



CARL J. KENNEDY BRANCH 704
THE LETTER CARRIER REPORTER

PROUDLY SERVING

TUCSON • GREEN VALLEY • SIERRA VISTA • CASA GRANDE •

SAFFORD • DOUGLAS • GLOBE • WILLCOX • COOLIDGE • SAN MANUEL • MIAMI • BISBEE

December 2021

Email Address: nalcbranch704@outlook.com

Printed by Branch 704

CONGRATULATIONS ON **YOUR RETIREMENT!**

KEN BOUCK
SILVERBELL STATION



ON YOUR CONVERSION TO CAREER!



Isaac Ruiz
Parvaiz Afzalzai
Kadhun Ismaeel

Mission
Silverbell
Cherrybell

Check out our WEBSITE: www.nalcbranch704.org

Branch 704 Meeting Thursday, December 2, 2021, begins promptly at 7:00 p.m. Please call Office for reservations to attend in person or with your email address information to attend remotely via the Web-Ex. In person may attend without reservation, but we are social distancing & wearing masks at meetings.

WEB-EX reservations must be made EVERY month

President's Report

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Open Season is usually the one opportunity each year carriers have to enroll or make changes to their health, dental and vision plans.

Open Season runs from November 8th through December 13th. The Health Fair will be virtual again this year. Each Health Insurance Organization will sponsor their own webinar and will be available on USPS LiteBlue. If you go to the link for the comparison tool in OPMs website, you can check out the health plans available. I encourage everyone to put in the NALC Health Plan. I believe it is the best one for the price and benefits. Find the Comparison Tool here: <https://www.opm.gov/healthcare-insurance/healthcare/plan-information/compare-plans/>

CCAs have two options for health benefits. One option is the USPS Noncareer Health Benefits Plan, in which newly hired CCAs may enroll and participate upon being hired. This option is available to all CCAs, regardless of length of service. CCAs may elect coverage in the USPS Noncareer Health Benefits Plan within 60 days of the date they were hired, or within 60 days upon being reappointed to another 360-day term after a five-day break in service.

The second health benefit option available to CCAs is to participate in the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program. This option is available to CCAs after completing one 360-day term and being reappointed to another. The National Agreement provision governing CCAs' right to participate in FEHB is found in Article 21 - Health Insurance. CCAs may enroll in any available FEHB plan, including the NALC Health Benefit Plan (HBP), but there is **no** Postal Service contribution toward the premium. This means the entire cost of the premium is the **CCA's** responsibility.

Upon conversion to career status, a letter carrier's health benefits options change significantly. Most importantly, once converted to a career status position, letter carriers have 60 days to enroll in an FEHB health plan. Converted CCAs will receive a package of information in the mail that includes a brochure of plans and their costs. FEHB is available to all career letter carriers.

The Union received notification for the Delegates to the National Convention to Chicago IL. There are some preliminary guidelines to attending the National Convention. Because of the continuing presence of the Coronavirus and the safety of our members at the convention, delegate members should anticipate that when the Convention takes place, delegates and other convention event attendees may be required to comply with vaccine mandates and/or masking and testing requirements. The main concern will be the safety of all the delegates, guests, and family members attending the convention.

Letter Carrier Michael Blanton, from Branch 576, died when a box truck driver crashed into his LLV Tuesday in Phoenix. I want to extend our sympathy, and condolences to his family and friends. We have a challenging job as letter carriers. We have to face dogs, weather, traffic, or a combination of all of these, which can make our jobs dangerous. If you have to deliver mail and it is not safe for you for any reason, call the manager right away and fill out the PS Form 1767, Report of Hazard, Unsafe Condition or Practice. Inform your steward or the branch office and do not place yourself in a situation that may cost you your life. Being safe on the job requires that all carriers identify and inform management when they are in an unsafe situation that could cost them their life, or that of a fellow co-worker. We all need to look out for each other. **Do not** hesitate to report being in an unsafe situation.

