

*The Official Newsletter of  
NJ Merged Branch 38, NALC*



# THE SENTINEL

April 2022

## Postal Reform Act



**President**

*by Mike O'Neill*

**The Postal Reform Act of 2021-2022, H.R. 3076, is now the law of the land.** After many years of working with the Postal Service, our mailers, the other Unions, and Congress, this critical piece of legislation has passed both houses of Congress with bi-partisan support. That's correct, both Republicans and Democrats stood up and did the right thing. For the many of our members who don't have the time or the inclination to follow what goes on in Washington, let me explain what this legislation means to us.

**H.R. 3076 is a bipartisan bill that will bring financial stability to the Postal Service.** It includes key provisions for letter carriers, including eliminating the mandate that requires the Postal Service to pre-fund its retiree health care benefits decades in advance. The Postal Service was the only Federal or private entity that labored under that unfair and unreasonable mandate. It cost the Postal Service 5.5 billion dollars per year. Several years ago the Postal Service stopped making those payments, simply because we did not have the money. About 50 billion dollars have been paid into this account, and the Postal Service owed an additional 35 billion in arrears. As a result of the passing of H.R.

3076, the Postal Service is permitted to pay for its retiree health benefits annually, like everyone else. The 50 billion in the account may be used to make those payments for several years into the future. Additionally we no longer owe the 35 billion. That has been forgiven. The financial standing of the Postal Service is immediately on solid ground.

**The Bill also puts into law the requirement that the USPS provide six day delivery.** It has been an annual battle to have Congress extend this mandate. Now it is law, and means protection for letter carrier jobs.

**H.R. 3076 further ensures the financial future of the Postal Service** by integrating postal employees and retirees into Medicare. A more detailed explanation of this aspect of the Bill can be found on the NALC web site. The end result of this provision is savings to the Postal Service in the area of health benefits for our members and retirees.

**The passing of H.R. 3076 would not have been possible without the hard work, dedication, and support of many.** President Rolando and the NALC leadership have been relentless in their efforts to form a coalition in support of this Bill. The NALC legislative team has been focused and intent on garnering the Congressional support needed to get it passed. None of this, of course, would have been possible without the financial support provided by the Letter Carrier Political Fund, and the many members who contribute to the Fund. We all have cause to celebrate.

**Celebrate, yes. Relax, no. We have many more legislative battles in front of us.** NALC legislative goals have not all been achieved and there will certainly be attacks by our enemies in the future. Thank you to those who contribute to the LCPF, and to those who have not yet signed on please consider doing so. The battle continues, and we need everyone on board to continue our success.

# NEW JERSEY MERGED BRANCH 38

National Association of Letter Carriers

374 Morris Avenue  
Springfield, NJ 07081

Phone  
973-564-7244

e-mail  
NALC38@VERIZON.NET

FAX  
973-564-7673

## Branch Officers

Michael J.O'Neill	President
Dan Szucs	Executive Vice President
Joseph S. Rutkoski III	Treasurer
Mark McGrady	Director of City Delivery
Christine A. Strasser	Corresponding Secretary
Pete Bednarz	Full-Time Area Rep
Roy Jancio	Recording Secretary
Dominic Walton	Sergeant-At-Arms
Ron Villegas	Director of Retirees

### BRANCH 38 TRUSTEES

Clint Colie	Keith Hemmings
Richard O'Connell Jr.	Joseph Otero
Armando Pedreira	

### PART TIME AREA REPRESENTATIVES

Clint Colie	Michael Hedglin
Roy Jancio	Joe Otero
Armando Pedreira	Dominic Walton
Joseph Zammito	

### NATIONAL BUSINESS AGENT

Larry Cirelli 212-868-0284

### BRANCH 38 ATTORNEY

Donald Millman, Esq. 973-669-9776

### MUTUAL BENEFIT REPRESENTATIVE

Tamara Humphrey 973-444-5128

## DATES TO REMEMBER

### BRANCH MEETINGS

April 6, 2022  
May 4, 2022  
June 1, 2022  
September 7, 2022

### SPECIAL EVENTS

NALC Food Drive  
May 14, 2022

Retiree Breakfast - South  
May 17, 2022

MDA Day at the Races  
May 22, 2022

Scholarship Night  
June 1, 2022

Spring MDA Golf Outing  
June 20, 2022

**NJ Merged Branch 38  
Web Site**

<http://www.branch38nalc.com/>

# Family Medical Leave Act



## **Executive Vice President**

**by Dan Szucs**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the carriers of Branch 38 and across the county for their dedication to provide much needed service during this historical pandemic. While other people could not or would not leave their homes, all of you, day in and day out would still deliver their mail, medications, paper towels and even toilet paper. Your hard work and dedication to the American public has proven that you all are true American heroes. As essential employees, you all still had to go to work everyday with the chance of getting the COVID virus, and many of you did. The government passed the EFEL law that provided time off with pay, and the DOL approved a positive COVID result as evidence of an on-the-job injury and provided COP.

