



CARL J. KENNEDY BRANCH 704

THE LETTER CARRIER REPORTER

PROUDLY SERVING

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JUNE 2022

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CONGRATULATIONS TO ROBERT CRAMER CASAS ADOBES



Check out our **WEBSITE:** www.nalcbranch704.org

Branch 704 Monthly Meeting is Thursday, June 2, 2022, & will begin promptly at 7:00 p.m. Please call the Office with your email address information for reservations to attend remotely via the Web-Ex. You may attend In Person without a reservation, but we are social distancing, so a call to us would be appreciated.

WEB-EX Reservations must be made EVERY month

President's Report

Dear Brothers and Sisters

On Monday, April 18, 2022, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) announced a special solicitation period as part of the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). The CFC Special Solicitation opened on April 18 and will run through June 30.

This special solicitation is being conducted to give federal employees, including Postal Service employees, the opportunity to support charities serving the humanitarian and refugee crisis caused by the war in Ukraine. During the CFC Special Solicitation, employees may donate using the CFC Giving Mobile App or through the CFC Online Giving System. Pledges may be made through payroll deduction, a bank account, or via credit card. Employees who previously donated to a charity during the regular CFC campaign using payroll deduction, may not increase the deduction during the special solicitation, so a new deduction would need to be set up. Employees should keep in mind that the current number of payroll deductions is limited to three. Those who have reached this limit may want to consider using one of the other methods to make a donation. Employees may also volunteer their time in lieu of a cash donation. More information regarding the CFC and the special solicitation is available online at cfcgiving.opm.gov/welcome.

Form 990 for the Branch taxes have been filed with the IRS.

NALC Health Representative, Bruce Jenkins has moved to South Carolina and had to resign his position. I have

appointed Amber Underwood as the new NALC Health Benefit Representative for Branch 704. I want to thank Bruce for his work, not only as Health Rep., but as a Trustee for the Branch and as a Steward when he was an active carrier. We will miss him, but we wish him all the joy in his new endeavor.

The Branch Office is in need of uniform shirts for our new CCAs. If you have your full complement of uniforms and have extras in your closet that are clean and still in good condition, please consider donating them to the Branch Office. Management has been hiring a lot of CCAs and we are running short on uniform shirts for both men and woman. Feel free to bring items to the branch office or make your Steward aware that you have donations, so they can bring them to the Branch.

Gerald Patrick Gaskin Scholarship: Two \$1000.00 scholarships will be awarded by drawing. To be eligible, the entry must be under the age of 23, and a dependent child of an active, retired, or deceased Arizona NALC Member. A qualifying entry must include proof of Acceptance and/or Registration at the College of choice. All entries must be received **by June 30, 2022**. Further qualifications are provided in this newsletter.

I want to wish all Moms a Very Happy Mother's Day! Thank you for all your hard work at the Post Office, but more importantly, for being the wonderful, empathetic women that take care of your families and all those around you. Here is hoping you have a wonderful day!!

In Solidarity,
Kathy Walter

Vice President Article

Hope all Mothers out there had a great Mother's Day and received some recognition showing how special and important they and motherhood are! Hope everyone will have a good Memorial Day! I would like to thank all Active, Reserves, National Guard, Retired military and ALL Veterans that have or are serving this great nation! I want to especially honor those U.S. military personnel who have died in the performance of their military duties! Without them, we would not have the freedoms that we have!

Did you know that the way that city letter carriers clock in will be changing in the very near future? In fact, in some locations, the Rural Letter Carriers are already using this new system. The OIG states that the EBR system that the USPS uses has approximately 21,000 remaining readers in use. The USPS management believes it will run out of serviceable units by the end of 2022. The OIG states that the EBR system is quickly becoming obsolete, and the US Postal Service will need to create a solution for future employee timekeeping. The OIG report states that the USPS updated the Time and Attendance Collection Systems (TACS) in December 2020 and was not pursuing initiatives to update the physical time collection devices (EBR System). According to the OIG, the company that built the electronic badge reader (EBR) used by Postal Service employees to input time clock entries, went out of business in

August 2018.