At the November 4th Branch meeting the Proposed Budget for the 2022 was presented to the membership for consideration and discussion. At the December Branch meeting, we will vote on the proposed budget for 2022. We will also have a special guest on the WEBEX, NALC Legislative and Political Organizer, John Beaumont. I look forward to seeing you at the branch meeting or the WebEx.

At the State Convention, the Member of the Year award was issued to Branch 704 member Ray Root, for his many years of service to branch members. It was a pleasure to present the award to him in person at the November Branch meeting along with Stuart Love's Retirement Certificate. Two other awards were also issued to Branch 704. Sister Amber Underwood in recognition of service to the Arizona State Association of Letter Carriers Executive Board as Trustee, and Brother Mario Monzon in recognition of service as Arizona Letter Carrier Congressional Liaison AZ/CD2. I hope to have the opportunity to present them their awards in person.

I send my prayers to all our members that have lost a loved one during this past year. Thanksgiving is a special season since it gives us another chance to spread joy, reminisce on wonderful memories, contemplate on the lessons we have learned and appreciate the people in our lives. I wish an incredible Thanksgiving Day to you and your family.

In Solidarity

Kathy Walter President

Attention Postmaster: 1 Monthly issue consisting of at least 25% non-advertising matter in each issue of the Carl J. Kennedy Branch 704, The Letter Carrier Reporter Volume 2021-12 Issue #12 Organization: National Association of Letter Carriers, 2950 N. Country Club Road, Tucson, AZ 85716-1912

Vice President Article

I would like to thank all military veterans for their service to our great country! Veterans Day is observed on November 11 in commemoration of the anniversary of the signing of the Armistice that ended World War I. Hostilities officially ended in 1918 at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month. Formerly called “Armistice Day” the holiday was originally intended to honor veterans of the First World War. Later, the meaning of the holiday was expanded to include not only veterans of World War 1, but to honor all U.S. Military veterans who served in either wartime or peacetime. According to the Department of Defense website, the correct spelling is “Veterans Day” with no apostrophe. The Holiday is not a day that “belongs” to one veteran or multiple veterans, which is what an apostrophe implies (possessive). It is a day for honoring all veterans - so no apostrophe needed.

President Biden’s spending package would give USPS \$6 Billion to replace USPS to purchase 70% of our massive mail delivery fleet with battery-electric power. The first of the new trucks should hit the street in 2023 with full delivery completed by 2028. The USPS is purchasing the trucks from Oshkosh Defense, which won a procurement battle in February to produce the fleet, dubbed “Next Generation Delivery Vehicles” or NGDVs. The Postal Service plans to buy up to 165,000 NGDVs, which can run on battery power or gasoline. So please tell our elected officials in Washington to vote yes on this legislation.

November is when daylight hours are getting shorter, and nighttime is getting longer. I would like to warn my fellow City Letter Carriers that darkness comes with its dangers. It is harder to deliver mail and parcels, it is harder to see house numbers, the possibility of missing deliveries increase, and the possibility of accidents increase, etc. (For example, you are trying to locate a house number and you fail to see a tree branch, a cat/dog/child running in front of your LLV/vehicle, and you hit them resulting in a broken mirror or worse.) Since our start time is 8:00 AM it is highly likely we will be out after dark, so I am warning you to be careful after dark. (Let’s hope that management will soon start us earlier!)

Also, darkness is not the only possible cause for our jobs becoming dangerous. The other is the lack of City Letter Carriers for the upcoming holiday season and beyond, which results in increased overtime and carrier burn-out. Just look around at all the help wanted signs! Can the USPS acquire enough trained employee to cover all necessary job openings?

In my opinion, we are in or about to enter a crisis of under staffing and overwork in the USPS. Just ask the carriers in Chicago where they held a public protest in September against late start times and after-dark delivery. Their Branch 11 President, Mack Julian,

said the union will not go along with giving out flashlights to new carriers on his watch. Delivery after dark is dangerous, and not just in high-crime neighborhoods. “Try doing anything in the dark.” He said “Try cutting the grass. Yeah, you maybe can get it done, but it’s a whole hell of a lot easier when the sun is out, isn’t it?” Besides, Julian said, “it’s worse service. Say, it wasn’t dangerous? Do you want your mail delivered to you at 9 o’clock at night?” Does that sound familiar?