The one benefit that an employee of the Postal Service has which was forgotten about is your FMLA (Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993) benefits. A few common questions usually come up when discussing FMLA, such as: Who is an eligible employee? An eligible employee is one who has been employed by the Postal Service for at least 12 months (this time does not have to be consecutive, but generally must have been worked within the past seven years) and has completed at least 1,250 workhours during the 12-month period immediately preceding the date the leave starts. The 1,250 workhours include overtime, but excludes any paid or unpaid absence, except for absences due to military service. Leave without pay (LWOP) does not count toward the 1,250-workhour eligibility requirement.

**What is a serious health condition?** An employee's own serious health condition is one which renders the employee unable to perform the functions of his or her job. An employee is "unable to perform the functions of the position" when his or her health care provider finds that the employee is unable to work at all or is unable to perform any one of the essential functions of the employee's position within the meaning of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). FMLA-covered absences to care for an employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent who has a serious health condition requires medical certification that the employee is needed to care for a family member and encompasses physical care and psychological comfort and reassurance when the family member is receiving inpatient or home care.

Postal Service regulations implementing the Act are found in Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM) Section 515. The law entitles eligible employees to take up to 12 workweeks of job-protected absences. The following are reasons for applying for FMLA: The birth of an employee's child and the care of that child during the first year after birth. The placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care. A serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the functions of the employee's job. To care for the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent who has a serious health condition.

It is important for our members to utilize FMLA when they qualify because it protects them against management taking any adverse administrative or disciplinary actions based upon FMLA protected absences. When you are unable to work due to circumstances beyond your control the Family Medical Leave Act is designed to protect you from unreasonable attacks by management. It is law, it is available, be sure to use it.

If you have any questions or concerns let your shop steward know, call your area representative or call the Branch office. For a more in-depth understanding, refer to M-01866 in the Materials Reference System on the NALC website at [mseries.nalc.org/M01866.pdf](https://mseries.nalc.org/M01866.pdf).

## **MDA Shamrocks At Blackjack Mulligan's Raised Over \$1,000**



# *Medical Documentation Part II*



***Treasurer***

**by Joseph Rutkoski**

**Part I of this article was published in the February 2022 issue** of the Sentinel and focused on those circumstances where medical documentation was needed and what it must include. This article (Part II) will focus on examples of arbitration decisions that have found that management's request for medical certification was improperly required and the remedy the employee would be entitled to in these circumstances

**Arbitration case C-00008 ruled that the medical documentation request was ruled to have been unjustified** because there was "no pattern that could raise suspicion and indicate that an employee's undocumented request should not be accepted." The Arbitrator found that three absences in a thirty-four-week period were insufficient to deem the employee's sick leave request "suspicious." Where an employee appeared sick at the time leave was requested, arbitrators usually rule that certification should not have been required.

**In C-01224, the arbitrator ruled again that the request for medical documentation was not reasonable** when the employee actually appeared ill to the supervisor at the time. The arbitrator pointed out that "an employee can have a lousy record of attendance but still can become ill at work which would justify excusing him from work."

**In C-04033 the arbitrator stated, "The single, isolated incident of the grievant leaving work due to illness on a prior occasion, with no indication otherwise in the grievant's work record that he is likely to have abused sick leave, is not sufficient to produce a substantial doubt in the mind of a reasonable person that the grievant left his route on the day in question simply because he did not want to complete the overtime assignment."** In this case the supervisor had conceded that the grievant had the outward appearance of being sick by the hoarseness in his voice. Further, it is unreasonable for a supervisor to require medical documentation of an employee requesting sick leave without an inquiry into the employee's illness.

