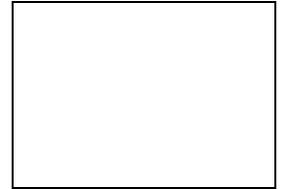


# 908 News

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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## Presidents Report

Happy New Year everyone. I hope everyone had a safe and happy holiday, as 2020 was one year we would all like to forget. Moving on to the upcoming year, we will be facing many new issues, but hopefully, the COVID-19 issues will start to ease up as there seems to be a light at the end of the tunnel. It doesn't pay to dwell on it as all we can do is just try and do our part to stop the spread and try and get back to some sense of normalcy. I have always been a half-filled glass person, so I am looking ahead to a more positive 2021. We are planning to try and resume our regular monthly meetings at the Pine Grove Fire Hall on Jersey Ave in Gloucester until such time as the Governor lifts his indoor restrictions, and we can return to our hall in Woodbury. I can honestly say this hall has plenty of room to accommodate our regular meetings with all social distancing policies in effect to make the meeting a place where everyone can feel safe. I understand if you feel reluctant to attend, but if you are feeling fine and have no underlying issues, please try and come so we can get back to the business of the branch.

On to the latest news, the first thing, obviously, is our new proposed national agreement. By the time you read this newsletter, you should have received your ratification ballot in the mail along with a proposed national agreement. I ask you to read it carefully before sending back your vote.

Our national president, Fred Rolando, along with executive vice-president Brian Renfroe, held a national agreement virtual rap session, which I dialed into, that highlighted the new proposed agreement. I will give a brief synopsis here but will answer any questions I can at our steward meeting and hopefully our next general membership meeting. As I stated last month, I believe this new agreement does a good job in addressing many of our issues. Of course, no agreement gives you everything you want, but I truly believe this one did a pretty good job for the members going forward.

With the COVID-19 issue on everyone's mind, there has been talk about having in office testing, which would be a good idea and definitely overdue. He stated the new stimulus package would grant the postal service a 10-billion-dollar loan forgiveness, which is desperately needed, however there was no Family First Coronavirus Relief in this package. Hopefully, something will be forthcoming on this.

The new agreement will last until May 2023. He stated there was increasing talks about offering incentives to employees about early retiring, so who knows where that will go. I guess the one major part of the new agreement dealt with CCA's who will be automatically be made career after 24 months. He stated the **CCA's must have worked in the same installation for 24 months**, which means you must have 24 months of relative standing in the office you work, in order to qualify for the automatic career conversion. He said once the contract is ratified it will take approximately 8 to 10 weeks to get your back pay. He said local negotiations (LMOU) will begin at the end of April and last for 30 days. I suggest any of you who want things changed in your office to review your local agreement with your steward so he can get those added or changed in the next agreement. The new holiday perk for employees will begin with the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday. A lot of people asked about new vehicles and he stated new vehicles won't be coming before 2022 unless the incoming administration will allot money for them. He also said he expects a joint route inspection process to come back once again, which we always said was the best way

to evaluate routes. It was quite obvious the process the postal service tried to use cost the company millions of dollars, as it always does. Hopefully, we can get routes adjusted fairly with a joint process. It also appears PMG DeJoy will be staying on as well, which may or may not be a good thing. One other issue that was asked when it came to CCA's being loaned out to other installations during this COVID era. He once again reiterated that CCA's should be loaned out as a "last resort" not a regular routine. We have some managers who refuse to abide by this memo and continue to loan out CCA's like it is business as usual. If you get sent to another office, please make sure the office has all the mail ready for you on the dock when you get there.

These are just some of the highlights, but you can read all of the new language when you receive the proposed agreement in the mail. If you have any questions or concerns after you get it, please feel free to give me a call and I will gladly answer any of your concerns. Hope to see you at this month's meeting. Stay safe.

Gary DiGiacomo – President

## Next Meeting

The next regular monthly meeting of the Branch will be held on **Wednesday, January 20<sup>th</sup> @ 8 p.m., at the Pine Grove Fire Hall, 827 Jersey Ave., Gloucester City, NJ 08030**. 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, January 13<sup>th</sup> @ 7:30 and 8:00 pm** respectively **at the Branch union hall**.

