

# 908 News

NALC Branch 908  
AFL-CIO  
PO Box 150  
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# 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    September 2017

## Presidents Report

I hope everyone had a nice summer. We have had a few developments since June that I want to fill everyone in on. Most importantly, our new national agreement has been ratified overwhelmingly by the membership, even though only a third of the members voted. That number is very disappointing to me, since it shows two thirds of the members didn't participate in the vote, which isn't a good sign. If you were one of those, please start taking a more active role in the process. This is your future, so please get involved to make sure the postal service is there for you when it is time for you to retire.

As far as getting the back pay and new salary structure in place, here is the latest you can expect to see. Effective August 19, 2017, career letter carriers began earning the first 2 C.O.L.A.'s that were effective Sept. 3, 2016 and March 4, 2017 plus the 1.2% general wage increase that was effective Nov. 26, 2016. **These increases will be reflected in the Sept. 8 2017 paychecks.** Back pay on these increases will be calculated from their effective date through August 18, 2017. The postal service states it will take some time to calculate the back pay for our 210,000 carriers, but will be done as soon as practicable.

As for the CCA's, it will take a little longer due to the complexity of implementing a new pay scale. **The CCA's will begin earning their pay increases on Sept. 16, 2017 and reflected in their Oct. 6, 2017 paycheck.**

Next, with a new contract, we will now be able to negotiate, fix or change your local agreements. There are a lot of offices out there who haven't looked at their local for many years, so now will be a good time to change some things you may want in your office. Items like fixed or rotating days, prime time vacation duration, incidental leave, etc. There are approximately 22 items that can be addressed, so take a look at your local to see what you have and may want to add or subtract. Your shop steward will be looking for volunteers to be on the negotiating committee, so if you want to be a part of the process please let him or her know. The process will begin on October 16, 2017 and end on November 14, 2017. We will be having training for the stewards prior to the start of local negotiations, so make sure your steward attends the training. There are a few new items that have to be added to everyone's local, especially since the CCA's are now considered part of the compliment and will be included in the prime and non-prime annual leave selection percentages. Get involved in the process and try and get some needed language in your local for everyone's benefit.

The next item to speak on is fall route inspections. It looks like they will be going into our Bridgeton office at the end of September to conduct a much needed inspection. I know a lot of carriers aren't too thrilled with the idea of an inspection, but believe me it will benefit you in the long term. Remember, many of our offices haven't had updated data in a long time, and it is good to finally have a count where we will now get credit for our parcels. For the record, Deptford made out extremely well in getting fresh data, and I expect all of our offices the district chooses to count will benefit as well. We will once again have a training seminar for the carriers in Bridgeton, so they all will know what lies in front of them. Our training in Deptford turned out to be a huge success for those who attended. I am sure the district will come into Bridgeton trying to get the office to give up an auxiliary route in exchange for not coming in. I say this to all carriers, please don't be intimidated to agree to this phony gesture. There is no guarantee they will not come

back in to try and get more later on, no matter what they say now. Do the inspection, and be done with it for good.

One other item I need to address is the discipline members are receiving. I know a lot of you don't want to sign for the discipline management issues, but please sign for it. The reason I say this is because we have managers issuing discipline but never actually giving it to the carrier and writing on the letter "refused to sign." This is a sneaky and cowardly way many managers are doing business. We come to find when carriers get another piece of discipline this bogus one shows up. We can't defend it if it doesn't have a signature and we can't prove you never received it. Just sign all discipline and get it to your steward ASAP! By signing the discipline doesn't mean you agree with it, it just shows you received it and we can then defend you in the grievance procedure.

And lastly, I mentioned in June about possible **time-card tampering** going on in our branch, and I am here to report our Steward from Elmer/Woodstown has uncovered numerous deletions of work hours of employees in this installation. The same manager, who came from Pennsville, was doing the same thing there as well. Carriers were being improperly clocked out, thus depriving them of overtime and penalty overtime. The stewards from both offices are now digging deeper into these violations and grievances are being filed as well, to recoup the lost wages for our members. The business agent has been made aware of these issues and will be handling these issues at his level. I am not sure if this is going on in any other offices, but please start checking your pay-stubs, and if you think you may have been shorted, please let your steward know. This is a very serious situation that must be addressed.