**In C-03860 the supervisor's request for medical documentation was found improper** because the supervisor had not questioned the employee about his illness before asking for medical documentation. The Arbitrator stated, "To conclude that the grievant was not ill because [the supervisor] perceived no outward manifestation was not enough." (See also C-03819, C-04002 and C-05015)

**Many arbitrators have ruled that the workload at the facility at the time the sick leave request is made is a factor** which the supervisor should consider when deciding whether to require medical documentation of an employee. However, heavy mail volume alone is usually ruled to be an insufficient reason for requesting medical documentation. In C-00276 the employee had no history of sick leave abuse and had not tried to leave earlier on in the day for personal reasons. The arbitrator ruled that management's request for medical documentation based only on heavy mail volume was unreasonable. Similarly, in C-06723 the arbitrator concluded, "The mere fact that management would be inconvenienced by an employee's absence, or that other employees may have been previously required to provide medical documentation in similar situations, or that productivity and/or efficiency may be negatively impacted by an employee's unscheduled absence, are insufficient reasons--in and of themselves--to justify the requiring of an employee to provide medical documentation to verify an unscheduled absence." Finally, although the Postal Service often argues that medical documentation is properly required where the employee calls in sick on a day preceding or following a day off, that reason alone is insufficient to require medical documentation. The arbitrator in C-03744 stated, "The station's need for more carriers to tide-over a holiday is, in itself, not a sufficient reason for requiring medical certification." The arbitrator concluded that the possibility that the grievant was seeking to lengthen a holiday was not demonstrated by any statement or action.

**The remedy most frequently granted to the employee when a supervisor was found to have violated Part 513.361 of the Employee and Labor Relations Manual by arbitrarily, capriciously, or unreasonably requiring medical documentation of an employee is reimbursement for the cost of the medical documentation.** As the arbitrator in C-01624 pointed out, "where a gross error is made by the supervisor and the effects of the error falls upon an employee who is not on Restricted Sick Leave and who has not 'taken advantage' of a very substantial sick bank, since his sick leave payments have been negligible, the Employer ought to bear the responsibility of paying the cost of a medical documentation which the grievant has been directed to procure."

**All of this can become rather complicated. Whenever you are required to provide medical documentation, contact your shop steward and/or area representative for advice. Don't ignore the request. We can help you with what is required and what actions can be taken in your interest.**



# LWOP vs. AWOL



**Director  
of  
City  
Delivery**

**by Mark McGrady**

There have been several reports of carriers being improperly charged Absent Without Official Leave (AWOL) for absences for which they thought they were charged Leave Without Pay (LWOP). Although the employee receives no pay under either pay status, there are important differences. An employee may be issued discipline for any single instance of AWOL, while LWOP is an approved leave status. Instances of AWOL may also have a negative impact on transfer requests. Provisions in the Employee & Labor Relations manual define when and under what circumstances both AWOL and LWOP are appropriate.

**ELM Section 513.61** provides: If sick leave is approved but the employee does not have sufficient sick leave to cover the absence, the difference is charged to annual leave or to LWOP at the employee's option.

**ELM Section 513.62** provides: If sick leave is approved for employees who have no annual or sick leave to their credit, the absence may be charged as LWOP....

**ELM Section 513.63** provides: If sick leave is disapproved, but the absence is nevertheless warranted, the supervisor may approve, at the employee's option, a charge to annual leave or a charge to LWOP.

**ELM Section 513.64** provides: An absence that is disapproved is charged as LWOP and may be administratively considered as AWOL.

**ELM Section 514.1.C.** provides: LWOP is different from AWOL (absent without leave), which is a nonpay status due to a determination that no kind of leave can be granted either because (1) the employee did not obtain advance authorization or (2) the employee's request for leave was denied.

**ELM Section 514.22** provides: Each request for LWOP is examined closely, and a decision is made based on the needs of the employee, the needs of the Postal Service, and the cost to the Postal Service. The granting of LWOP is a matter of administrative discretion and is not granted on the employee's demand except as provided in collective bargaining agreements or as follows:

- a. A disabled veteran is entitled to LWOP, if necessary, for medical treatment.
- b. A Reservist or a National Guardsman is entitled to LWOP, if necessary, to perform military training duties under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA), Public Law 103-353.

- c. An employee who requests and is entitled to time off under 515, Absence for Family Care or Serious Health Condition of Employee, must be allowed up to a total of 12 workweeks of absence within a Postal Service leave year for one or more of the reasons listed in 515.41(a) through 515.41(e), and up to 26 workweeks of leave during a single 12-month period to care for covered service members with a serious injury or illness.