Chicago carriers are so understaffed that every day about 100 routes go partially or completely undelivered. Management denies this, so the union started tallying the data to prove it. Stewards in every post office sent daily reports to the branch headquarters, where a spreadsheet was compiled. Julian shared this data with Congress members. As a result, on October 15, a Congressional hearing was conducted. PRO Act. He stated that our current labor laws are outdated and no longer protect our right to form and join unions. The Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act is how our laws catch up. The PRO Act is the most significant worker empowerment legislation since the Great Depression. The State Convention took place in October and our National President Fredric V. Rolando spoke. (Details about the convention were discussed during the November meeting. (Hope everyone attended the meeting!) One of the items that President Rolando brought to the attendees attention was The PRO Act. It provides the following: Empower workers to organize, bargain, and reach a first contract after union is recognized; end employer’s practice of punishing striking workers by hiring permanent replacements; hold corporations accountable by penalizing employers who retaliate against pro-union workers; repeal Jim Crow era “right to work” laws that lead to lower wages, fewer benefits and dangerous workplaces; and create pathways for workers to form unions without fear in newer industries like Big Tech.

The PRO Act will help communities thrive by giving workers like you and me a louder voice and greater dignity. For decades, our rights have been eroded by big corporations and union-busting politicians. The PRO Act will return power to the hands of workers. Workers should be able to form a union free from intimidation and threats from their employers. Millions of workers want-and desire-the rights and respect that comes with a union. The PRO Act will finally level the playing field and empower working people.

For more information on this important campaign by the AFL-CIO, text “PRO” to 235246 and visit <https://go.aflcio.org/csc-proact> to watch a short video about the PRO Act.

Tell Senator Kyrsten Sinema (520) 639-7080, Email: sinema.senate.gov, twitter: [senatorsinema](https://twitter.com/senatorsinema) and

Senator Mark Kelly (520) 670-6334, Email: kelly.senate.gov, twitter: senmarkkelly how broken labor laws impact workers and how labor law reform can create an economy that works for everyone. Let's get this bill passed!

I would like to wish all City Letter Carriers a Happy and Safe Thanksgiving! Please enjoy the time with your family and friends. Be safe!
In Union Solidarity,
Mark Follet
Vice President



CONGRATS STUART!!

STUART LOVE RECEIVES HIS RETIREMENT CERTIFICATE AND PIN AT THE BRANCH 704 NOVEMBER MEETING, PRESENTED TO HIM BY KATHY WALTER, PRESIDENT. WE THANK STUART FOR HIS MANY YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE USPS AND DEDICATION TO OUR BRANCH. HE HELD MANY POSITIONS IN BRANCH 704 AND WILL BE MISSED. CONGRATULATIONS & ENJOY YOUR NEXT ADVENTURE IN LIFE, STUART!



Meeting Dates

Branch Meeting-Thursday, December 2, 2021
Stewards' Meeting-Thursday, December 18, 2021
E Board Meeting-Thursday, December 23, 2021

Chaplain's Corner

Thankfulness

What a great time of year in Arizona. We are blessed with such beautiful weather. I'm certainly thankful we can enjoy the outdoors again. So much beauty with all the rains this summer, the desert is alive again. I'm thankful for that. I'm also thankful for God who loves us and wants us to share the struggles in our lives, how we are feeling and even about the joys in our life. God is always ready to hear from us, with our prayers to Him. 1 Chronicles

16:34 says, "Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for His steadfast loves endures forever." Even though we all go through so much at times in our lives, hopefully there is something to be thankful for. Hope you all have a wonderful Thanksgiving with friends and family.
Blessings to all,
Rick Evans 520-248-9643
Chaplain