Hope to see everyone at the next meeting on Sept. 20, 2017.

- Gary DiGiacomo - President

## Next Meeting

The next regular monthly meeting of the Branch will be held on **Wednesday, September 20<sup>th</sup> @ 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, September 13<sup>th</sup> @ 7:30 and 8pm** respectively.

## Attendance Prize Now at \$175

Had he been in attendance at the regular monthly meeting of the Branch on **Wednesday, June 21<sup>st</sup>, Chris Brestle**, a member out of the Woodbury Office would have been the recipient of the **\$150** attendance prize. The prize now increases to **\$175** 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

Welcome back Brothers and Sisters. I hope everyone had a safe and enjoyable summer. My prayers go out to all our Brothers and Sisters who are suffering from a result of Hurricane Harvey who has devastated the Southern parts of Texas and Louisiana with historic flooding. As the fall season is about to begin we see many changes, the leaves on the tress begin to change color and fall to the ground, animals prepare to hibernate, the temperature changes, and it begins to get dark sooner. One thing

that hasn't changed is the atmosphere/morale at the **Camden, aka "The Hell Hole", Annex**. The bullying and horrible morale still exists in this building. Two of the things that are contributing to the deplorable conditions at The Hell Hole are, the use of false numbers to determine carrier workloads and managements refusal to staff properly. I want to clarify that these conditions exist in many of our offices not just **The Hell Hole**. One might ask how do we put a stop to these atrocities? I believe a possible answer is to start holding the minions at the SJ District accountable for mandating ridiculous policies such as the two mentioned above, and I also feel that we should file a Joint Statement on Violence and Behavior grievance against the very minions that mandate the policies like the two mentioned above. We should file them every day that these mandates are used by management to violate carrier's rights to be treated with respect, dignity, and fairness. Another avenue is to reach out to our Congressmen and State Senators and request thru them to conduct a Climate Assessment Survey of this deplorable place. Like I said there are many changes coming with the Fall Season upon us, however I highly doubt any changes will occur at the **Camden, aka "The Hell Hole", Annex**.

**Proud to be union.  
Mike Powell - Vice President**

### Health Benefits, MBA, FMLA, Optical

Hello all, and welcome back. Hope you all had a wonderful safe summer. Top of the list today all CCA's write it down..you should have received a letter by now, but if not....there is going to be a Special Enrollment Period for the USPS Health Benefit Plan for all CCA's September 4th to October 19<sup>th</sup>. Each CCA will get a letter from USPS outlining details of this enrollment period with the new contractual increases. Please get the word out to all CCA's that this is happening. There are no changes to any HBP for CCA's except to the USPS Plan. First term CCA it will cost \$40 PP for self only, \$115.50 self plus one, and \$173.25 self and family... After first appointment self \$40, self plus one \$82.50, and self and family \$123.75....

The main open season for all employees is coming quick. Dates for this will be from November 13 to December 11<sup>th</sup> inclusive. There have been no changes over the summer to any benefits with the NALC HBP. When OPM releases the new rates for open season I will get them out to all the members immediately. The Mutual Benefit Association (MBA) is revising its life insurance products offered to letter carriers and their family members. These revised products include:

- MBA Whole Life
- MBA Whole Life Paid-Up in 20 Years
- MBA Whole Life Paid-Up at Age 65
- Independence (Single Premium) Whole Life
- MBA 10 Year Renewable and Convertible Term Life

The new products will be available effective Sept. 1. For applications and brochures, contact me at 856-304-8665, or call the MBA office at 202-638-4318.

Anyone in need of FMLA paperwork simply call HR Shared Services at 877-477-3273 Option 5, then Select 6....to submit mail or fax to: HRSSC FMLA Eastern, PO Box 970905, Greensboro NC 27497-0905....FAX: 651-456-6041...

Optical reimbursements one per member, or family member per year send a copy of your receipt with name, and office/retired to me..George Greenwood HBR, 1083 Chews Landing Rd., Laurel Springs NJ 08021.