In response to the OIG and concerns regarding the future viability of the EBR System, the USPS operations is in the process of formalizing plans to enhance the MDD/MDD-TR (our scanners) to replace our traditional method of clocking in on the EBR. This enhancement will allow city letter carriers to clock in and out, switch operations and record work on other routes through the scanner! Also, this new program will join the programs where you can complete PS Form 3575-Z, Employee Generated Change of Address, to document that the customer had moved and left no forwarding address and also, the ability to input customer connect business leads already on the MDD/MDD-T.

The Postal Service is planning to test a new enhancement to the MDD/MDD-TR that incorporates the ability to provide building access information for select buildings. With this enhancement, the Postal Service hopes to reduce the amount of parcel redelivery and "No Access" scans by providing delivery instructions.

During the test, carriers will receive building access information such as access codes, instructions related to key keepers, or receptacle location, for select buildings in the test site. When carriers are within a 25-foot radius of the delivery point, they will receive an alert on their scanner with the access

information. This testing will be conducted for approximately three months in the Arlington, VA, Main Office.

Technology will continue to advance and city letter carriers should be ready! Letter carriers should be encouraged by these advances in technology and the evolution from the MDD to the MDD-TR. I believe that these enhancements and those that follow, could offer letter carriers additional and more convenient options for receiving or providing information related to their duties.

I believe that by the fall of 2022 or by March 2023, the USPS and NALC will agree on a new Joint Route Evaluations and Adjustment Agreement. It will use the concepts that retain a similar structure and evaluation period as was used in the past, but now the process incorporates a significant amount of technology that is now available through the MDD/MDD-TR. The technology is nothing more than information. This includes details of what each carrier does on every route each day, the locations of scans, parcel deliveries, accountable deliveries, etc.

The NALC is very happy with the results of the testing. The vast amount of information that is now available allows the joint teams to identify and correct any data problems such as clock-ring errors. The teams also are able to identify allied time on the street, such as relay time and parcel or accountable delivery. The results were very clean data that makes it easy to evaluate routes based on the average time a carrier takes to deliver a route daily.

NALC is working extensively with the Postal Service to improve the adjustment part of the process. For many years, the evaluated territory being transferred to or from a route was based on a one-day PS Form 3999 prepared by a ride along supervisor. Having a supervisor accompany a carrier for a full day is very expensive and not an enjoyable experience for the carrier or the supervisor. That single day may or may not be representative of the normal time it takes to deliver a particular part of the route. This was the best that could be done for a

very long time. However, the information that can be obtained through technology provides an opportunity to improve in this area. NALC and Management are working toward using the technology to develop something like a PS Form 3999 for adjustment purposes. The idea is to create a file that is based on the average times over the course of a week rather than a single day. This should result in more representative times when the territory is moved from one route to the other route. This would not only eliminate the need for a supervisor to accompany the carrier on every route to evaluate and adjust routes, but also result in cost savings and a more efficient process.

The feedback from the test sites was unanimously positive. The only difference for the carrier during a route evaluation, in this concept, is the carrier talking to the joint team about their route. Thus, nothing changes compared to a normal week or weeks.

Tucson hit 100 degrees for the first time this year on April 22, 2022-almost two weeks before the average date for hitting 100 degrees. This leads me to believe that this could be a very hot summer! Our chances of exposure to extreme heat are high. It can result in heat illnesses and injuries, such as heat stroke, heat exhaustion, rhabdomyolysis, heat syncope, heat cramps and heat rash. However, the one that most people forget about is dehydration. Dehydration can lead to serious complications including heat injury, urinary and kidney problems (i.e., Kidney failure, etc.), seizures and low blood volume shock (hypovolemic shock). Therefore, it is extremely important that you stay as cool as possible and drink plenty of water so you will be there for your loved ones now and in the future!

In Solidarity,
Mark Follet
Vice-President

Chaplain's Corner

Brightening the world around you

Has the world around you become dark? Does life right now taste as sour as a bucket of fresh lemons? Sometimes it just turns out that way. Here's a suggestion: Don't get overwhelmed. Just find one thing you can do or one person whose life you can brighten and add some sugar to. When we focus on blessing others, our own problems often seem less burdensome. Proverbs 11:25 reminds us that "the generous will prosper; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed." How can you be sweet tea and sunshine today? Taken from- *God is good, y'all. Inspirations To Bless Your Heart.* KEN PETERSON General Editor.

