

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



THE SENTINEL

March 2023

Contract Negotiations



President

by Mike O'Neill

On February 22, 2023, NALC entered into negotiations with USPS in an effort to come to terms on a new National Agreement. After reviewing President Renfroe's opening statement, I am encouraged that our national officers are in tune with the concerns and priorities of the membership. I am also encouraged by the fact that the Postal Service is in far better financial position than during the last set of negotiations. This is, of course, due in large part to the hard work and sacrifice of city letter carriers and recent legislative victories achieved through the leadership of NALC.

The goals of NALC as expressed by President Renfroe in his opening statement are both critical to the success of the Postal Service and intrinsically interrelated. Every letter carrier is aware that staffing, safety, fair wages, and a better working environment must be our top priorities. It is also obvious to anyone paying attention that all of those issues must be addressed in concert if they are to be adequately resolved. Success in any of these areas cannot be achieved without dealing with the others.

Our members have been overworked and subjected to unrealistic expectations for far too long. The hours they have been forced to work, often under an atmosphere of intimidation, cannot be maintained or no longer accepted. The only solution is more help. The Postal Service must take action to make the letter carrier job more attractive to prenotion workers. The time to eliminate the CCA classification is long overdue. If we want people to seek positions and make their careers in the Postal Service, we have to make them career employees, with adequate and attractive wages and benefits. Anything short of that will leave us with the current transient workforce that has hampered our ability to serve the public and maintain a viable Postal Service.

In order to attract workers and ask them to make a career of the Postal Service we also have to guarantee their safety. The recent surge in violence against letter carriers is unacceptable and must be addressed in a serious and urgent manner. Our current members deserve nothing less, and potential employees will not seek jobs in which their lives are at risk every day just by going to work.

The intimidation and disrespect that has been the managerial "style" of too many managers in the Postal Service has been discussed over and over the last several contract negotiations. The time for real action rather than task force discussion is now. No self respecting person will accept a job in which they are treated as less than human rather than the most valuable asset in the Postal Service. A strong message with serious consequences must come from the top down. It is my sincere hope that all of these issues will be address in our new National Agreement.

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

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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

April 5, 2023
May 3, 2023
June 7, 2023

SPECIAL EVENTS

Retirement Training
March 19, 2023

Retiree Breakfast - South
May 16, 2023

NALC Food Drive
May 13, 2023

John Sheridan
MDA Day at the Races
May 21, 2023

Scholarship Night
June 7, 2023

**NJ Merged Branch 38
Web Site**

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

MDA 2023 Kick-Off



Executive Vice President

by *Dan Szucs*

I would like to start off my article by thanking all carriers of Branch 38 for their hard work and dedication in making the 2022 peak parcels season another success. UPS, FEDEX and Amazon could not keep up with the carriers and their performance. A job well done!

The NALC was the first national sponsor of MDA in 1953, and MDA continues to be the NALC's official charity. NJ Merged Branch 38 has led the nation year after year in its contribution to this great cause. This January, at the Branch 38 Shop Steward Training Seminar in Atlantic City, we kicked off our MDA fundraising events with the 6th Annual Shamrocks for MDA in Honor of Robert Paccioretti.

Who is Robert Paccioretti? Robert served six years in the US Navy and then joined the Postal Service in 1979 as a Letter Carrier in Garfield, NJ. Bob served on the Dispute Resolution Step B Team from March 2004 until his passing. Bob was truly dedicated to this process, the USPS, and NALC. I never knew a more honest, dedicated, caring man. There are not enough good adjectives to describe Bob. He would bring clothes and food to those in need and would reach in his own pocket to buy food for the hun-

gry and take care of people that couldn't take care of themselves. He was truly a humble person!

Bob was a religious man as well and almost became a priest. We all thought that he may have missed his calling. He really didn't miss his calling though. He helped more people than we'll ever know. He touched their lives and made them better for it. I know he did mine.

Many years ago, Bob began a tradition at the Garfield Post Office and in his hometown of Clifton. He sold MDA Shamrocks at various bars and restaurants and contributed the money to MDA as part of Branch 38's fund raising efforts. Bob's Shamrock campaign was extraordinarily successful over the years and became a tradition. In fact, some of the establishments continued the sales of the Shamrocks even after Bob's passing.