Any questions give me a call. Hope to see you all at the September meeting...Be safe...George...

**George Greenwood, HBR**

### Ozzie's Corner

One of the most frequently asked questions I get talking to Letter Carriers is: Why give to the NALC Political Fund? When you donate \$1.00 or more to the LCPF, you as a Letter Carrier are delivering a message to our congress in Washington, D.C. The NALC has Legislative activists, organizers and liaisons that educate members in our Congress about issues with our job in today's craft. In addition, the pact is to help strengthen and support pro-letter carrier candidates, regardless of their political affiliation. Therefore, by building strong relationships with those legislatively, the NALC elects and re-elects those who stand by us. So for as little as a buck, we are protecting 6-day delivery, door to door delivery, collective bargaining rights, worker protections, job security and retirement benefits...so it's not why give, it's why not? Finally, I want to thank our latest LCPF contributors over the summer: Leroy Blount, Gil Curran, Delores McClellan and Carlo Morning. I hope to see you all at the meeting in September.

### **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, welcome back from summer! I hope it was great for all of you. The Branch will be sending uniforms and other items to carriers in the Houston, TX area, they are in need of everything. There will be a trustee meeting September 28th at 7:30 pm at union hall to go over the books. Coming up are Branch elections in October, please remember to vote. December 10th will be the kids Christmas party from 1 to 3 pm at the hall. Please remember the branch benefits such as sick and welfare optical and death benefit funds. Contact myself or a branch officer for details. Another benefit is our owcp/dept of labor attorneys Uliase and Uliase, 856-310-9002 first visit is free. See you at the meeting, God Bless

**Jim Comuso - Chairman of the Board Trustees**

### Proposed By-Law Amendments Passed

The proposed By-Law amendments that were published in the May Branch newsletter were opened for debate and voted on at the regular monthly meeting of the Branch on **June 21<sup>st</sup>**, they were all subsequently passed unanimously.

### No Talking To Our Customers?

Our Marlton shop steward has reported that local management has told all carriers during a stand-up talk they are no longer to have any conversations with customers on their routes, as it is a time wasting practice! They are saying the district is making them do this, and it is not their idea! How pathetic this company is getting if that really is their policy.

### Notice of Nominations and Election of Branch Officers, Shop Stewards and Convention

#### Delegates

This is to provide official notice that nominations for the election of Branch Officers, Shop Stewards, and Convention Delegates for the term 2018 thru 2019 shall take place at the regular monthly meeting of the Branch on **Wednesday, October 18, 2017**. Elections shall be by secret mail ballot of the eligible Branch membership and held as soon as possible after nominations at the October regular monthly meeting. Nominations shall be made from the meeting room floor or in writing to the Branch Recording Secretary, mailed, or presented to him/her prior to or at the October regular Branch meeting. Each eligible member of the Branch nominated for office shall accept or reject nomination in writing prior to the adjournment of the October regular monthly Branch meeting. Failure to accept nomination for Branch office prior to adjournment of the October regular Branch meeting will invalidate the nomination. Shop Stewards shall be nominated by an eligible Branch member from the office at which the nominee is employed to represent the Branch membership. Installation of Branch Officers, Shop Stewards, and Convention Delegates shall take place at the regular monthly meeting of the Branch in January. Offices up for election include that of the Branch President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Assistant Recording Secretary, Trustees' Chairman, Trustees (4), Health Benefits Representative, Housing Chairperson, Sgt. at Arms, Shop Stewards (18) and approximately (36) Convention Delegates. The number of Convention Delegates to be compensated for their attendance at a State or National Convention, provided they meet the eligibility requirements for such compensation, shall not exceed two and one half (2.5) percent of the total Branch membership, (which is approximately 18).

### Thanks Branch 908

I would like to thank all of my Branch 908 Brothers and Sisters who reached out to us after our son was killed. The flowers, cards, phone calls and e-mails from my extended Union family made this difficult time a little easier to get through. Trudy and I thank everyone for keeping us in their thoughts. Thanks again.

**Norm Spence – Recording Secretary**