

# 908 News

NALC Branch 908

AFL-CIO

PO Box 1223

Blackwood, NJ

08012

# Bill Revak Branch 908

## South Jersey Letter Carriers

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November 2024

### Presidents Report

Well brothers and sisters, a lot has happened since last month. First and foremost, I must report to everyone that we lost a dear friend and true fighter for union rights, when our former president and current financial secretary, **Steve Lipski**, lost his battle with cancer, this past month. Our deepest condolences and prayers go out to Janet and his three children and four grandchildren during this tragic time. I know we will never be able to replace the knowledge and leadership Steve brought to this branch. Rest in peace my brother.

Next, we finally have a tentative agreement that will be sent out to the membership for a ratification vote in the coming weeks. I suggest when everyone gets their ballot, along with the tentative agreement, you read it from front to back and make your own educated decision, and do not be influenced by all the distractions that are out there. My phone has not stopped ringing since the T.A. was released last month. Carriers had not even read it, but already were turning it down because of all the negativities put out there by those with an agenda. I explained to all those I spoke with that we would be attending the C.O.P. meeting where president Renfroe would explain the T.A. in detail. We attended the C.O.P. and now have a better read on what this tentative agreement contains. Many of you know, I have been extremely vocal throughout this long wait for an agreement, and can say, after hearing what is in this new agreement, is still very confusing to me as to why it took so long to reach a deal, although I do have an idea, that I will not share here. I am not here to tell you how to vote, but to give you what this agreement contains, and then hopefully, you can make up your own mind. I will try and go over some of the items that are contained in it, but we will go over it in more detail at this month's meeting. We will be going over this agreement in detail with the stewards at our next steward meeting, and they should be able to answer any other questions you may have if you can't make the meeting. First, to understand where you will be in the pay scale, the NALC has put up on the website a Wage Calculator, that you can input your current rate and then see where you will be at the end of this agreement. When you take all those intangibles in, you will see what kind of change was negotiated, and what your salary will be in the end. The economics portion of this new T.A. are as follows. There will be three **1.3%** general wage increases, the first, 11-18-23 paid retroactively, the 2nd, 11-16-24 paid retroactively and 11-15-25. These are the General Wage increases. There are 7 C.O.L.A. increases with **\$2309** of retroactive pay to all carriers at top level and proportionate for the rest. This was one of those areas that those affected have a problem with, which I understand. We believe everyone should get the same COLA's, but that still hasn't been corrected. The 2 pay tables that are in place still remain, however, 92 weeks have been removed, making it faster to get to the top level. **City Carrier Assistants**, which are still part of this agreement, will get **2.3%** paid retroactively to 11-2023 and another **2.3%** in 11-2024 paid retroactively. They will also get a **\$.50** per hour increase if ratified. These are the economic parts of the T.A. Also, if ratified, there will be backpay for everyone, which will vary based on your pay rate and number of hours worked. Anyone can get between \$1500 up to \$4000 or more, just so you are aware. These are just projections, not actuals. Also, if you retired during this period, you will be entitled to a back paycheck. Some other items, are PTF's and CCA.s will get a guaranteed day off, if they wish, which was something that

was an issue. PTF's and CCA's will get advanced Annual Leave of 40 hours. The next item deals with the uniform allowance. Everyone is aware, including the postal service, of the prices of uniforms. For the next 2 years, there will be an increase to \$536 next year and \$549 in 2026. President Renfroe states he believes there will a new uniform structure after that where the postal service will take over the distribution of uniforms. Hopefully, he is correct, because that is the only way to make it work for all carriers. Another change concerns the new Article 8 provisions. There are many, so I won't get into it here, but one is the right for non OTDL and Work Assignment carriers to leave after 11.5 hours or 60 hours in a week with no disciplinary action from management. There will now be 2 lists instead of 3. The 10-hour OTDL list is gone. You can sign both lists or just one. One for working all available overtime, or one to just work your own route on your regular scheduled day off only. This is another new wrinkle in Article 8. These are just some of the provisions, and we will go more in detail at the meeting with the entire tentative agreement.

Lastly, our merger with Branch 4623 of Clementon has been completed, and effective January 1, 2025, we will be welcoming them into our Bill Revak Branch 908 family. See everyone at this month's meeting.