During the first four years of this fundraiser, you helped raise \$32,300.00. Last year, we were looking to raise \$1.00 more than the previous year. The members of Branch 38 answered the call and raised over \$13,000.00, much more than the previous year. The officers and staff of NJ Merged Branch 38 have continued the tradition in honor of Bob. We are asking all of Branch 38 Shop Stewards to sell the Shamrocks to the carriers in their offices, and to place the Shamrocks on the Union bulletin boards. Each Shamrock will cost \$5.00 and will be proudly displayed in every office of Branch 38 through the month of March. The officers and staff of NJ Merged Branch 38 believe that the annual Shamrock campaign in Bob Paccioretti's name is a fitting way to honor his memory.

Throughout the year Branch 38 will be holding many other fundraising events as well. Blackjack Mulligan's Shot for MDA, John Sheridan Day at the Races, Spring Golf Outing, The Charles Connell Annual Golf Outing, Jets Tickets Raffle, and our Annual Beefsteak Dinner. You will find information on these events in this Sentinel, on our website, and on the Branch 38 Facebook page. Thank you for your support for all of these efforts.

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.

Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive May 13, 2023

Branch 38 is proud to participate in this year's Food Drive as part of our essential role in the communities we serve. It is important that we continue to do our part to provide assistance to those experiencing hard times and are in need. We ask all of our members to do all they can to make this another successful Food Drive. Please contact your Area Representative if you would like to become more involved.

You Should Know The Rules



Treasurer

by Joe Rutkoski

Just because management claims that something is ok to do, that doesn't necessarily mean that it really is. Over the years I have heard of management instructing carriers to do things that they really shouldn't do. Let's look at some examples.

Not attempting parcels: With the huge increase in parcels, some carriers are pressured to speed it up by just leaving them at the door without attempting to deliver them first. A variation of this is the so-called "knock and drop," in which carriers are told to knock on the door but not wait for the customer to answer before leaving the parcel on the doorstep. This is a violation of Section 321.4 of the M-41 which states, "If a parcel does not fit completely within the mail receptacle or parcel locker (when available), determine if someone is available at the address by ringing the doorbell or knocking on the door." These instructions make it clear that delivery must be attempted at the customer's door. Only after it is clear no one is home are carriers authorized to leave the parcel in a protected location or leave notice.

Section 322.311a of the M-41 states: Parcels must not be left in an unprotected location such as a porch unless the mailer participates in the carrier release program by endorsing the package "Carrier-Leave If No Response" or the addressee has given written directions for an alternate delivery location. Examples of protected locations are a locked vestibule, locked hallway, with the doorman of an apartment building, inside a storm door of a residence, etc. Thus, carriers may leave a parcel in an unprotected location when it is endorsed by the mailer "Carrier—Leave If No Response," or in a protected location, such as at the manager's office of an apartment building, but only after attempting delivery at the customer's door.

Skipping Blocked Mailboxes: Some offices have a policy of skipping delivery when the mailbox is blocked by a car or some other obstruction. Carriers are told to bring the mail back and mark it as "box blocked." It is not delivered until the obstruction is removed. This practice is also not ok. Postal Operations Manual

(POM), Section 632.14 states: Where the approach to the mail receptacle located at the curb is temporarily blocked by a parked vehicle during normal delivery hours for the area, or snow or ice hampers the approach to the mailbox, the carrier normally dismounts to make delivery. If the carrier continually experiences a problem in serving curb line boxes and where the customer is able to control on-street parking in front of his or her mailbox but does not take prompt corrective action after being properly notified, the postmaster may, with the approval of the district manager, withdraw delivery service.

The POM makes it clear that if a box is blocked, the carrier must dismount to deliver the mail. This applies whether the box is blocked by a vehicle, a trash can, or even snow. Delivery is withheld only if the problem is continual, i.e., repeated over a period of time, not on an occasional basis. Additionally, the customer also must have some control or ability to do something about the obstruction. Even then, delivery can be withheld only if the customer fails to remove the obstruction after being properly notified and only if the postmaster has the approval of the district manager. Obviously if dismounting the vehicle to make the delivery would create a safety hazard, then the delivery should not be made and the carrier should notify management of the hazard by filling out a PS Form 1767 Report of Hazard, Unsafe Condition or Practice.

