

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



THE SENTINEL

March 2020



President

**Safety
First**

by Mike O'Neill

Since the beginning of this year, we have had four rollaway/runaway accidents in our Branch. Fortunately, there were no injuries. Unfortunately, four of our members are facing serious disciplinary action as a result of these accidents. We will handle the grievances for the discipline issued for each of those accidents on their own merits. I sympathize with each of those members, because they had no intention of being a part of a serious accident when they went to work in the morning.

I bring these accidents to your attention for the sole purpose of imploring all of our members to follow the proper parking procedure every time you leave the driver's seat of your vehicle. We've all heard the procedure hundreds of times, but safety is about good habits and reminding each other the importance of working safe.

Every time you leave the seat of your postal vehicle, put the gear shift in park. Make sure it is securely in park. Engage the hand break. When you inspect your vehicle in the morning, make sure the hand brake holds with the vehicle in drive and reverse and your foot off the break. If it doesn't, write the vehicle up and don't use it until it is repaired. Curb your wheels in the appropriate direction, depending on the incline of the street. Curb them every time you leave your seat. Turn the vehicle off and take the keys out of the ignition. Take them every time, with no exceptions.

Please, take the time to park your vehicle properly every time. You do not want to go home one evening and explain to your family that you may lose your job because you were in too much of a hurry to park your vehicle properly. You certainly don't want to go home and explain to your family that someone was seriously injured because you were in too much of a hurry to park properly. Imagine how either of those scenarios would make you feel.

We have also had at least two of our members struck while crossing the street on foot by moving vehicles. Although both of those carriers appear to have been doing everything correctly, their accidents serve as a reminder of how important it is to constantly be aware of your surroundings and minimize any distractions. If you are in the habit of having ear buds in your ear to talk on the phone or listen to music, please, stop it now. The phone call can wait. We've all heard about how important it is to drive defensively. The same applies to walking. We cannot count on everyone else to look out for us. Distracted drivers and walkers are a fact of life in 2020. We have to be sure that we do not become their victims.

Every safety rule and regulation is put into place for the well being of every employee and the customers we serve. Take each of them seriously, and take the time to adhere to them. I am aware of the pressure put on everyone to get the job done as fast as possible. That is never an excuse for ignoring safety. We can never forget that, and we should remind management whenever they forget it.

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

**Your Job is in
Jeopardy!!!**

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

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	Financial Secretary
Pete Bednarz	Full-Time Area Rep
Roy Jancio	Sergeant-At-Arms
Ron Villegas	Director of Retirees

BRANCH 38 TRUSTEES

Keith Hemmings	Richard O'Connell Jr.
Joseph Otero	Armando Pedreira
	Dominic Walton

PART TIME AREA REPRESENTATIVES

Clint Colie	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 1, 2020
May 6, 2020
June 3, 2020

SPECIAL EVENTS

Shamrocks for MDA
January-March, 2020

Retiree Luncheon
April 26, 2020

NALC Food Drive
May 9, 2020

MDA Day at the Races
May 17, 2020

Scholarship Night
June 3, 2020

**NJ Merged Branch 38
Web Site**

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

PDI's & Weingarten



Executive Vice President

by Dan Szucs

Prior to issuing discipline, management is obligated to conduct a thorough investigation. This includes getting the employee's side of the story. This will normally take the form of a pre-disciplinary interview (PDI) or an investigatory interview (II). If you are brought in for one of these type of interviews, there is no doubt that your supervisor or manager is looking for information to use against you in some level of discipline.

All letter carriers, including CCAs, have Weingarten Rights. Weingarten Rights provide that you have the right to have a union representative present during any meeting that could lead to discipline. Stewards are permitted to assist you in any investigation by management, and help ensure that you get your "day in court."

If called into a meeting with management, U.S. Postal Inspectors, or an Office of Inspector General (OIG) agent, read the following statement to the person you are meeting with before the meeting starts: "If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated, or affect my personal working conditions, I respectfully request that my union representative, officer, or steward be present at this meeting. Without my Union representation present, I respectfully choose not to answer any questions or participate in this discussion."

Weingarten Rights have been afforded to employees as the result of a federal labor law created as the result of a 1975 ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court. The Weingarten Rule gives every employee the right to representation during any investigatory interview, which he or she reasonably believes may lead to discipline. This rule applies during any investigatory interview, conducted by any level manager, which could lead to discipline. Investigatory questions might be posed during a closed door meeting, through a text message, a phone conversation or through an informal conversation at the supervisor's desk. In any situation, don't answer any questions without union representation if you suspect that discipline could result. Invoke your Weingarten right to representation.

