

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



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Newsletter Com: Spence, Lipski, Powell Ph: 906-2838 Fax: 227-0516 www.nalcbranch908.com March 2021

Presidents Report

It is with a sad heart I must report the founding father of Branch 908, **Bill Revak**, passed away on February 6th. I am sure many of our current members probably don't even know who Bill was, other than seeing him tend bar at all of our union meetings for the past 20 years. It is here I would like to pay my respects to a man who built this local to where it is today as the second largest branch in New Jersey. I think many of our younger members need to do a little research to see how this union came to be as strong as it is today thanks to hard work, sacrifices and dedication of people like Bill, who led the way during the strike in 1970 that got this union to where it is today. I urge all members to go and watch the video of "the strike at 40", that recaptures what transpired during this time that led to collective bargaining. For me, Bill was the first person I ran into when I started back in 1980, who showed me what it meant to be part of a union. He was branch president at the time and was probably the most feared union advocate around. Anytime an office had a problem, Bill would be there to straighten it out. I can say after watching how one person could make managers shake in their boots, I knew this union was something I wanted to become a part of. After becoming a shop steward back in 1988, I soon realized Bill was looking for members to carry on his fight, and he made sure he trained anyone who wanted to learn how to defend carriers' rights. The one thing I always remembered about Bill was his total commitment to the membership. He truly cared about making sure all carrier's rights were protected and would do whatever it took to make sure they were protected. Back when I started there was a lot of animosity between the craft and management and having a strong union president really meant a lot. I can say personally, he was a great mentor to me as he helped me become an arbitration advocate and work my way up to become president of this great branch. I know I can't do him true justice in this article, but I needed to let the younger members understand the importance of his contributions to make this local what it is today. Another thing I admired in Bill was his honesty and bluntness. He never backed down from anyone when he knew he was right, and that is something I try to emulate each day as president, even though I could never fill his shoes. He always said to take care of the membership, because as long as they have your back you never have to worry about those above you. Those words were never truer. I had so much respect for him that I asked him to install me as president, since that meant a lot to me. I could go on and on about some of my unique stories with him at the arbitration hearings, but they can't be put in writing, for fear of embarrassing those involved. This union owes a debt of gratitude to Bill and those he brought with him along the way to get us where we are today. I want to thank his family for allowing Bill to be the person he was and for all he did for this branch. I will always have a special place in my heart for Bill, and our branch is working on something to make sure he is never forgotten. Rest in peace my brother.

Also, another member has also just passed away as I write this month's article. **Joe Walder Sr.**, our current housing chairman, and retired carrier out of our Deptford/Woodbury installation passed away on February 26th at the age of 71. Joe leaves behind his wife of 51 years Marge, and his 4 children, **Joseph A. Walder, Jr. (Kellie)**, **Frances D. Couse (Clifford)**, **Christopher John Walder** and **Margaret M. Doyle (Timothy)** Our hearts and prayers go out to both families during this tough time.

I hope to see everyone at this month's meeting where I will update you on the contract ratification vote and the latest news on our jobs. Stay strong.

Gary DiGiacomo – President

Next Meeting

The next regular monthly meeting of the Branch will be held on **Wednesday, March 17th @ 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, March 10th @ 7:30 and 8:00 pm** respectively at the Branch union hall.

Attendance Prize Now at \$175

Had he been in attendance at the regular monthly meeting of the Branch on **Wednesday, February 17th, Krenar Lena**, a carrier out of the Woodbury Office would have been the recipient of the **\$150** attendance prize. The prize now increases to **\$175** and will increase **\$25** per meeting, up to a maximum of **\$250**, until a member in attendance has their name drawn.

