

908 News

NALC Branch 908
AFL-CIO
PO Box 150
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South Jersey Letter Carriers

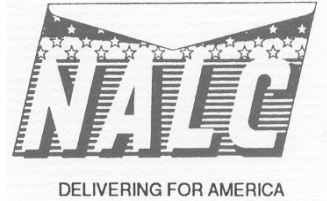
Atco, Barrington, Bellmawr, Berlin, Blackwood, Bridgeton, Clayton, Deptford, Egg Harbor City, Gibbsboro, Gibbstown, Glassboro, Glendora, Gloucester, Haddon Hts., Hammonton, Lawnside, Magnolia, Mantua, Maple Shade, Marlton, Mt. Ephraim, National Park, Paulsboro, Penns Grove, Pennsville, Pitman, Riverton, Runnemede, Salem, Sewell, Somerdale, Stratford, Swedesboro, Voorhees, Wenonah, Westville, Williamstown, Woodbury, Woodstown



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BUY AMERICAN - BUY UNION



Newsletter Com: Spence, Lipski, Powell Ph: 906-2838 Fax: 227-0516 www.nalcbranch908.com October 2019

Presidents Report

I am sure you are hearing from your managers how the postal service is in deep financial trouble and something has to be done to save the company from going under, am I right? It appears this is the latest "Kool Aid" they are feeding everyone throughout the country at the management level and are making them take it to the craft employees to get us to buy into their misguided philosophy. Listen, I know there are many challenges facing this organization at this time, but I have a hard time believing this rhetoric when I look around and see all the wasteful spending these stuffed shirts are undertaking! Either they are trying to destroy this company, which I am starting to believe, or we are being led by a bunch of incompetents! First, the postal service has decided to jam down our throats this consolidated casing initiative, that was supposed to be a test but is now a full-blown change of work methods nationally in over 200 offices. The amount of money that is being wasted to try and make this program work is astronomical. There is so much additional overtime being used, when there was very minimal before, and all the union time needed to file grievances on all of these violations will also break records. We have our Marlton office in the midst of this nightmare, and I can say by witnessing what is going on there, this is the most confusing set up of our job I have ever witnessed. It is comical to watch how they try and make it work. You have managers doing craft work all morning long just to say this is a success. There is more stress on the managers than there is on the employees. They are violating every provision of our manual, but couldn't care less because they are being told to do it, even though they know they are wrong. They have even taken the approach that they will not even meet with our steward on the grievances we are filing because they are being instructed not to acknowledge these violations. The next waste of spending has to deal with all of the grievances we are filing in offices where they refuse to follow the contract and refuse to address the simplest of issues. All the district has to do is pull all the 613 time and see where the problems are. They need to either train their managers on how to handle issues before they become grievances or take them out and put someone in there who will. We are not the problem; it is those managers who are allowed to run these offices into the ground that is killing this company. Once I see them address these problem managers, then I will start to listen to what they have to say.

Speaking of wasting money, we just concluded the management requested route inspections in our Sewell office, and lo and behold, since the numbers weren't in their favor, they decided to throw out the entire count and reschedule it for the spring! How much money did this inspection cost? I would like to know whose idea it was to come in here in the fall and think they were going to take out 3 routes? The problem I have with them throwing out this count is the managers are still using their old data, which was corrupted, and our carriers are now being harassed to make those old numbers, even though the managers have updated street times available to use. This is where we need someone with common sense to come to the table and come up with a plan that makes sense to the entire office so we can move forward with some real numbers and eliminate the problems this office is now facing. Is anyone listening out there? Lastly, as you may or may not know, our contract expired on September 20th and we now head to the long and tedious portion of mediation and then arbitration. If you have been paying close attention to the issues, you can see this round of negotiations is a

lot different than the last contract when newly appointed PMG Brennan was her own person and did the right thing by working with our national to come to a joint agreement. Not this time! It appears there is a new approach in DC this time and once again they will be forcing us to go the distance and get a third party to come up with a contract. Hopefully not!

