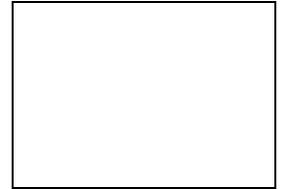


# 908 News

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    September 2020

## Presidents Report

Welcome back everyone. I would have to say that for the 40 years I have been associated with the postal service, these last six months have been the most challenging and stressful any of us have had to deal with. Just when you think our jobs couldn't get any worse dealing with the COVID-19, you have our new PMG trying to dismantle the postal service with all of his new-fangled ideas. I mentioned back in June he was just taking over the reins and was hoping he would come in with an open mind and would listen to the voices of reason when making decisions. Boy, does it appear that is definitely not the case. If anyone is paying attention, you could see we have put enormous political pressure on him to answer our concerns, but if you watched him before Congress, you could see he was either a flat-out liar, or just plain ignorant about our job, or maybe both! With the elections fast approaching, he decided to implement a slowdown of delivery, which made no sense unless he had an ulterior motive! Who knows where all this will lead, but I am confident our leadership will make sure our jobs will be protected from this onslaught! I won't dwell on the political aspects of what is happening, but ask all of you to stay informed on what you should be doing to protect our future.

Next, I mentioned our Marlton office was hoping to have the Consolidated Casing Initiative removed in July as one of the first wave of offices to go back to normal, but of course that didn't happen. It appears they will have to wait until January to have their routes put back to their original structure. The worse part of this failed program is that it forced a lot of seasoned carriers into an earlier than wanted retirement because of the undue stress. I am sure these initiatives are meant to do just that, which is horrible.

Not to be beaten, the postal service just couldn't stop trying to shove initiatives down our throats without any input from our union. The latest two programs, which have now been stopped, the ESAS program (Expedited Street/Afternoon Sortation), which has basically the same premise as the consolidated casing initiative, in that carriers spend as little time in the office in the morning by not casing any mail and coming back in the afternoon and prepare their case for the next day. Does anyone remember **Model City**? That was basically what this program would have been had not our union filed a national level grievance, and subsequently resolved this issue before going to arbitration. They are trying their hardest to eliminate our office time from the manuals. The problem with this idea is they have to bargain with us in order to change the manuals! The other program they tried to implement, which is another blast from the past, is called SER, or Sortation Equipment Reconciliation. What this does is take away cases and make all cases six shelves! Remember how that worked out before? Again, I won't go into detail here, but this isn't efficient and won't make our jobs easier. The only thing I see that would have been positive coming out of this move would be more **OVERTIME** for our carriers! It appears this initiative has been halted as well, even though as of this writing some offices in our district are stating they are going to implement this. We shall see where this goes. Next, we will be getting ready for our arbitration hearings in the next 3 months for a new contract, unless the parties come to an agreement before the hearings begin on September 23<sup>rd</sup>. Our national has continued talks in trying to reach an agreement, which hopefully the postal service would change their position and sit down with us in good faith, considering the situation we are all dealing with. Regardless, our national is prepared to fight

for the best possible contract, especially since you have been out there on the front line delivering for the country and deserve a substantial reward for your dedication and hard work in these stressful times. I am confident we will come out on top with a new contract that rewards you for what you have done. Stay tuned.

Another issue that is being addressed is annual leave carryover. Since this is an unprecedented time in the postal service, our union has approached management asking to increase the maximum number of 440 hours to a higher number for next year, since many carriers had to cancel their vacations this year due to the pandemic. Hopefully, there will be an agreement on this as well.

I guess the next big issue we will be dealing with in this COVID-19 era, will be those members whose children are going to school remotely or in school partially. As of now there are no new guidelines that will aid in parents who have young children who need to be supervised if they are being schooled remotely. The position as of now is that the postal service considers the schools to be open, even if it is only for a couple of days a week. I hope there will be some more positive news in the weeks ahead to handle these concerns.

Lastly, it appears once again, we won't be able to hold our regular meeting this month unless the governor eases up on inside restrictions. Please check our website for up to date info on our meetings, and I hope if we can't have a meeting this month, we will have one in October. Stay Safe and Strong.

