

THE LETTER CARRIER REPORTER



CARL J KENNEDY BRANCH PROUDLY SERVING

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Apr 2024

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COMMUNITY
FOOD BANK
OF SOUTHERN ARIZONA

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Tucson, AZ 85713
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Working Together to Stamp Out Hunger

It takes a community to collect more than 200,000 pounds of food in one day.

And it doesn't happen without letter carriers providing an essential service on the second Saturday of May during the annual Stamp Out Hunger drive. This year the magic happens on **Saturday, May 11th**.

Every year we are amazed at the hard work letter carriers put in not only doing their regular job of picking up and delivering the mail, but going that extra mile to pick up food donations people leave at their mailboxes.

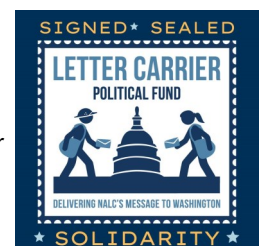
We know how much that adds to a full day of work already. "This effort doesn't come together without hard-working letter carriers," says Malea Chavez, CEO of the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona. "We have many volunteers who come out to help, our staff is working that day as well. This is a huge amount of food to handle in one day, and it starts at the mailbox with a letter carrier willing to pick up a donation."

All the hard work adds up to enough food to keep donations from the Community Food Bank going through the hot summer months, when food drives slow down, yet the need for food doesn't change. We continue to see demand up as high as 30% over last year.

As we get closer to **Saturday, May 11th**, please know that we are doing everything on our end to make this a successful food drive.

And we are full of gratitude for your willingness to be a part of our biggest food drive of the year.

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 .



NEXT UNION MEETING FIRST THURSDAY OF THE MONTH: April 4, 2024
Meeting will begin promptly at 7:00PM

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

President Renfro has asked that we notify all carriers to take action on Stop the raid on Postal Pensions on the NALC.org website under Government Affairs Take action. It is easy to do Login with:

First Name + Last Name + ZIP + Last 4 digits of SSN or if applicable, First Name + Last Name-JR + ZIP + Last 4 digits of SSN. Carrier must take an active role to address this now otherwise it will be years before we have opportunity again.

Stop the raid on postal pensions For over 52 years, the Postal Service has faced a persistent and glaring misallocation of retirement fund obligations, resulting in over \$90 billion dollars in unjust expenses. Despite the Segal report's findings and Congress passing two laws that direct OPM to implement a new and fair valuation methodology, President Biden is sweeping the issue under the rug. This is an urgent issue that must be addressed now. By directing the OPM to stop the raid on the Postal Pension Fund and implement overdue reforms outlined in the Segal report, the President can safeguard the USPS's financial stability and honor his promise to the dedicated postal workers who have served the nation tirelessly for over half a century. It's time for President Biden to prove his "pro-labor" agenda doesn't exclude postal workers. If done now, implementing the action recommended in the Segal Report can save USPS \$3.2 billion this year by eliminating any CSRS amortization payment in FY 2024. It also would allow tens of billions of dollars to be transferred into the Postal Service Retiree Health Benefits Fund in FY 2025. The next transfer can't be made until 2035, under current law. The time for this administration to act is now. Union members please take the time to be active with going to the NALC website and following the prompts to insure that we make some noise on this issue, it would be a shame to miss this opportunity and have to wait years into the future for the next opportunity.

Branch 704 Bowl-a-thon in Casa Grande was successful as we raised a total of \$645.00 for MDA on 3/10/24. I want to thank Ray Devellin, Steward for Casa Grande, for putting this together and Cotton Bowl Lanes for being a part of our efforts to have an MDA Fundraiser. We will be having an MDA fundraiser here in Tucson soon.

