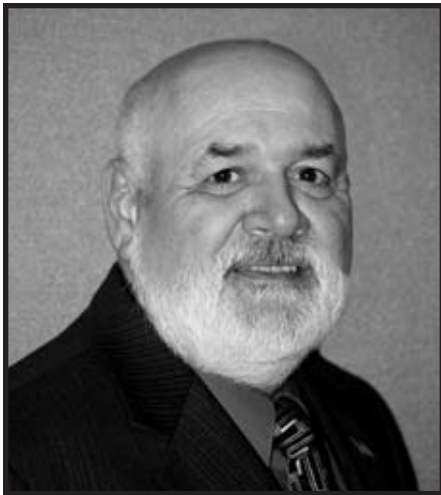


# THE SENTINEL

Volume XXXV, Issue 6, December 2009

## *The President's Report*



### *Pete Maglio, Branch President*

I would first like to thank the membership of Branch 38 for their continued support and trust. It is an honor and privilege to serve as President of Branch 38. At our October Branch Meeting, all incumbent officers were returned to their present positions by acclamation. Charles Connell was nominated and unopposed for the position of Director of Retirees/HBR. Brother Connell will be replacing James Eagan. Jim is retiring at the end of this current term after more than 30 years of dedicated union service.

**When I assumed the presidency in the beginning of 2009, I stated that there would be difficult times ahead. I had no idea how right I was. This past year we were confronted with further decreases in mail volume resulting in more adjustments and lost routes. District Offices in the Northeast Region have either closed or consolidated. Unemployment in our country has reached numbers not seen in three decades. Some market analysts project that things will continue to worsen in the job market before it gets better. Sadly, it seems certain that 2010 will bring additional hardship and challenges.**

**The implementation of Flat Sorting System (FSS), which is scheduled to come on line as early as January 16, 2010, will also bring new challenges. The carriers' office time will be reduced further. That will result in additional street time and more route adjustments. These changes make it even more important for carriers to work in a professional manner.**

**I know that letter carriers will meet the future challenges in the Postal Service head on, and we will adapt and persevere. Fortunately, we now have a labor friendly White House and Congress. Our negotiated benefits have not been lost or reduced. Most importantly, the economic downturn**

has not yet resulted in any letter carrier lay-offs.

**I am especially proud of the results of our efforts in COLCPE. Branch 38 began 2009 as one of the lower branches in COLCPE automatic contributions. We can now boast that we have become one of the best in the country. Our E-Activist volunteers have also climbed significantly.**

**Brother and sisters, we cannot afford to become complacent in our efforts. Contributions to COLCPE help re-elect our friends to congress and defeat those who oppose letter carriers' interests. COLCPE gives the NALC and all active and retired letter carriers a voice in Congress. We must be mindful of any legislation that is detrimental to the welfare of Postal workers and their families. Remember to sign-up and give to COLCPE. Give what you can. It all helps!**

**In closing, I would again like to say that it is an honor and privilege to serve as President of Branch 38. The prestige and welfare of its members will always be my first concern. On behalf of the officers, the Executive Board, and staff of NJ Merged Branch 38, I would like to wish all members and their families a very Happy, Safe, and Healthy Holiday Season.**

# 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

Pete Maglio	President
James Stasse	Executive Vice President
Paul Biggs	First Vice President/Treasurer
Michael O'Neill	Second Vice President
Tony Massa	Third Vice President
Ralph Silvestri	Director of City Delivery
John Sheridan	Corresponding Secretary
Pat Flannery	Recording Secretary
Jim Eagen	Director of Retirees/HBR
Peter Bednarz	Sergeant-At-Arms

### PART TIME AREA REPRESENTATIVES

Mark McGrady	Dan Szucs
Joe Rutkoski	John Dock

### BRANCH 38 TRUSTEES

Keith Hemmings	Richard Mitchell
Richard O'Connell Jr.	William Trudell
Dominic Walton	

### NATIONAL BUSINESS AGENT

Larry Cirelli 212-868-0284

### BRANCH 38 ATTORNEY

Donald Millman, Esq. 973-669-9776

### MUTUAL BENEFIT REPRESENTATIVE

Martin Spielman Jr.

