy to hear that all employees are tracking their hours, but since we can't trust many of them, they have given us no other option than to keep an eye on them. It seems each month I am once again being alerted to managers still manipulating time-card rings. This is extremely important for us to monitor these issues, since there is talk some of our offices will be inspected possibly in the spring. We need to make sure our routes are being given proper credit for the work they are doing. I am noticing managers are still clocking carriers out to the street earlier than when they leave, and clocking them back to the office if they working past 18:00. For the life of me, I can't understand why these managers are continuing to do this with everything that has been happening around the district lately. I will continue to pressure the district to stop these managers from messing with the times of our routes. This practice of time-card manipulation is like an addiction to these managers, they just can't stop! Please be aware of your managers and be alerted if they tell you not to hit in or out.

Next, as we are now having P.T.F.s being created as a result of our new agreement, I wanted to reinforce some of the guidelines you may need to know going forward. There is a 90-Day "qualifying period" when new employees may not use annual leave. Even though you may have earned annual leave during this period, the postal service will not authorize any paid annual leave as per the E.L.M. section 512.313. We have gotten many calls regarding this and just wanted to let those newly converted carriers know the rules on this. **Sick leave**, however, is **not** subject to the "qualifying period!" There is an entire section in this month's postal record addressing all of your questions and answers.

Another concern we are dealing with is the number of CCAs that are being hired in our branch, specifically our Deptford installation. It appears the district is over staffing Deptford, which leads to many CCAs being loaned out to other offices on a daily basis, which isn't fair or reasonable. Our business agent is looking into this, as it seems half the workforce in Deptford are CCAs!

Also, I was told by someone last month they had a problem with us putting the non-union members names in our newsletter. I am sorry if this offended you, but I think all of our dues paying members have a right to know if they are working in the same building as those who are trying to get a free ride on their backs. With all of the raises and job protection the union affords everyone, I don't think it is fair for those to get a pass at our

expense. I heard some managers were unhappy we included this as well. I say to those managers, stop reading our newsletter, it is for our dues paying members, not you.

One last item I want to touch on deals with carriers (CCAs included) who get injured on the job. If you suffer an on the job injury and aren't sure of your rights, please call me or your steward to make sure you are getting the right information. It appears some untrained managers are giving wrong information out to carriers, which can cause a major delay in getting your claim approved. Please, contact a union representative before you fill out any forms.

Hope to see everyone at this month's meeting.

- Gary DiGiacomo – President

Next Meeting

The next regular monthly meeting of the Branch will be held on **Wednesday, October 17th @ 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, October 10th @ 7:30 and 8pm** respectively.

Attendance Prize Now at \$200

Had she been in attendance at the regular monthly meeting of the Branch on **Wednesday September 19th, Barbara Block**, a member out of the Bridgeton Office would have been the recipient of the **\$175** attendance prize. The prize now increases to **\$200** and will increase **\$25** per meeting, up to a maximum of **\$250**, until a member in attendance has their name drawn.

Comments from the VP

Last year we took part in an Angel Tree for under privileged children and it was a great success. The way the Angel Tree works is, tags are placed on the tree representing these children's wishes. Donors pick a tag from the tree and then shop for the gift for the child selected. Please see your shop steward if you are interested in being a donor. If any member has any questions, contact Vice - President Mike Powell @ 856-906-2026 or 908vp@comcast.net. If you believe every child deserves a Merry Christmas, then please help! Like it or not brother and sisters we are a union family. Like most families we from time to time have disagreements. Most families have that family member who likes to stir up trouble or push our buttons but remember brothers and sisters when push comes to shove we need to stick together. Management throughout the South Jersey District and here at the **Camden (aka Hell Hole) Annex** continually try to divide and weaken us and a weakened workforce is one that can be manipulated and taken advantage of. Brothers and Sisters, we cannot let that happen. When you see Management targeting an older carrier, speak up and write a statement for that carrier. When you see management coercing a carrier to work unsafe, speak up and let them know that safety is as much their responsibility as it is the carriers. Remember no piece of mail is worth risking your life. So, remember Brother and Sisters, we are a union family, and management, or nobody for that matter messes with our union family. I want to encourage all our active members, retired members and CCA's to try to attend our monthly meetings. It's not only your chance

to get some important information on things happening in the branch but more importantly to ask questions or voice your concerns to your elected officers. You can also grab a bite to eat, have a beverage of your choice and meet and mingle with new and old friends. I'll close with this tidbit of information. One last thing, Daylight Savings time ends on November 4 and we all know that some of us will be working in the dark. I want to remind everyone that if management instructs you to finish your assignment in the dark then make an attempt to follow that instruction until you feel that an unsafe condition exists. You, the carrier, are the one that makes that determination. If you determine the conditions are unsafe then inform your supervisor that you will be returning to the office. If you receive any discipline for your actions, contact your steward and he/she will grieve the situation. We deserve and have the right to a safe working environment as provided under Article 14 of our National Agreement. If any active member, Cca or retired member needs my aid on any issue please contact me anytime at **(856) 906-2026** or **908vp@comcast.net**. **Proud to Be Union**

Mike Powell - Vice President

Health Benefits, MBA, FMLA, Optical

Hello brothers and sisters. It's already October. Time to start doing your homework. Open season is a few short weeks away. FEHB Open Season for 2019 benefits enrollment period runs Monday Nov. 12, 2018 through Monday Dec.10, 2018, and runs concurrently with the TRICARE Open Season. Now is the time to research what is best for you. I urge you to take a good look at your own HBP. Union owned, and operated NALC Health Benefit Plan. Low premiums, low deductible, outstanding coverage nationwide. Recently converted CCA's have a great opportunity now! Choose your plan, and if you don't like it, then during open season switch it. You kind of get a free trial period.

