

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 December 2019

Presidents Report

As is my custom, I will try and not dwell on all the negativity that we are facing with our employer at the moment and try to focus on the greatest time of year where we should all step back and take a deep sigh and remember what this time of year is all about. I know we work for a company who has lost their way, but try to put that behind you for now, and concentrate on doing what we do best, which is deliver for our customers. I know the packages are already at an all-time high, and the overtime is flowing quite freely, so please make sure you take your time and be safe in making all those deliveries, especially the newer CCAs, who may be experiencing your first Christmas. As we head into the new year, hopefully we get some favorable decisions on a few arbitration cases that are being heard at this moment. The biggest case we are waiting on deals with the disastrous consolidated casing initiative that is currently being deployed in our Marlton office. This has gotten worse as it continues to move forward. We now are seeing carriers out on the street till 9pm or later, and many of our new CCAs have resigned due to the stress and fatigue of dealing with this nonsense. The postal service has now made routes that were once manageable into overburdened routes that show no signs of being able to be completed in their delusional 8-hour world. To show how this program is failing, we are seeing other parts of the country starting to protest this delivery method, which shows this is not only hurting the workforce but also damaging our relationship with our customers. The protesters are getting the public involved in seeing what is actually going on behind the scenes with this crazy initiative. Hopefully, an arbitrator will put an end to this nightmare, and put things back to where they were, and force the postal service to sit down with us to create a better solution than what they are putting out there. The other arbitration being heard deals with the CCA cap, and again hopefully, this will be resolved by next year as well and we get our CCAs converted to regular. Lastly, as I promised, I will not mention the offices where we are still having issues at this time, as we are still trying to get those issues resolved. I can guarantee you next year I will not hold back if this nonsense continues and the problems are not resolved. I want to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Healthy and Happy New Year. Please come out to the Christmas meeting for a relaxed time and celebrate the holiday with some shrimp and wings and the beverage of your choice.

- Gary DiGiacomo – President
856-906-2838

Next Meeting

The next regular monthly meeting of the Branch will be held on **Wednesday, December 18th @ 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, December 11th @ 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, November 20th, Charles Gravener**, a retired member out of the Marlton Office would have been the

recipient of the \$200 attendance prize. **The prize now increases to \$225 and will be won by a member in attendance at the December 20th meeting.**

Comments from the VP

Brothers and Sisters, to keep in the spirit of Christmas, I am going to keep this month's article positive. First, I want to wish all our Branch 908 members (regular, retired, CCAs) and their families a Merry Christmas and a Happy Prosperous and Safe New Year. Brothers and Sisters this is the season for giving and lending a helping hand to those less fortunate than us and that's why I got our branch involved in The Angel Tree for Underprivileged Children. The past 3 years our members have opened their hearts to buy gifts for underprivileged children, so that these underprivileged children can have a Merry and Happy Christmas. I want to thank the following Branch 908 members who have sponsored a child and in some cases 2 or more children this year, they are **Ozzie Lecky** (Westville), **Chuck Huff** (Mt. Ephraim), **Mike Hoopes** (Mt. Ephraim), **Bob Olszewski** (Bellmawr), **AJ Rybicki** (Bellmawr), **Bill Kyser** (Haddon Hts.), **Rob Rieger** (Haddon Hts.), **Joe Sloan** (Gloucester), **Steve Elias** (Gloucester), **Bob Gaff** (Gloucester), Vice President - **Mike Powell** (Gloucester), **Joe Powell** (Mt. Ephraim retired), **Tom Barnett** (Branch Treasurer - Woodbury retired), **John Andrioli** (Supervisor) and a big **Thank You!** to **Tom Danaher** (Gloucester retired) who sponsored **3** children. I would also like to thank all our Shop Stewards for doing an outstanding job for our members. I had a very hectic year at the Hell Hole to say the least. I was able to help not only our members, but when requested, I was able to help members from our sister branch 540. The most rewarding accomplishment was that I was able to get two removals overturned, and have our members returned to work. I would like to give a shout out to everyone who helped decorate the hall for the kids Xmas party, they are **April Litty**, **Shawn McBride**, **Phil Haas**, **Ozzie Lecky**, **George Greenwood**, **Pete DeSimone** and Vice President **Mike Powell**. Before I end this article, I want to encourage all our active members, retired members and CCAs to try to attend our December meeting. 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 help 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. I Hope everyone had a safe Thanksgiving with your families. Open season for FEHBP is officially over. The only time changes can be made now until next open season will be for a Qualifying Life Event such as marriage, birth of a child, loss of other insurance, career status change, etc... any questions on QLE feel free to call me. Another program I learned at NALCHBP training is called "Keep Your Child on Track". This pertains to wellness appointments for your children. Pediatricians recommend checkups at 1, 2, 4, 6, and 9 months. 1, 1 ¼, 1 ½, 2, 2 ½, and 3 years, then annually after that. NALC/Cigna has created a checklist to bring to these appointments. To make a printout of

the checklist for these appointments go to Cigna.com/takecontrol/go... click on go, checkup prep, then children.

As I mentioned at last month's meeting exciting news has come out of NALC Mutual Benefits. MBA has announced the return of Disability Income Insurance. These plans will be offered for 6, or 12-month periods with dollar value options of \$650, \$1350, or \$2000. The plans are available for NALC members only. Once the bureaucratic red tape has been cleared, and MBA is ready to roll out the plans I will notify everyone via newsletter, meetings, stewards and officers.