**If management charges an employee with AWOL simply because they disapproved the absence, the employee should report this to their Shop Steward. The AWOL should be challenged because when the request is disapproved, the reason for the disapproval must be noted on the PS Form 3971. Management can not charge an employee with AWOL because the employee requested LWOP.**

**We encourage carriers to periodically request a copy of their PS Form 3972 Absence Analysis to make sure that they have not improperly been charged AWOL. Contact your Shop Steward if you detect any problems or have any questions.**

**Check Out  
The Branch 38  
Facebook Page**

**"NJ Merged Branch 38"**

# *Membership Recognition*

The NALC provides lapel pins in recognition for membership of 25 years or more, and for each additional five years. We also award Gold Cards for 50 years of membership, and plaques for 70 & 75 years of membership. The Gold Card comes with the added benefit of no more dues. All of these special awards are available upon request. If you believe that you are entitled to any of these awards, contact Director of Retirees, Ron Villegas at 973-564-7244 (Ext.21) and we will check our records and request the awards from NALC Headquarters. Thanks to all of you for your loyal support.



President Mike O'Neill presents Bob Welch with an NALC lapel pin in commemoration of forty-five years of membership in NALC. The presentation was made on Bob's final day before his retirement from the Eatontown Post Office.



At a recent Branch Meeting, Mike presented a 30 year NALC lapel pin to Mike Ahearn, who recently retired from the Parsippany Post Office.



President O'Neill had the pleasure of presenting NALC lapel pins to Frank Filipkowski (35 years), Vincent Tortora (25 years), and Branch 38 Area Representative Joe Otero (25 years) all from the Holmdel Post Office.



Former Branch 38 and NJ State Association of Letter Carriers Director of Retirees, Jim Eagen, is presented with an NALC lapel pin in honor of sixty-five years of membership in NALC. Included in the photo are Pete Bednarz, Dan Szucs, Mike O'Neill and Christine Strasser. The presentation was made on Jim's ninety-fifth birthday.

**John Sheridan**  
**MDA Day at the Races**

**Sunday, May 22, 2022**

Monmouth Park Race Track  
 175 Oceanport Ave, Oceanport, NJ

Gates Open at 9:00 AM  
 First Race is at 12:15 PM  
 Free Parking

\$70.00 Per Person Includes:  
 Beer, Soda & Water  
 Cheeseburgers, Ribs, Chicken, Salads,  
 Corn on the Cob & Watermelon  
 Admission & Programs

For Tickets Call  
 Armando Pedreira: 973-564-7244 (Ext.19)  
 or Contact Your Area Rep  
 All Proceeds Go Directly to MDA

**Spring MDA**  
**Golf Outing**

**Monday, June 20, 2022**

10:00 AM Shotgun Start

BUNKER HILL GOLF COURSE  
 GRIGGSTOWN, NJ  
 FEE - \$75 per Golfer

Price Includes:  
 Golf, Cart, Lunch, Beer, Water

Contact Chris Strasser  
 at  
 973-564-7244 (Ext. 20)

**NJ Merged Branch 38**  
**Retiree Breakfast South**

On Tuesday, May 17, 2022, at 10:00 AM, NJ Merged Branch 38 will be holding our annual Retiree Breakfast in the Southern end of New Jersey. The Breakfast will be held at the Toms River Elks Lodge 1875 at 600 Washington Street, Toms River, NJ. To reserve a spot, and to get directions, call Branch 38 Director of Retirees, Ron Villegas at 973-564-7244 (Ext. 21). All Branch 38 retirees are welcome to attend. There is no charge to retired members and a guest.

Your Branch Officers will all be in attendance. This is an excellent opportunity for retirees who have relocated to the southern end of New Jersey to come together to exchange old stories, renew old friendships, and hear what's going on in Branch 38. This is planned to be a less formal event, so casual attire is encouraged.

The NALC and Branch 38 values the participation and support of our retirees. This is another opportunity to get together and stay in touch. We're hoping for a good turn out. We were very pleased with the turn-out at the first two Retiree Breakfasts - South, and are happy that it has become an annual event on the Branch 38 calendar. Hope to see you there.



