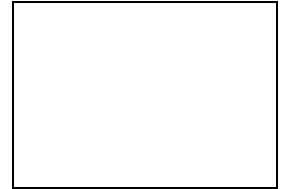


908 News

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 February 2020

Presidents Report

Well brothers and sisters, we have finally gotten a decision on the long-awaited CCA cap issue, which seemed to take forever to get settled. The decision will have an enormous impact on many of our own CCAs, who will finally be granted career status in the weeks ahead. For those who aren't sure if they are affected, here is the criteria to figure out if you are one of the ones who will get converted. CCAs who have 30 months of relative standing on February 15, 2020 in offices with 200 workyears, will be made regular in their installation. For the record, we do not have any 200 workyear offices in our branch. For those offices below 200 workyears, those CCAs with 30 months of relative standing, which are all of our offices, will be converted to part-time flexible career status in their installation. These conversions will be made as soon as administratively practicable, but will occur no later than 60 days from the date of this agreement, which was signed on January 22, 2020. If you believe you qualify for this conversion, make sure you start having a conversation with your manager to see when you will get converted. I know many of our CCAs will have questions on the difference between being a PTF and a CCA, and I will give a few highlights here, but if you need more information come to our next meeting and ask questions, or read about all of your new benefits on the NALC website. The first and most important new benefit is you are now a career employee with all the benefits a career employee has. Some of the benefits are; you now get paid sick leave and annual leave that you can now carryover, you get employer contributions to your retirement and increased contributions to your health insurance, you now have seniority rights and also will get paid if you get called for jury duty, and a very important benefit you will now have Article 29 protection. This article deals with those instances when you are involved in an accident or safety infraction when management takes away your driving privileges. This Article will protect you by allowing you to work in a non-driving capacity until management returns your driving duties. They just can't leave you home until they decide they want to bring you back like they could when you were a non-career employee. These are just a few of the many benefits of becoming a career employee, so take this promotion seriously, and hopefully, you can enjoy a long career. The next issue we are patiently waiting for is the arbitration decision on the consolidated casing initiative. The parties have submitted their briefs and I have been told we can expect a decision sometime this month. Our national leaders are very confident we will prevail in this case, so as soon as I get a decision, I will let everyone know. As for our national agreement, we are in the midst of finding a neutral arbitrator to hear our case at arbitration, so don't expect to hear much on this until probably by the end of the summer. On to the next most important issue we will be facing this year is the elections in November. If you look at this month's postal record you will see a list of the letter carriers nationwide and locally who have stepped up to support the most important endeavor of our careers, the LCPF. I want to thank everyone who has contributed and also to give a huge shout out to our very own **OZZIE LECKY**, our LCPF chairman, who has gotten our membership numbers right below the 200 mark and around 30%! Ozzie has done a tremendous job in signing up our members and continues to educate our members on the importance of giving to this fund. We all know the political stage is an ugly one to deal with, but no matter what party you are affiliated with, giving to politicians that support our job are

the ones we use this money for. Please have a conversation with Ozzie and he can explain to you the importance of supporting this cause. Our numbers have continued to rise in the years that Ozzie has been in charge of this fund and we hope everyone who is not mentioned this month in the postal record will consider joining with the rest of your brothers and sisters this year so we can see your name in there next year. Remember, there is power in numbers, and we all know what makes politicians listen, money and votes! In unionism.

- Gary DiGiacomo – President
856-906-2838

Next Meeting

The next regular monthly meeting of the Branch will be held on **Wednesday, February 19th @ 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, February 12th @ 7:30 and 8pm** respectively.

Attendance Prize Now at \$50

Had he been in attendance at the regular monthly meeting of the Branch on **Wednesday January 15th, Herbert Nuss Jr**, a member out of the Atco Office would have been the recipient of the **\$25** attendance prize. The prize now increases to **\$50** 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. With the major announcement coming from NALC HQ, those CCAs affected with converting to FTR, and PTF Career, this is, and constitutes a Qualifying Life Event (QLE). This means you are now eligible for more benefits, such as the Federal Employee Health Benefit Program, Life insurance, and Thrift Savings Plan Retirement. Once you are converted to a career position you have 60 days to enroll in a FEHB health plan. You can no longer be in the USPS Health Plan so if no choice is made you will be without health insurance. If a letter carrier was enrolled in the USPS non career health benefits plan and converted to a career position that enrollment is terminated on the last day of the month that falls 28 days after conversion to a career position. To avoid a gap in coverage, newly converted letter carriers should enroll in the FEHBP as soon as possible. The fastest, and easiest way to do so is through the USPS LiteBlue website, and Postal Ease. Coverage will begin on the first day of the first pay period after signing up online.

I encourage all CCAs being converted to look at your (Union Owned) NALC Health Benefit Plan. Three options are available to you with our plan, all at very low cost for excellent coverage. To make any changes you must have your employee ID number, and a password setup to get into the system. Don't put it off in case there are any difficulties when changing. Find out more about the NALC Health Benefit Plan at <https://www.nalchbp.org/> Any questions on the plans, or any of the above information please feel free to call me anytime at 856-304-8665. Also, I strongly encourage you to read the "Letter Carrier Resource guide" on the NALC web page at nalc.org.

Branch 908 has an optical fund set up for all members in good standing to reimburse you the member, or dependent family member a once a year \$20 payment for optical expenses. To receive reimbursement, send a paper copy of your optical expense to me at: George Greenwood, 1083 Chews Landing Rd., Laurel Springs, NJ 08021. Be safe out there.

