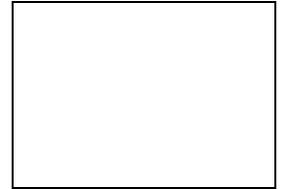


908 News

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



Return Service
Requested



BUY AMERICAN - BUY UNION



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

Presidents Report

Hope everyone is doing well as we continue the battle of the times. As I write my article this month, we are still hoping to have a regular general membership meeting this month, if not in our hall, then in another place that can handle the 25 percent maximum number the governor has imposed on us. Please refer to our website for the latest up to date news on our meeting status. There was talk on possibly having a ZOOM meeting, but this is just not a viable or even productive way to conduct a meeting, in my opinion, so hopefully we can find a place to meet, or maybe the Governor will expand his percentages.

Last month I mentioned there was talk on expanding the Annual leave carryover from 440 hours to 520 hours. For those who aren't aware, this has been approved for the 2021 leave year for those career employees who have accumulated leave over 440 hours from the 2020 leave year.

I also mentioned there may be issues with employees who have children who were only attending schools on an intermittent basis and how that would be handled. Thankfully, on September 16th the DOL issued revised rules clarifying the definition of intermittent leave that was different from the original position back in April. **Under this revision, employer approval of intermittent leave is not required when an employee needs to take leave due to their child's school operating on alternate days of in-person and distance learning. In these cases, each day the school is closed constitutes a new reason for the leave and the reason would cease once the school reopens. For example, if the school is open for in-person learning on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, the employee would be allowed to take leave on Tuesday and Thursday, when the child is not allowed to be present in the school. The same rule applies in circumstances where the school is open for a portion of the day. The reason for the leave would begin at the time the child was not allowed to attend class in the school and end upon their return to the building.**

Another item that was addressed and clarified, dealt with the Families First Coronavirus Response Act Impact on Retirement and Thrift Savings. I know the time to make a decision has passed, but I still wanted to explain this to everyone, since it was too late to put it in last month's newsletter. This is very important for everyone to understand. Hopefully, everyone was given the stand-up talk with regard to this, but I wanted to put in writing for everyone to read and understand the impact this leave could have on you. Leave taken under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act is not eligible for retirement and Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) deductions. This is in accordance with guidance issued by the Office of Personnel Management which oversees both benefits. Those that have taken leave under the FFCRA will be issued refunds by the Postal Service for any retirement and TSP contributions which will be reflected on your October 2, 2020 paycheck. Leave used under the FFCRA (Emergency Paid Sick Leave and Emergency Family and Medical Leave Act Expansion) will not impact creditable service time towards retirement eligibility. This leave does not impact the High-3 Average Salary calculation used for an annuity computation. The annuity calculation for full-time career employees will not be impacted. However, use of FFCRA leave for part-time career employees will have an impact on annuity calculations. Annuities with a part-time career component are prorated based on the hours worked when compared to a full-time position. Leave taken under FFCRA is not considered basic pay and is treated similarly to periods of

Leave Without Pay (LWOP), which does not increase the total hours worked for the part-time component calculation. Carriers that wish to, may change their election of FFCRA leave to a different type of leave (such as sick or annual) to keep their retirement and TSP contributions. To avoid a refund, all requests must be entered in AdjustPay before September 11, 2020. All TSP eligible employees may change their TSP election at any time during the year. The FFCRA will expire December 31st, 2020, and any unused leave will be forfeited. Also, by joint agreement (M-01929), several COVID related memorandums of understanding have been further extended through December 31, 2020. 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).

