

THE LETTER CARRIER REPORTER



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Website: www.nalcbranch704.org
Email: nalcbranch704@outlook.com

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STEVEN 'HAPPY' KARLAN



GREEN VALLEY

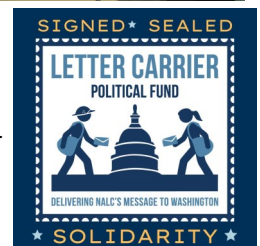
DAVE CAPLEY



SUN

LAST
PUNCH

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: March 7, 2024
Meeting will begin promptly at 7:00PM

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear Brothers and Sisters

The Choice vacation period shall begin with the week containing May 1st and remain for a period of (52) consecutive weeks ending with the last full week in April, excluding the (3) three-week period immediately preceding Christmas and the (1) one-week period containing Christmas. Each carrier may make the following selections during the Choice Vacation bidding:

- 1) One 5-day period or Two 5-day periods.
- 2) One 10-day period.
- 3) One 10-day period and One 5-day period.
- 4) One 15-day period.

No employee may select three separate five-day periods prior to the establish deadline. Scheduling of annual leave for the Choice Vacation Selection period shall be by bidding seniority/relative standing within. Annual leave will be done in triplicate on PS Form 3971. The second copy of PS Form 3971 will show the action taken (approve/disapproved) and returned to the employee no later than April 1, 2024. Check with your stewards to know what the annual leave quota is for your station.

Food drive is the second week in May for 2024. It is important that we all support the food drive as it is very needed in our communities. This is the only time of the year that your participation in helping our communities is supported by the USPS. **Union will be sending out with stewards the order sheets for the food drive t-shirts as soon as we get the prices.** Volunteers will be needed to pick up food from carriers on the routes, if you are interested in helping or you have a family member who wants to help please contact the branch office.

National Convention Delegate letters have been sent to members who were elected to attend the convention. The letters gave instructions for them **to submit annual leave as soon as possible** for Saturday August 5, 2024 thru Sunday August 9, 2024 to attend the national convention, which starts on Monday August 05, so make sure you give yourself time to travel.

As a reminder, all housing reservations will be handled through NALC's official housing company. Branches delegates should not contact hotels directly if you are using the NALC housing for reservations at hotels. The Branch will provide information when we receive the

credentials.

Retirement class on February 4, 2024 was held at Branch 576, National Officer Dan Thoth and Dan Ver-luis gave a very thorough class covering all aspects of retirement. I encourage anyone who is 5 years before you believe you will retire to go to a retirement class and get the information you need to retire with all your benefits. One of the issues that come up when an employee is ready to retire is they do not understand what they should expect money wise after they retire. This creates uncertainty for them, by going to the class and receiving information members retire much more at peace with what will happen after they retire with their money. I will inform you when we will be having a class in Tucson. It's never too early to educate yourself on what to expect when you retire.

This is a call to action to all active and retired branch 704 members HQ NALC is having a collective week of action asking the House Ways & Means Committee to schedule a markup on the Social Security Fairness Act (H.R. 82). H.R. 82 would repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO), which are parts of Social Security law that unfairly reduce or sometimes eliminate Social Security benefits of federal annuitants.

The bill has overwhelming bipartisan support with more than 300 cosponsors. Last November, a successful field hearing was held on repealing the WEP and GPO. There was enthusiastic support from legislators and witnesses for repealing these unjust Social Security penalties. The next step to move H.R. 82 forward is for the Ways & Means Committee to schedule a markup on the bill. To keep up the momentum during this week of action, NALC is asking all letter carriers to contact members of the Ways & Means Committee and ask them to hold a markup on H.R. 82.

Go to your [NALC.ORG/Legislation/TakeAction](https://www.nalc.org/legislation/take-action) and let your representatives know to support H.R. 82.

In Solidarity
Kathy Walter
President

From the desk of the Vice-President

Recently, there have been way too many on-the-job injuries that have occurred within the last two months. The main concern is first and foremost, is everyone's pledge to work safely. There is never a situation where you would jeopardize your health and safety to get the mail delivered or to rush to be back in the office at a specified time. The second concern is, if you are involved in an on-the-job injury, whether proper information and medical treatment is being provided to you as soon as possible. Finally, do you know what steps are necessary to avoid any delay of your workmen compensation claim being accepted and being properly compensated if your injury puts you out of work?

