

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 2020

Presidents Report

We have a contract, pending the ratification vote of the membership, which should pass overwhelmingly. After months of talks between the parties, I had always thought there would be an agreement without allowing an arbitrator to rule on a new contract, just by reading between the lines of statements made by President Rolando throughout this whole process. It was nice to see some positive news come out for once, since we have had nothing but negative news for the last 9 months of this pandemic. For those who haven't had a chance to look at what was agreed upon, I will highlight some of the particulars. For the record, it looks like this agreement is one which takes care of just about everyone.

First and foremost, the monetary portion of this tentative agreement, which is for 44 months, which concludes in May 2023, includes **four annual general wage** increases and **seven cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs)**. In addition, effective Nov. 19, 2022, a new top step (Step P) will be added to the career letter carrier pay scales, which will be **\$444** annually greater than Step O. The agreement also provides for the **automatic conversion of city carrier assistants (CCAs) to career status no later than after 24 months of relative standing**. The wage increases are as follows. All letter carriers, career and non-career alike, will receive four wage increases under Article 9 as follows: • **1.1** percent effective Nov. 23, 2019, paid retroactively. • **1.1** percent effective Nov. 21, 2020, paid retroactively. • **1.3** percent effective Nov. 20, 2021. • **1.3** percent effective Nov. 19, 2022. CCAs will receive additional wage increases of **1** percent on these four dates for a total of: **2.1** percent on Nov. 23, 2019 (paid retroactively); **2.1** percent on Nov. 21, 2020 (paid retroactively); **2.3** percent on Nov. 20, 2021; and **2.3** percent on Nov. 19, 2022. These additional 1 percent increases will be paid in lieu of COLAs for CCAs.

All career letter carriers will receive **seven COLAs** based on changes in the Consumer Price Index (CPI-W) using the existing COLA formula and the July 2019 CPI-W as the base month. The first two will be paid retroactively: • The first COLA will be **\$166** annually effective Feb. 29, 2020, paid retroactively. • The second COLA will be **\$188** annually effective Aug. 29, 2020, paid retroactively. The remaining 5 will be based on the C.P.I. for the remaining term of the agreement every 6 months.

Letter carriers who have retired over the last several months will receive applicable retroactive general wage increases and COLAs. The Office of Personnel Management will also make any annuity adjustments made necessary by the retroactive increases.

A few other notable changes I think you will find acceptable concerns carriers who work their holiday. **Article 11, Sections 3 and 4** have been modified to now allow full-time employees who work their holiday to elect to have their annual leave balance credited with up to eight hours of annual leave in lieu of receiving holiday pay.

The other change, that was an issue last contract, concerned CCAs who were converted to career status and had to wait 90 days to use annual leave. The new language states, "CCAs with a minimum of 90 days of service prior to conversion to career status without a break in service are **exempt** from the Ninety-Day Qualifying Period in ELM 512.313." This is another great change that needed to be addressed and was nice to see the postal service agree to.

The last highlight, which I think was a much-needed change was, "no later than 60 days from the ratification date of the 2019 collective bargaining agreement, Managed Service Points (**MSPs**) will be removed from the street delivery portions of city letter carrier routes. These were nothing more than a waste of time and has no usefulness any longer now that we have scanners that can track us. These are just some of the new items in the tentative agreement that you should all check out for a more detailed explanation to use when you get your ballot to either accept or reject this agreement.

Some other local news, which we can't wait to see end, is the consolidated casing disaster, which will be ending in late January in our Marlton office. **All routes will be put back to their original configuration and all carriers returned to their original routes they held before this program started!**

Lastly, I mentioned last month our National Business Agent, Dave Napadano retired. He has been replaced by his R.A.A. Brian Thompson, who will now serve as our new B.A. for Region 12.

I would like to take this moment to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year, and hope to see you at our Christmas meeting this month, God willing. Stay safe this holiday season.

Gary DiGiacomo – President

Next Meeting

The next regular monthly meeting of the Branch will be held on **Wednesday, December 16th @ 8 p.m., at the Pine Grove Fire Hall, 827 Jersey Ave., Gloucester City, NJ 08030**. 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 9th @ 7:30 and 8:00 pm** respectively **at the Branch union hall**.

Attendance Prize Now at \$125

Had she been in attendance at the regular monthly meeting of the Branch on **Wednesday, November 18th, Barbara Ricci**, a retired carrier out of the Marlton Office would have been the recipient of the **\$100** attendance prize. **The prize now increases to \$125 and will be won by a member in attendance at the December 16th meeting!**

Comments From the VP

I want to start this month's article by thanking the brothers and sisters of this great branch for all your hard work during these trying times. As I have said every month during this pandemic **YOU ALL ARE HEROES!!** It has been five years since I got carriers from our branch participating in the Angel Tree for under privileged kids. I am proud to say, that in those five years our members have sponsored and donated gifts to approximately 100 children. This year because of the pandemic we will only be sponsoring 10 children and because our members are always ready to step up all 10 children have already been placed with a sponsor. Over here at the Camden, AKA Hell Hole, Annex or maybe a better term would be **shit show**, management is forcing all non-odl carriers to work overtime on their regularly scheduled days and also requiring them to work their N/S days. These are serious violations of Article 8. This increase in hours can lead to fatigue which can lead to an unsafe situation.