See you at this month's meeting where I will have a lot more things to discuss.

- Gary DiGiacomo - President

Next Meeting

The next regular monthly meeting of the Branch will be held on **Wednesday, October 16th @ 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, October 9th @ 7:30 and 8pm** respectively.

Attendance Prize Now at \$175

Had he been in attendance at the regular monthly meeting of the Branch on **Wednesday, September 18th, Dean Delsignore**, a member out of the Haddon Hts. 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

I want to remind all our members that Branch 908 will be participating in an Angel Tree for under privileged children. The way it works is, tags are placed on the tree representing these children's wishes. Donors pick a tag from the tree and then shop for the gift for the child selected. Please see your shop steward if you are interested in being a donor. If any member has any questions, contact Vice - President Mike Powell @ 856-906-2026. If you believe every child deserves a merry Christmas, please help! Daylight savings time ends on November 3 and we all know that some of us will be working in the dark. I want to remind everyone that if management instructs you to finish your assignment in the dark then make an attempt to follow that instruction until you feel that an unsafe condition exists. You, the carrier, are the one that makes that determination. If you determine the conditions are unsafe then inform your supervisor that you will be returning to the office. If you receive any discipline for your actions, contact your steward and we will grieve the situation. We deserve and have the right to a safe working environment as provided under article 14 of our National Agreement. I want to encourage all our active members, retired members and CCA's to try to attend our monthly meetings. 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 assistance 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. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) officially announced the dates for the 2019 Federal Benefits Open Season which will run from **Monday, November 11 through Monday, December 9, 2019**. This open season is for the 2020 plan year of federal benefit programs. Now is the time to start researching for your health needs in the upcoming year. It'll be here fast. For detailed information on the NALC Health Plan visit <https://www.nalchbp.org/> or see/contact me. Rates for the year 2020 will also be released October 3rd by OPM. New premiums are available at OPM.gov, and on liteblue.usps.gov.

Another very important subject to look into is for CCA's who would like to have something to show for retirement. Try the MBA CCA retirement savings plan. See me at the meetings, or visit the National's web page for brochures, and applications. Any monies saved can be transferred to your Thrift Saving Plan retirement account when you are converted to career. Information can be found under member benefits at <https://www.nalc.org/>

NALC Br. 908 has an optical reimbursement account setup for all members in good standing. This is a one time \$20 per year benefit for any member, or family member dependent. To receive your reimbursement, send a copy to me (Paper copy only...no electronic copies) in the mail at: George Greenwood, 1083 Chews Landing Rd., Laurel Springs, NJ 08021....

Have a great fall season. See you at the next meeting.

- **George Greenwood, HBR, 856-304-8665**

Ozzie's Corner

September 24th was National Voter Registration Day. The AFL-CIO has set up a link on their website since that Tuesday to register brothers and sisters in minutes. The web address is <http://go.aflcio.org/nvrd>. In addition, if you want to receive text information from them, text the numbers: 235246 (data and message rates may apply). November will be here before you know it, therefore we need to study beforehand the candidates running in this upcoming election. As Letter Carriers, we need to know the people running and getting elected in these offices have our backs on the issues that we need to keep and not lose. Furthermore, we have and must to do our job by casting our vote, whether it is going to the polls or by VBM (vote by mail). Vote by mail is a great way to help those who can't physically go out and cast their vote. The senior citizens, shut-ins and disabled are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity. The process is a win-win because, A: your vote counts when you send it through the mail and B: by sending any of the return political mail outgoing (voter registrations or ballots) you are supporting Letter Carrier jobs. By the way, there is no postage to cover mailing in your ballot, it is hassle free (not standing or waiting in line at the polls) and accessible. I will have the vote by mail ballot applications covering all 5 counties in our union at October 16th's general meeting.