As the year winds down, I'd like to remind all members of the Optical Reimbursement account established by NALC Br. 908. This entitles any member in good standing, or family dependent member a one per member/family \$20 annual reimbursement for optical expenses. To receive reimbursement, send a copy of your optical receipt to me at: George Greenwood 1083 Chews Landing Rd., Laurel Springs, NJ 08021...any questions on any of these matters feel free to call me anytime at 856-304-8665.

Hope to see you all at the December meeting. Have a great, safe holiday season all.

- George Greenwood, HBR, 856-304-8665

Ozzie's Corner

As we look back at 2019, 3 major points moving forward are hanging in the air politically for City Letter Carriers. First, we had the proposed Postal Budget. Earlier this year, President Trump requested a study to be done on the Postal Service and its financial state in the organization. The research from his team he hired found that the USPS needed eliminations, cuts and adjustments to our health benefits, retirement packages and service of delivery. In addition, he wanted to take away our collective bargaining rights (no unionization). Remember Brothers and Sisters, we can't take this threat as a light brush off. Therefore, we as members of the NALC (National Association of Letter Carriers) need to be steadfast, strong and not waiver a single bit of this bad ideology. Next, we had the USPS Fairness Act (H.R. 2382). House Resolution Bill 2382 was a proposal adopted by Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-OR) to repeal the pre-funding mandate. In 2006, a postal reform law through the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act (PAEA) required that the Postal Service pre-fund decades worth of health benefits for future retirees. The mandate has produced a financial disaster every year since showing billions upon billions of dollars in loss. By eliminating the mandate, the postal service will be back on the right track to a well-oiled profit-making machine. In Addition, H.R. 2382 has 270 cosponsors in Congress and the NALC wants that number to reach 290 for it be a victory for both Letter Carriers and the Postal Service. Finally, Postmaster General Megan Brennan decided to step down and retire from her post next month in January. The resignation shouldn't be a big surprise to us because honestly, she has been feeling the pressure from President Trump and his administration from day one. The next person to fill the seat could possibly have a Donohue personality (cut, slash all things across the board). Since 1975, The Letter Carrier Political Fund has assured us no matter what fly by night proposal, bad legislation harming Letter Carriers or who is in control.... we have had the last word. My phone number is (856) 220-8658 to contribute for as little as a \$1 per pay.

In other news, I want to thank December's contributors to our pact: **Tracy Daniels** (Mt. Ephraim), **Jonathan Goodwin** (Blackwood), **Tim King** (Westville), **Delores McClellan** (Maple Shade), **Allen Muff** (Sewell), **Richard Murphy** (Voorhees). Retirees: **Mike Breyer** (Sewell), **Mike Fitzgerald** (Woodbury), **Shari Owen** (Riverton) and **Bruce Shelton** (Woodbury). Life Members: **Rodman Jack Geisler** (Woodbury) and **Leo Mealey Jr.** (Westville). Furthermore, I want to thank Jason Dempster (Atco Shop Steward) and George Greenwood (Health Benefits Rep.) for their assistance at November's general meeting sweepstakes. I want to wish all of you a Happy Holiday and Happy New Year. Ozzie's Corner Editing Note from November's Article: it should have said it was the 50th Anniversary of strike not 40th.

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.)*

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 25-19-Week 2 (Nov. 30, 2019) and ends Pay Period 01-20-Week 1 (Dec. 27, 2019).

Contract Heads To Arbitration

The 60-day mediation period following the expiration of our contract on September 20th has ended with both parties still at impasse. We now move on to binding arbitration. Meanwhile, the terms of our 2016 – 2019 National Agreement remain in effect.

Turkey Drawing Winner

At the regular monthly meeting of the Branch on **Wednesday, November 20th, Juan Lopez**, a carrier out of our Camden Annex Office was the winner of the Annual Jack Bittner Thanksgiving Turkey Giveaway. Thanks to Branch Trustee Chairman **Jim Comuso** for donating this year's turkey.

Proposed 2020 Branch Budget

The proposed 2019 Branch Budget, which has been approved by the Executive Board, was presented for the review and consideration of the membership in attendance at the regular monthly meeting on November 20th. The proposed budget will be open for review, discussion, consideration, and vote at the regular monthly Branch meeting on December 18th. The budget estimates the receipt and expenditures of \$237,000.00 for 2020.

2020 Leave Year

The Postal 2019 leave year ends on **January 3, 2020**. The 2020 leave year begins on **January 4, 2020**. The maximum amount of annual leave that employees may carry over from 2019 to 2020 is **440 hours** (55 days) for bargaining unit employees. Employees should coordinate with their supervisors to schedule any excess leave before January 4, 2020.

Annual Branch Banquet – March 28

Start planning to attend now. The 13th Annual Branch 908 Banquet will be held on **March 28, 2020** from 7:00 – 11:00pm at Elizabeth's Ballroom located at Highland Blvd. & Sylvan Ave., Gloucester City N.J. This is a great night to eat, drink, dance, and socialize with good friends and specially to honor those members who have retired in the past year as well as those who have been selected to receive Branch Awards. If you have retired since the last banquet or you will retire before the end of the year contact Branch Vice President, Mike Powell at 908vp@comcast.net. More info to come.

The Officers and Shop Stewards of the Branch would like to take this opportunity to personally wish You and Yours a Happy Holiday Season and a Happy, Healthy, and Prosperous New Year!