Gary DiGiacomo – President

### We value your opinion;

### We want to hear from you the membership

I never thought leaders like former VP Joe Walder Sr. and just recently our former President Steve Lipski would no longer be with us. As you probably have heard former President Lipski, one of my Mentors has passed away. President DiGiacomo posted on the NALC website all about Steves legacy, and I can tell you as someone who was so lucky to personally see and learn from how impressive he was. I learned so much and had so much more to learn from him. His greatest attribute that I took from him was his selfless drive to see other people learn and become future leaders. So many hours of just conversations about all aspects of running a branch or filing a grievance was worth the number of late nights after meetings and lost hours of sleep. I will forever miss him, and I am so thankful for all he did, there will never be someone like you again. Our meeting in November we will spend time discussing the Tentative Agreement, which has been presented to the membership. We must wait for it to be made available in its full version to read all the details of it, and that should be after 11/2/24. There have been plenty of opinions on this T/A, please remember that we at the local level only see what is given to us. We don't have anything to do with putting this T/A together. We will read it over and try to present it to you and explain to you the breakdown of this T/A. Please be respectful to this and allow us to go through this, so you can make a decision based on what you have learned about this. I am very aware it's difficult not to hear all the other opinions on this matter. Whatever decision the membership makes is what makes us so great, because the membership rules. Your involvement is the only way to ensure your best interest is at the forefront. Personally, if it gets voted and accepted, we are prepared to fight for every word in the agreement. If it's not and goes to arbitration the same. We will be waiting for the result and will fight for everything in that agreement, all our responsibilities won't change from that

standpoint. We must stay in this and battle for all our rights, please don't allow us to become divided. We don't win then management does. Now on another disturbing subject I have seen lately speaking of management. They have made a habit of feeling way to comfortable approaching carriers about this made-up term "stationary events/ inactivity events". They approach you saying I just need to answer my bosses as to why and this is just a "discussion" they say this won't go anywhere. Well, that is a lie as I have seen this be used as evidence in discipline issued and referenced as a previous discussion. We have stated before please prior to speaking to them please say "If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated, or affect my personal working conditions, I respectfully request that my union representative, officer, or steward be present at this meeting. Without my Union representation present, I respectfully choose not to answer any questions or participate in this discussion." This is a provision of your Weingarten Rights and will stop them from using the backdoor attempt to slip you into a false sense of security, while actually going after your livelihood. If you state what I wrote above, you have now activated your rights to proper representation and if they ignore it, they have now violated your Weingarten Rights. By exercising your rights, it allows your steward to properly approach the line of questioning that is going to be asked and protect you, not your manager, from their boss. Last but not least I'd like to welcome our new brothers and sisters from Branch 4623. I look forward to this great partnership in the years to come. Always remember their bad day is not yours, they also have a responsibility to follow the rules. **Stay Strong, Strength in Numbers, I look forward to hearing from you.**  
**Executive Vice President Shawn McBride (856)649-9317**

### Comments from the VP

I want to start this month's article with a few words about my good friend, mentor, and union brother Steve Lipski. He was our branch President for many years, and he also held every other position in our great branch. His leadership and knowledge of the contract was impeccable, but it was the behind-the-scenes things that Steve did for our members that made him special. He volunteered to do express mail on Christmas Day one year so a young carrier in our Gloucester Office could spend the day with his young family. There were so many expresses that year he worked till like 11pm. On another occasion he provided a member that had financial difficulties with gifts to put under his Xmas tree. That is just a few of the many instances of Steves' unselfish behind the scenes deeds. RIP Steve, you will be sorely missed. November 5<sup>th</sup> is Election Day. Please take the time to vote. Your vote counts no matter what party with which you are affiliated. Veterans Day is November 11, and I want to thank all the Veterans of our great branch for their service. We have finally reached a tentative agreement with the Postal Service. I urge everyone to educate themselves with all the info you can get your hands on whether it be from the National website or at our next monthly meeting so that you can make an informed decision when it comes time to vote on the tentative agreement. I want to wish all our members and their families a Happy Thanksgiving. 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](mailto:908vp@comcast.net)** Proud to be Union. **Mike Powell- Vice President**

### Next Meeting

The next regular monthly meeting of the Branch will be held on **Wednesday, November 20<sup>th</sup> @ 8 pm**, 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.** Food, soda and beer is always served at the meetings. The Executive Board and Shop Steward meetings are held on the 2nd Wednesday of the month. The Executive Board meets @ **7:30 pm**, and the Shop Stewards @ **8 pm**. The next meeting of the Executive Board and Shop Stewards will be on **Wednesday, November 13<sup>th</sup> @ 7:30 and 8pm** respectively.

