



CARL J. KENNEDY BRANCH 704
**THE LETTER CARRIER
REPORTER**

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June 2019

Email Address: nalcbranch704@outlook.com

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NALC Food Drive 2019



WEBSITE: www.nalcbranch704.org

Next Union Meeting: Thursday June 6, 2019, 7:00pm.

2950 N. Country Club Road, Tucson, AZ 85716-1912

President's Report

Greeting Brothers and Sisters,

We did a great job with this year's Food Drive! Everyone went the extra mile to insure we got more exposure this year which brought more donated food. Last year we received 273,652 pounds of food and \$25,377.00; this year 311,593 pounds of food and \$25,211.00 were collected. Some of you may have seen Business Agent Dan Versluis helping at Rincon Station and Casas Adobes Station with food pick up and, on the docks, unloading the LLVs. Many thanks Dan, for participating in the food drive. Between the Community Food Bank volunteers, TEP who donated the bags we used, the retirees who helped on the routes, the stewards working to insure all the cards and bags got to the customers, and especially the carriers and rural carriers that picked up food, between all of us we made it a successful food drive. Thank you all for your help; this has given a huge boost to our community to ensure food is on the tables for the people in need.

We will have a guest speaker at the June Union meeting. Tucson Democrat, Regina Romero entered the race for mayor of Tucson; she is excited to have the opportunity to address our members and inform them on her vision in leading the city in a new direction. Please come and hear our guest at the June union meeting.

I want to acknowledge Amber Underwood and Irving Crespo who helped at the State Convention. We had several branch members in committees from Sergeant-at-Arms, Election, Audit, Retirement, and Member of the year committee, our Delegates were involved and made the State Convention a success.

National Officer Fred Rolando addressed several topics: he spoke about the Contract being officially open June 26, 2019 for negotiations and how they will continue to narrow the gap between CCAs and Regular carriers. The NALC has initiated a National level dispute over the Postal Service's continuing non-compliance with the contractual caps on employment of City Carrier Assistants (CCAs). The Postal Service, therefore, must take appropriate remedial action to bring the CCA complement into compliance with the Agreement and maintain such compliance. To fix this the Postal Service must promptly convert a sufficient number of currently employed CCAs to career status to bring the CCA workforce into compliance with the contractually mandated percentages and maintain such compliance going forward. The estimate number of CCAs over the complement is around 4400 CCAs nationwide. The carriers and CCAs who started after 2013 now make up half the workforce in the Postal Service, and the retention average rate nationally is 58% and in some parts of the country it is 70%. There are some cities like Aspen that can't get CCAs to

work for the Postal Service. The Postal Service had to start new hires as Part Time Flexible Career employees. With USPS wanting to start employees in large cities as PTFs it makes sense to do away with CCAs and start everyone as career employees like they did before they had a supplemental work force.

NALC also filed a national level grievance regarding the Postal Service's unilateral implementation of the consolidated casing initiative scheduled to begin in over 200 locations this summer. My understanding is the caser will case 3 routes pull down in 90 minutes, the caser after casing 6 to 9 routes will go out and carry to make 8 hours. The carriers will come in when the route is pulled down, be in the office no more than 15 minutes to get accountable mail and load vehicle and carry for 7:45 minutes on the street. At one-point Rincon Station was under consideration to be a site for the caser initiative, but at this point we are not involved in this yet. We will have to wait to see what the future holds in store for Tucson.

Fred spoke about the new jobs at National they will be hiring employees for: (RWCA) Regional Workers Compensation assistant to help with OWCP representation directly. (LPO) Legislative and Political Organizer to support our state associations and mobilize our NALC activist network. (RGA) Regional Grievance Assistant is designed to make sure all letter carriers are represented in the grievance procedure no matter how large or small their branch is.