## DATES TO REMEMBER

### BRANCH MEETINGS

January 6, 2010  
February 3, 2010  
March 3, 2010

### SPECIAL EVENTS

December 19, 2009  
Branch 38 Christmas Party

December 25, 2009  
Christmas Holiday

January 1, 2010  
New Year's Day

January 10-12, 2010  
Shop Steward Training

January 18, 2010  
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

February 15, 2010  
President's Day Holiday

**NJ Merged Branch 38  
Web Site**

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

# Health Benefits

## Open Season



**Jim Eagen**

**Health Benefit Plan**  
**Representative**

The NALC Health Benefit Plan picked up 26,000 new members during the 2008 open season. Those members were attracted by the reduction in out of pocket costs, lower premiums, and additional benefits offered by our Plan. We are hoping to do even better during this year's open season which runs from November 9 through December 14. The Plan has added even more benefits, continued to reduce out of pocket expenses, and maintained a competitive edge in premiums, when compared to our competitors.

Any NALC member who switches to our Plan from one of our competitors can realize an annual savings of more than \$1,200 in premiums. The 2010 bi-weekly NALC Health Benefit Plan premiums for active letter carriers are \$44.57 (self only) and \$86.11 (self and family). For annuitants, the monthly premium is \$147.00 (self only) and \$299.74 (self and family). These continue to represent substantial savings compared to other plans with similar benefits.

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***“I can't imagine a better time for all of our members to join together and make the NALC Plan even better than it already is.”***

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Listed below are some of the improved benefits new to the Plan in 2010:

**NALC will pay the Plan allowance for non-PPO pathologists, radiologists, and emergency room physicians at the PPO benefit level when the services are provided at a PPO Hospital**

**NALC will also pay the Plan allowance for non-PPO air ambulance at the PPO benefit level.**

**NALC added coverage for routine pap and chlamydial test for female dependent children under Preventative Care, Children benefit.**

**NALC added coverage for a routine human papillomavirus (HPV) test under the Preventive Care, Adult benefit.**

**NALC will cover the removal of impacted teeth that are not completely erupted under the Surgical Benefit.**

**NALC pays 100% of Plan allowance for immobilization by casting, splinting, or strapping of a sprain, strain, or fracture when you receive care within 72 hours of an accidental injury.**

**I encourage all letter carriers to consult your 2010 brochure for additional changes and comparisons. Remember, the NALC Health Benefit Plan is union run and operated for one express purpose; to provide the best possible health care coverage to our members. Other plans are operated to turn a profit. The NALC Plan has only the best interests of our members in mind.**

**This year the NALC Health Benefit Plan is celebrating sixty years of dedicated service to their members. I can't imagine a better time for all of our members to join together and make the NALC Plan even better than it already is.**

***NALC HEALTH BENEFIT PLAN***  
***LOWER PREMIUMS***  
***AND***  
***BETTER BENEFITS***

# *NJ Merged Branch 38* *Supports the First National* *NALC Bowl-A-Thon for MDA*

**On November 1, 2009, the NALC held the first annual National Bowl-A-Thon in support of MDA. Branch 38 was proud to participate and, as is our tradition, stepped up to help make this event a successful one. Thanks to the efforts of Chairman Paul Franco, and with the help of the members of Branch 38, we were able to raise nearly \$1,000 for Jerry's Kids. As always, it was the participation of the members from throughout the Branch that made the event a successful one.**

**Paul wanted to thank all of the members who came out to bowl, and all of the sponsors who contributed to the cause. He especially wanted to thank Keith Hemmings, Charlie Connell, and Pat Flannery for all of their help in putting the event together on very short notice. Special thanks go out to NALC Director of Health Benefits Tim O'Malley who stopped by to show his support and help out. Paul is already looking forward to next year, and the wheels are in motion to make next year's Bowl-A-Thon an even bigger success. Circle the first Sunday in November on your calendar and come out and join the fun.**



Bowl-A-Thon Chairman Paul Franco & Friends



Branch 38 bowlers welcome  
NALC Director of Health Benefits  
Tim O'Malley



Tim O'Malley, Paul Franco, and some en-  
thusiastic supporters are ready to roll for  
MDA.