Comments From the VP

The month of February has been very painful to say the least. We lost the founding father of this great branch, **Bill Revak**, and just recently, another stalwart of this branch, **Joe Walder**. Their leadership and mentorship will sorely be missed by the membership, and for me personally, I will miss their friendship the most. My heart goes out to their families. RIP my brothers. In other matters, apparently the SJ District is being dismantled. From what I heard, from a reliable source at the 501 building in Bellmawr, the District Manager is leaving for a job in Chicago. Well don't let the door hit you wear the sun don't shine or in other words good riddance. My source said its comical watching the rats scrambling and stabbing each other in the back for the few crumbs that are going to be left over there. From what I understand they were offered an early retirement package with no incentives. All I can say to that is WOW!! Over here at the Camden, A.K.A. Shit Hole, well it's just that a Shit Hole. Lastly, I want to thank all our brothers and sisters who have risked their health to deliver for the American people during this pandemic. As I have said before **YOU ALL ARE HEROES!!!** I will continue to say this till this pandemic is over. 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**

Proud to be Union.

We are in this together, Be Safe and God Bless

Mike Powell – Vice – President

Easter Ham Drawing

At the regular monthly meeting of the Branch on **Wednesday March 17th**, there will be a drawing for an Easter Ham, donated by branch retiree **Joe Foreman**, in honor of former Branch COLCPE Chairman **Norm Task**.

Health Benefits, MBA, FMLA, Optical

Hello sisters, and brothers. Don't forget with the new year you are entitled to fill out a new NALC HBP Health Assessment.

This entitles you to a free gift from the NALC upon completion of your assessment. For details High Option members go to page 85 of the 2021 brochure. Value, and CDHP members the information is on page 156.

Mutual Benefits have released the interest rates for 2021. Interest rates for Mutual Benefit Association products are set annually by the MBA Board of Trustees. These interest rates are in effect from Jan. 1, 2021, through Dec. 31, 2021.

Universal Life* - 4%, Interest Sensitive Whole Life* - 4.5%, Deferred Annuities - 4%, Flexible Annuities * -3.00%, Life Dividends Left on Deposit -2.5%, Newly issued Supplemental Contracts 2.5%, and Death Claim interest on proceeds - 2.5%. For more information on MBA products visit nalc.org under Member Benefits.

For any member in good standing Branch 908 has an optical reimbursement of \$20 per year, for any member or qualified dependent (one per family/member). If more than one member is in the same household, then each member is afforded a reimbursement. To get yours send a paper copy of your optical expense with your name, address, and office on it to me at George Greenwood, 1083 Chews Landing Rd., Laurel Springs NJ 08021....Feel free to call me anytime 856-304-8665.

Be safe all.

George Greenwood, HBR

Ozzie's Corner

In last month's annual LCPF edition of The Postal Record, on page 49 you'll see 197 of our brothers and sisters contribute to the most important Pac in the NALC (National Association of Letter Carriers). The 197 names listed were an all-time Branch 908 high in per capita shattering 2019's mark (196). The Letter Carrier Political Fund contribution percentage in Branch 908 for the 3rd year in a row went past 26% (26.72). Since 2017 (23.78%), we have grown leaps and bounds as a branch in this department (2018 - 26.05%, 2019 - 26.87) and I want to personally thank each, and every name listed for the 2020 year. On the flip side of things (literally on page 48 of The Postal Record) I discovered a problematic error. Under Branch 540 (Camden Merged), we had not 1, not 5, but 11 of our members show up under their contribution listing (all 11 City Letter Carriers in the 30 Delivery Zone, Camden Annex). 2 thoughts immediately came to mind...A. Camden's contribution percentage is inaccurate with bad data and B. these members have a finance number to and are members of 908, not 540. The next step I did was contact the Finance Department at the NALC Headquarters and spoke to Tracey Jones. Among many of their duties, the people who are employed at The Finance Department are in charge of entering in every dollar in the system for LCPF before each yearly issue of February's Postal Record is published. I explained to Mr. Jones what I found, and he told me he would look into the situation. A week later, Mr. Jones reached out and told me the listing was a mistake under 540 and he apologized. However, I still needed more answers to why this blunder occurred. One of the questions that came to mind I asked was if The Postal Record will print a correction, an apology to 908 and the most important thing, the correct contribution percentage for Branch 540. Mr. Jones told me that he will look into the situation and when I get an answer, I will let all of you know asap.