Legislative Liaison John Beaumont talked about legislative issues at the State Convention. He reminded the members what's at stake in the coming months. 1. Raises federal employees' pension contributions between 6 and 7.25% of pay over the next six years, costing active carriers up to \$3,600-\$4,350 per year. 2. Eliminating cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) for current and future retirees under the Federal Employment Retirement System (FERS) the average FERS annuitant would lose \$23,430 over 10 years, \$99,471 over 20 years, \$246,185 over 30 years, that's your money people! To not be informed or involved to actively protect our jobs is not the way we must respond to what is happening. If you have not signed up for the Letter carrier political fund let your steward know or call the branch office. It is easy and this helps our National Officers not only with money but also with the number of members we have in the Letter Carrier Political Fund Pack as you know Congress listens to money and more important votes. Imagine the political power our National President Fred would have if he had a Pack with all the union members on it as a voting block and contributing money?

Right now, only 9% of all members contribute to the LCPF and

(President Article Cont. on page 3)

(President Article Cont. from page 2)

they have contributed 6.5 million. Where is the other 91% of the members? Do they not care if they have raises or retirement? I do not believe this, as we all want the promise to be able to support our families and have a good retirement in the future. So, I will be waiting to help sign up everyone that has not signed up for the LCPF, my door is always open.

Dan Versluis and John Robles from the Region 4 Business Agents Office had classes that as always are different and informative. They answered questions from all the members on a wide variety of subjects and made it interesting.

In Solidarity
Kathy Walter

By making a contribution to the Letter Carrier Political Fund, you are doing so voluntarily with the understanding that your contribution is not a condition of membership in the National Association of Letter Carriers or of employment by the Postal Service, nor is it part of union dues. You have a right to refuse to contribute without any reprisal. The Letter Carrier Political Fund will use the money it receives to contribute to candidates for federal office and undertake other political spending as permitted by law. Your selection shall remain in full and effect until cancelled. Contributions to the Letter Carrier Political Fund are not deductible for federal income tax purposes. Federal law prohibits the Letter Carrier Political Fund from soliciting contributions from individuals who are not NALC members, executive and administrative staff or their families. Any contribution received from such an individual will be refunded to that coordinator. Federal law requires us to use our best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, occupation and name of employer of individuals whose contributions exceed \$200 in a calendar year.

CONGRATULATIONS...

On Your Retirement!

Diane Feldmayer
Rincon Station

Pat Chavez
Rincon Station

David Moreno
Mission Station



▼ ▼
--Not Pictured--

On Your Conversion!

Roczanne Chavez

Terrence Biehl

Michelle Ross

Miriam Orozco

Aaron Thomsen

Steph Gomez



2019 NALC BRANCH 704 STATE CONVENTION DELEGATES, INCLUDING NBA, DAN VERSLUIS

Vice President Article

Thanks to all the carriers, volunteers and Southern Arizona residents, who participated in this year's "Stamp Out Hunger" food drive. The Community Food Bank received a total of 311,593 pounds of food and \$25,211.00 for hungry families. Every pound of food that's been collected will immediately assist hungry families in Southern Arizona. None of this would be possible without the dedication, hard work, and volunteerism of all Postal employees, including Clerks, Rural Carriers and the many other volunteers through the Community Food Banks and AFL-CIO affiliated members. I want to express my sincere thanks to Tiffany Eggert, this year's Branch Food Drive Coordinator for a job well done.

I understand the Union office has received numerous calls regarding OWCP injuries. Management seems to be misinforming employees about which forms to fill out and how to receive benefits. Recently several employees have been denied Continuation of Pay or their choice of doctors based on the information supplied by local management.

The claimant has a right to the initial choice of a treating physician but, must take steps to exercise that right. Restrictions apply including limitations on the services of chiropractors. Every letter carrier should have a physician or medical care provider in mind that will competently evaluate and treat a job-related injury, no matter when the injury occurs. Typically, this means a medical care provider other than your personal physician because they are not usually immediately available to evaluate and treat your injury. Remember once you make two visits to the treating physician, that doctor becomes your Doctor of record for OWCP purposes. YOU make the initial choice of physician, not management. Management has the right to send you to their clinic, but you must first be allowed to see your chosen physician or medical care provider if they're immediately available to see you.