### Attendance Prize Now at \$225

Had he been in attendance at the regular monthly meeting of the Branch on **Wednesday, October 16<sup>th</sup>, Todd Trampe** a member out of the Williamstown Office, would have been the recipient of the **\$200** attendance prize. The prize now increases to **\$225** and will increase **\$25** per meeting, up to a maximum of **\$250**, until a member in attendance has their name drawn.

### Turkey Give Away

Trustee Chairman **James Comuso** has once again donated a turkey in memory of former Trustee Chairman Jack Bittner. Come out to the **November 20<sup>th</sup>** meeting for a chance to win!

### Penalty Overtime Exclusion

As referenced in Article 8, Sections 4 and 5 of the National Agreement between the NALC and the USPS, the December period during which penalty overtime regulations are not applicable consists of four consecutive service weeks. This year, the December period begins **Pay Period 26-24 (Nov.30 2024)** and ends **Pay Period 01-25 (Dec. 27, 2024)**.

### NALC HBP, MBA, FMLA, OPTICAL Acct.

Hello sisters and brothers. Hope all is well. By the time you read this open season (11/11/2024 through 12/09/2024) should be in full swing, as OPM so far is getting it done. Also seems so far that OPM planned well with the amount, and detail on what information they're providing us with. As I've been saying from the start of this relax, let them continue to get all the information to us, then decide accordingly. Some are fortunate, and will have no decision to make, while others are going to have to follow all the directions in the papers OPM has sent out. Still minimum change should be easily achieved. Any problems follow the instructions on what OPM sent you, and again should/hopefully will go smooth. As always in addition feel free to give me a call with any questions, or concerns. George Greenwood, HBR 856-304-8665. I'm going to cut it short here this month with so many things going on throughout the NALC, and USPS which could require space in our newsletter. Final note from me this month is regarding our Br. 908 Optical Account. Our account balance remained unchanged from Oct. 01 through Oct. 30 as no claims were submitted. Anyone entitled to and need to file a claim for optical reimbursement simply mail me a paper copy of your receipt with your name, address, and office/retired to me at George Greenwood HBR, 1083 Chews Landing Rd., Laurel Springs, NJ 08021.

Be safe folks. Talk to you all soon- **George Greenwood, HBR**

### Management Dropped The Ball On This!!(Conclusion)

I switched topics and asked, "Mr. Balvinder, did you even reach out to check on the employee to see how that person was doing?" Mr. Balvinder responded and said, "I called the Postal Inspector". I immediately said, "Excuse me, that's not what I asked. When a Letter Carrier is assaulted and/or robbed, I understand you need to call Postal Inspections, but that was not what I asked. Did you call the carrier to check and see if the employee was ok?" Mr. Balvinder said, "No, I didn't". At the end of the day, we are all human beings. The employee who experienced this life changing on the job event will never be the same again!! As a leader on the management side, there should have been an ounce of care and concern, but nothing was shown. MANAGEMENT DROPPED THE BALL ON THIS!! After I was done addressing the Postmaster, I turned to The POOM (Post Office Operations Manager) and said the following, "What could have been done to bring E.A.P. out to the Camden Annex? The carrier gets shot and goes to the hospital? Wait, I know...the carrier gets shot and dies on the job." The whole thing has left a bad taste in my mouth and truly stinks to high heaven. Oh, it gets better, 3 weeks later in mid-August we had a guest come out to our building in the morning to do a stand-up talk. Mr. Balvinder invited a Postal Inspector to discuss the protocol when you get held up in a robbery. ARE YOU KIDDING ME? Where was this discussion on July 11th? (the day after the employee was assaulted). Wait I know, missing in action just like the visit from E.A.P.!! Mr. Balvinder, I want to take this time to use a word that you have mentioned before in our Safety Meetings...Bullshit. It is Bullshit that you never brought in E.A.P. for the employees. It is Bullshit that you never contacted the carrier minutes after the crime happened on the job. It is Bullshit that you invited a Postal Inspector out (3 weeks later as a consolation prize for the employees). THAT IS HOW MANAGEMENT DROPPED THE BALL ON THIS!! Believe it or not, there is some good that did come out of all this mess. First, the employee (with the assistance of Shop Steward Mike Powell and a former Customer Service Mgr. in Camden) was able to be paid through ECOMP on stress

leave. Second, a different Postal Inspector notified the victim a few weeks ago (In early October) that they apprehended one of the assailants. What we need to continue to push for is the passing of **The Protect Our Letter Carriers Act** (H.R. 7629). Letter Carriers must and need to work safely every day without the thought of a robbery or assault on their minds. Currently, there are 132 co-sponsors in the 118th congressional term. In other news, we lost former Branch 908 President and current Financial Secretary, Steve Lipski. When I started my Letter Carrier career in 2005, Bro. Lipski was Branch 908's Local President. Years later in 2013, Westville got duo'd in the Camden Annex with Gloucester City. Bro. Lipski will be known as one of the most intelligent and respected union leaders in the N.A.L.C. I am proud to have known and worked with him. Please keep his wife Janet and the rest of his family in your thoughts and prayers.