## Attendance Prize Now at \$125

Since the December regular monthly meetings of the Branch had to be cancelled, the prize still stands at \$125 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

Happy New Year to all our active and retired members and their families! I would like to thank the members of Branch 908 for all your support and having the confidence in me to serve as your Vice - President during probably the most hellacious year of our lives to date. As we begin the New Year, our national leaders have finally appointed a ballot committee so that the tentative contract agreed upon can be voted on and ratified. I am baffled as to why the committee wasn't already in place so we could get this process started immediately but hopefully the ballots are in the mail so we can vote to ratify this contract. Once the contract is ratified, we will get the retroactive pay we are entitled to hopefully by the end of this year, as we all know how these things always seem to get botched by the Postal Service. I personally would have liked to see some sort of hazard compensation for all of us that have been exposed to this horrible COVID 19 virus. Words cannot describe what all of us out here on the front line have had to cope with day in and day out over the past year. An important issue that needs immediate attention by congress, is the expiration of the Cares Act. As it stands now if you go out for COVID-19 you must use your own leave, which is a downright crime. In other matters, I recommend that everyone start the New Year off by checking

their Personnel file for mistakes and for discipline that should have been removed. The Postal Service, in compliance with OPM, has gotten rid of the paper versions of the OPF (Official Personnel File), the files are all digital now and you can view your file from your home computer. Go to the eOPF website at <https://eopf.usps.gov/eOPF/jsp/essLogin.jsp>. Once there, you will need your EIN (Employee Identification Number), this is the number on your pay stub, and your USPS PIN number (the same one you use for Postal EASE). If you forget your PIN, call 1-877-477-3273 and follow the prompts to have a new PIN mailed to you. Once you log in you can view and print anything in your file. If you find something that should not be there, contact your Shop Steward. On a bright note, it has been five years since I got carriers from our branch participating in the Angel Tree for Under Privileged Children. This year we sponsored 10 children. I want to thank the following carriers and their families for bringing the Sprit and Joy of Christmas to these children in need. From our Bellmawr Office, **Bob Olszewski, Diego Melendez, Rico Jackson.** Haddon Heights, **Bill Kyser.** Westville, **Ozzie Lecky.** Gloucester, **Joe Sloan** and VP- **Mike Powell** and we had a retiree who requested to be anonymous. Lastly, I want to thank all our brothers and sisters who have risked their health to deliver for the American people during this pandemic. As I have said before YOU ALL ARE HEROES!!! If any active, CCA or retired member needs my assistance on any issue please contact me anytime at **(856) 906-2026** or **908vp@comcast.net.**

**Proud to be Union.  
We are in this together, Be Safe and God Bless  
Mike Powell – Vice – President**

### **Health Benefits, MBA, FMLA, Optical**

Hello brothers, and sisters, and Happy New Year to you all. With the new year comes changes to all health insurance plans. For those in the NALC HBP see beginning on page 16 of the NALCHBP brochure for any changes that may affect you, and what you need to do if anything to maximize your coverage. You can go to <https://www.nalchbp.org/> to see the brochure online.

Once the contract is ratified many CCA's will be converted to career. When this happens remember you have a mini open season for 60 days from the date of conversion. If you do not enroll during your first 60 days after being converted to career, you will have to wait to enroll during Open Season unless you have a Qualifying Life Event (QLE). Please give me a call with any questions. 856-304-8665.

Also, in the New Year check out NALC Mutual Benefits. The MBA is the life insurance division of the NALC. Today, the MBA has more than \$224 million of life insurance in force on its members.

Insurance plans offered by the MBA are designed to give NALC members and their families the best possible protection for the lowest cost. See MBA Membership Qualifications for details regarding eligibility for purchasing MBA products. All can be found at <https://www.nalc.org/> under member benefits.

Optical Reimbursement, one \$20 per year reimbursement for optical expenses for any member in good standing, or qualified dependent is available to you through NALC Br. 908. To receive your reimbursement for optical expenses, send a paper copy of your receipt to me at: George Greenwood, 1083 Chews Landing Rd., Laurel Springs, NJ 08021. Any questions on the above always feel free to call me at 856-304-8665. Happy New Year folks.