- Gary DiGiacomo – President

## Next Meeting

The next regular monthly meeting of the Branch will (*possibly*) be held on **Wednesday, September 16<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 9<sup>th</sup> @ 7:30 and 8:30 pm** respectively. **Please check the Branch website [nalcbranch908.com](http://nalcbranch908.com) to confirm if the meeting is on before traveling to the hall.**

## Comments From the VP

There are a few things I will address in this month's article. First and foremost, is thanking all of our brothers and sisters of this great branch for all your hard work during this pandemic. You all are **Heroes**. Yes, working during this pandemic is causing a great deal of stress. I am out here with you on the front line, and with management up to their same devious bullshit, I know how stressful it can be. Over here at the **Camden, a.k.a. Hellhole, Annex** the geniuses in charge have changed some of our start times to 9 am., are forcing non-odl carriers to work overtime every day, are still delaying mail and the list goes on and on with no end in sight. On a positive note we have received some favorable grievance decisions. One decision was for an Article 29 violation in which the carrier was **awarded approximately 97 hours of Administrative Leave OUCH!!!** Also, just in was **an award of 52 hours to be paid at the overtime rate for Article 8 Violations**. I don't know when we will be able to have a regular branch meeting again, so I will be suggesting at our upcoming Executive Board

Meeting that we start collecting email addresses for anyone who wants to participate in branch meetings through zoom. I know our sister Branch 540 has been doing their meetings through zoom and it seems to be working well for them. 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 and June** 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. Welcome back. Hope y'all had a safe, healthy summer. Unfortunately, we are still in the grip of this Covid-19. If you have health issues or are simply afraid to go see a doctor remember NALC HBP has Telehealth/Virtual Visits. **In addition to the virtual doctor visits available through NALCHBP Telehealth, the Plan will now cover medically necessary online Telehealth Office Visits. This will be effective March 1, 2020 until further notice. To locate a provider in the telehealth network, contact the following:** NALCHBP Telehealth (medical): High Option Members visit [nalchbptelehealth.org](http://nalchbptelehealth.org) or call 888-541-7706

Telehealth (medical): CDHP/Value Option Members visit [www.MDLIVEforCigna.com](http://www.MDLIVEforCigna.com) or call 888-726-3171.

It's only September, but now is the time to start looking at health, dental, and vision plans for open season this year.

**Open Season Announcement: Open Season Dates: November 9, 2020 - December 14, 2020. 2020 Federal Benefits Open Season will NOT be delayed due to COVID-19!**

Go to OPM.gov to look at plans, benefits, etc. for comparison as the plans will have minimal change after they are announced. My money for years has been with NALCHBP. Reasons being first, and foremost we own it. It's a nonprofit so the rates are kept low, and benefits are outstanding as it is the only 5-star plan in the USA.

I also encourage all members to look into what NALC offers you in Mutual Benefits. They offer a full range of Life insurance policies (you will be shocked at the cost through USPS) after you retire, and also available are many various savings retirement plans for you, and your family. The retirement savings are really a great way for CCA's to put some money away until you're converted to career status, then you can transfer all funds if you desire into your Thrift Savings Retirement. It'll be nice to have something to show for your time spent in CCA status. Information on all the above can be found at NALC.org under Member Benefits.

And of course, don't forget NALC Br. 908 has a fund set up for you to get an annual \$20 reimbursement for optical expenses. This is one reimbursement per year for any member in good standing, or a family member. Simply send me a paper copy of your receipt with your name, mailing address, and office/retired to George Greenwood, 1083 Chews Landing Rd., Laurel Springs, NJ 08021.....Any questions on any of the above feel free to call me anytime at 856-304-8665...Be safe folks.