Whether or not your belief is "reasonable" depends on the circumstances of each case. Some cases are obvious, such as when a supervisor asks an employee if he discarded deliverable mail. Generally, if you are asked a question concerning something you allegedly did wrong, you should assume that discipline could result, and you should request a steward.

Your steward cannot exercise Weingarten Rights on your behalf, and the employer is not required to inform you of your Weingarten right to representation. You must ask for representation. You can ask at any point during an interview, even if you didn't ask for it in the beginning. No matter how smart you think you are, no matter how innocent you are, you should never, under any circumstance, participate in an investigative interview without a steward present.

ELM Section 665.3 requires all postal employees to cooperate with postal investigations, and the Postal Service may take disciplinary action against an employee when he or she fails to cooperate during a normal investigatory interview. This would appear to put the employee in an impossible position. Should an employee answer questions, even if the answers may result in criminal charges, or should the employee refuse to answer, risking the possibility of discipline for "failure to cooperate" in an investigation? That is exactly why it is critical that you invoke your Weingarten rights, and ask to have a steward present before answering any questions. If a steward is not provided after you have asked for representation, you may respond that you will be happy to cooperate in any investigation, but you will only answer questions once a steward is provided.

Stay as calm and relaxed as possible. Remember what your rights are, and request a shop steward immediately. The steward is entitled to know what the meeting is about, and has the right to speak with you in private before the meeting or at any time during the meeting. Management is required to conduct a thorough investigation, and the burden of proof rests on their shoulders. Most importantly, you are entitled to representation.

**Check Out The New
Branch 38
Facebook Page**

"NJ Merged Branch 38"

Shamrocks for MDA
In Honor Of
Bob Paccioretti

Third Annual Shamrocks for MDA fund raiser in honor of Bob Paccioretti. Bob was a leader and loyal supporter of Branch 38, especially our efforts in support of MDA.

We lost Bob on March 23, 2017 to a battle with cancer. Each year Bob would ask various businesses in his community to sell Shamrocks for MDA. He would raise several hundred dollars each year.

We have continued this tradition in Bob's memory, selling Shamrocks in the Post Offices in Branch 38, raising over \$16,000 during the past two years. You can support this effort by contacting your Shop Steward or Area Rep, or by mailing in a contribution to the Branch office.

Start St. Patrick's Day Early
Take a Shot for MDA

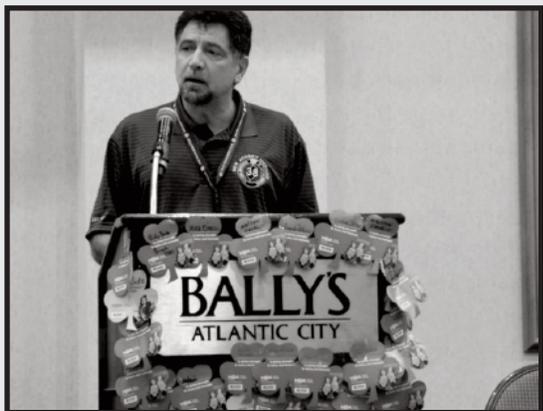
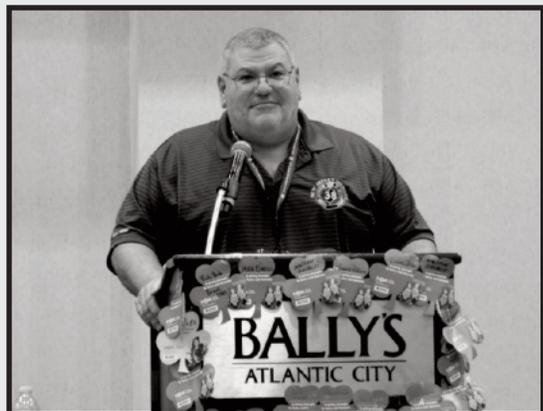
Blackjack Mulligan's Public House
 279 Passaic St., Garfield, NJ

Sunday, March 8, 2020
 3:00-9:00 PM

Buy a \$5.00 Shot of Black Jack Mulligan's
 Homemade Apple Pie Cider
 and
 All \$5.00 Will Go Directly to MDA

There Will be a DJ & Live Music
 Raffle Prizes & 50/50

Check Out the Web Site for the Menu
blackjackmulligans.com



MDA Day at the Races

Monmouth Park Race Track
 175 Oceanport Ave, Oceanport, NJ

Sunday, May 17, 2020
 Gates Open at 11:30 AM
 First Race is at 12:50 PM

\$50.00 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

NJ Merged Branch 38

Retiree Breakfast South

On Tuesday, May 12, 2020, at 10:00 AM, NJ Merged Branch 38 will be holding our third 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.