**George Greenwood, HBR**

### **Ozzie's Corner**

JUSTICE WAS SERVED!! The question you are asking right now is with what Ozzie? Well, do I have an experience to share with you! On June 3, 2020 I went home after work and found my entire neighborhood lost power (blackout). Severe thunderstorms and damaging winds fueled the destruction to a nearby power grid. June 4th was my scheduled day off (drop day) from work, but I called out of work Friday June 5th because I needed to get additional emergency supplies (including a generator). The leave I used on the 5th was emergency annual leave and I returned back to work Saturday June 6th. On June 11th, my paycheck showed I was marked LWOP (Leave Without Pay for 8hrs) where it should've been 8 hrs annual docketed. Oh, it gets better! On June 19th, I put in for a personal day off for June 23rd and again I was using 8 hrs of annual leave. One of my coworkers arranged to come in that 1 day that week so I could have off (that coworker had vacation all week). June 22<sup>nd</sup> (the day before my approved day off) I received a phone call from the Customer Service Manager at the

Camden Annex. The Manager stated that my day off was not approved because I didn't submit the request within a 5-day time frame. However, I explained to the Manager that there was a mutual agreement between me, another employee and the delivery zone supervisor. Also, the Manager told me I would be marked AWOL (Leave Without Pay) if I didn't report to work on the 23rd. I immediately said to the Manager I will see you on the 24<sup>th</sup> (hint). Later that day on June 22nd, I checked my virtual timecard and the Manager indeed marked me AWOL. The following week on June 30th, I went to Con. Donald Norcross's office and filled out a Request for Assistance form. I submitted a complaint against this Manager (who also was the OIC: Officer in Charge at the time). The Officer in Charge oversees all Postal Operations in that particular facility, including yes you guessed it payroll! Con. Norcross's office sent me emails and updates every step of the way through my request, including their office sending a statement to the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development on July 6th. That concludes Part 1 of this saga, please read February's Newsletter to get the conclusion.

In other news, I want to thank January's LCPF contributors: **Ashley Andrews** (Maple Shade), **Jason Axilbund** (Westville), **Jonathan Goodwin** (Blackwood), Retirees: **William Dougherty** (Williamstown) **Chuck Huff III** (Mt. Ephraim), **Joe Powell Jr** (Mt. Ephraim) and **Charles Reynolds** (Westville). My phone number is (856) 220-8658 to reach me for anything in our branch. In closing, please be safe and stay healthy.

### **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.)*

### **COVID-19 Related MOUs Extended Until March 26, 2021**

By joint agreement (**M-01932**), several COVID related memorandums of understanding have been further extended through **March 26, 2021**. These memoranda include: temporary expanded sick leave for dependent care (**M-01910**); temporary additional paid leave for CCAs (**M-01911**); temporary use of the 7:01 rule (**M-01913**); temporary workplace changes to promote social distancing (**M-01915**); and temporary use of TCAs (**M-01916**).

NALC and the Postal Service also agreed to another temporary time limit extension on Step B and arbitration appeals (M-01933), and an agreement giving local parties the ability to develop a sign-up process for full-time employees who previously did not, or could not, place their names on either the overtime desired list or work assignment list (M-01934). Both of these agreements will expire on March 26, 2021, as well.

Also extended through March 26, 2021, is a USPS memorandum (**M-01914**) which instructs managers and supervisors to allow liberal changes of schedule to accommodate employees who are dealing with childcare issues related to the pandemic. The memorandum also provides for liberal sick leave usage for employees who are sick and liberal annual and leave without pay (LWOP) to the extent operationally feasible, treats COVID-19 related leave as scheduled (as opposed to unscheduled) leave, and directs that leave taken for COVID-19 related reasons during this time not be cited in discipline for failing to maintain an assigned schedule.

### **Proposed 2021 Branch Budget**

The proposed 2021 Branch Budget, which has been approved by the Executive Board, was presented for the review and consideration of the membership in attendance at the regular monthly meeting on November 18th. The proposed budget will be open for review, discussion, consideration, and vote at the regular monthly Branch meeting on January 20th. The budget estimates the receipt and expenditures of \$237,000.00 for 2021.

*"History is a great teacher. Now everyone knows that the labor movement did not diminish the strength of the nation but enlarged it. By raising the living standards of millions, labor miraculously created a market for industry and lifted the whole nation to undreamed of levels of production. Those who attack labor forget these simple truths, but history remembers them."*

- Martin Luther King Jr.