**- George Greenwood, HBR**

### **Ozzie's Corner**

In the midst of the horrific virus we as Americans are battling every day across our country known as The COVID-19 Pandemic, in every neighborhood of every state there are laborers on our streets getting it done day in and day out ... hard working, blue collar men and women delivering magazines, letters and packages. The job I'm referring to is City Letter Carriers. I want to personally thank each and every active City Letter Carrier in Branch 908. The service you provide each and every day is invaluable and I'm damn proud to say to you all, keep up the great work. Next, I want to thank each member in 908 (Active, Retired and Life) who took part in the ACTION NEEDED exercise on the NALC website over the past couple of months. If you missed reading June's Newsletter, the NALC is asking all members to send a free e-mailed letter on their website to the Congressman, Congresswoman and Senator that is assigned to the area that particular member resides. The letter the member sends is to support COVID-19 financial assistance for the Postal Service and special financial relief (example:

hazard pay) for active Letter Carriers. Remember, The Heroes Act (HR 6800) going into September is a resolution that is still on the senate floor and hasn't been brushed off yet by our members in Congress. Therefore, we need to continue sending the emailed letters every day to let the men and women know in the political spectrum that Letter Carriers are an important frontline job in today's society and the Postal Service is equally an important essential business. Also, friends and family members of NALC members can go to [HeroesDelivering.com](http://HeroesDelivering.com) to show the same support members are doing on the ACTION NEEDED exercise. On the NALC website the ACTION NEEDED exercise I discovered is in different steps, so pay close attention to the new info:

**Step 1:** Go to NALC.ORG, then click on Government Affairs at the bottom

**Step 2:** Click on to the right of that page the words: Legislative Action Center under Legislative Activities

**Step 3:** To the right of the HOME NALC LEGISLATIVE ACTION CENTER page is a white rectangle box, put in your info after reading the simple step by step instructions above

**Step 4:** Click on the blue GO! button under the rectangle box(your full name and address should appear on the upper right hand page)

**Step 5:** Go to the left of that page and click on the blue READ MORE button under the TAKE ACTION! column

**Step 6:** You will see a TAKE ACTION heading on this page, then underneath is a TAKE ACTION blue button under Support USPS In Next Emergency Stimulus, click on the blue button

**Step 7:** Follow Steps E to H in June's Newsletter Brothers and Sisters, the bottom line is there is still time for all of us to do this simple less than 2-minute exercise. In addition,

if you are not computer savvy, you get locked out of the exercise or with your blessings and thumbs up if you need me to do the emailed letter for you, please don't hesitate to reach out and contact me. Finally, I want to send a special thank you to Branch 908's Recording Secretary: **Norm Spence** for putting in the ACTION NEEDED exercise in June's Newsletter.

In other news, I want to thank this month's LCPF contributors: **James Holmes** (Woodbury), **Shakeera Johnson** (Gloucester City), **Elizabeth Wasenda** (Riverton), **Kathy Williams** (Woodbury), **Carmen Zambrano** (Voorhees), **Mike Rofrano** (Retiree-Gloucester City), **Gary Stevens** (Retiree-Voorhees) and **Pasquale Penza** (Life Member-Runnemede). My phone number is (856) 220-8658 to reach me in our branch. In closing, I hope and pray we will see each other soon and you and your loved ones stay safe and be well.

### **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.)*

### **Branch Scholarship Winner**

The winner of this year's Branch Scholarship is **Gabriel Renninger**, son of **Eric Rinninger** out of the Williamstown Office. The alternate is **Kevin Sharkey**, son of **John Sharkey** out of the Sewell Office. The winner of the Scholarship will receive a fund of \$2000.00 (\$500.00 a year for four years). If you have any questions, Trustee **Jim Boyle** can be contacted by phone at 856-952-6107.

### **NALC Lapel Pins Earned**

The Branch has recently had the pleasure of honoring several of our Gold Card members who have earned lapel pins. The following Gold Card members have earned their 55-year lapel pin: **Alfred Capaldi** from the Stratford Office, **Wayne Kline** from the Bridgeton Office and **Robert Zurlo** from the Somerdale Office. **Rodman Geisler** from the Woodbury Office has earned his **65-year** lapel pin. Congratulations and Thank you for your many years of membership.

The NALC Constitution provides for the awarding of suitable lapel pins for every five years of NALC membership commencing with the 25th year. For example: 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50 and so forth. If you feel that because of your years of NALC membership, you are eligible for the award of a suitable lapel pin, see Branch Recording Secretary Norm Spence or send a letter to the Branch (PO Box 150, Pennsville, NJ 08070). Include your Name, Office, approximate date you became a member of the NALC and what pin you believe you have earned.