Blessings to all,
Rick Evans 520-248-9643
Chaplain



GET WELL

Carrier Penny Chaffin

OUR SYMPATHIES

**Retiree Don Hootman on the passing of His Father.
Carrier Abel Cervantes on the passing of His Grandmother.**



Retiree Representative Report

Record heat in southern Arizona could not prevent the success of the 2022 Letter Carrier Food Drive. A much deserved thank you goes to all the active and retired letter carrier volunteers who participated in the collection of food to stock the pantry of the Food Bank. The one-day Food Drive provides a great service to the community. Recently retired letter carrier, Dan Turrentine, did a marvelous job for the Branch as our 2022 Food Drive Coordinator. Getting the Retiree volunteers together at the Office to make sure the food drive cards and bags were properly distributed to the various Tucson Stations and Associate Offices was time consuming, but the results were more than worth the effort. The total amount of food collected should be known soon.

Some good news from OPM for just recently retired and those about to submit their paperwork. Retirement case average processing times have trended downward for the third consecutive month, from a high of 89 days in February to just 80 days in April. Recently, we have received some questions about the Postal Reform Act and its effect on retirees and Medicare. A provision in the law was made to waive the penalty for postal retirees who failed to sign up for Medicare part B when they reached 65 years of age. A one-time

penalty-free sign-up period will be granted to these individuals. As of yet, there is no information on when this will occur. However, keep in mind that Medicare open season this year starts Saturday, October 15th and ends Wednesday, December 7th. If no other special enrollment period is announced, this may likely be the time that retirees over 65 years of age will be allowed to sign up without being penalized for late enrollment. No official word yet from Medicare or the NALC HBP.

A lot of new CCA's have been hired locally. We need to welcome these new brothers and sisters and help them out in understanding what the letter carrier job entails. Making sure they realize that they will be outside for **most of the day** and they **need to hydrate**. Also, as a result of all these new members, the branch is in desperate need of used, but still wearable men's and women's shirts to make available to our CCA members until they receive their uniform allowance. Thank you in advance for your donations.

In Solidarity,
Art Higven (520) 304-4196

Gerald Patrick Gaskin Scholarship Fund Criteria

ELIGIBILITY:

- Applicant must be a dependent child under the age of 23 of an active, retired, or deceased Arizona NALC member.
- Applicant must be a high school senior, a junior nearing completion of his/her junior year or a graduate of High School or equivalent (GED) or attending an accredited college, community college, trade school, or higher education (undergraduate) at the time of submitting the scholarship application.
- In the case of a junior applying, they will be required to submit not only grade transcripts for the junior year ending, but must submit a timely grade transcript for their senior year.
- Applications must be submitted on form or copy of form provided by the Arizona State Association of Letter Carriers.

REQUIREMENTS:

- Applicants must show proof of acceptance to an accredited college or trade school.
- Applications must be received before the last day of June.
- Applicants must show proof of age.
- Applicants must receive the endorsement of the President or Secretary of the Branch in which they claim eligibility.

REGULATIONS:

- The State Association shall fund \$1,000.00 to the scholarship per year and there will be a minimum of 1 scholarship awarded on a yearly basis.
- All funds shall be awarded after acceptance to school of applicant's choice.
- The funds shall be made payable to both the student and the school.
- The scholarship committee shall review all applications to assure that all criteria have been followed and met. The decision of the scholarship committee shall be final.
- In the event the student withdraws from school all monies shall be returned to the scholarship fund. Any exceptions must be reviewed and approved by the committee. Scholarships not used within one year of the drawing date shall be returned to the scholarship fund.
- If the NALC member withdraws from the union, applies for or enters supervision, or terminates employment with the Postal Service then the scholarship will be cancelled. Children of 204-B's are excluded from making application for 2 years following his/her qualifying letter carrier's return to the craft.
- Prior scholarship winners shall not be allowed to re-apply in future scholarship campaigns.
- The Scholarship Committee shall award the scholarships by random drawing of all eligible applicants. The drawing shall be held at such time as selected by the committee.
- Two alternates shall be drawn in the event that the scholarship winner is later ruled ineligible. The alternate's names will not be disclosed.