The 2019 rates are at the end of this newsletter.

During open season is also a great time to look into all the policies/programs offered to you by NALC Mutual Benefits Program. Check out the various life insurance, and hospital plus plans, and CCA's I encourage you all to look at the MBA retirement savings plan. When converted to career you simply transfer if you please, all that savings into your Thrift Savings Retirement Account. Any and all policies/programs offered by your NALC Union can be found at NALC.org.

On a final note any claim for optical reimbursements simply send to me a receipt for optical expense with your name, address and office/retired to me at: George Greenwood 1083 Chews Landing Rd., Laurel Springs, NJ 08021.....Any questions on all the above always feel free to give me a call at 856-304-8665...See you all at the meeting.....Be safe...

- George Greenwood, HBR

Ozzie's Corner

In July (as I reported last month) we had our national convention in Detroit, where national President Fred Rolando brought up to the delegates that old, ugly P word... **Privatization**. In a Legislative report sent out on July 16th, ten bipartisan representatives introduced a House Resolution (HR 993) calling on Congress to take all appropriate measures to ensure that the Postal Service remain an independent agency of the federal government. President Rolando stated that privatization of the Postal Service will inevitably increase costs and limit service for locations not deemed profitable, which is just the tip of the iceberg. In addition, this big change will kill the standard of living for all Letters Carriers. In just over 2 months, this HR bill has currently 178 cosponsors. Remember, a cosponsor represents a person in Congress who signed on in support of our HR bill. The other 3 major HR bills are doing great, with huge support across the board (HR 15, 6-day delivery - 225, HR 28, door to door delivery - 247 and HR 31 Service standards - 227), but HR 993 is the one we need to pay close attention to because if we lose this, it will be a big and drastic change for us as Letter Carriers. By the way, speaking of attention, I want to give a special thanks to my Shop Steward and Vice President of Branch 908 Mike Powell for his assistance on 2 of our LCPF contributors this month and I want to give a big thanks to Tom "Newt" Walsh for his help at our September meeting. Job Security and protection can cost you as little as a \$1 a pay period through the LCPF. Furthermore, we just got a \$645 COLA increase and in November we are getting a 2.1% general wage increase, so to me it's a no brainer to invest in this pact. My phone number is (856) 220-8658 if you need any Legislative and Political assistance on any matters. Finally, I want to thank Greg Brown (Haddon Heights), Dennis Keener (Marlton - retiree), Tim King (Westville), Allen Muff

(Sewell) and Tom Spearman (Haddon Heights) for being our October contributors to LCPF. I hope to see you all at the October 17th meeting. In Solidarity,

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.)*

Trustee Report

Brothers and Sisters, it's October already, get your costumes out! On September 27th the trustees performed an audit of the branch's main checking account. All funds were accounted for and all your monies are in excellent shape. The next audit will be performed on January 31, 2019 at the hall at 7:30 pm. Any member wishing to observe the process or would like to review the bills may attend. We work for you, the member.

Now, just a couple of upcoming events. At the regular Branch monthly meeting on October 17th, a potential new branch attorney will be in attendance to take questions and be interviewed by you. The children's Xmas party is scheduled for December 9th from 1 to 3 pm at hall and in April 2019, is the branches banquet, always great time!

For all the new hires or newly converted career employees, we have new and used clean uniforms please come take a look they are free! Please come to a meeting, food and drink is provided and you can learn about your rights and meet the branch officers. Hope to see you. Thank you for allowing us to serve you!

- James Comuso Sr - Trustee Chairman

Grievance Log

Step B Decision

Elmer - Management was in violation of Article 17 of the National Agreement by not providing sufficient time for the steward for grievance handling. The appropriate remedy is to compensate the steward at the regular overtime rate for the 4 hours spent handling grievances off the clock. A lump sum payment of \$180.00 will paid to steward Frank Ingemi.

Hammonton - Management violated Article 15 of the national Agreement by failing to comply with the local grievance settlement which management agreed to pay the grievant the higher-level pay entitled for a week on a higher level. In addition to the amount owed grievant, an additional remedy of \$50.00 is appropriate in this case for management's failure to make the proper payment in a timely manner.

Gibbstown - Management was in violation of the Step 4 settlements M-00536 and M-01216 when they did not allow the grievant to verify the mail count during a one-day mail count. As a remedy, management is directed to cease and desist.

Stratford - Management did not have just cause to issue grievant a Letter of Warning for failure to Follow Instructions. As a remedy, the Letter of warning is rescinded and reduced to a discussion.

Stratford - Management did not have just cause to issue grievant a 7-Day Suspension for failure to Follow Instructions. As a remedy the 7-Day Suspension is rescinded.

OPM Announces 2019 FEHBP Rates

OPM has announced the 2019 FEHBP rates. The NALC Health Benefit Plan has a modest increase for all options. The complete rates for 2019 can be found on OPM's website at <https://www.opm.gov/healthcare-insurance/healthcare/plan-information/premiums/>

Below are the rates for active Letter Carriers for 2019:

NALC HBP Option	Enrollment Code	2019 Empl. Pays	2019 Change in empl. payment
High Self	321	81.43	9.01
High Self & Family	322	174.31	16.95
High Self Plus One	323	193.86	20.44
CDHP Self	324	52.45	3.71
CDHP Self & Family	325	118.26	10.47
CDHP Self Plus One	326	114.57	9.13
Value Self	KM1	43.05	3.04
Value Self & Family	KM2	97.10	8.60
Value Self Plus One	KM3	94.03	7.50