Leaving the Vehicle in Gear When Making Mounted Deliver-ies: Management often gives this instruction when the carriers are being inspected or observed because it takes less time. Postal regulations require that carriers take the vehicle out of gear and place the transmission in either park or neutral when making a curbside delivery. M-0994 National Level Step 4 provides: "...employees performing curbside delivery, from right hand drive vehicles, shall follow the procedures of: (1) on level streets or roads, placing the vehicle in neutral (N), placing the foot firmly on the brake pedal while collecting mail or placing mail in the mail box; (2) on hills, placing the vehicle in park (P), placing the foot firmly on the brake pedal while collecting mail or placing mail in the mail box." Most carriers are unaware of this requirement. "When delivering curbside mailboxes, place vehicle in neutral on level ground or in park when on a hill." The reason is to prevent injury should the vehicle accidentally move while a carrier's arm is extended into the mailbox.

If any of the examples listed above are happening in your of-fice, you should tell your shop steward or Area Representative about it. Management should be required to abide by their own regulations and cease instructing carriers to violate them. If management claims that there's a past practice of doing otherwise, tell them that a past practice does not override the clear and unambiguous language of their own regulations that are written in their own manuals.

PS Form 3971 - Get Paid!



Director of City Delivery

by Mark McGrady

The Branch has been experiencing an increase in the number of carriers not being paid when they call out sick from work. One of the reasons for not being paid is that the carrier failed to fill out and submit the PS Form 3971, Request for or Notification of Absence.

The PS Form 3971 must be filled out when a carrier requests any type of leave, whether that leave is annual, sick, leave without pay, or late. You must fill the form out completely and sign it. You should fill the form out in duplicate, so you have proof that you requested the leave. After completing the PS Form 3971, submit it to your supervisor and make sure the supervisor signs it, acknowledging that you submitted it and the date you submitted it. After submitting your leave request, make sure that management approves your request. If they do not approve your request for leave you should question why they did not approve it. If your request for leave is denied you should see your Shop Steward.

Article 10 of the National Agreement explains the type of leave you can request.

Annual Leave: Annual leave is paid vacation time.

Emergency Annual Leave: In an emergency, a carrier need not obtain advance approval for leave, but must notify management as

soon as possible about the emergency and the expected duration of the absence. The carrier must submit PS Form 3971, explain the reason for the absence to the supervisor as soon as possible, and provide documentation of the emergency.

Sick Leave. Article 10.5 provides for the continuation of the sick leave program, whose detailed regulations are contained in ELM Section 513. Section 513.1 defines sick leave as leave which “insures employees against loss of pay if they are incapacitated for the performance of duties because of illness, injury, pregnancy and confinement, and medical (including dental or optical) examination or treatment.” Letter carriers apply for sick leave either in advance or after returning to work by submitting a PS Form 3971. When an employee has an unexpected need for sick leave, he or she must notify the appropriate postal authorities as soon as possible of the illness or injury and the expected duration of the absence. Upon returning to work, the employee must submit a PS Form 3971.

On the PS Form 3971 under types of leave you will see Holiday/AL Lv Exch. This is an option a carrier may take if they work on a Holiday and wish to be credited with Annual Leave in lieu of payment for the day as explained in Article 11 Section 3.A Payment. An employee shall receive holiday pay at the employee’s base hourly straight time rate for the number of hours equal to the employee’s regular daily working schedule, not to exceed eight (8) hours. Effective with the 2021 Independence Day holiday, employees who work their holiday, at their option, may elect to have their annual leave balance credited with up to eight (8) hours of annual leave in lieu of holiday leave pay.

It is important to remember that in any dispute regarding payment of leave the controlling document will be the PS Form 3971. When a request is disapproved on the 3971, the union can challenge it immediately, rather than wait until the employee is not paid. If the request is approved and the employee does not receive payment for the requested leave, the union can request a salary advance and initiate a grievance if necessary. In all cases, it is critical that we have a 3971 with the appropriate action taken and the supervisor’s signature.

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.

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.