GET WELL TO: THE FAMILIES OF BROTHER ABRAHAM BUSTAMANTE
& BROTHER DIMAS GONZALEZ

OUR HEARTFELT SYMPATHIES & CONDOLENCES



~SISTER AMBER UNDERWOOD ON THE LOSS OF HER DAUGHTER, CODY
~BROTHER RON BERTSCHY ON THE LOSS OF HIS AUNT
~BROTHER KEN BERTSCHY ON THE LOSS OF HIS SISTER
~SISTER LINDA ROBERTSON ON THE LOSS OF HER FATHER
~SISTER SHAYLA LARRY ON THE LOSS OF HER FATHER

Health Benefits Representative Report

OPEN SEASON NOV 8 - DEC 13

New for 2021 NALC Health Benefit Plan Wellness Incentive Program for High Option Members. Beginning January 1, 2021, you, and your eligible family members age 18 and older can earn valuable health savings rewards by participating in several wellness incentive programs. Upon completion of one or more of the wellness programs, screenings, or preventive services listed below, each eligible member will receive a debit card. The corresponding monetary reward will be loaded to the card. The money you earn can be used on eligible medical expenses not covered by your insurance plan. Eligible expenses are defined by Section 213 (d) of the Internal Revenue Code. A description of each activity can be found in the 2021 Plan brochure or on the NALC Health Plan website.

Your Health First Disease Management Program - \$50
Healthy Pregnancies, Healthy Babies - \$50
Quit for Life Tobacco Cessation Program - \$50
Annual biometric screening - \$50
Health Assessment - \$30
Annual influenza vaccine - \$10
Annual pneumococcal vaccine - \$10
COVID -19 vaccine - \$50

Please make sure to become familiar with the 2021 Open Season page at www.nalchbp.org. There you will find the Open Season video, short video links for specific programs, booklets, and brochures source: The NALC HBP Report
The best of health to you and yours,
Bruce D Jenkins 520-273-4798
Health Benefit Representative

OWCP Representative Report

Greetings and salutations to all the members of Branch 704,

I would like to thank brother Follet for his article in the last newsletter. There are a few things I would like to add. First and foremost, I am only allowed to represent members of the branch. So, if you know a non-member that is hurt, do not send them to me unless they have a signup sheet in their hand.

If you are injured on the job, the first thing you must do is report it to your supervisor. The next call should be to the Union office, then call me. Always ask for a completed copy of any form you give to management in writing. When they send you to the clinic or Concentra, do not make a follow up appointment. Instead, seek your own physician (one that has your interests in mind and not the U.S.P.S). The reason for this is if you go to the same doctor twice, they become your physician of record and if they do not have your best interests in mind, they can harm your claim. Additionally, most of the clinics have you see a nurse practitioner or a physician's assistant, neither of which count in the eyes of OWCP, as well as a chiropractor. If you have one of these three without an actual physician concurring with their opinion it will mean nothing to OWCP.

About 2 weeks after you submit your claim, you will get a brochure looking thing that will have your claim number on it. This number will begin with a 55. Once you have that, then you can fill out an Authorization to Represent and Release Information form. This will allow me to be your representative. Time limits are very crucial with the OWCP and must be adhered to. On a side note, correspondence from Phoenix is never OWCP, but is the USPS injury comp team. Their job is to get your claim denied any way they can. OWCP correspondence will come from London KY or San Antonio TX. Lastly, the OWCP has allowed for anyone that has contracted Covid 19. If it can be reasonably assumed the contact came through your duties as a letter carrier, then you can file a form CA-1 and they are not seeming to fight this as much they do other injuries.

I hope that none of you ever need my service and that you all have long and healthy careers .
In Union Solidarity,
Keith R. Gaub 520-275-8737
OWCP Representative
Branch 704 NALC

Retiree Representative Report

We at Branch 704 are very blessed to have many dedicated and distinguished retirees amongst our membership, one of whom recently was acknowledged by the NALC Arizona State Association. Ray Root was the recipient of the 2021 Arizona Member of the Year Award. Ray has served the branch as Health Benefits Representative for over 35 years. With his firsthand knowledge of the plan, keeping us informed through the years of the many changes, and promoting and increasing plan enrollment. Though no longer required,

he continues to attend branch meetings to inspire all of us. Bruce Jenkins, also a retiree, is doing a magnificent job in taking over the position.