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

1. If you suffer an on-the-job traumatic injury, you should immediately notify your supervisor and request authorization for medical treatment.
2. The Postal Service is required to provide you with a CA-1 and CA-16, but if the CA-16 is not made readily available, you should request it and identify the physician that you have selected to provide medical treatment for the injury.
3. The Postal Service should also provide you with a CA-17 (Duty Status Report) for the physician to complete and return to the Postal Service.
4. Tell your shop steward about the injury right away.
5. Complete Form CA-1 in its entirety, if you are disabled for work because of this injury and filed CA-1 within thirty days of the injury, you may be entitled to receive continuation of pay (COP) from your employing agency. COP is paid for up to 45 calendar days whether disability is partial or full. You must select COP or the use of annual or sick leave on the CA-1 to ensure your wages aren't affected while you recover.
6. Go to your doctor for treatment and make sure to provide management with medical documentation within 10 days of initial treatment.
7. Register a profile online with the Department of Labor at <http://www.ecomp.dol.gov>. Upload your CA-1 and supporting documentation to the website above.
8. If necessary, request assistance from the branch office or our OWCP Representative Keith Gaub.
9. Make and keep your own copies of all claim-related documents that you provide to OWCP and/or to USPS.
10. When submitting documents to OWCP, always put the OWCP claim number at the top right-hand corner of each page.
11. If OWCP requests information, thoroughly comply with the request, including the time limit (usually 30 days).

CCA Q & A Meeting

Branch 704 is conducting a meeting with our CCA's members and want to welcome you all to join us on Thursday February 22, 2024 at 6pm. Our goal is to educate our CCA's on their responsibilities as Letter Carriers, explain the benefits of being part of a union, and to teach them of their contractual rights as employees of the Postal Service.

Legislative News

This month long, the NALC is asking members to participate in a collective month of action by asking their members of congress to support door delivery (H. Res. 376). More than 35 million U.S. businesses and households receive mail at their doors six—and sometimes seven—days a week. Receiving

mail, including bills, paychecks, medications, ballots and packages at the door is preferred by the public. Continuing this essential service is critical to the economic success of the Postal Service. Door delivery should be expanded, not restricted or eliminated. Cutting it would undercut the Postal Service's 'last mile' benefit, and likely reduce revenues by more than any cost savings. Use the Legislative Action Center on the NALC website or call the Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121 to let our voice be heard!

Another bill that we are asking the membership of Branch 704 to take action and contact their members of Congress to ask them to co-sponsor bill HR 5995. Are you a current or former City Carrier Assistant (CCA) or were you ever a Casual or Transitional Employee (TE)? Have you heard of HR 5995?

The NALC fact sheet on HR 5995 states in significant part:

Many federal employees, including Postal Service employees, begin their federal/postal service in non-career positions before transitioning to career status. These employees, including letter carriers who were employed as casuals, transitional employees (TEs) or city carrier assistants (CCAs), do not receive retirement credit for their time spent in these positions. Because years employed as a non-career employee are not creditable under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), employees who started in non-career positions and transition to career status must work longer to reach the required years of employment to receive full retirement benefits.

The Federal Retirement Fairness Act would modify what is considered creditable federal civilian service under FERS. It would allow these employees to make catch-up retirement contributions for time spent as non-career employees after Dec. 31, 1988, making such time creditable service under the FERS, and for other purposes.

This legislation would allow letter carriers and other affected employees the opportunity to purchase retirement credit for the time they spent in these non-career positions, providing greater retirement security.

I would like to challenge every member of Branch 704 (retired and active) to contact their member of Congress and ask them to Co-sponsor HR 5995 and HR 376. You can find contact information for your member of Congress on NALC.org, under the Government Affairs tab, select Legislative Action Center. Click on "Take Action" and follow the prompts to log in and take action today.

"It's the U and I in UNION that makes us strong."

With love and unity,

Vice President/Formal Step A Designee

Alexis Padilla

CONTRACT TALK

PROTECT YOURSELF

Always fill out a 3996 whenever you need Overtime or assistance.

