

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



THE SENTINEL

June 2023

2023 Scholarship Winners



2023 NJ Merged Branch 38 Scholarship Winners
Marllyson Solis, Audrey Bruden, and Victoria Vira.

Congratulations to our 2023 Scholarship Winners. Angelina Zammito, daughter of Parsippany letter carrier Joe Zammito, was awarded the Michael J. McTigue Scholarship. Marllyson Solis, daughter of Secaucus letter carrier Mario Solis was awarded the Gil Hampton Scholarship. Audrey Bruden, daughter of East Brunswick letter carrier Stacy Bruden, was awarded the Richard P. O'Connell Scholarship. Victoria Vira, daughter of Dunellen letter carrier Michael Vira was awarded the Tony Massa Scholarship. Each scholarship is worth \$1,500. The four scholarship winners were selected from several worthy applicants by a college professor, who indicated that this year's selection process was especially difficult. We wish all of the winners and applicants success in their future college studies and careers.

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/HBR
Roy Jancio	Recording Secretary/MBAR
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
Joe Otero	Armando Pedreira
Dominic Walton	Joseph Zammito

NATIONAL BUSINESS AGENT

Bruce Didriksen 212-868-0284

BRANCH 38 ATTORNEY

Donald Millman, Esq. 973-669-9776

MUTUAL BENEFIT REPRESENTATIVE

Roy Jancio 973-564-7244 (Ext.24)

DATES TO REMEMBER

BRANCH MEETINGS

September 6, 2023
October 4, 2023
November 1, 2023
December 6 2023

SPECIAL EVENTS

Charlie Connell Golf Outing
October 9, 2023

Retiree Breakfast
October 22, 2023

Retirement Training
October 29, 2023

MDA Beefsteak Dinner
November 11, 2023

Holiday Party
December 16, 2023

**NJ Merged Branch 38
Web Site**

<http://www.Branch38nalc.com/>

Contract Negotiations



President

by Mike O'Neill

The 2019-2023 National Agreement between NALC and USPS expired at midnight on May 20, 2023. The parties opened negotiations for the 2023 National Agreement on February 22, 2023. Although an agreement has not been reached by the May 20 deadline, the parties continue to negotiate during the mandatory 60 day mediation time frame. NALC will continue to work towards a negotiated agreement with the Postal Service during that 60 day period. If an agreement is reached, it will be presented to the membership for a vote. If an agreement is not reached, issues that remain in dispute will be addressed through an interest arbitration process, which would result in a final and binding decision on the contents of a new national agreement. The parties would select a neutral arbitrator to chair an arbitration board which would include one management and one union arbitrator.

NALC has made it clear that city letter carriers need to be recognized and rewarded for their hard work, long hours, and exceptional performance during the COVID pandemic and the most recent two national elections. Our members delivered essential goods to America's people during the pandemic, at great risk to themselves and their families. They did their part to preserve our democracy by protecting and expanding our nation's vote by mail option. Their work cannot go unrewarded.

NALC has also insisted that the issue of staffing must be addressed in our next contract. Improved and competitive wages will help to address the staffing shortage, but a fully career workforce is the cornerstone of a stable future for our craft and the Postal Service. Providing fair starting wages, full benefits, and a regular schedule is the only way to attract and retain the people we need to continue to provide the service the American people deserve. NALC has made this issue a priority in negotiations, and the Postal Service must be aware of its importance going forward.

The safety of letter carriers and the increasing crime against those carriers is no less of a priority. USPS and NALC must work together to address this critical issue. Letter carriers should not have to fear for their lives or their safety when reporting to work. Solutions to this growing crisis have to be found and found as quickly as possible.

NALC has committed to address management's failure to adhere to the terms of the jointly negotiated national agreement and the provisions of their own handbooks and manuals. Repetitive violations and non-compliance with negotiated grievance settlements and decisions has eroded an already contentious relationship between the union and management at all levels of the Postal Service. Managers who engage in this unacceptable behavior must be held accountable.