Orange Letter Carriers showed  
their support for MDA.



East Orange Letter Carriers came  
out strong for Jerry's Kids.



Keith Hemmings and  
Tim O'Malley

# Branch 38 Columbus Day Golf Outing



**Co-chairs Charlie Connell & Mike O'Neill**

The twenty sixth annual Branch 38 Columbus Day Golf Outing was another unqualified success. We were honored by a visit from the NALC Director of Retired Members, Ernie Kirkland who expressed amazement at the extraordinary level of golf expertise demonstrated by the participants. Brother Kirkland was overheard to say, "I've never seen golf played like this in all my years of attending NALC tournaments."

A good time was had by all, and a nice piece of change was raised for MDA. Thanks go out to all of the carriers and friends who came out to play, and to the other Branches who sponsored holes and sent golfers to participate. Special thanks are in order to co-chairs Charlie Connell and Mike O'Neill, as well as Keith Hemmings who helped by selling 50/50 tickets and distributing the refreshments. We are especially grateful to Brother Kirkland for taking time out of his busy schedule to join in our efforts in support of MDA. You can't beat a good time with good friends for a good cause. Make a note on next year's calendar to come out and join the fun.



**Branch President Pete Maglio and Ernie Kirkland**



**East Brunswick Carriers came ready to play.**



**Secaucus foursome keep up their strength.**



**Clifton Carriers on a "coffee break."**

# Solidarity

## Now More Than Ever



**Michael O'Neill**  
**Second Vice President**

**Solidarity, sisterhood, and brotherhood** are words often used to convey a commitment amongst a defined group of people. Fraternal organizations like the Elks or Lions incorporate those words in their constitutions and by-laws. Sports teams use them to reinforce a spirit of unity and singular purpose. Unions such as the NALC have always utilized those terms to also emphasize the fact that we have joined together for the betterment of the group as a whole. We have each acknowledged that we as individuals are better equipped to achieve our goals as a group rather than alone.

**We are currently experiencing a crisis** situation in the Postal Service. There is no question that the future of the Postal Service, and therefore the future of our job and our retirement, is in jeopardy. Until very recently, the Postal Service has enjoyed increased mail volume and revenue nearly every year since its

inception. That has all changed with the advent of electronic communication. The recession which currently has its hold not only on the Postal Service and the United States, but indeed on the entire world, has seriously compounded the situation.

**Such difficult times bring feelings of** uncertainty and fear of the future. None of us know for sure with any degree of certainty what the future will bring, and that fact alone translates into a feeling of anxiety for us all. It are times like these when the concepts of solidarity, sisterhood, and brotherhood need to be more than quaint little phrases, and must become a way of life if we are to get through these challenges together.

**During the past few months, there has** been an increase in incidents of carriers lashing out at their Shop Stewards, Branch

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**“Let’s pull together in  
solidarity and help  
each other get through  
this as one.”**

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Representatives, and our national leaders as if they were the cause of the financial problems facing the Postal Service. What is worse, some carriers have lashed out against each other, criticizing each other for working too fast, or too slow, or any number of other complaints.

**I think it is important for each of us to** realize that none of us is responsible for the turmoil in the Postal Service, and that each of us is doing our best to get through

this together. There is not one letter carrier, from the newest PTF to National President Fred Rolando, or anyone in between, who caused or is enjoying what is going on in the Post Office today. None of us wanted to see routes abolished, offices posted for bid, or carriers excessed. None of us wanted it, but it is the reality we are facing, and we are better off facing it together rather than alone.

**One way of minimizing the anxiety level** all of us are experiencing is to make an effort to find out what is going on. If we all took the time to get our facts straight before making judgment on any particular issue, we would all be better off. The fact that you are reading this news letter shows that you must be interested in keeping up with what is going on. Take the time to also read the NALC Postal Record each month. It provides the latest news within the NALC and the Postal Office, and offers in depth analysis and explanations of the positions and actions taken by the union.

**It would also be a good idea to try to** attend the monthly Branch Meeting or, if more convenient, a local meeting just for your office. Your Area Representative will schedule one any time the local steward asks for one. It’s a perfect setting to find out the latest news and have your questions answered.