Membership Recognition

The NALC provides lapel pins in recognition for membership of 25 years or more, 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.



Joseph Longo, of the Orange, NJ Post Office, receiving his plaque commemorating 70 years as a member of the NALC.

John Vaccaro, of the Newark, NJ Post Office, receives his Gold Card, commemorating 50 years as a member of the NALC.



Report Unsafe Conditions



Director
of
City
Delivery

by Mark McGrady

Letter carriers have many duties and responsibilities, as outlined in the M-41 Handbook. One of those responsibilities is to report any and all hazards and unsafe conditions and practices to our immediately supervisors.

The best way to report a hazard, unsafe condition or practice is to fill out a PS Form 1767. As provided for in the Employee & Labor Relations Manual, this form is designed to encourage employee participation in the Postal Service Safety and Health Program, and to provide prompt action when employees report a hazard. This form provides a channel of communication between employees and management that promotes a prompt analysis and response with corrective action to reports of alleged hazards, unsafe conditions, or unsafe practices. Although you are not required to fill out this form, it is a great way to start a paper trail to be sure management corrects the hazardous condition.

The PS Form 1767 is broken down into 4 sections:

First, The Employee Action, Area. You want to be specific about where the location of the hazard is, describe what the hazard is and what you believe could correct the hazard. Complete section I., and file it with your immediate supervisor. If you desire anonymity, complete section I. (including your name) and file the report with the Safety Office. Safety personnel will immediately return the form to your supervisor for necessary action, and will delete your name from the form to ensure your anonymity.

Second, Supervisor Action Taken. Management must investigate the alleged hazard during the same tour of duty in which the report was received. They are required to abate the hazard if it is within the scope of their authority to do so. They also must record the action taken to eliminate the hazard or record recommendation for corrective action in section II, and sign their name. They should forward the original and yellow copy to their immediate

supervisor (approving official); send the pink copy to the Safety Office; and give the employee the remaining blue copy as a receipt. It is their responsibility to monitor the status of the report, at all times, until the hazard is abated.

Third, Approving Official's Action. They must initiate an action to eliminate or minimize the hazard. If this results in the submission of a work order, attach the original of this form, and forward through channels, to the manager, Plant Maintenance. If they determine that there are no reasonable grounds to believe a hazard exists, they must notify the employee in writing within 15 calendar days. Safety personnel will assist them in this determination when requested. If the hazard was abated by the first line supervisor, or when it has been abated through the approving official's actions, notify the employee in writing, and send the original of this form to the Safety Office.

Forth, Maintenance Action. When the work order has been completed they must, sign, date, and return the original of this form to the approving official who will then forward it to the Safety Office.

Your supervisors must maintain a supply of PS Forms 1767 in the workplace in a manner that provides employees with both easy and (if desired) anonymous access. Let's all keep each other safe and report any unsafe condition on a PS Form 1767.

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.

Beware of Scams



Treasurer

by Joseph Rutkoski

For the past several years the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has been warning participants and investors in the Thrift Savings Plan of scams targeting federal employees. SEC filed fraud charges against brokers posing as consulting groups for Federal Employees. These groups give the misleading impression that they are affiliated with or approved by the federal government or TSP.

The brokers convince federal employees to roll over holdings from their TSP accounts into higher-fee variable annuities. The brokers don't actually steal your money out of your TSP account, but earn millions in high commission cost that the federal employee gets stuck paying for when they switch the money out of their TSP accounts and into an account that the broker recommended. These are fees that the employee would have never incurred if they had just left the money in the TSP

According to SEC, the brokers managed to convince federal employees that they could offer advice about their retirement savings and TSP accounts. They sent TSP investors incomplete or modified transaction forms that didn't include information indicating that the investment was, in fact, privately issued and had no connection to the Thrift Savings Plan.