As everyone should know by now, DOIS is not the be-all and say-all when it comes to your route. You as an individual Carrier can not be held to DOIS standards. Management may try to hold you to those standards, but contractually they can't. What do you do when Management continually harasses and mistreats you because the DOIS numbers are indicating the impossible? First you must fill out a 3996 when you are of the opinion that you need overtime or auxiliary assistance to case, carry, and complete all the other duties on your assignment for that day. It is your responsibility to give management your estimate after receiving the last dispatch of mail and not 10 minutes after clocking in. Those provisions are contained in Section 131.4 of the M-39 and they are called, "Reporting Requirements". Many times, management claims that you have under time and forces a carrier to carry not only their assignment but also to carry splits. If you are of the opinion that because management has assigned you a split, you will go into overtime, you are then required by the M-41 Section 280 to submit Form 3996. When you do so, make sure that you fill it out completely, listing the reasons why you feel that you will need the time that you are requesting. And in all cases, when dealing with an abusive Supervisor, request a copy of the completed 3996. This is your only proof that you have requested overtime or assistance. Carriers that are instructed to curtail mail or are forced to leave mail, including bring back mail, kills or forwards, you must fill out Form 1571. This again is for your own protection, and you should request a completed copy. Management has the sole authority to direct you to curtail mail or not. You have a right to a completed copy of your 3996 and 1571 per Article 41, 3K. If management refuses to give you a copy then request time to see your steward. Your Steward will initiate a grievance on you behalf. If management does not approve your request for overtime or assistance, then ask them what time should you call for further instructions, i.e. approve overtime, sending you some help or bring back the mail. This should not be confrontational and management should give you clear and reasonable instructions. Keep your cool and follow their instructions. Keep your copies of Form 3996 and 1571 just in case management forgets that you requested overtime, auxiliary assistance or that you were instructed to curtail mail. If you feel the instructions given by management, puts you in a Catch-22, or are unrealistic, request official union time with your steward. In these situations, there are several provisions that may have been violated and should be addressed as soon as possible.

Remember, you are the Professional Letter Carrier on the route and it's your profession . So, it's up to you, The City Letter Carrier, to **PROTECT YOURSELF.**

In Solidarity

JC Mena

Steward Sun Station

MBA/HEALTH BENEFITS REPORT

As a busy mom or dad, you're juggling it all; dashing from work to soccer practice to dance class, fitting in birthday parties, teacher conferences, and family dinners around the kitchen table. While it may feel tough to fit it all in, here's something you don't want to skip, **well-child visits!** Recommended for infants, children and teens, these medical appointments are the time for vaccinations, important health screens, a check of your child's development, and for you to ask questions and voice concerns.

Kids who skip well-child visits are more likely to fall behind on the vaccines they need to stay healthy. As a result, they may face higher odds for pneumonia and other infections that need hospital treatment. Keep up with your rapidly growing child/children. Well visits help you keep pace with what they need now.

The NALC Health Benefits Plan covers well-child visits, examinations, and other preventive services as described in the Bright Future Guidelines provided by the American Academy of Pediatrics. See the Plan brochure for details or go to www.nalchbp.org. (Look under the Plans and Benefits tab and click on "Wellness and Other Special Features".) For more information call customer service at **888-636-6252** or the Health Benefit Plan at **703-729-4677**.

To help motivate you, the Plan offers a \$50 in health savings rewards for completing 6 (six) well-child visits through age 15 months as recommended above. See the Plan brochure for details.

My doctor sent me to get tests and I was wondering what I should do to get results?

Ask your doctor or the specialist who are doing the test, how to get the results of tests or procedures. Will it be in-person, by phone, mail, through the Plan or provider's portal? Don't assume the results are fine if you don't get them when expected. Contact your healthcare provider and ask for your results. Ask what the results mean for your care.

How do I find out which hospital or clinic is best for my health needs?

Talk to your doctor or ask your doctor, which hospital or clinic has the best care and results for your condition if you have more than one hospital or clinic to choose from to get the healthcare you need. Be sure you understand the instructions you get about follow-up care when you leave the hospital or clinic.

I am scheduled to have surgery and am wondering what should I expect?

Ask your doctor or surgeon what you should expect. Make sure you, your doctor, and your surgeon all agree on exactly what will be done during the operation. Ask your doctor, "Who will manage my care when I am in the hospital?" Ask your surgeon: "Exactly what will you be doing."; "About how long will it take?"; "What will happen after surgery?"; and "How can I expect to feel during recovery?". Tell the surgeons, anesthesiologists, and nurses about any allergies, bad reactions to anesthesia and any medications or nutritional supplements you are taking.

Be safe! Stay hydrated! Make your and your family's health a priority!