Gerald Patrick Gaskin Scholarship Application Form

Please accept my application for the Gerald Patrick Gaskin Scholarship sponsored by the Arizona State Association of Letter Carriers (ASALC). I am a dependent child under the age of 23 of an active, retired or deceased ASALC member.

Letter Carrier (Name): _____

Applicant Name: _____

Social Security Number: _____

Applicant Address: Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone Number: (_____) _____

Signature of Applicant

Date

(Certifies that all rules and regulations are understood and agreed to.)

Branch Number: _____ Branch City/Name: _____

Signature of Branch President or Secretary

Date

(Certifies member is in good standing.)

THE FOLLOWING MUST ACCOMPANY THE APPLICATION:

- PROOF OF AGE
- PROOF OF ACCEPTANCE TO ACCREDITED COLLEGE, OF CURRENT YEAR

Application must be received by June 30th, of current year.

MAIL APPLICATION TO:
Gerald Gaskin Scholarship Committee
C/O NALC Branch 704
2950 N. Country Club Road
Tucson, AZ. 85716-1912



Meeting Dates

Branch Meeting-Thursday, June 2, 2022

Stewards' Meeting-Thursday, June 16, 2022

E-Board Meeting-Thursday, June 30, 2022

An Enormous Amount of Thanks go Out to ALL our Food Drive Volunteers!



From the sorting of the cards, wrapping the pallets for each station, delivering all the Food Drive materials to all the stations, Our Media Contacts, the Community Food Bank to Our Food Collectors & Sorters!

Our utmost respect & THANKS to our Food Drive Coordinator, Dan Turrentine. Dan is one of our Retirees and ran everything so smoothly. Dan, you are amazing and you made it all look so easy!

WE COULD NOT HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT YOU ALL!!!!

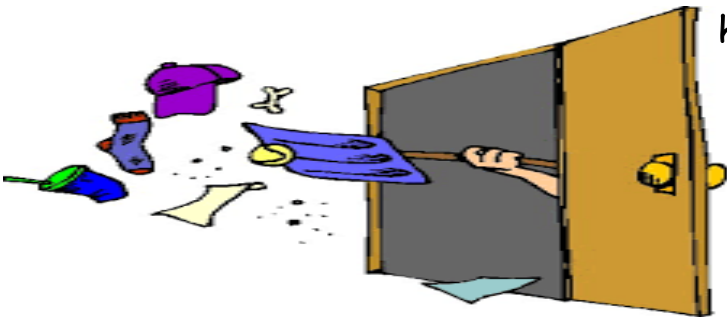
NEEDED: UNIFORMS

(Pants - Shorts - Shirts - Jackets - Sweaters - Hats, etc.) ESPECIALLY SHIRTS!! Please make sure to donate good, clean, & usable uniform items. If you are approaching retirement & have an excess of uniform items, please keep our CCA's & Branch 704's Uniform Donation Room in mind. A HUGE Thank You to Retirees Ross Phillips and Art Higven for all their

hard work and organization of the used uniforms.

It's A LOT of work,

Y'ALL!!



Congratulations to Our New Conversions!

Maria McKean
Angelique Saenz
Brandon Kallipolitis
Hector Aboyte Jr.
Tracie Reed
Laura Acuna
Elias Rodriguez
Sandro Silva Jr.

San Xavier
Silverbell
Mission
Mountain View
Cherrybell
Mountain View
Silverbell
Rincon



Contract Talk

PART ONE

IMPORTANT BENEFIT CONSIDERATIONS UPON CONVERSION TO CAREER

You are finally being converted to career status! Congratulations! Conversion to career is an exciting time for city letter carriers as they become eligible for additional benefit options. Many of these benefits have enrollment time frames and deadlines. Most career benefit selections must be completed within 60 days of conversion. Remember to complete the enrollment process before the applicable deadline.