Hunger exists in every community in the country, and each year food banks depend on letter carriers to help replenish the shelves in the communities we serve. The largest single-day food drive in the nation is quickly approaching. With just two months to go until the May 11 event, volunteers are welcome to sign up on line at the foodbank website to help either on the docks or helping carriers pick up food on the routes. We did not have enough volunteers last year and hope that we can have our retired members and friends sign up this year to help. The Postal Service has a lot of employees both management and carriers that are relatively new and are not sure what the Postal Service does on food drive day. Due to this we are trying out new ways to educate people about the food drive and what we all need to do together. Branch 704 food drive coordinator is Dan Turrentine, retired Cherrybell Letter Carrier, he will be going out to stations with more information. City Carriers, have your friends fill their social media accounts with information about the Food Drive on May 11, 2024. You may be wondering why we are asking you to start now? And I would say the more time we talk, read, bring it up, the better informed the public and friends are ready for the food drive and we can have an awesome day collecting food for our communities. More information about the Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive can be found online at nalc.org/food.

In Solidarity
Kathy Walter
President

Important Dates

E-Board

Thursday March 28th 6pm

Easter

Sunday March 31st

Branch Meeting

Thursday April 4th 7pm

Royce's Birthday

Thursday April 11th

Tax Day

Monday April 15th

Steward's Meeting

Thursday April 18th 5:30pm

E-Board

Thursday April 25th 6pm

From the desk of the Vice-President

The Spring Season is just around corner, which is when the sun shines a little brighter, the flowers start to bloom, and temperatures start to rise. As temperatures start to climb in the coming months from the 80's to 110's, it's never too early to think about heat safety. The most important thing you can do to prepare yourself for hotter temperatures is to incorporate a healthier diet, get a good night's rest (6 to 8 hours) and of course hydrate, hydrate, and hydrate.

The Postal Service has implemented a mandatory training course, **Heat Illness Prevention Program (HIPP)**, to protect employees from heat illnesses and to continue to educate us on how to stay safe during hot weather. The **HIPP** is in effect from **April 1 through October 31** and is triggered any other time when NATIONAL Weather Service (NWS) reports for a particular work location indicates that the outdoor heat index is expected to exceed 80 degrees Fahrenheit during a workday or work shift. (So, in Southern Arizona, that would be for the entire period of April 1st through October 31st).

Management is required to ensure that the Heat Stress Recognition and Prevention course is provided to all bargaining unit employees and the record in **HERO** as after the fact training by March 15th. The Heat Stress Recognition and Prevention consists of Safety Talk HIPP #2068 (10 minutes), Online/Video training course as well as weekly stand-up talks addressing issues related to heat exposure and prevention of heat-related illness. Shop Stewards and branch leaders should

make sure that all letter carriers are receiving this annual training, especially CCAs who are often subject to later start times and excluded from training and stand-up talks. New hires and carriers returning from extended absences also must be considered as they are primarily susceptible to heat because they may not be acclimated properly. Those employees who are absent when the training is provided are required to be provided with the training prior to returning to street duties.

Heat Illness prevention is everyone's responsibility. That is achieved by being well prepared (Hydration, balanced diet, and rest) and being constantly educated on recognizing heat illnesses, the symptoms associated with it and what proper first aid steps you should take. Every employee should be provided with the Heat Illness Prevention badge cards. If you don't have one, make sure to inform management so they can provide you with one.

Brothers and Sisters please take care of yourselves and look out for one another. It's the U and I in **UNION** that makes us strong. Stay safe!

With love And Unity
Alexis Padilla
Vice President Formal Step A Designee

FROM THE PEN OF THE SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

Spring is officially upon us. I hope you all had a wonderful St. Patrick's Day. Branch 704's Bowl-a-thon, in Casa Grande, was a big success. We raised over \$600.00 for the MDA. A huge Thank You to Ray Devellin, shop steward for Casa Grande, for making it happen. Also, thanks to the Tucson Members who made the perilous journey up I-10 to support our Associate Offices. Last month's contest yielded the most entries of any of my games to date. Thank you for that. Five members got the correct answer of 103.5, so I've decided to award all of them a prize. To Tom Reis, Dan Oved, Letty Ramos, Steve Wiley and Sylvia Mireles, I say congratulations. This month's contest is super easy. What's the best day of the year? Month and day. (Hint: The song is about me) Please arrive 5-10 minutes prior to the scheduled meetings at the Branch Office. It's also a good time to donate those mildly used uniforms. Royce, the Administrative Assistant, wanted me, to remind you, about notifying him, of your change of address and change of duty station.