"These brokers were motivated by the prospects of higher commissions as they targeted federal employees age 59 and a half and over, and intentionally obscured important details when recommending variable annuity purchases," Aaron Lipson, associated director of SEC's Atlanta Regional Office.

Another scam occurs when companies are offering cash payment in exchange for a portion, or all, of your future annuity payments generally much less than their long-term worth, and typically charging high interest rates and fees. OPM has specifically received numerous phone calls from one company in particular asking to not just verify annuity amounts, but also banking

information, including routing numbers and account numbers. OPM's suspicions were confirmed by its Inspector General's office who discovered this company is currently under investigation by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB). CFPB lists several things you can do to protect your retirement annuity:

The following can be done to protect yourself:

1. Be skeptical of any phone call or message claiming to be affiliated or approved by the federal government. No federal agency, including the TSP, will reach out to a person to a push a specific product or service, Donley said. "If you receive a communication, whether it be a phone call or an email or a text saying, 'Hey, I'm from the government and I have a product for you,' that's a real red flag that something's wrong," he said. SEC suggests federal employees and retirees first contact the TSP to check the legitimacy of the offer.

2. Never give out personal information in these situations. Federal organizations won't ask for personally identifiable information, like an account number, password or Social Security number, on unsolicited phone calls or messages

3. Don't sign over control of your benefits. Companies sometimes arrange for monthly payments to be automatically deposited in a newly created bank account so the company can withdraw payments, fees and interest charges from the account. This leaves you with little control.

4. Don't buy life insurance that you don't want or need. Pension advance companies sometimes require consumers to sign up for life insurance with the company as the consumer's beneficiary. If you sign up for life insurance with the pension advance company as your beneficiary, you could end up footing the bill, whether you know it or not.

5. Go to <https://www.consumerfinance.gov/about-us/blog/consumer-advisory-3-pension-advance-traps-to-avoid> for more information. You can report any suspected scams to OPM's Office of Inspector General (OIG) at: OIG hotline number: 877-499-7295. Or Write To: OPM Office of the Inspector General 1900 E Street NW Room #6400 Washington, DC 20415-1100.

"Phishing" is another scam in which a target or targets are contacted by email, telephone or text message by someone posing as a legitimate institution to lure individuals into providing sensitive data such as personally identifiable information, banking and credit card details, and passwords. The information is then used to access important accounts and can result in identify theft and financial loss.

Discipline - Let Us Help



Financial Secretary

by Christine Strasser

It is not the intent of any letter carrier to be issued discipline at any point in their career. In fact, most employees can work their entire career without being disciplined. If, however, you are issued discipline, you should be aware of your rights under the contract, and how to protect them.

When you are issued discipline, your shop steward does not need to be present. Discipline can be referred to as the letter of charges. The issuance of discipline can be a meeting between the supervisor and the employee. The meeting should provide ample time for the employee to read the letter of charges. The employee should clearly understand what the charges, are and the level of discipline being issued. You should ask questions if you don't understand the charges, but don't get into an argument. We'll do that during the grievance procedure. You are not going to change their mind by arguing.

The supervisor will request the employee to sign the letter of charges. The employee's signature only provides management proof of receipt, it does not admit guilt of any of the charges listed. Contractually, an employee does not have to sign the letter of charges. If you choose to refuse to sign, it will be noted.

At this point, a copy of the discipline should be provided to the employee. If is not, request a copy. Ninety-nine percent of the time, the meeting does not take place as described above. The discipline is never read to the employee. It is handed to the employee before their tour or as their tour is ended, and a copy may not be provided. Make sure you obtain a copy. Management is not required to automatically provide a copy to the shop steward. Immediately submit a written request to see your shop steward.

National Agreement Article 15, Section 2(a) provides:

15.2 Section 2. Grievance Procedure—Steps Informal Step A (a) Any employee who feels aggrieved must discuss the grievance with the employee's immediate supervisor within fourteen (14) days of the date on which the employee or the Union first learned or may reasonably have been expected to have learned of its

cause. This constitutes the Informal Step A filing date. The employee, if he or she so desires, may be accompanied and represented by the employee's steward or a Union representative. During the meeting the parties are encouraged to jointly review all relevant documents to facilitate resolution of the dispute. The Union also may initiate a grievance at Informal Step A within 14 days of the date the Union first became aware of (or reasonably should have become aware of) the facts giving rise to the grievance. In such case the participation of an individual grievant is not required. An Informal Step A Union grievance may involve a complaint affecting more than one employee in the office.