The Letter Carrier Political Fund is the fuel that helps get our message across in Washington. The NALC uses this capital to establish strong, informative relationships with members in congress by educating them on our core issues. Therefore, the NALC endorses, elects and re-elects those men and women who stand by us. Contributing to this pact is hassle free and for as little as a \$1.00 per pay period, you are sending a message to our elected officials. I want to thank October's LCPF contributor **Tom Danaher** (Retiree - Gloucester City). My phone number is (856) 220-8658 if you need to reach me for any issues or help in our branch.

In Solidarity,

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).

Missing Gold Card Members

The Branch has been unable to locate three of our newest Gold Card members so that we can get their new gold cards to them. Their last known addresses have been returned to us as UTF. If you know how to get it touch with the following members, please forward the information to Branch Recording Secretary Norm Spence at norm908@comcast.net, or 609-636-2807.

Joseph Eivich, Woodbury retiree, last known address was in Ormond Beach, FL. **Phil Juhring**, Glendora retiree, last known address was a POB in Woodstown. **Leonard Maddox**, Woodbury retiree, last known address was on S. Broad St in Woodbury.

There are also several other new gold card members who have not yet contacted us to receive their gold card. If you were on the list and have not yet received your gold card, please contact Branch Recording Secretary Norm Spence at the e-mail address or phone number listed above.

Notice of Nominations and Election of Branch Officers, Shop Stewards and Convention Delegates

This is to provide official notice that nominations for the election of Branch Officers, Shop Stewards, and Convention Delegates for the term 2020 thru 2021 shall take place at the regular monthly meeting of the Branch on **Wednesday, October 16, 2019**. Elections shall be by secret mail ballot of the eligible Branch membership and held as soon as possible after nominations at the October regular monthly meeting. Nominations shall be made from the meeting room floor or in writing to the Branch Recording Secretary, mailed, or presented to him/her prior to or at the October regular Branch meeting. Each eligible member of the Branch nominated for office shall accept or reject nomination in writing prior to the adjournment of the October regular monthly Branch meeting. Failure to accept nomination for Branch office prior to adjournment of the October regular Branch meeting will invalidate the nomination. Shop Stewards shall be nominated by an eligible Branch member from the office at which the nominee is employed to represent the Branch membership. Installation of Branch Officers, Shop Stewards, and Convention Delegates shall take place at the regular monthly meeting of the Branch in January. Offices up for election include that of the Branch President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Assistant Recording Secretary, Trustees' Chairman, Trustees (4), Health Benefits Representative, Housing Chairperson, Sgt. at Arms, Shop Stewards (19) and approximately (36) Convention Delegates. The number of Convention Delegates to be compensated for their attendance at a State or National Convention, provided they meet the eligibility requirements for such compensation, shall not exceed two and one half (2.5) percent of the total Branch membership, (which is approximately 18).

2020 Color Coded Rotating Day Off Calendar

Our new 2020 color coded rotating day off calendars have been completed and uploaded to our web site. They can be viewed online or downloaded as a 12-page monthly calendar or a 2 page version. nalcbranch908.com/2020cal.html

- **Norm Spence - Recording Secretary**

OPM Announces 2020 FEHBP Rates

OPM has announced the 2020 FEHBP rates. The NALC Health Benefit Plan has a modest increase for all options. The complete rates for 2020 can be found on OPM's website at <https://www.opm.gov/healthcare-insurance/healthcare/plan-information/premiums/>

Below are the rates for active Letter Carriers for 2020:

NALC HBP Option	Enrollment Code	2019 Empl. Pays	2019 Change in empl. payment
High Self	321	87.56	6.13
High Self & Family	322	181.15	6.84
High Self Plus One	323	211.31	17.45
CDHP Self	324	52.45	0
CDHP Self & Family	325	120.63	2.37
CDHP Self Plus One	326	115.72	1.15
Value Self	KM1	43.05	0
Value Self & Family	KM2	99.05	1.95
Value Self Plus One	KM3	94.97	0.94