Finally, I want to thank our latest LCPF contributors: **Felix Bocchicchio, Sharon Brown, Dan Burkhardt, Boyd "Bud" Burrows, Don Caswell, Richard Davis, Chuck Foley, Joe Foreman Jr. (Increase), Mike Graff (Increase), Pasquale "Pat" Penza, John Phy Jr. (Increase), Elyssa Portobanco, Gabriel Mazariegos, Himanshu Vats** and 2 Retirees that wanted to remain anonymous.

My phone number is **(856) 220-8658** if you need my assistance in our branch. Please be safe and see you at November's meeting. 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.)*

**Kid's Christmas Party**

Our annual Kid's Christmas party will be Sunday December 8<sup>th</sup>, 12-3pm. At the American Legion Hall. 502 Colonial Ave. Woodbury. There will be kid friendly food, games, holiday crafts, and a visit with Santa who will be bringing an American made toy for each child. There may also be an appearance by the Grinch! We will be decorating for the party on Sunday December 1<sup>st</sup> @ 11am if anyone would like to help.

**Hops for Hope**

This year's Hops for Hope at the Double Nickel Brewery was a success! So far this year our Branch has raised \$6,710 for MDA. Thank you all so much for your support and generosity. Thank you to all who donated baskets for the auction: **Mario Illiano** of Bellmawr, **Michael Dorisia** of Stratford, **Pete DeSimone** of Marlton, **Walt Grossmick** and his wife Robin of Gibbstown, **Steve Elias, Mike Lombardi, Shawn McBride, Tom McCabe,** and **Tom Barnett** all of Woodbury. Thank you to **540** President **Chuck Goushian** for sending a donation. Thank you to the Branch **769** members that came out to support the event. Thank you to all our local businesses that donated items.

- The Double Nickel Brewing Co.**
- Morey's piers beach front waterparks**
- Brad Peters and Hello High Dispensary**
- Longwood Gardens**
- DiDonato's Family Fun Center**
- Anderson Contractors of Westville**
- Broadway Auto Sales of Westville**
- Westville Service Center**
- Anthony Serano Sports Apparel**
- Wawa**
- Chick-fil-A**
- Texas Road House of Sicklerville**
- Top Golf**
- Pinspiration of Clarksboro**
- TGIFridays**
- Dave and Busters**
- Rack's**
- Five Guys of Sicklerville**
- Chophouse**

**Texas Road House Gift Cards**

We will be partnering with Texas Road House to sell gift cards leading up to the holidays. It will be an online sale so one can easily purchase gift cards from the comfort of your own home for holiday gifts or just for a night out. It is then sent right to your email. Our branch will earn 10% of the sales which will be donated to MDA. All the specific details were not available at the time of printing so when they are I will share them with your stewards, online, and on Facebook. For more information call/text **April Litty@856-885-1451** or **Jason Dempster@856-503-5007**

**CCA's**

If you are given any type of discipline or corrective action let your shop steward know ASAP, even if you're still in your probation period. Management does not inform the union that is your responsibility. There are free hand-me-down uniforms available for you at the union meetings.

**2025 Color Coded Calendar**

The 2025 rotating day off calendar is now available on our website.



***Veteran's Day is November 11<sup>th</sup>.  
Thank you to all those who served!***

***The Branch Officers and  
Stewards wish all the Members  
and their families a  
HAPPY THANKSGIVING!***

***R.I.P. Steve Lipski, we thank you for your years of service, knowledge, and wit. Our Condolences and sincere thanks to his wife Janet, for all she has done for our branch over the years.***

Check us out on the web @ [www.nalcbranch908.com](http://www.nalcbranch908.com)  
On Facebook @ NALC Branch 908  
To share any info, photos or original artwork for the newsletter or website send to [Aprillitty@gmail.com](mailto:Aprillitty@gmail.com)

**Branch Attorneys**  
**Uliase & Uliase**  
**106 White Horse Pike, Haddon Heights, NJ 08035**  
**(856) 310-9002**