**Let’s pull together in solidarity and help** each other get through this as one. Take a second the next time you’re tempted to make a negative comment about your union or your fellow workers. Maybe it would be more helpful to ask a question rather than criticize. We’re all in the same boat, and we need each other pulling in the same direction to weather the storm.

# Random Thoughts



**Pat Flannery**  
**Recording Secretary**

**This past year has been a very trying and stressful one for all of us, but even more so for letter carriers. There is no dispute that the Postal Service is in dire straights financially. The NALC responded to this financial emergency with the IRAP and MIARAP agreements. We can debate the details of the processes themselves, but in the final analysis it must be recognized that something had to be done to slow the tsunami of red ink. No business could survive the hemorrhaging of money the Service was experiencing. We must also keep in mind that had we done nothing, the very existence of the Postal Service, and our jobs, would have been jeopardized. 2009 has been very difficult, and there is little doubt that 2010 will present similar challenges.**

**These difficult times ahead will require the full mobilization of this Union's resources and commitment. Our primary goal has, and always will be, to preserve and protect the jobs and rights of letter carriers. Branch officers and shop stewards alone cannot achieve that goal without the total support of the membership. You are the Union. You are our strength.**

**Management is running amok trying to increase productivity beyond what is realistically possible. They are transferring the pressure from their bosses to the carriers without regard to what is actually attainable, or the consequences their ill advised actions have on service to our customers.**

**We are in this mess because Postal management has abused its right to mismanage. We do not have control over that. What we do have control over is how we, as a Union and as individuals, respond to the never ending insanity.**

**Our response needs to be one of professionalism and unity. Letter carriers know how to do their jobs. We must not allow ourselves to be intimidated under any circumstances. Every carrier needs to come to work each morning with the resolve that they will not be cowed into running their routes or skipping breaks and lunch to meet absurd DOIS projections.**

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***“Our primary goal has, and always will be, to preserve and protect the jobs and rights of letter carriers.”***

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**The M-41 Handbook contains all the ammo you need to stand up to unreasonable demands made by management. If you don't know what your responsibilities and rights are, however, you are in a dangerous position.**

**Over the years, some carriers have strayed from doing the job right. Some do not complete 3996's. Some don't wear their seatbelts. Some come to work not**

wearing proper uniforms. Some don't come to work at all far too often. In years past, management may have looked the other way. Those days are over. Now management is strictly enforcing every rule they can think of to issue discipline. Make sure you know what the rules are, and make sure you follow them and avoid unwanted discipline.

**During this past year there has been a dramatic increase in the number of removal disciplines issued to carriers. Attendance related discipline is high on that list. Be acutely aware of your attendance record. It is often the most difficult type of disciplinary action to defend against.**

**Another often used charge for discipline is Failure to Follow Instructions. Please don't put yourself in that position. Avoid arguing with a supervisor. When you're told to do something, make sure the instruction is clear and simply follow it. The cardinal rule is to “Obey and Grieve”.**

**You may have been reading this and thought, “easy for you to say.” Nobody is saying it's easy, but the alternative is not what any of us want or need. What it comes down to is re-thinking our approach to the job. We must correct bad habits and remember to do the job the right way. It's not easy, but losing your job and income is not easy either.**

**Your stewards and branch officers are here to help and guide you through these difficult times. Seek out their help and follow their advice. Together we can survive these difficult times and grow stronger together. Unity is the key.**

**NJ Merged Branch 38  
Web Site**

**[www.branch38nalc.com/](http://www.branch38nalc.com/)**

# Branch 38 Annual Retiree Breakfast



Branch 38 President Pete Maglio welcomes the retirees and honored guests.

On Sunday, October 18, 2009, Branch 38 held its annual Retiree Breakfast at the Chandelier Restaurant in Bellville, NJ. Over 100 of our retirees came out to enjoy breakfast and each other's company. Each year this event is an opportunity to renew old acquaintances, relive old memories, and be brought up to date on issues affecting the Postal Service and the NALC. As they do each year, Congressmen Bill Pascrell and Donald Payne came by to share the latest news out of Washington affecting letter carriers, both active and retired. Not only can we count on these Representatives to show up every year, we can also count on their unwavering support for our issues all year long.