NJ Merged Branch 38 *Retiree Breakfast South*

On Tuesday, May 16, 2023, at 10:00 AM, NJ Merged Branch 38 will be holding our annual Retiree Breakfast in the Southern section 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. Also invited are Brian Renfroe, NALC President and Bruce Didriksen, Region 15 NBA. 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 NALC and 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 three Retiree Breakfasts - South, and are happy that it has become an annual event on the Branch 38 calendar. Hope to see you there.

Retirement Seminar

Sunday, March 19, 2023
10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

WOODBIDGE ELKS LODGE #2116
665 RAHWAY AVENUE
WOODBIDGE, 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 what information you will need to complete 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.

John Sheridan

MDA Day at the Races

Sunday, May 21, 2023

Monmouth Park Race Track
175 Oceanport Ave, Oceanport, NJ

\$70.00 Per Person Includes:

Admission & Program

Food Provided by Twin Oaks Caterer

BBQ Ribs, Fried Chicken, Sausage & Peppers

Corn On The Cob, Grilled Vegetables, Potatoes

Cole Slaw, Salad, Fruit Salad

Corn Bread, Biscuits, Desert

Iced Tea, Lemonade

BYOB

For Tickets Call

Armando Pedreira: 973-564-7244 (Ext.19)

or Contact Your Area Rep

All Proceeds Go Directly to MDA

LCPF - Every Dollar Helps



**Corresponding
Secretary**

by Christine Strasser

If you opened the February 2023 issue of *The Postal Record* expecting to read the national officer's monthly articles, state summaries, and branch summaries, there were none. The February *Postal Record* is dedicated to the Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF). You may be wondering why the LCPF is so important. The Postal Service is governed by legislation generated and approved by both Houses of the United States Congress, subject to the approval of the President of the United States. Any legislation passed in the Congress has a direct effect on the Postal Service, our collective bargaining, our health benefits, and our retirement benefits. How do we ensure we are protected in Congress? By contributing to the LCPF.

The LCPF is a political action committee for letter carriers. Through the National Association of Letter Carriers, the LCPF supports both Democrats, Republicans, and Independents. With over 290,000 active and retired letter carriers located in every state, the NALC has the ability to maintain relationships with members on both sides of the aisle in Congress and across the entire political spectrum. Members of Congress have one common and obvious goal; to win an election. In order to achieve that goal, the candidates need votes and money. As a large and diverse organization, the NALC represents a very significant number of votes. As political activists, we control a significant amount of money through our Letter Carrier Political Fund. As such, we have the ability to have an impact on who gets elected, and what issues they support.

While only ten percent of NALC members contributed to LCPF, in April of 2022, H. R. 3076, Postal Reform Act was signed into law by President Biden. This groundbreaking legislation supports the interests of active and retired members. The current legislation includes the repeal of mandating the postal service to prefund retiree health benefits in advance, a minimum delivery of mail and packages for six days, and integration of postal annuitants into Medicare beginning in the year of 2025.

The 117th Congress came close to passing the Social Security Fairness Act, which would have repealed the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision. These two provisions reduce or eliminate Social Security Benefits for letter carriers who retire under the Civil Service Retirement System. This bill has been reintroduced in the current Congress.

Another major bill which is expected to be reintroduced in the current Congress is the Federal Retirement Fairness Act. This bill would allow postal employees to make catch-up retirement contributions for time spent as non-career employees. The non-career employees were previously casuals, transitional employees, and currently city carrier assistants (CCA's).

Bi-partisan support is important. For some time now, Congress has been unable to work efficiently. The inefficiency causes filibusters, during which no legislation can be passed. When either the House of Representatives or the Senate cannot agree on legislation, the American public suffers. It took nearly thirteen years to achieve sufficient bi-partisan support to pass postal reform. This was made possible only through contributions to the LCPF in order to elect both democrats and republicans who support postal reform and maintaining a strong United States Postal Service.

Contributing to the LCPF can be made through payroll deductions, automatic deductions from a bank account, annuity deductions, or a one-time donation. The contribution does not have to be large, every dollar counts. Imagine if every NALC member contributed a small amount. It would go a long way to ensure that bills supported by NALC would pass. There is other legislation that will need to be reintroduced for the Postal Service to maintain and secure our futures as letter carriers. Whether you are retired or active, contributing to the LCPF is essential for successful support of any future legislation. If we can increase from ten percent to twenty-five percent contributing to LCPF, the future of the Postal Service, our collective bargaining, our health benefits, and our retirement benefits could be secure well into the future.