We are in the midst of the 2022 FEHB Open Season, which continues till Monday, December 13th. The pandemic has caused many changes to plan benefits and coverage, including higher premiums. A few plans are no longer available. Those who are contemplating retiring soon, keep in mind that to maintain your health benefits into retirement, you must be enrolled in the

Federal Employee Health Benefit (FEHB) Program for five consecutive years prior to retirement, or if less than five years, for all service since your first opportunity to enroll.

The new JCAM (Joint Contract Administration Manual) has recently been published. In Article 28.4.B, with regards to debts of retired employees is the following, "If a retiree receives an invoice or notice of debt determination from the Postal Service after his/her separation date, the retiree should initiate a grievance through the local branch of his/her former employing office. Such dispute must be initiated directly to Step B. The grievance must be received at Step B within thirty days from the date the retiree first learned of the Postal Service's intent to collect the debt."

CONGRATULATIONS RAY ROOT!!



Do not ignore correspondence from the USPS, even after retirement. It might be something other than an invitation for holiday employment.

I would like to thank all the retirees who help in putting this newsletter together in preparation for mailing. A special thanks to Ross Phillips and all his assistance at the branch. Keeping all those uniform donations folded and sorted is no small task. When visiting the uniform supply room please do not treat it like a fitting room and try to keep the hangers and garments from falling on floor.

The Holiday Season being upon us, wishing all members and their families a very Joyous and Happy Thanksgiving!

In Solidarity,
Art Higven (520) 304-4196

Our Beloved 704 Retired Member, Brother Ray Root, receives his NALC AZ State Association's 2021 Arizona Member of the Year Award at the Branch 704 Monthly Meeting. Presenting his award is President Kathy Walter. Ray is accompanied by his wife, Dorothy

Ray Root, is a Branch 704's Treasure! He has worked tirelessly for our Membership & had a long, distinguished career working for the USPS. He started at the Post Office in 1958 at the age of 20 in Toledo, Ohio. He was part of the first nation-wide eight-day strike by federal postal workers in March of 1970. Ray and his fellow carriers took great risks, since striking against the government was a felony, punishable by a year and a day in jail and a \$1,000 fine. The strike influenced the passage and signing of the Postal Reorganization Act of 1970 winning full collective bargaining rights. They gained the right to negotiate on wages, benefits and working conditions. We enjoy the rights we have today from this sacrifice. After 1970, Ray brought his family to Tucson. He has served in many capacities for our Branch, lastly, as our past HBP Representative. Ray's dedication to his family, career, volunteer work and all-around wonderful person, made him the perfect to receive this award. He is such a respected man. We are proud to have him in our midst.

2021 BRANCH 704 STATE DELEGATES

Arizona State Convention held in Phoenix on October 28-30





Contract Talk

ARTICLE 26 UNIFORMS

When does a CCA become eligible for a uniform allowance?

A CCA becomes eligible for a uniform allowance upon completion of 90 workdays or 120 calendar days of employment as a CCA, whichever comes first. CCAs who have previously satisfied the 90/120-day requirement as a transitional employee (with an appointment made September 29, 2007), become eligible for a uniform allowance when they begin their first CCA appointment.

Once eligible for a uniform allowance how does the CCA get the funds to purchase uniforms?

Currently, when a CCA becomes eligible for a uniform allowance, funds must be approved through an eBuy submission by local management (usually it is the Station Manager). After approval, a Letter of Authorization form must be completed by local management and provided to the employee within 14 days of the eligibility date. The CCA takes the completed form to a USPS authorized vendor to purchase uniform items. The Letter of Authorization can be located on the Uniform Program website on the Blue Page under Human Resources.

Can I purchase my uniforms from any uniform vendor?

Uniform items can only be purchased from USPS licensed vendors. A list of all authorized Postal Service Uniform vendors is located on the Human Resources website: Uniform Program from the Blue Page and on LiteBlue under My HR and look for the link for Uniform Program.

Once I purchased my uniforms do I need to do anything with the invoice?

