

908 News

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

South Jersey Letter Carriers

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

Presidents Report

What a difference a month makes! Last month I was filling everyone in on some of the latest developments going on with some issues we are waiting on, such as the consolidated casing arbitration, etc., and just like that we are hit with a national pandemic! This situation forced us to cancel all meetings last month and possibly this month as well. All functions, locally and nationally have been postponed for later times when it is safe to do so. The food drive will be held at a later date when it is safe to do it. Our retiree/branch banquet has been rescheduled for October 11th, which hopefully will be a better time. On to the important issues we face now is obviously the COVID-19 virus that is around us at this time. I know this is a very stressful time for everyone, but I want to give a huge shout out to all our brothers and sisters who are doing a tremendous job in keeping the mail flowing during this tough time. As you all know, we have been having a hard time getting the proper supplies to everyone, but I can say the district has been trying their best to get supplies to the offices as best they can considering the situation we are faced with. It appears the supplies are now starting to show up in our offices, which is a good thing, but please let me know if you need additional supplies because the district will get them to you. I am on a daily telecon with the all local union presidents, business agents and managers of the district to keep the line of communications open as to the latest information available. As I write this month's article there have been 2 positive cases in the South Jersey district near us, Lawnside and the 501 building, the other cases that are presumed positive are more toward central Jersey. It appears each day another installation is being affected, so this information I am speaking of will undoubtedly be added to. All we can do at this point is to follow all the proper guidelines on how to handle these situations. I have been getting constant updates from our national union that I continue to send out to your stewards, who I hope are sharing this information with you. The union and the postal service are continuing to sign off on joint memos for our benefit, which I will highlight a few here, since I am told some managers aren't sharing this info with you. The first one deals with **Temporary Expanded Sick Leave for Dependent Care**. This memo states that during the next 60 days sick leave may be used by an employee for unexpected childcare needs, since schools and most childcare services have been closed. Employees may use sick leave for these situations. The next one is a huge help for our CCA's who don't receive sick leave and their annual leave is minimal. This memo is titled **Temporary Additional Paid Leave for CCA's**. There are a few items that CCA's qualify for 80 hours of paid leave, such as contracting the COVID-19 virus, or experiencing symptoms of the virus, but one which is very valuable deals with **Sick Leave for Dependent Care**. Any CCA who is faced with daycare issues may put in for up to 80 hours of paid leave for this situation. Please talk with your steward or branch officer if you are having a hard time getting this leave. One last memo that has been signed off on is **Temporary Use of the Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM) 432.53, City Letter Carriers (7:01 Rule)**. I hope your managers haven't approached you with this memo, since this isn't something we should be using. This memo isn't really designed for our area, so please let me or your steward know if they are asking you to use this. There are more memos being signed off on a daily basis, so please check the NALC website for the latest information. These are just a few of the memos that have been signed off on.

We are all facing a situation we could have never thought could occur, but we all must try and do what we can to get through this together. I am proud of how most offices are handling this situation, but we had one office in particular, **Sewell**, who just can't stop their continuing harassment of our carriers. Hopefully, this issue has been resolved, but I am just frustrated that we had to deal with this type of behavior during this most stressful of times. I understand we have expectations to try and make, but a little leeway and compassion would go a long way in this time of stress. I am not sure if we will be able to have any meetings this month since we are mandated not to have social gatherings, but please check our website for up to date info on our meeting status. Stay safe and we will prevail in this battle.

- Gary DiGiacomo - President

Next Meeting

Due to the ongoing Corona Virus, the April Branch meetings will be cancelled and hopefully we can get back to normal in May.

The next regular monthly meeting of the Branch will (*possibly*) be held on **Wednesday, May 20th @ 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 (*possibly*) be on **Wednesday, May 13th @ 7:30 and 8pm** respectively.