I am encouraged by NALC's stated priorities in their attempt to reach agreement on a new national agreement. It is my hope that the USPS representatives realize that their priorities should mirror ours if their goal is a vibrant and thriving Postal Service, now and into the future. Without fair wages and benefits a stable workforce is not attainable. Letter carriers must also be treated with dignity and respect, and that cannot be accomplished if management is permitted to ignore their obligation to honor written agreements. A prosperous future for the Postal Service is dependent upon achieving all of these goals.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the winners of the four NJ Merged Branch 38 scholarships. These four young women performed greatly throughout their high school careers, both in the classroom and in their communities. I know that their parents are proud of their achievements, and we join them in wishing them well throughout their college years and beyond. It is our pleasure to recognize their achievements and to provide some small assistance as they pursue their goals.



Michale J. Migtiue Scholarship Winner Angelina Zammito.

NALC Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive



Parsippany carrier Mike Basiak with 3,200 lbs of food donated by B& G Foods



Rahway letter carriers getting the job done on Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive Saturday



Lyndhurst letter carrier Daniel Collins delivers much needed food to St. Michael's Food Pantry.



Stewards Jamie Alberti and Harold Schuler led the way for a successful Food Drive in Garfield.

NALC Disaster Relief Foundation

In 2018, NALC established the NALC Disaster Relief Foundation to alleviate the suffering of members affected by natural disasters including earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes, and wildfires. The Foundation was designed to provide an avenue for our members to assist our fellow sister and brother members during extreme times of great financial need. Branch 38 members have benefited several times from this Foundation. Please consider contributing to this worthy cause by going to nalc.org and clicking on the NALC Disaster Relief Foundation link. Thank you.

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, request the awards from NALC Headquarters, and make arrangements to present the award to you. Thanks to all of you for your loyal support.



Pictured from left to right are the graduates and instructors of Branch 38’s Formal A Training: Christine Strasser, June Albergro (Red Bank), Dan Szucs, Amy Vega (Hackettstown), Cliff Haworth Dodd (Rutherford), Shahid Butt (Piscataway), Roy Jancio, Christina Williams (Caldwell)Anthony Feliciano (Se-caucus), and Pete Bednarz.



Newark letter carrier Jerome “Big A” Alexander is honored by the Postal Service and NALC for 55 years of service to his customers and union membership. Pictured above is Newark Postmaster Silvia Glover, NJ District Manager Michael Deignan, Mrs. Alexander, Jerome, and Branch 38 President Mike O’Neill.



The family of former Branch 38 Financial Secretary John Sheridan and the officers of Branch 38 celebrate John’s memory at Branch 38’s annual John Sheridan’s Day at the Races Fund Raiser for MDA at Monmouth Park Racetrack. Thanks go out to Armando Pedreira and Clint Colie for organizing this special event.

The Branch 38 Facebook Page

“NJ Merged Branch 38”

All Branch 38 members are invited to join our closed Facebook page to stay in touch and keep up to date on NALC news and Branch events and activities.

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 for more information.

Branch 38 Celebrates Our Retirees



NBA Bruce Didriksen, NALC Director of Life Insurance Jim Yates and Branch President Mike O’Neill honored 60 Year Members James Antoine from Waldwick, Russell Aquino from East Orange, Robert Reina from Orange, and William Vance from Newark at our recent Retiree Luncheon.



NBA Bruce Didriksen and Branch President Mike O’Neill present David Crocket, retiree from the East Orange Post Office, with his NALC lapel pin commemorator forty years of membership.



NBA Bruce Didriksen and Branch President Mike O’Neill present Joseph Licinski, retiree from the Bloomfield Post Office, with his NALC lapel pin commemorating forty years of membership.



NBA Bruce Didriksen and Branch President Mike O’Neill present William Brown, retiree from the Holmdel Post Office, with his NALC lapel pin commemorator forty years of membership.