We were also honored by a visit from NALC Director of City Delivery, Dale Hart, who brought greetings from NALC President Rolando. Dale also shared with us the latest news out of headquarters in Washington. Region 15 NBA, Branch 38's own Larry Cirelli, was also in attendance and thanked the retirees and all of the members of Branch 38 for their hard work and support. The retirees received a special treat as former Branch 38 Presidents, Al Ferranto, Bob Borgognoni, and RAA Bruce Didriksen were all in attendance, and each shared their best wishes and some personal thoughts.



Mr. & Mrs. Phil Moretti



Congressman Bill Pascrell pledges his continued support.



73 Year NALC member Lawrence Stabile



Congressman Donald Payne and Trustee Keith Hemmings



Harold Waldron and Richie O'Connell Jr.



Dale Hart

# GPS Is On The Way



**Paul Biggs**

**First Vice President**

Incredibly enough, as we struggle through the worst financial crisis in the history of the Postal Service, the Office of Inspector General (OIG) has convinced management to invest in Global Positioning Systems (GPS) for our Postal Service vehicles. They argue that the savings in hours and gas that will be captured as the result of the use of the GPS units will substantially exceed the cost. Although their logic and reasoning is questionable at best (see the results of the MSP scans), like most other delivery companies, the Postal Service has the right to utilize GPS units in order to know where their vehicles are.

With GPS technology, the Postal Service insists that they will be better able to determine and develop driving patterns and monitor driving habits, which will help reduce fuel consumption. The type of data the GPS system will collect is vehicle speed, vehicle idling, park times, and route deviations. The information collected is automatically transmitted to postal management via email and end of day reports.

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***“Letter Carriers must be prepared to deal with this new technology.”***

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Letter carriers must be prepared to deal with this new technology. As noted above, management, both in the local office and at the District level, will be able to monitor where their vehicles are at all times, how long they’ve been there, and how fast they are going. It will be more important than ever for letter carriers to be exactly where they are suppose to be at all times, and that they abide by all traffic regulations while operating a Postal Service vehicle.

The program requires that carriers be notified if they are assigned a vehicle with GPS installed. The program also requires that a service talk be given before GPS enabled vehicles are used in any office. At the outset, the vehicles will be utilized in a few, centrally located offices, but they will soon be passed along to other offices as determined by management. If you find that there are GPS vehicles in your office, and management has not given the service talk, or if they do not notify a carrier who is assigned to a GPS vehicle, notify the Branch office immediately. The National Business Agent has asked to be notified of any such violations of the program.

If you are like 99% of all letter carriers and you are doing your job the way you are suppose to be doing it, the GPS is just another annoyance and sad indicator of management’s distrust of their dedicated employees. If you have fallen into some bad habits while delivering your route, now is the time to get back on track. As of yet, management has not indicated that the GPS will be used to take disciplinary action, but history tells us that we cannot count on that. When I see it in writing, and in practice, I’ll believe it. Regardless of management’s intent, be professional at all times.

***Worried about the future of the USPS?***

***Worried about the future of your job?***

***Tired of listening to all of the rumors?***

***Want to know what’s really going on?***

**Sign Up as an e-Acivist**  
**Now!!!**

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

***Want to keep your job?***

***Want to keep your health benefits?***

***Hoping to collect a pension some day?***

***Would you like someone looking out for your interests in Washington?***

**Sing Up for COLCPE Now!!!**

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

# Charlie Connell

## Director of Retirees & Health Benefits



As the new Director of Retirees and Health Benefits for Branch 38, I would like to introduce myself and share some of my background. Many of you already know me as the Director of Retirees of the New Jersey State Association. Others may recognize me as their Brookfield Uniform representative.

**I began my career with the Postal Service** in 1966 in Port Reading, NJ. I actively participated in the strike of 1970, and later became president of Branch 5907. Port Reading was the first branch to merge with Union, NJ Branch 2951. I served in several positions in Branch 2951, including secretary and eventually vice President. Branch 2951 became Central Jersey Merged Branch 2951, encompassing 32 offices and over 1000 members. While serving with Branch 2951 I became the Muscular Dystrophy Chairman. I also chaired the first Columbus Day Golf outing, which I continue to chair to this day.