In other news, on February 4th the AFL-CIO sent me an email for a Day of Action. The AFL-CIO wanted union members to reach out and call their member(s) of Congress and tell them to pass the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act. If passed, The PRO Act would empower workers to organize and bargain and hold corporations accountable for union-busting. Remember, we have better and higher wages and strong employee protection through and only through a union!

Also, I want to thank March's LCPF contributors: **Sarah Caissey** (Marlton), **Clarence Covington Jr.** (Mt. Ephraim), **Joe Fenuto** (Blackwood), **Elliot Swinton** (Woodbury), Retirees: **Joe Foreman Jr.** (Marlton), **Phil Haas** (Westville, Current Sgt of Arms), **John Lowery Jr.** (Woodstown) and **William Morris** (Salem). For as little as a dollar per pay all active, retired and life members can take part in the pact. My phone number to reach me with any questions or concerns is (856) 220-8658.

Finally, my heart broke when I heard the news of the recent passing of two of our union brothers, **Bill Revak** (Founding Member, 1st Branch 908 President) **Joe Walder Sr.** (Retiree, Current Housing Chairman). Please keep the families of these 2 great union men in your thoughts and prayers.

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.)

Trustee Report

Branch 908 brothers and sisters, on January 31st, the branch trustees and myself completed a full audit on all branch funds and accounts. Accounts at Bank of America and TD banks along with convention fund CD and building fund investment with F&G investment. All funds were accounted for and all accounts are in excellent condition, your branch is in excellent financial condition. Just a reminder on small items, the branch does offer its members small eye glass reimbursement and a small reimbursement from the sick and welfare fund and a death benefit for members who pass away. See your steward or a branch officers for details. All CCAs should look into the benefits of the union's MBA or Mutual Benefit Association which you can view in the member benefits section of nalc.org. Lastly, we are having monthly meetings again, please come out and get informed. Stay safe and healthy.

James Comuso Sr - Chief Trustee

Branch Scholarship Drawing

We will be drawing the winner of this year's Branch Scholarship at the regular monthly meeting on **May 19th**. 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.

Grievance Results

Pre-Arbitration Settlement

Marlton- The 7-Day Suspension issued on 10/13/2020 for Failure to Follow Instructions is hereby **Rescinded and Expunged** immediately and removed from the grievant's record.

Step B Decisions

Marlton- The **Notice of Removal** issued to grievant on 12-29-2020 for Unsatisfactory Performance/Unsafe Act, is **rescinded** immediately, since management did not meet the burden of just cause in this matter.

Stratford-Postmaster Price failed to maintain an atmosphere of mutual respect in violation of the M-39 Handbook, section 115.4 and the ELM section 665.24. **As a remedy** management will contact the union within 7 days of receiving this decision for scheduling a Labor/Management meeting. The meeting will include the Branch President, local union reps, the National Business Agent, the POOM, and also representatives from the district's Human resources and/or Labor Relations. The main agenda of this meeting will include what steps will be taken to ensure all employees at the Stratford Post Office will be treated with dignity and respect.

Annual Branch Banquet

We have tentatively scheduled the Annual Branch Banquet for **October 10, 2021**. Hopefully the pandemic will be behind us and we can continue moving forward by honoring the following members who retired during the 2020 pay year:

Paul Fanuka – Marlton
Edwin Smith – Voorhees
Richard Gillespie – Riverton
Thomas Conner – Woodbury
Brian Heckler – Blackwood
Michael Kelly – Hammonton
Brian Deputy – Sewell
Bernadette Parncutt – Marlton
Brown Peterson – Blackwood
Thomas Rust – Voorhees
Fred Simpkins – Stratford
Joseph Gritz – Stratford
Charles Huff – Mt Ephraim
Dean Delsignore – Haddon Hts