# *Injured At Work - Now What?*



***Full-Time  
Area Rep  
& HBP Rep***

**by Pete Bednarz**

All letter carriers should know their rights and what actions to take if they get injured while performing the duties of their job. This article will focus on a traumatic injury, which is defined as a condition which is related to work factors that occur during the course of ONE workday. Examples of a traumatic injury would be: dog bite, slip, trip, fall, vehicle accident, injury while lifting. If you suffer an on-the-job injury, you should immediately report it to your supervisor. Don't give management an opportunity to issue you discipline for failing to report an accident.

**Request to fill out a CA-1, (Federal Employee's Notice of Injury)** on the day of injury or as soon as possible. Make sure to check off Continuation of Pay on the CA-1. It is important to request a copy of the completed CA-1 from your supervisor. Inform your supervisor that you are requesting authorization for medical treatment, and you need a Form CA-16 to bring with you to your doctor. The CA-16 is usually generated by management when they are filling out their portion of the CA-1. Take the CA-16 with you when you first go to your physician. This form is important because it guarantees payment by the Postal Service. Without it, your doctor may send you the medical bills. The Postal Service should also be providing you with a CA-17 (Duty Status Report). This form is filled out by your doctor indicating your ability to return to work and/or any limitations due to your injury.

**Some injuries call for immediate medical attention. You may not have time to fill out any forms at the office. You still have the right to request and complete a blank Form CA-1. You could also file a claim on E-Comp by going to [HTTPS://www.Ecomp.Dol.gov](https://www.Ecomp.Dol.gov).**

**The only way to claim benefits under FECA is to have a Form CA-1 on file. A timely submitted CA-1 will alleviate a lot of headaches that you can expect to have waiting for your claim to be processed. The completion of the CA-1 must be done within 30 days of the date of injury for you to be eligible for continuation of pay (COP). Exercise your right to receive COP instead of using your sick or annual leave.**

**The law requires the USPS to pay the initial 45 days as continuation of pay, however the first three calendar days after the injury are considered waiting days in which you use your sick leave, annual leave or LWOP. If the incapacitation exceeds 14 calendar days, the leave used during the first three days will be converted to COP also. Please be aware that if you do not submit any supporting medical evidence within ten days of the date of injury, the USPS will be authorized to terminate your COP.**

**After OWCP receives the CA-1 from the USPS, they will send you a case file number (claim number) within about two weeks. Use this case file number on all the documents submitted to OWCP and make sure to get your doctors to do the same.**

**Another important thing to remember is that you must be very specific when giving the details regarding the cause of injury when completing the CA-1. Present your doctor with full information regarding the cause of injury and be sure to describe all parts of the body affected by the injury. Make sure that the history and description of the injury is identical to what you reported to the Postal Service and OWCP. Remember that at some point the physician narrative will be of utmost importance to have your claim approved. Your physician will have to provide a clear diagnosis of your medical condition and his or her rationalized medical opinion about the causal relationship between your condition and the reported work-related factors on the date of your injury.**

**Be safe, know your rights, and if you run into any problems along the way, contact your Branch 38 Area Representative.**

## ***Priority Number 1 - Safety***

The best way to avoid problems with worker's compensation claims is to avoid getting hurt. Of course, nobody wants to get injured, but are we doing everything we can to make sure it doesn't happen? It doesn't take a lot of time to work safely, but it does require you to be aware of what you are doing. When operating your vehicle wear your seat belt, don't be on your phone or engage in other distracting practices. Drive defensively. You are your best defense against bad drivers. Park your vehicle properly. Engage the hand brake, curb your wheels, and always turn off the engine when you are not in the driver's seat. Take your keys with you every time. Be aware of your surrounding when you are walking. Look out for uneven terrain. Stairs and handrails in disrepair should be reported. Keep your eyes and ears open for dogs. Have your satchel and dog spray with you, and record all potentially dangerous dogs on dog cards to help your fellow carriers. Never put yourself in danger. Report all dangerous situations to your supervisor. Safety is up to us.



# Help Stamp Out Hunger



**Recording  
Secretary**

*by Roy Jancio*

The NALC Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive has been in existence for 31 years. During the last two years, however, the COVID-19 pandemic prevented letter carriers from collecting food from the residents in the communities they serve. This year the NALC Food Drive is scheduled to resume on May 14, 2022. The food bank shelves are bare due to the pandemic and the officers and staff of Branch 38 are asking everyone to step up and make a difference.

