

# 908 News

NALC Branch 908  
AFL-CIO  
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## Bill Revak Branch 908 South Jersey Letter Carriers

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### Presidents Report

It was nice to see many new faces at last month's meeting, so I hope many more members start coming out to see how your union works and get the latest information about your job and what is coming down the road. As always, I will report on the latest COLA (Cost-of-Living Adjustment) and surprisingly, there was no increase last month. For the record, this next and last COLA for this contract, will take into account the CPI-W through the release of the January 2023 numbers. The retirees next raise stands at **8.6%**, with 2 months remaining in their calculations. One item I wanted to address dealt with calls I have received, and our stewards questioned about these COLA raises. In order to receive the full COLA, you have to be at the top pay rate to get the full increase. The remaining pay scales have their raises given proportionately to your slot on the pay scale. You can check the NALC website for the pay charts. I hope this clears up any confusion this may have caused members. It is not surprising to me there was no increase, as the mid-term elections are approaching, and notoriously, these numbers always seem to drop at this time. You can say this has nothing to do with politics, but I disagree. I can bet after the elections are through, we will see those numbers go back up, since there is still major inflation out there. Just because we are seeing the gas prices start to drop, doesn't mean the price we pay for everything else is going down. It is quite the opposite. Food and energy prices continue to soar out of control, and that will be reflected down the line. Thank God we have this protection.

Next, everyone should have received an election ballot in the mail which is for the national election for President and some other offices in our union. If anyone would like my opinion on those running, feel free to ask. What I am very concerned with is the misinformation that is being sent to the newer CCA's on social media. Please don't believe the information that is out there. If you need clarification on these things, please come out to our meeting and we can discuss them there.

Next, we have been talking about the new route evaluation process that is being conducted, and our Sewell installation is our first office involved. Our Wenonah and Mantua zones are being looked at first, and it appears they should be getting some added relief, since some routes are definitely over 8 hours. Hopefully, we will have some updated info at this month's meeting. I just want to keep reiterating to everyone the importance of doing your route the same every day. This process can follow your every step, so if you extend your times at lunch or your breaks, it will automatically take that time away from you. Like I have been saying all along, do your route like someone is with you all the time, because in essence they are. The one positive we can get from this process, is no one is with you, so work accordingly!

Another item I would like to address for those newer carriers deals with when you get injured on the job. This is considered a traumatic injury, and you need to file a CA-1. Please don't allow your manager to do this for you. The first thing you need to do is contact your manager and let them know you got injured. Depending on the severity, you may need to get medical treatment immediately. If that is the case, make sure they give you a CA-16. This form gets you authorization to get treatment. The best way to fill out your CA-1 is through the ECOMP

Portal (ecomp.dol.gov) I suggest you immediately contact your steward or branch officer if you need assistance. Just remember, Continuation of Pay (COP) is not payable if the claim is filed more than 30 days from the date of injury. This can be very intimidating to those who never been injured, so please seek help from the union when in doubt. I will have more in the future, or if you need any help now, please contact me directly. Also, I mentioned recently we have had our stewards file grievances for the DPS issues. It appears these cases will be going to arbitration, since the postal service isn't accepting responsibility for these issues. They are taking the position these issues are untimely! Good luck with that rationale. I will let you know how this progresses.

Lastly, I mentioned at last month's meeting about the Social Security Fairness Act and where it is. It appears this bill will be going to the floor for a vote and I asked all those involved to fill out the survey from the NALC website on how it affects you, and also asked everyone to contact our representatives to get this bill passed. This is the first time in 30 years this bill has a chance to get those benefits back to all those CSRS retirees. I'm hopeful we can get by-partisan support for this much needed reform. See you at this month's meeting.

Gary DiGiacomo – President

### Next Meeting

The next regular monthly meeting of the Branch will be held on **Wednesday, October 19<sup>th</sup> @ 8 pm**, 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 pm**, and the Shop Stewards @ **8 pm**. The next meeting of the Executive Board and Shop Stewards will be on **Wednesday, October 12<sup>th</sup> @ 7:30 and 8pm** respectively.

### Attendance Prize Now at \$200

Had he been in attendance at the regular monthly meeting of the Branch on **Wednesday, September 21<sup>st</sup> Pasquale "Pat" Penza** a retired Gold Card member out of the Runnemede Office would have been the recipient of the **\$175** attendance prize. The prize now increases to **\$200** 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

Brothers and Sisters, we all should be treated with dignity and respect, which is why I will repeat what I said in last month's article. We need to have each other's backs. If anyone is harassed about how fast they are walking or the supervisor is screaming on the work room floor that everyone should be pulling down in 45 minutes, even though we have 23 minutes of allied time in the morning, should see their steward to file a grievance. Why file the grievance you might ask? So that we can have a paper trail of grievances against the minions that are habitual offenders. Then we just might get them removed from their office. Daylight Savings time ends on November 6, 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 try 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 he/she will grieve the situation. We deserve and have the right to a safe working environment as provided under Article 14 of our National Agreement. Also, I will be running the Angel Tree for underprivileged children, and I am happy to say Branch 908 will be participating in the Angel Tree again this year. 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. If any member is interested in participating contact Vice - President, Mike Powell @ 856-906-2026 or 856-287-8768. If you believe every child deserves a Merry Christmas, please help! The branch banquet will be held on April 15, 2023, from 7 pm-11 pm at the Elizabeth Ballroom located in Gloucester City. Save the date! I want to encourage all our active members, retired members and CCA's to try to attend our monthly meetings. It is not only your chance to get valuable 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 aid on any issue please contact me anytime at (856) 906- 2026 or [908vp@comcast.net](mailto:908vp@comcast.net).