LiteBlue & eOPF Problems



**Corresponding
Secretary**

by Christine Strasser

In late December, several hundred employees mistakenly used fraudulent websites to sign-on to LiteBlue and their accounts. As a result, their net-to-bank allotments were hacked and changed. After the Postal Service learned of the scam, all net-to-bank information was removed. The eOPF files and direct deposit options were disabled. It has been six months since the fraudulent websites occurred and numerous employees are still experiencing LiteBlue and eOPF sign-on issues.

To increase the security of LiteBlue, the Postal Service implemented multifactor authentication (MFA) necessary to gain access when signing on. In January, all employees were instructed to sign-in to LiteBlue and set up the multifactor authentication. If you did not, a letter was sent to your address of record with the Postal Service with a new password to set up the MFA. Many employees still have not set up MFA or have set up MFA only to be locked out again.

If you are still experiencing issues signing on to LiteBlue, you have options. The easiest remedy is to sign onto LiteBlue again and request a password reset. Again, a letter will be sent to your address of record with the Postal Service, which could take seven to ten business days. If that option has not worked and you are still waiting for a letter or your address is not correct, you can use the US Postal Employee Service Line.

The US Postal Employee Service Line will connect you to an automated listing of prompts. Many employees may be familiar with the phone number, 1-877-477-3273. The service line is used to access Postalease, Job Bidding, Unscheduled Leave, and HR Shared Services. When selecting the HR Shared Services option five, you will be able to select Employee Benefits, Retirement, Family Medical Leave Act, EHRSSC forms, and other options. The Employee Benefits option will allow you to access information regarding health and life insurance, Thrift Savings Plan, Military and Civilian Leave Buyback, Self-Service Password profile, pin resets, salary or pay inquires, etc. You will need to have your

Employee Identification Number (EIN) and your pin number available when prompted to enter on the touchtone pad. The wait time when calling the US Postal Service Line can be lengthy. Please allow yourself enough time when placing the call.

The eOPF, Official Personnel File, continues to be inaccessible through LiteBlue and could be unavailable for another four months. If you are retiring or need access to your Official Personnel File (OPF), all employees can request a copy of your file either in-person or in writing with the District Manager of Human Resources. If make your request in writing, you will need to prove your identity. To our contact New Jersey District Manager of Human Resources, Jaya R. Bhambhwani, you can call, email, or visit the district office. The phone number is (732) 819-3614. The email address is Jaya.r.bhambhwani@usp.gov. The district office is located at 21 Kilmer Road, Edison, NJ 08899-9998. While the eOPF through LiteBlue is unavailable, there will be no fee for your personnel file.

Hopefully, the above options will help employees who are still unable to access LiteBlue and eOPF. In the future, I strongly suggest you sign onto the legitimate LiteBlue site, by typing the web address www.liteblue.usps.gov directly in the URL bar at the top of the page and never use any search engine. Prior to entering any of your personal information, check to make sure you are on the correct website. These steps can protect your personal information when accessing LiteBlue.

Retirement Seminar

Sunday, October 29, 2023
10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

WOODBRIIDGE ELKS LODGE #2116
665 RAHWAY AVENUE
WOODBRIIDGE, NJ 07095

NJ Merged Branch 38 will be holding a retirement seminar for those considering their option to retire during the next few years. Information relative to CSRS and FERS retirement plans will be addressed.

We will be covering topics such as how to calculate your annuity and carrying health and life insurance into retirement. We will discuss the application for retirement, and what you need to do to prepare for retirement.

You will have a chance to ask questions and meet with some of the Branch 38 officers. Spouses are also welcome.

Please let us know if you plan to attend by contacting Ron Villegas at 973-564-7244 (Ext. 21) or your Area Rep no later than March 10, so that we will be sure to have an adequate supply of training material and space available.

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

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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.