It is imperative that the employee provide a copy of the letter of charges to the shop steward as soon as possible. The steward will request the necessary information regarding the discipline. In the request for information, the steward will request time to meet with the employee (now considered "the grievant"), review the information, and obtain a statement to add to the case file.

Discipline must be issued for "just cause." The "just cause" principle establishes a standard for any discipline or discharge of an employee. The principle requires "a fair and provable justification for discipline."

Article 16, Section 1 of the National Agreement provides:

In the administration of this Article, a basic principle shall be that discipline should be corrective in nature, rather than punitive. No employee may be disciplined or discharged except for just cause such as, but not limited to, insubordination, pilferage, intoxication (drugs or alcohol), incompetence, failure to perform work as requested, violation of the terms of this Agreement, or failure to observe safety rules and regulations. Any such discipline or discharge shall be subject to the grievance-arbitration procedure provided for in this Agreement, which could result in reinstatement and restitution, including back pay.

NALC President Rolando recently stated, "Discipline is a grave threat to a letter carrier's job security." Every carrier should remember this and take it to heart. Failing to grieve any discipline is a mistake. Discipline has levels and retention periods associated with it. If discipline is not brought to the attention of your shop steward and is not grieved, it will accumulate in an employee's eOPF file. As subsequent discipline is issued, it may lead to removal from the Postal Service. NALC stewards have been trained to protect letter carrier rights and fight against improper discipline. Take advantage of your rights and protections under the National Agreement. Do not ignore discipline. With the help of your shop steward and Branch officers, grieve any and all discipline issued to you.

How About a Big Pay Cut?



**Full-Time
Area Rep**

by Pete Bednarz

I know that most of you would agree that we worked too hard throughout our careers to allow the government to make drastic cuts in our paychecks without a fight. The White House recently released its FY 2021 budget proposal. As expected, the budget proposal does not favor the hard working postal employees and their paychecks. Some of the proposals are:

1. The budget asks for more than \$90 billion in cuts to USPS operations and workforce compensation over 10 years. Changes are based on the recommendations of the White House Postal Task Force, which include cuts to postal employee pay.

2. The budget calls for gradually equalizing employee and agency payroll contributions for pension benefits. This would raise the pension contributions of letter carriers by 1 percent of pay a year for up to six years, resulting in a take-home pay cut of up to \$3,700 annually after six years for active letter carriers.

3. For both active and retired federal employees, the budget proposes modifying the federal government's contribution to the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) so that federal employees pay more into the program. Being forced to pay more into our health benefit premiums reduces your take-home pay.

Congress has the power to impact our lives and future by voting to make drastic changes to the Postal Service. The current 2021 White House Budget Proposal call for these kinds of drastic changes that should put fear into every letter carrier in the country. Besides the pay cuts, current and future retirees would have their cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) slashed or eliminated. Active letter carriers would have their pensions cut by using the high 5 year average instead of the high 3 year average. The budget proposal also calls for eliminating the annuity supplement that covers the gap for employees who retire under FERS before they qualify for Social Security benefits at age 62.

Are you going to stand by and allow the government to cut your pay and benefits, or are you going to make a difference by joining the thousands of letter carriers who contribute to the Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF)? LCPF allows our Union members to make voluntary contributions through automatic payroll deductions to use for political purposes dealing with letter carrier issues. Without it, we would not have any resources to influence members of Congress to support our jobs and benefits. The LCPF has helped the NALC over the years, to develop and maintain relationships with members of Congress from both sides of the aisle as long as they support our issues. These friendships in Congress helped us defeat many House resolutions that would have hurt the USPS, and our jobs and benefits.

Just recently, on 2/5/2020, the House of Representatives passed the USPS Fairness Act (H.R. 2382) in a 309 to 106 vote. As letter carriers know, this bipartisan bill seeks to end the unreasonable mandate for the Postal Service to prefund retiree health care decades in advance.

Passage of H.R. 2382 is a tremendous achievement for letter carriers and the broader postal community. This is the first major piece of legislation tackling postal issues that has passed the House of Representatives since the 2006 passage of the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act, which forced the disastrous prefunding mandate onto our employer. Now that the bill has advanced through the House, it will be up to the Senate to take action on S. 2965, the bipartisan companion bill. Letter carriers should be ready to engage and educate their Senators and staff on the need to repeal the prefunding mandate.