**I worked on the committee when** Branch 2951 merged with Branch 38 to become North Central Merged Branch 38. In 1985, I was appointed to head the annual Food Drive for Branch 38 and I continue today in that capacity. Also in 1985, I was chosen by President

Sombrotto to represent the NALC as an Employee Involvement Facilitator, a position I held until 1996. I retired in August of that year and took a part time with Somes Uniforms, later purchased by Brookfield Uniforms.

**I've been married to my wife Paula for** over 20 years. Although she is a die-hard Yankee fan and I am a die-hard Red Sox fan, we enjoy the rivalry. We both like sporting events, horse racing, and going to Atlantic City. Many of you have met my wife at Branch 38 and NJ State functions in the Brookfield hospitality room while she was preparing your libations.

**I look forward to serving in my new** position as Director of Retirees and Health Benefits for Branch 38. I would like to thank President Pete Maglio, the other Branch officers, and especially the membership for their confidence in selecting me.

### In Memoriam

#### Eugene Carsey

Eugene Carsey passed away at the age of 87 on October 27, 2009. He was a retired letter carrier who carried out of the Kenilworth Post Office for 31 years. He was also an Army veteran of World War II, seeing action in the Battle of the Bulge. Eugene was predeceased by his wife Ida.

#### Robert R. Keating Sr.

Robert R. Keating Sr. passed away at the age of 78 on October 28, 2009. Robert was a letter carrier at the Kenilworth Post Office for 40 years before retiring in 1990. Robert is survived by his wife of 56 years, Jane M. (Boone) Keating.

#### Daniel E. Mahedy Sr.

Daniel E. Mahedy Sr. passed away at the age of 81 on October 18, 2009. Daniel carried mail at the Iselin Post Office for 23 years before retiring in 1990. He was a World War II Army veteran and received the Victory Medal. Dan served as president of the Iselin Branch of the NALC before eventually merging with Branch 38. He remained active in his retirement and assisted with the NALC Food Drive in Iselin every year. He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Charlotte (Burns) Mahedy.

# ***The Holidays are Often*** ***A Season of Stress***

## ***Michael O'Neill*** ***Second Vice President***

The holiday season often brings with it an increased level of stress for many people. There's pressure to get done all the things that need to be done to ensure that your family has the kind of holiday you want them to have. There are the parties, the decorating, the shopping, and all the expense that comes with the season.

This year brings even more than the usual pressures. Because of the instability of the economy, many people are facing financial difficulties. Thrift Savings plans are taking a beating and overtime is down.

The Postal Service is putting the pressure on all of us to pick up the slack for the lost volume and revenue. Unfortunately, many managers don't possess the skill or common sense to be able to motivate their employees without resorting to fear, intimidation, and abuse.

All of the factors listed above often lead to an unbearable level of stress. What is important to remember is that you do not have to deal with stress by yourself. The Employee Assistance Program is a service provided by the Postal Service for its employees. Counseling is provided for every imaginable need an employee may experience. There is help and referrals for folks with financial problems, dependency problems, family relationship problems,

and most any other situation. These factors can and do complicate our lives and raise our level of stress. Very often, you might just need to talk to someone about what you may be going through, and that might be enough.

EAP is confidential and is available initially at no cost. Don't feel that you need to take on the stress of the season on your own. Call 1-EAP-4YOU and get the help you might need to get through these sometime trying days. You can arrange for your first visit to be on the clock, if you wish. If you prefer not to involve your local manager, you can make an appointment on your own time. Don't let the stress of the holiday season get you down. Help is only a phone call away.

The Officers and Staff  
of NJ Merged Branch 38  
wish all of our members,  
whatever holiday your family may celebrate,  
the Happiest of Holiday Seasons  
and all the best in the coming  
New Year.

# THE SENTINEL

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

NON-PROFIT  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
PERMIT #398  
TRENTON  
NEW JERSEY

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



## Branch Meeting Information & Directions

Meetings are held at 7:30 PM on the first Wednesday of each month.

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.