The licensed vendor creates an itemized invoice of the sale, provides a copy of the invoice to the CCA, and sends the original invoice for payment to the local manager identified on the Letter of Authorization. Upon receipt, the local manager certifies the invoice and pays the vendor using the office

SmartPay card.

When will I get my uniform purchase card?

When the anniversary date is reached, employees are provided a purchase card containing their first annual uniform allowance as a career employee.

Will my uniform anniversary date ever change?

Once established, the uniform anniversary date does not change. Therefore, when a CCA is converted to career status, he/she retains the same anniversary date as they had as a CCA.

What happens to my uniform allowance if I don't use all of it before my five-day appointment break?

If a CCA does not use the full allowance before his/her appointment ends, the remainder of the annual uniform allowance carries over into the next CCA appointment as applicable but must be used before the next uniform anniversary date.

Can I purchase uniforms using my five-day calendar break?

CCAs cannot purchase uniform items during their five-day calendar break between appointments.

What happens if I don't use all my uniform allowance before my next anniversary date?

If the full annual uniform allowance is not used before the next anniversary date, the remaining balance for that year is forfeited.

What happens if I am converted to career status and still have some of my uniform allowance?

CCAs who are converted to career status may keep any unused uniform allowance until their next uniform anniversary date, at which point any remaining balance will be forfeited.

In Solidarity,
Mark Follet
Vice President/Steward

Carl J. Kennedy Branch 704
National Association of Letter Carriers
2950 N. Country Club Road
Tucson, AZ 85716-1912
Telephone: 520-323-2117
DECEMBER 2021

HAPPY
THANKSGIVING

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
TUCSON, AZ
PERMIT 982

BRANCH OFFICERS

KATHY WALTER	PRESIDENT
MARK FOLLET	VICE PRESIDENT
DON HICOK	RECORDING SECRETARY
LETTY RAMOS	FINANCIAL SECRETARY
ALEXIS PADILLA	TREASURER
BRUCE JENKINS	HBA REPRESENTATIVE
ART HIGVEN	RETIREE REPRESENTATIVE
JOHN THOME	SERGEANT-AT-ARMS



TRUSTEES

PETE TADEO

MIKE DONNELLY	VACANT
TIFFANY EGGERT	JC MENA

CHAPLAIN
RICK EVANS

STEP A REPRESENTATIVE

ALEXIS PADILLA 520-323-2117

SHOP STEWARDS

ELVIA MOLINA	BISBEE	520-432-2626
MATT GUY	CASA GRANDE	520-836-7221
KIMBERLY DAVIS	CASAS ADOBES	531-0693
VINCE TRUJILLO	CHERRYBELL	388-5182
VACANT	COOLIDGE	520-723-3011
MARK FOLLET	CORONADO	571-7245
DIMAS GONZALEZ	CORONADO	571-7279
JOHN THOME	CORONADO-ALT.	847-702-7233
JOE SCARAMELLA	DESERT FOOTHILLS	615-9032
BARBARA MADDUX	DOUGLAS	520-634-3631
TIFFANY EGGERT	FT. LOWELL	290-9723
VACANT	GLOBE	928-425-2381
VACANT	GREEN VALLEY	648-0095
VACANT	MIAMI	928-473-2561
LILLIAN VALDEZ	MISSION	889-8828
JOE SCARAMELLA	MOUNTAIN VIEW	744-7097
JOHN THOME	RINCON	520-296-2816
AL MARTINEZ	SAFFORD	928-428-0220
JENNIFER BRANUM	SAN MANUEL	520-385-9341
ALEXIS PADILLA	SAN XAVIER	883-3284
ABRAHAM BUSTAMANTE	SAN XAVIER-ALT.	883-3284
AL MARTINEZ	SIERRA VISTA	520-458-0554
CATRINA RUIZ	SILVERBELL	388-9257
ALFREDO DELGADO	SILVERBELL	388-9572
JC MENA	SUN	881-1276
TONY RODRIGUEZ	SUN	881-1276
VACANT	WILLCOX	520-384-2689