Comments From the VP

I would like to thank all our Brother and Sisters of Branch 908 who are out on the front lines delivering mail during this Covid-19 Pandemic. I know this situation is causing a great deal of stress and anxiety for all of you. I am out there with you on the front line and suffer the same stress and anxiety. The Covid-19 situation is extremely prevalent. Changes are occurring daily. Please watch the news and or check the NALC website to stay aware of any changes. I hope we can also put daily information on our own 908 website. I have written a letter to President Rolando asking him to negotiate with the Postal Service to move all of us that were part of the DUO'S in 2012, back to our original offices. This move would create many benefits. It would create the social distancing that we all need and is required, and it would save in my opinion the Postal Service lots of money in fuel costs, overtime, sick leave, etc. Let's face it, this is another failed program rolled out by the Postal Service and our national leaders are aware of it. Again, I thank all of you for your service under these hostile conditions. Remember, **WE ARE IN THIS TOGETHER!!!** I was going to keep this article short, but I'm going to report on the Camden, (**a.k.a. Hell Hole**), Annex and the **Sewell Cesspool**. First, the Hell Hole. Each zone here at the Hell Hole has one bottle of sanitizer, one canister of wipes, gloves, and masks but not enough supplies to clean our trucks every morning. The minions here have taken the position that if you put the need to wash your hands on your 3996, they will harass you and even walk with you. You would think that with the carriers not only putting their health and possibly their lives and their loved ones at home on the line this would be a non-issue. However, it's all about their numbers and they should be ashamed of themselves. One other thing that I was informed of is that there is a rat in one of the Camden

Zones. I was told this rat gave a written statement which helped get a new CCA fired. Last, I just got a removal overturned and the carrier has been returned to work. The Sewell Cesspool is getting deeper by the day. The **WANNA BE** that is running the Cesspool should be arrested for deliberately putting our carriers in harms way by blatantly disregarding all the instructions issued by the Federal, Local Governments and all the memos agreed to by the Postal Service and the NALC. Again, I want to thank all of you out on the front line for your service and please be safe. 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

We are in this together, Be Safe and God Bless

Proud to Be Union

Mike Powell – Vice - President

Attendance Prize Stands at \$75

Since the **March 18th** regular monthly meeting 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. I hope you are all well, healthy, and safe especially during these trying times. With all the hysteria, false information, and abundance of information concerning COVID-19 I'd like to direct you all to both nalc.org, and nalchbp.org for all updates, and pertinent information you may need. There are also links to connect to. President Fredric V. Rolando has issued a statement to letter carriers covering many of the evolving issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic. An audio version of the statement is also available on NALC's podcast feed on Podbean.com. In addition to contacting your shop steward, branch officer or NBA, NALC has a new resource for members to ask any questions about the COVID-19 pandemic: COVID19@nalc.org... When sending your email, please be sure to include your name and NALC branch number.

Well for all the CCA's affected by the March 14, 2020 conversion to PTF carrier I hope you're jumping on getting all your benefits in order. Health benefits, vision and dental benefits, TSP, Life insurance, etc... Your time is limited so don't delay. I encourage you all to take a good look at NALC Health Benefit Plan. It's the only 5-star plan in the nation, low premiums, low out of pocket expenses, huge network of physicians, hospitals, etc... go to nalchbp.org to check out the plans in full. High option is the best.

Any member in good standing of Branch 908 is entitled to one \$20 per member/or dependent family member optical expense per year. To receive reimbursement, send a paper copy of your expense to me at George Greenwood, 1083 Chews Landing Rd., Laurel Springs, NJ 08021.

Any questions on all the above please give me a call at 856-304-8665. Be safe folks.