In general, it is not in your best interest to choose management's clinic or physician for your initial, follow-up medical evaluation and treatment as most of their clinics are staffed by Physician Assistants and are not recognized by the Department of Labor as treating physicians. Remember who the management doctor is working for. I urge all employees to report all injuries no matter how minor to your supervisor immediately. You may report an injury without accepting emergency medical treatment. This protects you from discipline should the injury worsen over time and require medical treatment later.

Things to do when you suffer an on-the-job injury:

(1) Report the injury to your supervisor as soon as you can.
(2) Tell your local NALC representative about the injury right away. (3) Complete Form CA-1 or CA-2 and submit it to your

supervisor. (4) When you submit a CA-1 or CA-2, ask the supervisor to sign the receipt portion of the CA-1 or CA-2 and give it to you. (5) Ask the supervisor to give you a completed copy of the CA-1 or CA-2 after the Postal Service completes its part of the form. (6) Go to your doctor for treatment. (7) Request assistance from the branch or your National Business Agent's office. (8) Make and keep your own copies of all claim-related documents that you provide to OWCP and/or to USPS. (9) When submitting documents to OWCP, always put the OWCP claim number at the top righthand corner of each page. (10) If OWCP requests information, scrupulously comply with the request, including the time limit (usually 30 days).

In Union Solidarity,
Claudio Retes
Vice 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 2019-06 Issue #06
Organization:
National Association of Letter Carriers,
2950 N. Country Club Road, Tucson, AZ 85716-1912

Meeting Dates

**Branch Meeting-Thursday,
June 6, 2019 @ 7:00 pm**

**Stewards Meeting-Thursday,
June 20, 2019 @ 5:30 pm**

**Executive Board Meeting-
Thursday, June 27, 2019
@ 6:00 pm**



Formal Step-A Report

During the month of April, 13 grievances were resolved at the Formal Step-A level. A summary of the settled grievances is listed below:

FORMAL STEP-A:

- Settled **2** Letters of Warning (LOWs) by getting 1 rescinded and 1 reduced to an Official Discussion.
- Settled **2** 7-Day Suspensions by getting both suspensions reduced to a 3-Month Letter of Warning.
- Settled **2** grievances where management failed to post vacant bid assignments in a timely manner by getting the successful bidders of those routes paid \$250.00 each. **(Total: \$3,750.00)**
- Settled **3** grievances for management performing bargaining unit work by getting carriers who should have done the work paid. **(Total: \$750.18)**.
- Settled **3** grievances where management improperly forced non-ODL carriers to work overtime by getting those carriers paid the appropriate premium payment and ODL carriers paid for the missed opportunities **(Total: \$3,208.05)**.
- Settled **1** grievance where management failed to provide a newly hired CCA a full 8-hour shadow day by getting that CCA another 8-hour shadow day training.

We received 5 Step B decisions back this month:

Contract Talk

As shop steward I seem to encounter a lot of questions as to whether or not a grievance is necessary for a given situation. Unless life or limb is in harm's way, please always follow managements' orders and then file the grievance...we don't want anyone getting in trouble for "failure to follow instructions".

Q: I saw management running express/pulling down a route/delivering mail...is this a grievance?

A: Most likely, yes! As per Article 1 of the National Agreement:

1.6.A: Supervisors are prohibited from performing bargaining unit work at post offices with 100 or more bargaining unit employees except:

1. In an emergency;
2. for the purpose of training or instruction of employees
3. to assure the proper operation of equipment
4. to protect the safety of employees; or
5. to protect the property of the USPS

This is a serious grievance. If you see someone other than a city carrier doing city carrier work this means time and money is being taken away from a carrier and also perhaps denying the opportunity for someone to gain employment at USPS.

Three grievances were sustained in the union's favor for management failing to provide light duty and do search work within the carrier's medical restrictions. The B team awarded a monetary remedy of Administrative Leave for approximately 306.05 hours and any leave the grievant used recredited to his A/L or S/L balance. Approximate cost to the postal service is **\$9,478.37**.

Two grievances were denied by the Step B team stating management did not act arbitrary and capricious when they denied the carrier's request for transfer.

Management's failure to follow the contract at the Formal A cost the USPS \$17,186.60 this month.