Last month I had a ZOOM meeting with the District manager, and she highlighted a few things. First, our accident rates are still quite high, and they are trying to find ways to reduce accidents. We are now involved in a Joint Safety task force, that has two of our members on the team, Ozzie Lecky and Norm Spence. Safety is a big issue and hopefully, by including us in this process we can educate our members on how to work safely and reduce accidents. The other main topic concerned the CCA's and their retention rate, which is at an all time low. She has stated the district is working on a new policy for the CCA's, which has just been released, and hopefully will help keep them employed. There are many new features in their policy, but until I get clearance from our National, I will not publish what the new directives state. I am sure next month I will have more specifics. Also, we are involved in a Political mail task force, that I hope everyone has been made aware. Lastly, another issue that surfaced last month dealt with the payroll tax deferral that was to be implemented by a recent Presidential Executive Order, that had many employees concerned. Thankfully, the postal service has decided that it will not implement the temporary payroll tax deferral and employees won't have to deal with that fiasco. Remember to vote in the upcoming election, and I hope to see everyone at our next regular meeting, whenever that will be.

- Gary DiGiacomo – President

Next Meeting

The next regular monthly meeting of the Branch will (*possibly*) be held on **Wednesday, October 21st @ 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 14th @ 7:30 and 8:00 pm** respectively. **Please check the Branch website nalcbranch908.com to confirm if the meeting is on before traveling to the hall.**

Comments From the VP

As I have said in my previous articles, **You all are Heroes.** I want to thank all of our brothers and sisters of this great branch for all your hard work and risking your health during this pandemic. Please take the time to vote in the upcoming election

on November 3, your vote counts no matter what party affiliation you may be. Daylight savings time ends on November 1, which means 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 try 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. We deserve and have the right to a safe working environment as provided under article 14 of our National Agreement. Unfortunately, we will not be able to hold our Annual Retirement Banquet. I will be mailing a retirement package to each of our retirees that were scheduled to be honored this year. 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

Attendance Prize Stands at \$75

Since the **April, May, June and September** regular monthly meetings of the Branch had to be cancelled, the prize still stands at **\$75** and will increase **\$25** per meeting, up to a maximum of **\$250**, until a member in attendance has their name drawn.

Health Benefits, MBA, FMLA, Optical

Hello brothers, and sisters. Open season is coming quick. Open Season Dates: **November 9, 2020 - December 14, 2020**. Be prepared, compare plans, make your decision. For a detailed look at the NALC Health Benefit Plan go to <https://www.nalchbp.org/...> No rates have been set yet, but I will get that information out to all members ASAP. There are some changes/improvements coming to FEDVIP (Dental & Vision plans) for 2021. The US Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has selected insurance carriers to provide comprehensive, accessible, and competitively priced dental and vision coverage through FEDVIP, effective January 1, 2021. The contract term is seven years. In 2021 the FEDVIP dental carriers will increase from 10 to 12, and vision carriers will increase from 4 to 5. **2021 Dental Carriers Will Be:** Nationwide/International: Aetna Dental PPO, Delta Dental PPO, BCBS FEP Blue Dental, GEHA Dental PPO, MetLife Dental PPO, United Concordia PPO, UnitedHealthcare Dental PPO (New). Regional=Dominion Dental EPO (New), Emblem Health, HealthPartners (New), Humana EPO/PPO, Triple S Salud. **2021 Vision Carriers Will Be:** Nationwide/International: Aetna Vision, BCBS FEP Vision, MetLife Vision (New), UnitedHealthcare Vision, VSP. Again, be prepared, shop early to compare, and make your choice. Choosing a health plan can be confusing, stressful, even overwhelming. Unfortunately, selecting the wrong plan can also be a huge financial pitfall. One common mistake is considering only the monthly premium. Although this must be taken into account, it should not be the only deciding factor. Remember, the cheapest premium may not be the best option, and could cost you more in the long run. When deciding which plan is best for you, there are many things to keep in mind. If you need help in deciding follow this link to the NALC HBP page, or feel free to give me a call anytime... <https://www.nalchbp.org/directors-message...>

Any questions give me a call 856-304-8665. Be safe all.