- George Greenwood, HBR

Ozzie's Corner

On March 18th's general meeting I wanted to cover a few dates that happened in our union, but because the meeting was cancelled due to the coronavirus, I will cover them in this month's article. On March 1st to the 4th we had our NALC Region 12 Training Seminar in Atlantic City. The guest speaker on that Monday was NALC National President Fred Rolando. On the Legislative front, he started out by giving 2 big numbers: 290,000 and 10%. The numbers I just mentioned are the amount of members we have nationally in our union and our national percentage in LCPF. President Rolando emphasized many reasons why this number has remained the same. In one case, the NALC believes that when an active carrier is contributing through his or her postal check (Postalease), when they retire they automatically come off the rolls as an active contributor. In addition, when a Retiree is an active member, he or she doesn't sign back up or that person doesn't know how easy it is to call national and have the contribution automatically withdrawn from their annuity. Furthermore, when a CCA is signed up to LCPF through Postalease, when that C.C.A. goes on their break, the LCPF allotment automatically comes off. Therefore, the branch or assigned officer who oversees LCPF must re-sign that individual back up. Lastly, President Rolando mentioned that the 90% who aren't giving to LCPF are not necessarily members who don't agree with not giving, but honestly don't know what our national PAC is all about and I totally agree with him on this. Through my personal experience, the best conversations

you have with your members must be one on one, whether it is face to face or on the phone. The bottom line is we have to continue to educate and inform our members on the risks and rewards by contributing to LCPF. In each branch across the nation, we need strong, committed members to oversee the most important topic in the NALC. Imagine if our numbers nationally one day reached 20 or 30 percent, I guarantee you the issues we would be facing today as Letter Carriers would be completely wiped off the table! (6-day delivery, door to door, etc).

Next, our annual Washington DC Congressional visit scheduled from March 11th to March 13th was postponed due to the coronavirus.

Finally, I want to thank this month's LCPF contributors: **James Bakley II** (Elmer), **Felix Bocchicchio** (Mt. Ephraim), **Desree Whittington** (Gloucester City), Retirees: **Richard Bacon** (Bridgeton) and **Greg Byrnes** (Hammonton) and Life Member: **Howard Foxwell Jr.** Remember, for as little as a \$1 per pay you can contribute to The Letter Carrier Political Fund. My phone number is (856) 220-8658 if you need to reach me with any questions or concerns in our branch. Please be safe, take care and talk to you all soon.

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 Drawing

We will be drawing the winner of this year's Branch Scholarship at the regular monthly meeting on **May 15th**. The winner of the Scholarship will receive a fund of \$2000.00 (\$500.00 a year for four years). Applications are available at every monthly meeting, on the Branch web site, or you can contact Trustee **Jim Boyle**. All previous winners that still receive Scholarship payments must submit any updated info to Jim by the May monthly meeting. This would include the student's current college and where he or she will be attending in the upcoming fall semester. Remember all students must be a full-time student. All payments for the upcoming fall semester will be sent to the colleges in June. If you have any questions, Trustee **Jim Boyle** can be contacted by phone at 856-952-6107

Annual Branch Banquet – Postponed

The 13th Annual Branch 908 Banquet will now be held on **October 11, 2020** from 7:00 – 11:00pm at Elizabeth's Ballroom located at Highland Blvd. & Sylvan Ave., Gloucester City N.J. More details will come as we get closer to the date.

Grievance Log Step B Decisions

Camden Annex - Management did not have just cause to issue the grievant a Letter of Warning for attendance. As a remedy, the Letter of Warning shall be rescinded and removed from all files and records.

Sewell - Management did not have just cause to issue grievant a Letter of Warning for Failure to Follow Instructions. As a remedy, the Letter of Warning shall be rescinded.

Sewell - Management did not have just cause to issue grievant a 7-Day suspension dated November 6, 2019 for the actions on the street on October 25th. Since there was a reason to issue corrective action, the proper action will be to reduce this 7- Day suspension to a Letter of Warning and expunged on May 31, 2020.

Sewell - Management failed to provide light-duty to the grievant within his medical restrictions. As a remedy, management will convert all Annual leave, Sick leave and LWOP used by grievant to Administrative leave beginning February 1, 2020 until such time as grievant is provided the available work within his medical restrictions. Furthermore, management will comply with Article 13 and provide the grievant with any work that is available on a daily basis within his medical restrictions.

Sewell - Management had just cause to issue the grievant a Letter of Warning for Failure to Follow Instructions, but due to mitigating circumstances the LOW shall be reduced to a time served letter.

Stay Safe, We Will Get Through This