Management's failure to follow the contract at the Informal A cost the USPS \$5,711.24 this month.

Management's failure to follow the contract cost the USPS \$22,879.84 this month.

In Solidarity,
Stuart Love
Formal Step-A Representative

Q: I was taken off of my opt and given an N/S day or sent to another station...can I grieve this?

A: It depends. As per Article 41.2.B.5 "A letter carrier who, pursuant to subsections 3 and 4 above, has selected a craft duty assignment by exercise of seniority **shall work that duty assignment for its duration.**" Meaning you are obligated to the Hold-Down/Opt until the incumbent carrier returns...even if it's just to case the mail.

However, there are a few exceptions to this rule. This one seems to happen fairly frequently: if you are a CCA opted on a route and the station is fully flush...meaning there isn't enough work for all the carrier letter carriers you may be temporarily "bumped" off of your hold-down to allow for a full time carrier to make their hours.

Article 41 contains a lot of information on Hold-Downs and opting feel free to consult the contract or ask your shop steward if you have any questions in regard to this topic.

Q: I received discipline; can I grieve it?

A: Yes (unless you're a CCA who has less than 90 workdays or 120 calendar days)...Article 16 states: "No employee may **(Contract Article Cont. on page 6)**

(Contract Article Cont. from page 5)

be disciplined or discharged except for **just cause** such as, but not limited to, insubordination, pilferage, intoxication (drugs or alcohol), incompetence, failure to perform work as requested, violation of the terms of this Agreement, or failure to observe safety rules and regulations. Any such discipline or discharge shall be subject to the grievance-arbitration procedure proved for in this Agreement, which could result in reinstatement and restitution, including back pay."

The key component of the article is the mention of "just cause". How do we define "just cause"? Who defines it? As stewards we break down the discipline to see if there was indeed a "rule" that was broken, if it was a reasonable rule, if that rule is consistently and equitably enforced, and that a thorough investigation took place. Also, in terms of discipline maybe there was "just cause" but many times the severity of

the discipline is not reasonably related to the infraction itself. Our job as stewards is to enforce the contract and ensure that our carriers are treated fairly. We don't like to see anyone receive discipline and do our best to work for the affected carrier and either get the discipline completely rescinded or reduced as much as possible. If you receive discipline please inform your steward as soon as possible, we only have fourteen days from the date of issuance to work on it.

If you ever have any questions as to whether or not something is a contractual violation, please speak to your shop steward or give the union branch a call. We are happy to answer your questions or look into any concerns you may have.

In Solidarity,
Tiffany Eggert
Steward Fort Lowell

Annual NALC Food Drive

By the time you read this, the Food Drive will be over. How high is the anxiety level in your branch to do well? Being anxious, means we anticipate a certain outcome. We have a wonderful Food Bank here in Tucson. I want to do an outstanding job for them, fill their enormous warehouse right up to the rafters.

For several years now, I've worked with the marketing director of the Food Bank on radio and television spots. I share the PSAs on social media.

We all want the same thing – a large number of pounds collected. I try to ignore the handful of grumpy carriers who

don't share my enthusiasm for hoisting heavy canned goods.

This is a valued community service. Our great union helps insure healthy and hunger-free neighborhoods where we live and work. I personally find this quite rewarding. One day of a little extra work produces big results for people in need. I wish a successful Food Drive to all the branches.

#STAMPOUTHUNGER

In Union Solidarity,
Amber Underwood

Health Benefit Report What About Sugar in Fruit?

Though the sugar you stir into your morning coffee and the sugar in a peach are chemically similar, your body doesn't process them in the same way. Here's how the two differ:

- **Fruit's sugars are absorbed more slowly.** The sugars in fruit are encased inside the plant's cells, so your body has to work harder to break them down. The fiber in the fruit further slows digestion. Both factors mean when you eat fruit, you don't get the rapid rise in blood sugar that, if it occurs frequently, can raise the risk of heart disease and type 2 diabetes.
- **Fruit isn't all that sugary.** It packs a lower sugar content than, say, a fruit dessert. For example, 2/3 cup of raspberries has about 4 grams of sugar. Compare that with the 33 grams in 2/3 cup of Talenti Roman Raspberry Sorbetto, which contains raspberries but also sugar and dextrose (a type of sugar). Adults should

have 1½ to 2 cups of fruit a day.

