

# 908 News

NALC Branch 908  
AFL-CIO  
PO Box 150  
Pennsville, NJ  
08070

# Bill Revak Branch 908 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 2021

## Presidents Report

As we head into the final 3 months of the year, I want to make everyone aware of what to expect going forward. First, the 5 COVID-19 memos, that were to expire on September 30<sup>th</sup>, have been extended until December 31, 2021. For those not aware of these memos, they are as follows. **1. Temporary additional paid leave for CCAs. 2 Temporary use of the 7.01 rule. 3 Temporary expanded Sick Leave Dependent Care during COVID-19. 4. Temporary Workplace Changes to Promote Social Distancing. 5. Temporary Carrier Assistants.** As many of you may not be aware, the **Emergency Federal Employee Leave (EFEL)** ended on September 30<sup>th</sup> and **has not** been extended. This means you can no longer use this leave for COVID-19 absences. However, CCAs will now revert back to the March 18, 2020 memo which grants them Temporary Additional Paid leave up to 80 hours. This information can be found on the NALC website in the M.R.S. section. The memo number is M-01911. Next, the postal service has come up with another brilliant idea, they call the **2 in 1 casing process**, which they plan on trying this year, hopefully not in any of our offices, which they say they are using to capture floor space in offices that have limited space during the prime parcel mailing season! Just so you know how this works, you have one case that has 2 routes on it and the carriers start at different times but share the same case. It is not the same as the consolidated casing fiasco, but it doesn't seem to make much sense to me to try this in any of our offices. It is supposed to be a joint effort before implementing this and I have not been notified we will be chosen, so I am assuming we got a pass this time. The reason I bring this up is because you may be hearing about it in the future. Another issue that may be popping up deals with employees who are requesting to only work 8 hours a day and 40 hours a week for medical reasons. Management is giving employees a letter requesting the employee be referred to the District Reasonable Accommodation Committee for consideration. We contend this letter is not appropriate in that working 8 hours a day and 40 hours in a week is not a reasonable accommodation request. If anyone gets this letter, please let your steward or me know ASAP so we can address this immediately. This appears to be another intimidation tactic by the district to try and force people to work longer hours due to their lack of staffing in certain offices. This brings me to the next topic that management is rolling out with our help, that is called the **New Employee Mentoring Program**. In an effort to try and keep our newer employees on the rolls, they are trying another pilot program to try and make this happen. This program is designed to provide that newly hired carriers have a mentoring relationship with an experienced carrier through which feedback, coaching and positive reinforcement can be shared. This is kind of like the way we all started back in the day, but to be honest, the only way a program like this can work is when the new employees are hired as career employees, not CCAs. They can try anything they like, but until the CCA job description is dropped, they are just spitting in the wind. Finally, for some good news to relate to everyone. It is with great pleasure to announce our own Letter Carrier Political Fund Officer, **Ozzie Lecky**, was elected at our State Convention on

September 27<sup>th</sup>, to serve on the New Jersey State Executive Board for the next 2 years. This is our union's legislative branch, and Ozzie will bring a lot of life and positive results for our union. Congratulations Ozzie. One final note, which deals with our salary and the COLA's we just received. Everyone just enjoyed the largest COLA ever at \$1934.00, and the next one is starting at **\$104.00**, which begins now for the next 6 months, where I am sure it will be another high number. For the retirees, as of now, their raise is **5.9%**, with 2 more months to go, which is also a record for raises. I know it is a double edge sword in that inflation isn't a good thing, but if not for this negotiated COLA, we would never be able to keep pace. I will update everyone with the latest news at our meeting. Hope to see everyone there.

Gary DiGiacomo – President  
856-906-2838

## Next Meeting

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

## Attendance Prize Now at \$50

Had she been in attendance at the regular monthly meeting of the Branch on **Wednesday, September 15<sup>th</sup>, Heather Torres**, a member out of the Hammonton Office would have been the recipient of the **\$25** attendance prize. The prize now increases to **\$50** 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

I am going to start this month's article by wishing my longtime friend and union brother, **Tom Barnett**, a Happy 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday! Tom has been a stalwart for our branch for many years and I am lucky to have him in my corner as a friend and union brother. I also would like to congratulate my good friend and union brother, **Ozzie Lecky**, on his election to the Executive Board of the State Association. 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 any 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. Daylight Savings time ends on November 7, 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 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. 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. I would like to mention, The Retiree and Award Banquet will be held on **October 10** from 6pm-10pm at the Elizabeth Ballroom located in Gloucester City. See your Steward or contact me for tickets. About 5 years ago I got members of our branch involved in the Angel Tree for underprivileged children, and I'm happy to say Branch 908 will be participating in the Angel Tree again this year. The way it 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. If any member is interested in participating contact **Vice -President Mike Powell @ 856-906-2026 or 856-287-8768**. If you believe every child deserves a Merry Christmas, please help! 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. **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. Next month open season for health, dental, and vision insurance begins. It will run from **Monday 11/08/21 through Monday 12/13/21**. It will be here before you know it. No better time to visit OPM.gov to start comparing plans. OPM has yet to set the new pricing for 2022, but you can still get a general idea of what the costs will be. You'll find our own NALC HBP is absolutely top notch in premiums, coverage, out of pocket expense, network of physicians and facilities, and prescription coverage. You'll also see for the best family coverage for NALC High option is \$100, CDHP family option \$70, and Value Option family is \$20 less than the big name company. The plan you own, and operate NALC HBP is the only 5 star rated plan in the USA. Do your homework, figure out what is best for you, and your family, and be ready come open season.