- **George Greenwood, HBR**

Ozzie's Corner

This year marks the 45th anniversary of one of the most important political PACs in any union across the country known as: The Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF). The history behind this PAC started in 1975 through the NALC (National Association of Letter Carriers). Furthermore, the PAC was originally called COLCPE (Committee On Letter Carrier Political Education). Because labor unions are prohibited by law to use dues money politically, the NALC started this separate entity. The PAC covers all political affiliations (Democrat, Republican, Independent, Etc.). The NALC uses LCPF to educate and inform pro-letter carrier politicians and candidates who support our platforms and issues. For Instance, before the COVID-19 pandemic struck us hard, we were looking at correcting and addressing the Pre-funding mandate as one of the major issues. However, our main focus right now is asking Congress for a financial stimulus to assist The Postal Service. One of our greatest victories as a union is HR 23 (door to door delivery). HR 23 currently has 262 Co-Sponsors (bipartisan).

Bipartisan means an agreement between 2 political parties. Therefore, HR 23 got support from both the Democrats and Republicans. Whether that particular Congressman was re-elected in the area he was running in or if a new Congresswoman just won her first election in that district, the bottom line is the NALC is committed in building solid relationships with these politicians. In the United States, we currently have 300,000 members (active and retired) in the NALC and roughly less than 12% contribute.... that is a total and absolute disgrace! Local Branches and State Associations must do a better job in educating and informing each and every NALC member about the risks with our jobs because it can all go with one stroke of the pen.

In other news, I want to thank Norm Spence (Recording Secretary) for placing on our website the ACTION NEEDED exercise for our members to access and Digna Townsend (District Representative - Con. Donald Norcross) for our 2020 branch retiree certificates.

Finally, I want to thank this month's LCPF contributors: **Charles Foley** (Hammonton), **Patrick Leckie** (Voorhees), **Howard Nash** (Elmer) and **Kevin Breitenstine** (Stratford-Retiree). My phone number is (856) 220-8658 to contribute to LCPF or if you need my help/aid with anything in our branch. In closing, we are all in this together...you and your loved ones stay safe, be well and thank you for all you do each and every day. 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.)*

Grievance Log

Step B Decision

Bridgeton - Management violated Article 8 and 41 of the National Agreement and section 432.32 of the ELM via Article 19 when they removed the grievant from her hold-down assignment. As a remedy, the grievant, a CCA, will be paid a lump sum of **\$135.64** for being sent home early.

Bridgeton - Management violated Article 8 and 41 of the National Agreement and section 432.32 of the ELM via Article 19 when they removed the grievant from her hold-down assignment. As a remedy, the grievant, a CCA, will be paid a lump sum of **\$92.24** for being sent home early.

Bridgeton - Management violated Article 8 and 41 of the National Agreement and section 432.32 of the ELM via Article 19 when they removed the grievant from her hold-down assignment. As a remedy, the grievant, a CCA, will be paid a lump sum of **\$68.82** for being sent home early.

Camden Annex - Management violated Article 8.5 of the National Agreement when the forced Non-Overtime Desired List carriers and work assignment carriers to work overtime off and on their assignments. As a remedy, **6 Overtime Desired List carriers will receive 29 hours at the overtime rate.**

Camden Annex - Management violated Article 8.5 of the National Agreement when the forced Non-Overtime Desired List carriers and work assignment to work overtime off and on their assignments. As a remedy, **3 Overtime Desired List carriers will receive 23 hours at the overtime rate.**

Elmer - Management had just cause to place grievant in an off-duty without pay status on June 17, 2020. However, management failed to provide evidence, explanation, or even indicate that a continued risk or danger existed that would warrant keeping grievant in an off-duty-without pay status until June 26, 2020. As a remedy, the grievant will returned to a pay status effective June 19, 2020. Local management is directed to process the necessary pay adjustments for keeping grievant in a non-pay status.

Williamstown - Management violated Article 8.8 of the National Agreement when it sent grievant home on two separate occasions prior to working his 8-hour guarantee. As a remedy, the grievant will be paid a lump sum of **\$246.27**

2021 Color Coded Rotating Day Off Calendar

Our new 2021 color coded rotating day off calendars have been completed and uploaded to our web site. They can be viewed online or downloaded as a 12-page monthly calendar or a 2-page version. nalcbranch908.com/2021cal.html

- **Norm Spence** - Recording Secretary