- **Fruit boosts health.** It's packed with antioxidants, vitamins, and minerals, plus fiber. And there is evidence that people who eat fruit have lower risks of hypertension, type 2 diabetes, certain forms of cancer and other diseases; fruit may even help with weight control.

These benefits might not extend to fruit juice, however, even if it contains no added sugars. Juices are a much more concentrated source of sugar. For example, a cup of apple slices has 50 calories and 11 grams of sugars, and a cup of apple juice has twice those amounts. Plus, juice lacks the fiber that slows the release of the sugars into the bloodstream.

The best of health to you and yours,
Ray Root 885-4983
Health Benefits Representative

Chaplain's Corner

It Takes Two

As a prisoner for the Lord, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Ephesians 4:1.

One story in circulation claims a mother and son were eager to attend a concert by renowned Polish pianist, Ignacy Paderewski. When the house lights dimmed, the mother discovered that the child was missing. As the curtain rose, the mother noticed in horror that her little boy was sitting at the keyboard, innocently picking out "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star." At that moment, the great piano master made his entrance, quickly moved over to the piano and whispered in the boy's ears, "Don't quit keep playing." Leaning over, Paderewski reached down with his left hand and began filling in a bass part.

Together, the old master and young novice transformed a tense situation into a wonderfully creative experience. Whether this is a true story or not, it is the perfect example of the relationship

we have with our heavenly Father. What we can accomplish on our own is hardly noteworthy. But with the hand of the Master, our life's work can be beautiful. Next time you set out to accomplish great feats, listen for the voice of the Master whispering in your ear, "Don't Quit. Keep playing." Feel His loving arms around you. Know that His strong hands are there, turning your feeble attempts into masterpieces. Remember, God doesn't call the equipped; He equips the called.

By David Jeremiah

Chaplain
Rick Evans
520-248-9643
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Retiree Update

I just returned from the Arizona State Convention, which was held in Laveen, AZ. Our National President, Fred Rolando, was the main speaker at this convention. He brought very important information to the delegates regarding the upcoming contract negotiations as well as many other issues that the NALC will be facing in the upcoming years. I am sure other officers will address some of these topics in their articles of this newsletter.

I want to speak directly to the retired members. If you do not know what is in store, the contractual negotiations does have an effect on your retirement annuity from the US Postal Service. Postal Management is proposing to decrease their amount of contributions to the health plan as well as eliminate COLA increases. If this happens, you will be required to pay whatever that difference may be. If the COLA is eliminated it will affect the retired members as well as the active carrier. Bottom line, whatever the amount happens to be, it comes out of the annuity that you receive.

The White House wants to do away with our bargaining rights, colas, change the high 3 to high 5 years to calculate the retire-

ment annuity, as well as changing the rates paid to the Thrift Savings Fund.

The only way to combat some of the issues that we as Retirees face is through the Political Fund and addressing these topics with the congressional representatives in our district. If you are not a contributor to the Political Fund, you can attend any one of the branch meetings where someone will be able to help you enroll. You can contribute as little as \$1.00 or whatever you are comfortable with. These funds are used only for those representatives that support the NALC's political positions.

Just because you have retired does not mean that you are no longer useful as a NALC member, come join us in the fight to keep what we have worked for our entire career. Hope to see you at a branch meeting soon.

In Solidarity,
Gene Kelley
Retiree Representative

CONDOLENCES

JR Gabaldon on the loss of your Mother.
Jim Batiste on the loss of your Wife.
Manny Chretien on the loss of your Mother.

GET WELL

Gene Kelley's Uncle.

**National Association of Letter Carriers
 Carl J. Kennedy Branch 704
 2950 N. Country Club Road
 Tucson, AZ 85716-1912
 Telephone: 520-323-2117
 June 2019 Newsletter**

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CHAPLAIN

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