New career letter carriers will receive a benefit's booklet in the mail from USPS Human Resource Shared Service Center (HRSSC). This book will contain documents needed for processing changes to benefits afforded to career letter carriers. In addition to the blue book, letter carriers can enter benefit's changes online via LiteBlue at liteblue.usps.gov. *If you do not receive your blue book soon after conversion, contact the branch for us to investigate on why you did not receive it.*

Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program

Once you are converted to a career position, you have 60 days to enroll in an FEHB health plan. The FEHB program has many plans to choose from, including the NALC Health Benefit Plan (HBP). The NALC HBP is a comprehensive plan that has provided letters carriers and their families with first-rate health insurance since 1950. The plan is owned and operated by letter carriers and pays particular attention to our health needs. The plan is not-for-profit; its only focus is the health of its members.

The premiums for the plan you choose will be split between you and the Postal Service. Article 21 of the National Agreement sets the percentage of the premiums that will be paid by each. Currently, USPS pays 73 percent of the weighted biweekly premiums as determined by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

If you were enrolled in the USPS Non-career Employee Health Benefits Plan and converted to a career position, your enrollment is terminated the last day of the month that is 28 days after you were converted. If you choose to enroll in an FEHB plan, your USPS Non-Career Employee Health Benefits Plan coverage will end when your FEHB coverage begins.

I would recommend that you enroll in an FEHB program as soon as possible, to avoid any gap in coverage or to start receiving health benefits. *Enrollment is not retroactive.* Your coverage in the FEHBP plan will begin the first day of the first pay period after Human Resources receives your election. To sign up for an FEHB plan, it is recommended that you use the PostaleASE website at ewss.usps.gov or on the Postal Service intranet (on the Blue page). Make sure you have your PIN and have your enrollment information available. **This is the fastest way to received coverage.**

The Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP)

The Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP) is a voluntary, enrollee-pay-all dental and vision program available to Federal employees and annuitants. It is sponsored by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and offers eligible participant a choice between 12 dental and five vision carriers. BENEFEDS administer the enrollment, plan change and premium payment processes for FEDVIP.

You are eligible to enroll if you are a Federal or U.S. Postal Service employee who is eligible to enroll in the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program, whether or not you are actually enrolled. You must be a full-time permanent employee. Premiums are paid pre-tax for employees. Dependent children are covered until age 22. If you would like to enroll in this program, you would need to go to benefeds.com. You would then be asked a series of questions to make sure you are eligible for dental and vision program. Then you must create a My BENEFEDS account. Once created just follow the directions. You have 60 days to enroll once you are converted to full time.

Remember that you have 60 days to complete your enrollment in the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program (FEHB) and the Federal Employee Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP). Should you miss this deadline, you would have to wait until the 2021 Federal Benefits Open Season with coverage effective January 1, 2022. Open season typically runs from the Second Monday in November through the second Monday in December each year. The only other way to enroll is to have a qualifying life event (QLE). Examples of QLEs include:

- 1. Marriage.***
- 2. Acquire a family member.***
- 3. Lose a family member.***
- 4. Lose other dental or vision coverage (FEDVIP only)***
- 5. Return from leave without pay.***
- 6. Divorce.***
- 7. Child reaching age 26 (FEHB only)***

PARTS TWO AND THREE of important benefit considerations upon conversion to career status will include Federal Employees Group Life Insurance (FGLI), Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) and Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program (FLTCIP) and Flexible Spending Account (FSA).

Congratulations on your new career position!

In Union Solidary,
Mark Follet
Vice President/Coronado Station Steward

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 2022-06 Issue #06 Organization: National Association of Letter Carriers, 2950 N. Country Club Road, Tucson, AZ 85716-1912 *The Letter Carrier Reporter* is the official publication of NALC Branch 704. The editor and/or Executive Board reserves the right to edit or omit articles due to content or space limitations. All facts, opinions and statements appearing within this publication are those of the writers and editors themselves, and are in no way to be construed as statements, positions or endorsements by Branch 704 or its officers. Permission is granted for the REPRINTING of any article that originates in this newsletter to any Branch of the NALC at any time. Please just give the writer credit. All articles, announcements, and advertisements should be sent to: nalcbranch704@outlook.com or the Branch office.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS
2950 N. COUNTRY CLUB ROAD
TUCSON, AZ 85716-1912
TELEPHONE: 520-323-2117
June 2022



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