Fraternally Yours,
Royce Kelly



MDA
BOWL
A
Thon



CONTRACT TALK

Intentional Delay of Mail

There are issues at certain stations where Supervisors or Managers are instructing Carriers to bring back mail or scan parcels as delivered that were not. If you are having these issues at your Station, contact your Shop Steward or The Branch. Some carriers are being told to stop delivering letters and flats at a certain time and only deliver parcels. Sometimes these instructions are given to the Carriers before they hit the street in the morning, but sometimes, carriers receive them via a phone call or a text on their personal cell. Another common method is for the Supervisor to use a mass text message via the Mobile Delivery Device (MDD).

There are times when it is proper to bring back undeliverable mail due to unforeseeable or hazardous circumstances such as missing mail receptacles, severe weather, animal interference, etc. However, in any situation where mail is not delivered, letter carriers should document the reason on **PS Form 1571. The Undelivered Mail Report Section 442 of the M-41, City Delivery Carriers Duties and Responsibilities address this as follows:**

44 Undelivered Mail: 442 Completing Form 1571

442.1 – After return from trip, obtain Form 1571, Undelivered Mail Report from Unit Manager.

442.2 – Add any mail which was not delivered, but was returned to the office.

442.3 – Sign the form and give it to the unit manager.

If you are being instructed by your supervisor to bring mail back undelivered, you must follow those instructions. Such instructions can be very frustrating, so stay calm and do as you are told. It's important that you follow the instructions given by your supervisor. You should then fill out PS Form 1571 for undelivered mail and inform your Shop Steward about the situation, who in turn should notify the Branch, who then should notify the National Business Agent (NBA).

Royce Kelly

Sergeant at Arms

Bowl a Thon for MDA in Casa Grande



MBA/Health Representative Report

The Postal Service Reform Act of 2022 (PSRA) was signed into law in April 2022. Since then, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), in conjunction with the Postal Service, has been working to implement a new Postal Service Health Benefits (PSHB) Program, as required under the new law. PSHB is a new, separate program within the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program and will be administered by OPM. Coverage under the PSHB Program will be effective January 1, 2025. Below is a list of facts regarding the PSHB Program for current annuitants:

1. You are required to select a health insurance plan in the PSHB Program during the 2024 open season period, from November 11, 2024 through December 9, 2024.
2. PSHB plan options and premium information will be available in October 2024.
3. OPM will launch a new enrollment platform for health insurance. Information on how to make elections using the new system will be available prior to the 2024 open season.
4. If you are an **annuitant as of January 1, 2025, and not currently participating in Medicare Part B**, you ARE NOT required to enroll in Medicare Part B to continue your health insurance coverage in the new PSHB Program. Participation in Medicare Part B is voluntary; however, enrollment in Medicare Part B may reduce your overall costs for health care-related expenses and may provide greater value.

a. Your covered spouse and eligible family members will also not be required to enroll in Medicare Part B even if they are age 65 or older; however, enrollment in Medicare Part B may reduce overall costs for health care related expenses and may provide greater value.

b. **Note:** If you are an **annuitant as of January 1, 2025, and are already enrolled in Medicare Part B**, you ARE required to remain enrolled in Medicare Part B to continue coverage under PSHB.

5. If you are an **annuitant entitled to Medicare Part a (typically at age 65) prior to January 1, 2024, and have not enrolled in Medicare Part B**, you and your covered, eligible family members may be able to participate in the special enrollment period (SEP) for Medicare Part B that starts on April 1, 2024 and ends on September 30, 2024. Those who enroll during the SEP will not need to pay the late enrollment penalty. Eligibility letters will be sent to annuitants and eligible family members in early 2024.

6. If you **retire between October 31, 2024 and December 31, 2024, and are entitled to Medicare Part A (typically at age 65)**, you will have the option to enroll in Medicare Part B during a specific eight-month special enrollment period immediately following your retirement date. If you wish to enroll, you **MUST** contact the Social Security Administration (SSA) to initiate enrollment if you are over the age of 65.