- **George Greenwood, HBR**

Ozzie's Corner

On May 2nd of last year, Congressmen Tom Cole (R-OK) and Derek Kilmer (D-WA) introduced the latest House Resolution (H.R.) Bill that supports Letter Carriers: H.R. 2478. H.R. 2478 (The Federal Retirement Fairness Act) is to provide certain federal employees the opportunity to make catch-up retirement contributions for time spent as temporary employees after December 31st of 1988. Therefore, this time will count as credit in the employee's Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS). The best part about this bill is that it now applies to temporary postal employees, such as Letter Carriers who spent time as Casuals, TEs (Temporary Employees) and CCAs (City Carrier Assistants). The bill has picked up modest steam on the congressional floor with a total of 52 Co-Sponsors (39 Democrats and 13 Republicans). Remember, many of us wanted to work in the Postal Service to enjoy the long-term financial benefit at the end of our careers, thus it makes total sense that we should be credited for the time we put into our job from day one.

Recently I've been asked whether we, as letter carriers are permitted to run for office. Since we fall under the Hatch Act, there are many rules we must follow. I've asked branch Recording Secretary **Norm Spence** to reprint his Hatch Act article from 2016. You will find many of the rules here. If you still have questions, please give me a call.

Finally, I want to send a special thank you to Marc Ashmon (Northeast Area-LPO) for recently sending 100 LCPF cups and shirts to our branch. On February 19th's meeting I will have these items as an added bonus to any member who signs up to LCPF. In addition, I want to thank this month's contributors, Active: **Marc Davis** (Blackwood), **LeRoy Huster Jr.** (Woodbury) and **Lisa Stilts** (Maple Shade) and Retirees: **Don Caswell** (Woodbury), **Charles Gravener** (Marlton) and **John Lowery Jr.** (Woodstown). My phone number is (856) 220-8658 for anything needed in our branch.

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.)*

The Hatch Act

What is the Hatch Act? Some background.

Until 1993, active letter carriers were barred from taking any significant volunteer role for any political campaigns. The primary sentiment behind the law was to protect federal employees from being strong-armed and intimidated into helping their bosses run for re-election. But as times and campaigns changed, many recognized that federal employees were being wrongfully left out of the political process.

So, in 1993, Congress amended the Hatch Act to allow federal employees to take an active part in political campaigns for federal offices. While there are still some restrictions on what federal employees (including you and your fellow active carriers) can do, there is much greater latitude for letter carrier political participation in campaigns for president, the Senate and the House of Representatives, as well as for state and local elected officials. Remember: Retirees, spouses and family members (including NALC Auxiliary members) are not bound by the Hatch Act.

If you have questions regarding the Hatch Act, contact the Office of Special Counsel by e-mail at hatchact@osc.gov or by phone at 800-85-HATCH.

Do's (while off the clock, out of uniform)

Active letter carriers may—on their own time, away from work, out of uniform and without using a postal vehicle:

- Be candidates for public office in non-partisan elections (that is, elections in which none of the candidates are to be nominated or elected are representing a political party).

- Register and vote.
- Sign and circulate candidate nominating petitions and ballot initiative positions.
- Assist in voter-registration drives.
- Speak and write publicly and otherwise express opinions about candidates, ballot measures and issues.
- Attend political rallies, meetings and other events.
- Attend fundraisers and contribute money to political organizations and campaigns.
- Volunteer for political campaigns and encourage others to volunteer.
- Participate in phone-banking and precinct-walking for candidates and ballot measures.
- Display bumper stickers, lawn signs and other campaign paraphernalia.
- Raise money for the Letter Carrier Political Fund from other NALC members. (Note: Letter carriers while detailed to 204b or other higher level assignments should not solicit contributions to the Letter Carrier Political Fund from postal employees who may be viewed as their subordinates.)
- Volunteer, run for and hold an office in a local or state political party or club.

Don'ts (while on the clock, at the workplace, in uniform or in a postal vehicle)

Active letter carriers may not—while on the clock, at the workplace, in a postal uniform or in a postal vehicle—engage in any of the otherwise permissible political activities listed in the “Do's” above. For example, while on the clock, at the workplace, in a postal uniform or in a postal vehicle, you may not:

- Send or forward a partisan political e-mail.
- Wear or display any political or campaign material, even as a computer screen-saver or desktop wallpaper.
- Circulate partisan political materials to co-workers.
- Sign up electronically to contribute to the Letter Carrier Political Fund or solicit other letter carriers to contribute.

Don'ts (ever)

Active letter carriers may not—even on their own time, away from work, out of uniform and without using a postal vehicle:

- Use their official titles or positions when engaging in otherwise permissible activities.
- Raise money for partisan political groups or campaigns (except for the Letter Carrier Political Fund), including phone-banking, letter-writing, selling tickets, hosting a fundraiser, inviting people to attend a fundraiser, or allowing your name to be used in a fundraising appeal.
- Otherwise solicit, receive or handle contributions for a partisan political group or campaign.
- Run for elective office in partisan (party-label) elections (even if you report “No Party Affiliation”).
- Raise money for the Letter Carrier Political Fund from non-NALC members (except from their immediate family members in the same household).

Annual Branch Banquet – March 28

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.

All Branch Members, family and friends are encouraged to attend at a cost of \$20 pp. The cost for current Branch retirees is \$10. Tickets may be picked up from Branch Vice President, Mike Powell at any Branch Meeting, or by mailing the form below with a check or Money order made out to NALC Branch 908 by March 20th to 136 New Jersey Rd. Brooklawn, NJ 08030.

Name: _____
Print
Check One: Honoree (<input type="checkbox"/>) Retiree (<input type="checkbox"/>) Other (<input type="checkbox"/>)
Total number attending _____
Total remittance \$ _____