**Proud to Be Union**

**Mike Powell – Vice – President**

### Health Benefits, MBA, FMLA, Optical

Hello again sisters, and brothers. It's October already, and time to start looking at open season for health benefits coming up next month. Compare now to see what suits you, and your family best, and be prepared to make any necessary moves during open season. Don't forget the NALC Health Benefit Plan is owned by us, and offers great coverage, low premiums, and low out of pocket expense. Check out our brochures at <https://www.nalchbp.org/>. Keep in mind there will be slight increases for 2023.

As I did at September's general membership meeting, in October I will be sharing more information gathered from our NALC National Convention. This month I'll focus on an extraordinary program NALCHBP has in collaboration with Hinge Health. Hope to see you all there and bring some coworkers too. Remember knowledge is power.

Any member in good standing wishing to receive their once a year \$20 reimbursement for optical expenses please send a paper copy of your receipt to me at...George Greenwood, 1083 Chews Landing Rd., Laurel Springs, NJ 08021. Any questions, concerns, etc., feel free to give me a call at 856-304-8665. Be safe all.

**- George Greenwood, HBR**

### Ozzie's Corner

OUR SISTER POSTAL UNIONS HAVE IT TOO!! In May's newsletter I talked about the first of our 3 sister postal unions (The National Postal Mail Handlers Union) that have a PAC (Political Action Committee). The next union we will focus on is The National Rural Letter Carriers' Association (NRLCA). Founded in 1903, the membership stands at an impressive 133,000. The NRLCA is comprised of 2 crafts, a Rural Letter Carrier and a Rural Carrier Associate (RCA). The NRLCA's main objective for a Rural Letter Carrier is to be a "Post Office on Wheels". Besides delivering mail, there are many other duties required in this postal position. A Rural Letter Carrier has to sell stamps, money orders, accept express and priority mail, provide postal products (example: flat rate boxes), offer signature and delivery confirmation, register and certify mail. Also, the job requires collecting customer's parcels. An RCA is a non-career employee who works as a substitute for the regular Rural Letter Carrier. Instances when an RCA is used is when a regular is off, sick or on vacation (they do not have their own route).

For the NRLCA's Legislative and Political information, I recently reached out and talked to Brother Paul Swartz (Director of Government Affairs). The name of the PAC the union practices is called The National Rural Letter Carriers' Association PAC. Just like The Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF), The NRLCA contributes through EFT (Electronic Fund Transfer, withdraw from your bank account), a one-time personal check contribution and Withholding (an allotment process similar to Postalease, a deduction from your postal check). Cash, credit cards and gift donations are other ways you can contribute to the PAC (not like LCPF). One advantage being

a retiree under the NALC (National Association of Letter Carriers) is that you can contribute a deduction through your annuity. However, Bro. Swartz said, "We are working on getting retirees the ability to contribute through their annuities". A common question that many of his members ask is, "Why contribute to the PAC?" The important role PACs play is to represent the members interests by supporting key government officials. The NRLCA's PAC is used in the following ways: A. Support the elections of those who currently are in Congress who are friendly to our position. B. Gains access to members who are on key congressional committees whose jurisdiction affects issues that are important to us. C. Develops relationships with members of Congress and new congressional candidates. Bro. Swartz emphasized, "Campaigns are incredibly expensive". In 2020, the U.S. election cost roughly \$14 billion. An average Senate campaign costs roughly \$10.3 million and an average House campaign is around \$1.6 million to run. The money contributed to the PAC is used in each member's election campaign committee. In turn, the money is used to do advertising in television, radio and newspaper. In addition, mass mailings are fueled by the fund too. Bro. Swartz summed it up by saying, "Quite simply, contributing to the PAC is like buying job insurance. It is the best protection you have in supporting the issues controlled by Congress that are important to you".

I want to personally thank Bro. Swartz not only for the interview, but for being another Legislative soldier on the labor battlefield fighting to protect our sister union.

Speaking of elections, New Jersey's Election Day is November 8th and as I reported at September's general meeting, I will have Vote by Mail ballot applications covering all 5 counties in our union. The applications will be available at October 19th's general meeting.

Finally, I want to thank this month's LCPF contributors: **Saeed Bukhsh** (Mt. Ephraim), **Brian Calloway** (Gloucester City), **Ryan Schmidt** (Pennsville, Transfer Adjustment), Retirees: **Ken Chojnacki** (Riverton), **Ron Iuliucci** (Williamstown) and Life Member: **Al "Bud" Davis Jr.** (Riverton). Please feel free to contact me for any assistance in our branch at (856) 220-8658.

### 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.)*

### Hops For Hope

The Branch is hosting a fundraiser for the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) at the Double Nickel Brewery on **Sunday, Oct. 9 from 3 – 6 PM**. See Trustee **April Litty** for more info and tickets.

### 2023 Color Coded Rotating Day Off Calendar

Our new 2023 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/2023cal.html](http://nalcbranch908.com/2023cal.html)

**- Norm Spence - Recording Secretary**

### 2023 NALCHBP Rates

NALC HBP Option	Enrollment Code	2023 Empl. Pays	2023 Retiree Pays
High Self	321	102.98	223.12
High Self & Family	322	211.30	457.82
High Self Plus One	323	241.73	523.75
CDHP Self	324	55.73	120.74
CDHP Self & Family	325	132.03	286.06
CDHP Self Plus One	326	122.95	266.40
Value Self	KM1	45.74	99.10
Value Self & Family	KM2	108.40	234.88
Value Self Plus One	KM3	100.90	218.62

### Branch Attorneys

**Uliase & Uliase**

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