In 2020, Branch 38 expanded the Heroic Achievement Award to three categories. One category is the Food Drive Hero Award. This program is designed to get more people involved. Branch 38 will look at individuals that went above and beyond the normal scope of the Food Drive. There are many ways to help make this year the best Food Drive ever. Branch 38 officers and staff will assist the Food Drive Hero(s) in every office any way we can. We are asking the Food Drive coordinator to contact the mayor and town council, the schools, churches, or other organizations in town to help promote the NALC Food Drive and spread the word. Another great way to get the word out is by utilizing your Facebook, Twitter, and/or Instagram account. Using social media is an easy way to spread the word to hundreds and even thousands of people with a quick post on the account(s). Getting a local newspaper or TV station to advertise the Food Drive will also help tremendously.

Equally important, if we have a Letter Carrier Food Drive Hero in every town it will not only better promote the food drive but will also show the community that the Letter Carriers do more than deliver mail for their communities.

Finally, if you or someone you know is interested in being a Food Drive Hero let your area representative know right away. Your area representative will guide you and give you new ideas to make the NALC Food Drive successful now and for years to come. Branch 38 will recognize all the Heroes but at least one will get the Branch 38 Food Drive Hero Award.

The Stamp Out Hunger Donor Drive was implemented in 2020 because the COVID-19 pandemic halted the normal Food Drive. The Donor Drive was implemented in lieu of the Letter Carrier Food Drive and will still be up and running this year along with the Letter Carrier Food Drive. Anyone can donate at any time to the NALC Donor Drive, not just on the second Saturday in May. As the need for food assistance is still more desperate because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the NALC still wants to allow everyone to continue to help to address that need and help your local community food pantry or bank. The Stamp Out Hunger Donor Drive has a single mission and that is to feed the hungry in America.

Please donate what you can to a food bank in your community. Simply log onto NALC.ORG, go to the Community Service section at the top right of the home page, click on Letter Carrier Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive section and then click on the Food Drive Home page on the right-hand side of the page. Scroll to the bottom and select your state and click on the link to donate directly. All collections stay in the local community. Another way to donate is to send a check to NALC Headquarters: Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive c/o NALC 100 Indiana Ave NW Washington, DC 20001.

Please help in any way you can and let's make the 2022 Letter Carrier Food Drive a great success.

**Sign Up for the Letter Carrier Political  
Fund Now!!!**

**Help Protect:  
Your Job  
Your Benefits  
The Postal Service**

**Go to: <http://nalc.org/>**

By making a contribution to the Letter Carrier Political fund, you are doing so voluntarily with the understanding that your contribution is not a condition of membership in the National Association of Letter Carriers or of employment by the Postal Service, nor is it part of union dues. You have a right to refuse to contribute without any reprisal. The Letter Carrier Political Fund 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 Letter Carrier Political Fund are not deductible for federal income tax purposes. Federal law prohibits the Letter Carrier Political Fund from soliciting contributions from individuals who are not NALC members, executive and administrative staff or their families. Any contribution received from such an individual will be refunded to that contributor. Federal law requires us to use our best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, occupation and name of employer of individuals whose contributions exceed \$200 in a calendar year.

# Retirees Can Still Help



## Director of Retirees

**by Ron Villegas**

I would like to thank the membership for the continuing opportunity to serve as The Director of Retired Members. I look forward to helping our members transition into retirement. Helping letter carriers with this transition over the past few years has been one of the most rewarding things I have done as a union activist.

Letter carriers serve the American public for decades before they retire, and they routinely make a difference in peoples' lives. Branch 38 retirees can make a difference once they have retired by participating in the Branch's MDA charitable fund-raising events. "The John Sheridan MDA Day at the Races" at Monmouth Park will be held May 22, 2022, and the "Charlie Connell MDA

Golf Outing" will be happening this Fall. These events have been named in honor of two Branch 38 retirees who worked tirelessly for our members.

The annual "Shamrocks for MDA" in honor of Robert Paccioretti is in its 5th year and getting bigger every year. A spring golf outing was added last year and, our Beefsteak Dinner in the fall has been a huge success. Unfortunately, the "Tuff Mudder" event was canceled this year due to COVID 19. These events raise a good deal of money for MDA, and they are a great way for retirees to stay active and involved. Besides, they are just plain fun! Specific information for these and other Branch 38 events can be found in the Sentinel and on the branch's web site ([branch38nalc.com](http://branch38nalc.com)).

