|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 908 NewsNALC Branch 908AFL-CIO **PO Box 1223** Blackwood, NJ 08012 | 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 |
| nalclogo |  | nalcenvelop | |
|  |  |  | |
| **Newsletter Com: Litty, Lipski, Powell Ph: 906-2838 Fax: 227-0516 www.nalcbranch908.com January 2024** | | | |

**Presidents Report**

Happy New Year everyone. It was nice to see so many new and old faces at our annual Christmas meeting last month, as everyone enjoyed the food and refreshments and relaxing atmosphere after winding down the hectic season. Hope to see the numbers continue as we head into 2024. Looking forward, we once again will be facing many challenges this coming year. The most anticipated issue we are waiting on is a new contract. Hopefully, by our next meeting I will have something new to share, as I will be attending a seminar in January, where we will get the latest updated information on the time frame of our possible arbitration dates, if we are still heading in that direction. Also, our Business Agent, Brian Thompson, will be in attendance at this month’s meeting, when he will install all the officers for their next 3-year terms.

There are a few things I want to remind everyone about that we ran into during the past month. For the life of me, I can’t understand why some of our members believe it is acceptable to throw mail away. I know they are not teaching this at orientation and at the carrier academy, so where this idea is being introduced is beyond my knowledge. It is one thing to bring back mail and properly dispose of it in the office, but to put mail in dumpsters or recycling bins is not allowed! This is one way to lose your job instantly, and it gives the service a bad name as well. There is no excuse to throw mail away, even if you think that is your only way to make management’s projections. You will never lose your job not making their most time ridiculous numbers, but I can guarantee you will lose your job by disposing of mail that is paid for by our mailers. Please be extremely careful if you even have the thought of doing something like this.

Next, it looks like the postal service has given their managers their raises effective this month, so now maybe they will see the light and give the craft who makes these managers make their numbers our fair share. I have no problem with managers getting raises, but to act like they can’t afford to give the hardest working craft their fair share does bother me. Looks like they are all getting at least a 5% bump, not including their pay for performance awards, which we got them, nothing they did other than brow beat the carriers at times to make their numbers. They also say they need to give them more money to keep the new managers! They say they are losing a lot of managers to retirement. No wonder, the old managers can’t stand this new regime, and would rather leave than stay and deal with this nonsense.

Next, I am amazed at how some managers react to what I write in our newsletter with regard to certain aspects of what is being portrayed by them. I appreciate they like reading the newsletter, but what I put in here is factual not made up, like the things they like to tell the carriers. Keep reading, and you will get educated in the truth.

Next, just a reminder for everyone, open season this year in the fall will require everyone to enroll in a new health benefit plan under the PSHB Program. The new PSHB plans will still be under the FEHB umbrella and likely will be largely identical to the previous FEHB plans, but they will be available only to Postal Service employees and their families. The plans will be the same in terms of the benefits, but by separating them, what we have is a set of plans where only postal employees are enrolled. For example, if a letter carrier has the NALC Health Benefit Plan’s High Option Plan and wants to stay in that plan during Open Season in the fall of 2024, the carrier will simply enroll in the NALC HBP’s High Option Plan in the PSHB Program. This is just an abbreviated version of what is coming, so stay tuned for more detailed information going forward. I just wanted to make everyone aware, so they are not surprised when the time comes.

Lastly, we will be doing some MDA fundraisers this year, so look for all the upcoming information to help support this most important endeavor of the NALC. Our MDA chairperson, April Litty, has many new functions that are going to help raise money in the coming year, so please support our efforts.

Hope to see everyone at this month’s meeting where I will have all the latest news and updates.

- **Gary DiGiacomo – President 856-906-2838**

**Next Meeting**

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

**Attendance Prize Winner!**

At the regular monthly meeting of the Branch on Wednesday **December 20th**, **Stephon Brant**, a member out of our **Williamstown** Office won the **$250** attendance prize. The prize now stands at $25 and will increase $25 per meeting, up to a maximum of $250, until a member in attendance has their name drawn.

**EVP’S FYI**

Welcome to the New Year 2024! I hope everyone had an enjoyable Holiday season. I would like to thank the membership for entrusting me as Executive Vice President of Branch 908 for the next three years, it is truly an honor. Recently we have heard that managers have been Annotating on PS Form 3996’s. Management cannot annotate on PS Form 3996 outside of the provisions of Section 280 of the M-41 Handbook. There is nothing stated in the M-41 that allows management to annotate or alter the PS Form 3996. From what we gather managers are annotating volumes and whatever postal math numbers they choose to make up. All they should be doing is approving, disapproving, and how much for. That is all, nothing else. This dispute has been settled countless times at the National level with many Step4 MOU’s. One other trick is management making copies of the PS Form 3996, and not copying the back of it. This is another violation. Management is attempting to alter an official form. They don’t want you, the carrier, to read the back of the form where it explains how to use it. If either of these above-mentioned things are happening in your office, please notify your Shop Steward so the grievance can be filed, and this foolishness will be stopped. We won’t be intimidated by these tactics. We will stop it from continuing. We have great Stewards they are prepared to fight this if it occurs. Always remember their bad day is not yours, they also have a responsibility to follow the rules. **Stay Strong,** **Strength in Numbers**. **Executive Vice President Shawn McBride (856)649-9317**

**Comments from the VP**

Happy New Year!! to all our active and retired members and their families! I would like to thank the members of Branch 908 for all your support and having the confidence in me to serve as your Vice-President. I would also like to thank all our active carriers and CCA’s for a job well done throughout the year and especially during the hectic holiday season. I would like to remind all our active members to serve their routes in a safe and professional manner. Do not be bullied by management and their projections to run your route. Take your lunch and breaks and take the time that is necessary to complete your route safely. I want to encourage all our members and especially our CCA’s to try to attend our monthly meetings. It’s your chance to get some important information on things happening in the branch and most importantly to ask questions or voice your concerns to your elected officers. If any active, CCA or retired member needs my help 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 brothers and sisters. Happy New Year to you all. As I briefly mentioned in the last newsletter, and at last month's membership meeting, we have a number of important things happening with health benefits for all employees. Although there is no new news on next year’s change to USPSHBP, or Open penalty free period for Medicare Part “B”, I did want to give you a bit more detail on the other 2 newer benefits of the NALC High Option HBP.