Branch 38 leadership has made a strong commitment to educate our members on many issues. The Letter Carrier Political Fund is a top priority, which we bring up at every meeting and Branch function. The message is loud, clear and convincing. Just two years ago we had 6% of Branch 38 members participating in automatic LCPF payroll deductions. As we have educated our membership on the importance of having political allies, the percentage of Branch 38 letter carriers participating in LCPF has increased to 18.5%, with an average of \$5.00 dollars being deducted biweekly from their paycheck. We need everybody on board to fight for their wages and benefits. That starts by signing up for LCPF, so that we can have our political friends on both sides supporting our postal issues. Contact your shop steward, area representative or call 973-564-7244 Ext.23 to sign up.

Retirement Seminar
Sunday - March 29, 2020 - 9:00 AM
Woodbridge Elks
665 Rahway Ave., Woodbridge, NJ

Wanted - Food Drive Heros



Sergeant
at
Arms

by Roy Jancio

The 28th Letter Carrier Annual Food Drive is scheduled for May 9, 2020. Our communities and food pantries rely on the Letter Carrier Food Drive each year. Branch 38 is looking forward to leading the way, as it has in years past. Branch 38 is looking for individuals to do more than collect food donations on their routes. We are looking for Food Drive Heroes. Becoming a Food Drive Hero will do two things. First, it will promote the Letter carrier Food Drive. Second, it will show the public that letter carriers do more than just deliver mail. It will show that letter carriers are an important part of their community.

At the 2020 Shop Steward Training Seminar, Branch 38 rolled out a new Food Drive Hero Program. The program is designed to get more people involved. It's easy to become a Food Drive Hero, and does not take much time at all.

You ask, "how do I become a Food Drive Hero?" Well there are many ways. First, Branch 38 will be sending out letters to the mayors of all the towns in the Branch. We are asking you to contact them, the schools, churches or other organizations in town to help promote the Letter Carrier Food Drive. Get the town and organizations to post the food drive on town signage or bill boards.

Another great way is to utilize Facebook. Most towns and organizations have a Facebook page and website. Ask them to promote the Food Drive on their pages. Try to get as many people as you can involved in the Food Drive. One example of getting a school involved would be to get permission to have fliers sent home to the parents, and ask them to send in a canned food item with their child on the Friday before the Food Drive. The carriers will pick the donations up at the end of the day. This is a great way to collect donations, and to show the kids how to help the less fortunate people in their community.

Another way to get the word out is through media coverage, including social media. Town papers are a great way to get the word out. Invite the media (TV or newspaper) to the post office with the mayor and/or council members. Some towns have a local channel they use for town events and you could talk briefly about the food drive at the local Town Council Meeting.

Social media is an easy way to get the word out about the food drive. Almost everyone has Facebook, Instagram and/or Twitter. This is an easy way to spread the word. Send out a post or tweet daily two weeks before the Letter carrier Food Drive.

Equally important, if we have Letter Carrier Food Drive Heroes in every town it will show the community that the Letter Carriers do more than deliver mail. It will show that letter carriers are an integral part of their communities. This is very important because there are members in Congress that want to cut USPS jobs and/or privatize, and we need the support of the general public. Branch 38 is asking that every member do a little more to get the word out in order to have another successful Food Drive. Let's show the community we care about them in a time during which we may need them to support us in the not so distant future.

Finally, if you or someone you know is interested in being a Food Drive Hero, or if you see someone going above and beyond, let your area representative know right away. Branch 38 will recognize all the Heroes, but at least one will get the Branch 38 Food Drive Hero Award.

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. And one of the coolest features: 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.

Download The NALC Workhour Tracker App

The app allows real time basic clock ring entries such as "begin tour," "office and street moves" and "end tour." It will automatically calculate the number of hours of straight time, overtime and penalty time you should be paid each pay period based on the entries made. Once entries are made in the app, the data will be available in the Members Only portal, where it can be edited, and reports can be printed. Go to NALC.org for more information. This tool is made available by NALC to help to make sure our members are paid for the hours worked.

NJ Merged Branch 38 Scholarship Application

NJ Merged Branch 38 is proud to announce that we are now accepting applications for our 35th 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 3, 2020 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, 2020**

2020 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.