**Important note for recent retirees; when you retire** your automatic contributions to the Letter Carrier Political Fund stops. To continue contributing you must sign up again as a retiree using your CSA (civil service annuitant) number. OPM will send you your CSA# soon after you retire. The Letter Carrier Political Fund is our most effective tool in protecting the rights of retirees and future retirees from legislation that could have a negative effect on our futures. If you have any questions, you can call me at (973) 564-7244 Ext. 21.

## CCA Conversions to Career

As a result of the new provisions in the National Agreement, many CCA's are being converted to career status. It is important that these carriers are aware that when they are converted, management is obligated to provide Career Conversion Training to each employee. That normally is conducted at District Headquarters. During that training, employees are informed of their newly acquired benefits, which include health insurance and Federal Employee Life Insurance. There are strict time frames in which the employee must enroll in these programs, or wait until the next open season. Anyone who is converted to career status should contact the Branch office, and we will make sure you are included in the next available Career Conversion Class. We want to make sure every one of our new career letter carriers receives all they are entitled to.

## Download The NALC Member App

The app contains links to workplace resources, including the National Agreement, the JCAM, the MRS, CCA resources and more. It also includes legislative tools, such as a bill tracker, an individualized list of your Congressional Representatives and PAC information. One of the coolest features is an Interactive Non-Scheduled Days calendar. Available for iPhone and Android smartphones. The app is available at the Apple App Store or the Google Play Store. Search for "NALC Member App." Go to [NALC.org](http://NALC.org) for more information.

# *NJ Merged Branch 38 Scholarship Application*

NJ Merged Branch 38 is proud to announce that we are now accepting applications for our 37th annual scholarships in honor of former Executive Board Member of NJ Merged Branch 38, Michael J. McTigue, former Branch Chaplin, Gil Hampton, former National Secretary Treasurer, Richard O'Connell, and former State Association President Tony Massa.

All four scholarships are in the amount of \$1,500 and will be awarded to four dependents of Branch 38 members in their final year of high school. The scholarships will be presented to the winners at the Branch Meeting on June 1, 2022 at the Woodbridge Elk's Lodge #2116, 665 Rahway Avenue, Woodbridge, NJ.

To be eligible, the applicant must be the son or daughter of an active or retired member of Branch 38, and must be graduating from an accredited secondary school this year, and planning entry into an accredited college or university this September. Other applicants will be considered where a member of Branch 38 is shown to be the student's primary source of dependency.

Interested applicants should fill in the accompanying form on this page, and provide the requested information in a legible manner and send, along with their High School transcript to: NJ Merged Branch 38 Scholarships, 374 Morris Avenue, Springfield, NJ 07081-1106.

The transcript must include S.A.T. scores, scholastic records, and any extra-curricular activities participated in. Recommendations of faculty or guidance personnel may also be included.

For questions or additional information, please contact Mike O'Neill at 973-564-7244 (Ext. 18).

**APPLICATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED  
NO LATER THAN  
MAY 15, 2022**

## 2022 SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Phone #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Birth:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Branch 38 Member  
(Parent or Guardian)**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Office Employed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name & Address of High School:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**List of Colleges or Universities Applied To:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Applicant:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Member:**

\_\_\_\_\_

# THE SENTINEL

NJ Merged Branch 38, NALC  
374 Morris Avenue  
Springfield, NJ 07081

NON-PROFIT  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
PERMIT #398  
TRENTON, NJ

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**



## Branch Meeting Information & Directions

Meetings are held at 7:30 PM on the first Wednesday of each month, except July & August.

The Branch Meetings are held at:

**ELKS BPO LODGE #2116**  
**665 RAHWAY AVENUE**  
**WOODBIDGE, NJ 07095**  
**732-634-2116**

**Directions:**

**SOUTH** on Garden State Parkway. Take Exit #129 to Route 9 North to Woodbridge Exit (Just after the Forge Restaurant on your right). At the end of the Exit Ramp, turn right onto Main Street (Route 514) and proceed until you reach a monument at City Hall. Bear left onto Rahway Avenue. The Elks is @1/2 mile down the road on your left.

**NORTH** on Garden State Parkway. Take Exit #127 to Route 9 North and follow directions above.

**NJ Turnpike.** Take Exit 12 (Carteret). Bear right after toll booth and turn left at light after overpass. Proceed through industrial park to Rahway Avenue and turn left. The Elks is 1 mile ahead on your right.