First, new in 2024 for High Options, we offer SilverScript Prescription Drug Plan (PDP), an Employer Group Waiver Plan (EGWP), for High Option retirees and their dependents who have Medicare A or Medicare A and B as primary payor. Silver script is brought to you by the NALCHBP and CVS Caremark Company and is a SilverScript Insurance Company. We pay your Medicare Part D Premium. Benefits will be equal to or better than current coverage. Part B reimbursement up to $600 annually. We will pay Part D late penalty, if any. Auto Enrollment. You have an Option Opt-Out. After January 1, 2024, your opt out request must be in writing. If you have any questions about your SilverScript coverage, please call Customer Care at 1-833-272-9886, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Second is a new Benefit started in 2023 for High Option. NALC High Option Plan-Aetna Medicare Advantage Program. No additional premium cost. $900 per year Medicare Part B premium reduction. $0 deductible and coinsurance for medical care. Unlimited physical, occupational and speech therapy.

Prescription drug coverage is as low as $0. Dental and Vision coverage (I strongly urge you to keep your separate dental and vision plans as this portion of benefits is minimal coverage). See any doctor who is eligible to receive Medicare and accepts Aetna Medicare Advantage. Additional programs: Silver Sneakers, Healthy Home Visits, Home-delivered meals after inpatient stay, and non-emergency transportation program. To Join Call Aetna at 866-241-0262.

Lastly Optical Expense Reimbursements. Any member in good standing simply sends me a paper copy of your optical expense with your name, address, and office/retired to me at George Greenwood, 1083 Chews Landing Rd., Laurel Springs, NJ 08021. Any questions on the above, or anything, HBP, MBA, FMLA always feel free to give me a call anytime at 856-304-8665. Have a safe, prosperous, Happy New Year everyone.

**- George Greenwood, HBR**

**Ozzie’s Corner**

In December's article I discussed the importance of Medicare Integration through The Postal Service Reform Act signed into law in 2022. First, YOU DO NOT HAVE to enroll in Medicare while employed with The Postal Service. The PSHB requires certain employees to enroll in Medicare Part B to continue their PSHB coverage once they retire. However, if you are an active employee under the age of 64 as of January 1, 2025, or if you retire after January 1, 2025(and you are under the age of 64), the following is what you need to know. You ARE required to enroll in Medicare Part B after you retire and become qualified to receive Medicare Part A to continue your PSHB health Insurance. The age when individuals become eligible for Medicare is 65. In addition, if you become an annuitant on or before January 1, 2025, you ARE NOT required to enroll in Medicare Part B to continue your PSHB coverage in retirement. Also, if you are an active employee aged 64 or older as of January 1, 2025, you ARE NOT required to enroll in Medicare Part B to continue your PSHB health insurance coverage once you retire. As an annuitant, there are specific exceptions to enroll in Medicare Part B for you and your family members. The exceptions are {A} you reside outside of The United States and its territories (you are required to follow the guidelines and process set forth by The Postal Service to be eligible for this exception).{ B} You are enrolled in a health benefit plan by The Department Of Veterans Affairs. {C} You are eligible for health services provided by The Indian Health Service. Annuitants will be responsible for providing proof of eligibility to the designated agency for the applicable exception(s). Next month, I will close with some key points on why this is huge. Finally, I want to thank this month's LCPF contributors**: Tim Abruscato,** **Jason Axilbund, Harry Bell, Mario Illiano, Keith Mitchell, Steve Petrillo and Ed Schopf**. My phone number is (856) 220-8658 to reach me for any questions/assistance in the 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 deductable 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.)*

**2024 Branch Budget Approved**

Those in attendance and eligible to vote at the regular monthly meeting of the Branch held on December 20th unanimously approved the Branch 2024 Budget. The budget estimates the receipt and expenditures of the Branch at $281,573.00 for 2024.

**Save the Date**

Annual Branch Banquet – April 13, 2024, start planning to attend now. The 17th Annual Branch 908 Banquet will be held on Saturday, April 13, 2024, 7 – 11pm 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 especially to honor those members who have retired in the past year as well as those who have been selected to receive Branch Awards. The following Branch members will be honored: **Richard Bergbauer, John Bobo, LeeAnn Boschetto, Nadine Casella, Ann Freshcolon, Edward Herda, Valerie Murphy, John Prelas, Jack Scott Jr., John Sharkey, Andrew Steen, Thomas Zaremba.** If you retired during 2023 and your name is not listed, contact **Vice President Mike Powell at (856) 906-2026 or** [**908vp@comcast.net**](mailto:908vp@comcast.net)**.**

**MDA**

We will be raffling off a 55inch 4K UHD Roku TV along with a $200 and $100 gift card at the June meeting. Tickets are $5 each and will be available to purchase soon from your shop steward, at the general meetings or you can call/text **April Litty 856-885-1451.** All proceeds benefit **the Muscular Dystrophy Association.**

**Branch Attorneys**

**Uliase & Uliase**

**106 White Horse Pike, Haddon Heights, NJ 08035**

**(856) 310-9002**

**A gold text and balloons on a black background

Description automatically generated**