Carriers are not machines and after working 60 hours or so you begin to slow down as fatigue starts to set in. At some point if you feel fatigued or sleepy you need to inform your supervisor its unsafe to work. Remember, if a supervisor gives an unsafe instruction you do not have to follow that instruction. Also, if you are working more than the maximum of 12 hours as provided in the National Agreement, you are entitled to an additional lunch break. **ELM Section 432.33 Mealtime States: Except in emergency situations or where service conditions preclude compliance, no employee may be required to work more than 6 continuous without a meal or rest period of at least ½ hour.** I want to remind everyone that when filling out your 3996 during the Xmas season, you can put the letter J for your reason for auxiliary assistance. I want to wish all our active and retired members and their families a Merry Christmas and a Safe, Healthy, and Prosperous New Year. We are in this together and we will get through this together. God Bless. I can be contacted at any time at **856-906-2026** or **908vp@comcast.net**.

Proud to be Union
Mike Powell – Vice – President

Health Benefits, MBA, FMLA, Optical

Hello all. Hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving. As the year winds down there's a few things I'd like to remind you of. First is the NALCHBP Health assessment. Filling this out will entitle you to one the following gift(s). For the Consumer Driven Health Plan (CDHP) and Value Option plans, for being proactive and completing the Health Assessment, you will be enrolled in the Self Only CignaPlus Savings® discount dental program. We will pay the program fee for the remainder of the calendar year in which you completed the Health Assessment, provided you remain enrolled in our Plan. If two or more covered family members (including the member) complete the Health Assessment, you and all covered dependents will be enrolled in the Family Cigna Plus Savings® discount dental program. For the High Option, we offer a choice of valuable incentives as a bonus for being proactive. When you complete the Health Assessment you can choose one of the following incentives: The CignaPlus Savings® discount dental program mentioned above for the CDHP and Value Option members; • Two \$20 PPO medical office visit co-payments waived (when the Plan is primary payor) when incurred in the same year as the Health Assessment is completed; or • A wearable activity tracking device (fitbit). If two or more covered family members (including the member) complete the Health Assessment, you may choose either the Family CignaPlus Savings® discount dental program, the waiver of four \$20 PPO medical office visits, or a wearable activity tracking device (limit of two devices per enrollment). More details can be found in the 2021 brochure under Wellness and Other Special Features.

The second thing is to get your reimbursement for optical expenses for 2020. Any requests received after December 31 will be counted as 2021. To receive reimbursement, you must be a member of Branch 908 in good standing. This is a once a year \$20 reimbursement for you/or a qualified dependent for optical expenses. Send me a paper copy of expenses with your name, address, and office/retired to: George Greenwood 1083 Chews Landing Rd., Laurel Springs, NJ 08021.

Lastly CCAs being converted to career you have 60 days from conversion to get into the FEHBP (Health Benefits), and FEDVIP (Dental and Vision). Go to nalchbp.org to see what's available to you with your own union owned health insurance. Great low premiums, low out of pocket, extensive coverage, and a massive network of providers. Any questions on any of the above always feel free to give me a call at 856-304-8665. Be safe all and have a great holiday.

George Greenwood, HBR

Ozzie's Corner

On November 17th, I received an email from the AFL-CIO. The email was about taking part in a day of action that same day (Tuesday) with The American Postal Workers Union (APWU). The APWU wanted union members to contact their local legislators and tell them to support/sign off on a \$25 billion dollar stimulus package for The Postal Service. As I started to reach out to my Congressman, I paused for a moment and asked myself this question: Do we as each union member have "The Whatever it Takes Attitude"? Later that day, I wrote down a few questions to test this theory. As a union member, do you or have you gone to in person union rallies? On days that you are not working or if you are retired, have you volunteered your time to do labor walks? Do you call or even visit in person your local politicians and ask them to support City Letter Carrier subjects?

Do you take part in Days of Action Exercises through emails? During elections, do you step up and reach out to other fellow union brothers and sisters through phone calls or phone banking? At Election time, do you study the political candidate's platforms and then go out or cast your vote? Do you contribute to The Letter Carrier Political Fund? If you answered no to one, some or all...you shouldn't feel ashamed or guilty. Every day when we get up, we have a choice to do things the same way or right the ship and do things in the opposite direction. As individuals that make up the best union in the country, we cannot dwell on what we haven't done, but what we can do. Remember brothers and sisters, it is not how you start, but how you finish. As the new year approaches, I challenge each and every one of you to do one, some or if you feel bold enough all. The impact you will have will make a difference to our union as a whole and always remember that in a union there is strength in numbers.

In other 908 news, all 3 Congressmen that make up our 33 offices in our union got their seats back after November's election. The Congressmen are Andy Kim (3rd District), Donald Norcross (1st District) and Jeff Van Drew (2nd District). In addition, we had every returning Congressman/Congresswoman back in their respected seats for the other 9 Districts in New Jersey. The election results were a huge win for us because all of these Representatives have supported City Letter Carriers from day 1!

Finally, I want to thank this month's LCPF contributors: **Tracy Daniels** (Mt. Ephraim), **Herbert Nuss Jr** (Atco), **Mohamed Zouini** (Marlton), Retirees: **Mike Breyer** (Sewell), **Mike Fitzgerald** (Woodbury) and Life Member: **Rodman Jack Geisler, Sr** (Woodbury). Also, I want to thank Shop Stewards: **Jim Boyle** (Somerdale), **Jason Dempster** (Atco) and **Pete DeSimone** (Marlton/Voorhees) for their assistance. I can be reached anytime at (856) 220-8658 for any matters in our branch. In closing, I want to wish you all a Happy Holiday and a Happy Healthy New Year.

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.)*

Turkey Drawing Winner

At the regular monthly meeting of the Branch on **Wednesday, November 18th**, **Jim Boyle**, Branch Trustee and a carrier out of our Stratford 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 2021 Branch Budget

The proposed 2021 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 18th. The proposed budget will be open for review, discussion, consideration, and vote at the regular monthly Branch meeting on December 16th. The budget estimates the receipt and expenditures of \$237,000.00 for 2021.

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!