The optical reimbursement year is also closing in. For you to receive yours for this year simply mail a paper copy of your optical expense to me at George Greenwood, 1083 Chews Landing Rd., Laurel Springs, NJ 08021....Any questions regarding all the above always feel free to give me a call at 856-304-8665...Be safe all, and we'll see you at the next monthly meeting.

**George Greenwood, HBR**

### Ozzie's Corner

On September 27th and 28th, we had our NJSALC (New Jersey State Association of Letter Carriers) 108<sup>th</sup> State Convention in Atlantic City, NJ. The keynote speaker on the 27<sup>th</sup> was Executive Vice President of the NALC, **Brian Renfroe**. On the legislative front, Brother Renfroe told our members we need to continue to push for HR 3076: The Postal Service Reform Act Of 2021. Brother Renfroe believes getting this House Resolution passed would be a huge win for Letter Carriers because it would put The Postal Service in a better financial footing. The important points of HR 3076 are explained in June's newsletter. Remember, there are 2 ways you can tell your politicians to support HR 3076: computer through our national website (NALC.ORG) and/or by phone.

In other news, a bipartisan pair of legislators introduced HR 4268: The Federal Retirement Fairness Act. On July 2<sup>nd</sup>, Tom Cole (R)- Oklahoma and Derek Kilmer (D)-Washington wanted to allow employees enrolled in the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) who initially start in government as a temporary worker the ability to make catch-up retirement contributions. Therefore, temporary Employees were unable to contribute to retirement accounts when they first started their employment. If passed into law one day, career employees who started out as temporary employees would have full credit for the years they served in both positions. Also, the federal worker would have the chance to retire on time, no matter how he or she started out in their government employment. HR 4268 has 15 co-sponsors currently on the bill.

Election Day is November 2<sup>nd</sup> in New Jersey and one way to cast your vote is by VBM (Vote By Mail). Vote By Mail is a great way to help those who can't physically go out and cast their vote. The senior citizens, shut-ins and disabled are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity. The process is a slam dunk because, A: your vote counts when you send it in the mail and B: by sending out any of the outgoing political mail (voter registrations and ballots) you're supporting City Letter Carrier jobs. Furthermore, it is hassle free (not standing and waiting in long poll lines), accessible and there is no postage to cover mailing in your ballot. Whether the election is at a local or state level, please study all of the candidates fully and cast your vote!

Finally, I want to thank September and October's LCPF Contributors: **Jarrold McGee** (Bellmawr), **Kyle Redmond** (Haddon Heights), **Juan Santiago II** (Pennsville), **Joe Thomas** (Williamstown), Retirees: **Kevin Breitenstine** (Stratford), **Boyd "Bud" Burrows** (Atco), **Ken Chojnacki** (Riverton), **Joe Laluk** (Maple Shade), **Mike Rofrano** (Gloucester City) and Life Member: **Pasquale "Pat" Penza** (Runnemede). Also, I want to thank **Jim Comuso** (Trustee Chairman) for his LCPF assistance. My phone number is (856) 220-8658 to contribute to LCPF.

### **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.)*

### Annual Branch Banquet

The rescheduled Annual Branch Banquet will be held on **October 10, 2021, from 6-10pm** at the Elizabeth Ballroom in Gloucester City. We will be honoring the following members who retired during the 2020 pay year:

<b>Paul Fanuka</b> – Marlton	<b>Edwin Smith</b> – Voorhees
<b>Richard Gillespie</b> – Riverton	<b>Thomas Conner</b> – Woodbury
<b>Brian Heckler</b> – Blackwood	<b>Michael Kelly</b> – Hammonton
<b>Brian Deputy</b> – Sewell	<b>Bernadette Parncutt</b> – Marlton
<b>Thomas Rust</b> – Voorhees	<b>Brown Peterson</b> – Blackwood
<b>Fred Simpkins</b> – Stratford	<b>Joseph Gritz</b> – Stratford
<b>Charles Huff</b> – Mt Ephraim	<b>Dean Delsignore</b> – Haddon Hts

Tickets are \$20 for members and guests, \$10 for Branch retirees. See VP **Mike Powell** or your shop steward for tickets.

### 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 2022 thru 2023 shall take place at the regular monthly meeting of the Branch on **Wednesday, October 20, 2021**. 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, Letter Carrier Political Fund Officer, Shop Stewards (19) 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).