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.

NALC Health Benefits Highlights



by Pete Bednarz

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

This article is written for all the Branch 38 members who are enrolled in the NALC High Option Health Plan. I will go over some of the many highlights included in the plan. Our plan is union-operated, union owned, and not-for-profit. While other plans are designed to make a profit, the NALC health plan was formed over 60 years ago as a benefit for all NALC union members. This is the reason that the NALC health plan can keep the premiums lower than most FEHB plans. If you have a different health insurance plan, compare some of these benefits and highlights so that you can decide during the next open season if you need to make changes in health coverage.

Telehealth or Telemental: These are virtual visits from your home or wherever you are with licensed physicians, nurse practitioners, psychiatrists, or psychologists. Simply download the app on your phone. You will save the time of scheduling appointments, driving to a doctor, and waiting in line. You will also save money as the copayments are \$10.00 instead of the \$25.00 you would pay for a doctor's visit. You can easily be treated for minor conditions such as allergies, sinus problems, abrasions, minor wounds, or mental health treatments. Your online physician can easily send any prescriptions to your local pharmacy and provide written documentation of your inability to work.

Hello Heart: Enables you to measure your blood pressure using a Free FDA cleared monitor and allows you to send the data privately to your doctor. This program empowers you to improve your lifestyle through coaching on your smart phone or tablet. You will have access to the most advanced hypertension management tools on the market and best of all it's free. Any NALC health Benefit plan member with blood pressure readings of 130/80 mmHg or above, or those taking blood pressure medication are eligible to enroll. To enroll, go to www.join.helloheart.com/NALC or text NALC to 75706.

Hinge Health: This is a virtual Musculoskeletal program that offers a convenient way to help you overcome back and joint pain, avoid surgeries, and reduce medication usage. This is all from the comfort of your home and is free to you and your dependents aged 18 and older. Depending on the treatment you need, you may receive access to a personal care team including a physical therapist and health coach. You will also receive a tablet and wearable sensors that guide you through the exercises. If you have pain and issues with your back,

neck, shoulders, hips, arms or legs, this program may be just what you need to avoid surgeries. Simply download the Hinge Health app or go to www.hingehealth.com/nalc, and you can get access to video visits with your care team.

Real Appeal: This is a proven online weight management program available to you and your family members for free as part of your health benefit plan. The program offers group and one-on-one personalized coaching through an online platform. It focuses on weight loss through proper nutrition, exercise, sleep, and stress management. You will have access to a coach and online tools to help track food and activity. Members will receive a food and weight scale, resistance band, workout DVD's, and much more for free. You can enroll in this program at www.nalchbp.org

Quitting Tobacco Use: This cost free program offers a variety of tools to help you quit smoking. It includes a coach who will work with you to create an individualized plan to create a successful quitting process. You can also receive free nicotine replacement therapy products such as gum or patches. To get started, go to www.quitnow.net/nalc

Health Assessment: This is an online tool that analyzes your response to health related questions and gives you a personalized plan to achieve specific health goals. It simply takes 10 minutes to answer questions about your health status. Go to www.nalchbp.org and search for Health Assessment. As a bonus for being proactive you will be offered valuable incentives. You can choose one of the following:

1. Free Fitbit (wearable activity tracking device) Limit of 2 devices per enrollment.
2. Two \$25.00 PPO medical office visit copayments will be waived.
3. Earn \$30.00 in health savings rewards.
4. Be enrolled in the CignaPlus Savings discount dental program.

If you are an NALC Health Benefit member, you have valuable resources to utilize in today's technology. The above highlights are just some of the many different options available to you. Take the time to go to the website and research the benefits that are offered to keep you and your family members healthy throughout the years.

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

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

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

NALC Disability Insurance



**Recording
Secretary**

by Roy Jancio

The NALC Individual Disability Income, was introduced because Letter Carriers do not qualify for state disability, therefore, members only have sick leave and annual leave if they get hurt or sick off the job. Non-Federal workers and employers pay into the NJ State Disability fund, therefore, they are covered under state disability. Federal workers and employers do not, and this is why the NALC has rolled out the Individual Disability Income Insurance.