7. As a general rule, spouse and family member PSHB coverage is based on the primary subscriber's eligibility. If the primary subscriber is not required to join Medicare Part B, neither will dependent family members. Likewise, if you qualify for the SEP, so will your covered family members.

Continued on page 6

It's Spring Cleaning time!

Out with the old (bad habits) and in with the new (good habits).

Please notify me of your change of address. Filling out a COA with the USPS is not notifying me. We are still accepting clean or new uniforms for our CCA's.

Service Pins are awarded based on years of membership in the Union, beginning at 25 years. I think I've caught up on the Service Pins. Please notify me if you think you are due one.

Branch 704's website is up and running again. There still might be a few bugs and glitches. Even though I'm not the webmaster, feel free to contact me with complaints.

The building that houses our Union Office has been PAID IN FULL. It's pretty sterile here, so stop by and give your input on making it pretty.

Royce

Administrative Assistant

How do I enroll during the SEP?

Complete the provided CMS-40B Form, Application for enrollment in Medicare Part B (Medical Insurance) and mail it with the copy of the notification letter in the return envelope you receive in March 2024. The return envelope must be post-marked by September 30, 2024.

If I received a notification letter for the PSHB SEP, do I have to enroll in Medicare Part B?

If you are an annuitant of the Postal Service, you are not required to enroll in Medicare Part B. If you are a covered family member of an annuitant, please refer to your notification letter to determine if you have the option, or are required to, enroll in Medicare Part B. As a general rule, if the primary enrollee for health coverage is enrolled in Medicare Part B, eligible family members must also enroll in Medicare Part B when they become eligible.

What happens once I return my enrollment form and a copy of my notification letter?

It will initiate your Medicare Part B coverage with an effective date of January 1, 2025. Please refer to your PSHB SEP notification letter to determine if Medicare Part B enrollment is an option or a requirement for you to remain eligible for the PSHB program.

What happens if my IEP overlaps with the PSHB SEP?

Your IEP will take precedence and your enrollment for Medicare Part B will become effective the month following receipt of your CMB-40 enrollment form.

When does an IEP occur?

It occurs when a person first become eligible to receive Medicare benefits. In most cases this coincides with an individual's 65th birthday enrollment period, for a total of 7 months, 3 months prior to the birthday, the month of, and 3 months following the birthday. For individuals who are still working at the time of eligibility, your SEP period begins on the date of retirement and concludes 8 months following retirement date.

What can I do if I misplaced the notification letter or I didn't receive a notification letter?

Please contact the PSHB Navigator Help line's toll-free number at 833-712-PSHB (7742), or email retirementbenefits@usps.gov.

It is very important to keep your mailing address updated with the US Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

There will be more updates throughout 2024 and all postal employees and annuitants will be receiving information from the Postal Service and OPM. I will definitely keep everyone updated.

In Solidarity,

Mark Follet

MBA/HB Representative

520-331-3316 (Please leave me a detailed message)

Congratulations

On reaching a NALC milestone

Retirement

Lynn Christmon Rincon

25 years of Service

Dennis Peterson Retired

Happy Karlan Retired

Cecilia Carbajal Fort Lowell

Israel Silva Sun

Albert Marsh Jr Retired

30 years of Service

David Gnuschke Retired

Jesus Alvarez Retired

Lynn Christmon Retired

35 years of Service

Irving Crespo Retired

Ronald Ratliff Sun

Robert Gomez Retired

40 years of Service

Donald Schrock Retired

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Easter

This is the time of year that we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He died on a cross for our sins and because of that sacrifice we are forgiven. We are thankful for what Christ did and that God raised him from the dead, back to life on Easter Sunday. The bible says in **Romans 10:9** That if you confess with your mouth **“Jesus is Lord”** and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. I hope that you all have a great Easter celebration.

Blessings to All

Rick Evans 520-248-9643

Special prayers go out to Brother Brian Rozon's Father who underwent cancer surgery last Friday.

To Robin Shane we pray for a speedy recovery from your surgery.

Our Sincerest Condolences to

Brother Jose Gonzalez of Mission Station on the passing of his Uncle

Check out more Photos

MDA

BOWL A THON



Bowl-a-thon for MDA