Letter carriers need this insurance. Letter carriers may exhaust their sick leave and annual leave due to injury or illnesses over time and then have no other source of income when they are unable to work. Some carriers may have sick leave but need this insurance to make up for lost overtime needed to pay bills.

This insurance is perfect for CCAs because they do not earn sick leave. Finally, OWCP claims can take forever to be approved. NALC Disability Insurance acts as an extra benefit when carriers are hurt on the job. If you are one of the people mentioned above, this disability income insurance is for you.

These are the qualifications to be eligible to purchase NALC Individual Disability Income Insurance:

- 1) You must be an NALC member, meaning every NALC member qualifies, including CCAs.
- 2) Any member can join up to the age of 59. Coverage lasts to the age of 65.
- 3) When picking a policy there are three monthly payable amounts to choose from and they are \$650, \$1350, and \$2000 a month. These are the amounts you will be paid if you are out of work for illness or injury. Depending on your age and the payable monthly payment the member will have a bi-weekly premium anywhere from \$11 to \$54. Your bi-weekly premium will always stay the same from the day you signed up. The premium comes directly from the members' paycheck. Whatever payable amount the member chooses will be paid to the mem-

ber tax free if injured or sick.

4) Premiums will be paid to any doctor authorized medical condition that causes a member to miss more than 14 days of work. The policy will additionally cover them when out on Workers' Compensation at the same payable amounts.

5) Filing a claim is easy! The member must complete one section of the form, the doctor another and management another. The policy reviewer from the plan will be looking for the first day the employee was out of work and an approximate date the member will return to work and possible pre-existing injuries.

This policy was designed to help NALC members with all of the issues listed above and many more. The MBA also has many other products and services such as Life Insurance (Many options), Hospital Plus and MBA Retirement Savings Plans (Many options including CCAs). If you have any questions about any of the products and services the MBA has to offer, please contact Roy Jancio at 973-564-7244 (Ex. 24).

Spring MDA Golf Outing

Monday, June 19, 2023

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)**

Retiree Corner



**Director
of
Retirees**

by Ron Villegas

Congratulations to everyone who retired in 2022 and in the first few months of 2023. You have put in your time and paid your dues, both literally and figuratively. It's time now for you to enjoy the benefits that you earned through your years of service. The NALC encourages you to continue your union membership by reducing the dues structure for retirees to only ten dollars per year and by continuing to improve our NALC health plan and MBA programs to better serve our active and retired members.

The NALC also recognizes members who have been members for twenty-five years or more. If you have been an NALC member for twenty-five years or more, contact me at (973) 564-7244, ext. 21 or email to rvillegas@branch38.org, and we will get you the appropriate membership recognition award.

Also, as a reminder to recent retirees, once OPM issues your CSA (Civil Service Annuity) number, you should sign back up for the Letter Carrier Political Fund. It is especially important for retirees because unfortunately many of the hard-earned benefits we enjoy as retirees could be legislated away. If you have any questions or need help signing back up, contact me at the branch office.

We are holding our next retirement seminar on Sunday, March 19th 10 A.M. at the Woodbridge Elks Lodge #2116, 665 Rahway Avenue. We will be covering everything you need to know to prepare for retirement in the coming years. If you would like to attend you can RSVP by March 10th to Dan Szucs at dszucs@branch38.org, or leave a message at (973) 563-7244 (Ext.13). Please include the proper spelling of your name, your office, your phone number, and let us know if you will be bringing a guest.

The Retiree Breakfast South will be held on Tuesday, May 16th, 10 A.M. at the Tom's River Elks Lodge 1875 at 600 Washington Street, Toms River. It's a great chance to get together with old friends and get the latest information about NALC and the Postal Service. If you would like to attend, you can RSVP by May 5th to rvillegas@branch38.org or by leaving a message at (973) 563-7244, ext.21.

Our annual Retiree Breakfast North will be held at The Chandelier in Bellville at 9 A.M. on October 22. Save the date!

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.

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.

NJ Merged Branch 38 Scholarship Application

2023 SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

NJ Merged Branch 38 is proud to announce that we are now accepting applications for our 38th 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 7, 2023 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, 2023**

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.