In Solidarity,

Mark Follet

MBA/Health Benefit Plan Representative

520-331-3316

RETIREE REPRESENTATIVE

Could 2024 be the year that H.R.82 makes it out of the Ways and Means Committee and on to the house floor for a vote? More than 300 members of Congress have signed on as cosponsors, including Juan Ciscomani and Raul Grijalva from Southern Arizona. Passage of this bill and Senate counterpart S.597 would be welcome news to CSR retirees in repealing the (GPO) Government Pension Offset and (WEP) Windfall Elimination Provision. Let's hope this legislation passes and overdue relief finally arrives.

A lot of new CCA's have been hired locally. We need to welcome these new brothers and sisters by helping them to fully understand what the letter carrier job entails. Making sure they realize that they will be outside for most of the day and dress appropriately, hydrating during the heat of the upcoming months. Also, as a result of all these new members, the branch is in need of 'gently' used, and still wearable men's and women's shirts, shorts, and slacks to make available to our CCA members until they receive their uniform allowance. Thanks in advance for your 'gently' used or new uniform donations. We very much appreciate all the assistance given to the branch by our retirees. Without your help many tasks would not be accomplished, especially the preparation for mailing of the monthly newsletter. Stay safe, be well.

Art Higven (520) 304-4196

IMPORTANT DATES

PRESIDENTS' DAY
MONDAY FEBRUARY 19TH

CCA QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
THURSDAY FEBRUARY 22ND 6pm

E-BOARD MEETING
THURSDAY FEBRUARY 29TH 6pm

BRANCH MEETING
THURSDAY MARCH 7TH 7pm

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS
SUNDAY MARCH 10TH

ST. PATRICK'S DAY
SUNDAY MARCH 17TH

STEWARD'S MEETING
THURSDAY MARCH 21ST 5:30

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

True Love

With February being here, a lot of people show their love to someone special on Valentines day. They might give chocolates, flowers, a card or go out for a nice dinner. These are some great ways to share with our loved ones. You can also tell others about God's love for us, he loves us unconditionally. We are called to love God and each other. In the bible in **1 John 4:7** it says, "**Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.**" Take the time to show your love to others throughout the year.

Blessings to All

Rick Evans 520-248-9643

Chaplain

Our Sincerest Condolences to

Ken Bertschy on the loss of his twin Brother Ed.

Martin Thompson on the loss of his Son

FROM THE PEN OF THE SERGEANT AT ARMS

I hope everyone had the opportunity to spend Valentine's Day with a love-one or two. It should be a paid holiday, but alas it isn't. But guess what? Monday is President's Day. Yup, thanks to unions like ours, we get paid. The correct answer to last month's contest was 4 and two people got it right on the nose. They were retired letter carriers, **Letty Ramos** and **Vincent Longo**. A very simple contest this month, send me the total number of points scored, divided by two, plus eleven, then multiplied by three, in this year's Super Bowl.

I hope everyone enjoyed the Chinese food we had at the last Branch Meeting. Like I said last month, I'm going to try and have something, periodic throughout the year, so try to arrive early.

Uniforms, when we say 'gently' used, we mean 'gently'. **Brother Phillips** wants me, the Sergeant-at-Arms, to really stress upon you, that **soiled, dirty, damaged or just plain disgusting** items are tossed. Don't even get me started on the socks. Ewwww. Anyway, about half, maybe more, of the donated items are **unwearable** according to **Brother Ross Phillips**. So, keep that in mind when donating your 'gently' used uniforms.

Fraternally,
Royce

I hope this newsletter finds you and your family in good health. Remember, Covid is still out there and spreading. Protect yourself. I hate to harp on this, but please please please, notify the office with your change of address. Brother Ross Phillips is in charge of our used uniform closet. He said that he is receiving items that are unfit for a dog to wear. Please be more selective in the items you donate. Finally, I'm still working on getting service pins out to you. If you feel you're due one, please contact me. ~Royce~

It's the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) fundraising season.

NALC Branch #704, Casa Grande Station is having a Bowl-a-Thon, on March 10th. It will held at Cotton Bowl Lanes at 1740 N Pinal Ave in Casa Grande. Registration @ 11:30, Bowling @ 12:00. \$30 per person and is limited to 1st 60 paid entries. Includes pizza, chips, soda and cookies. For more information contact Kathy Walter@520-323-2117 or Ray Devellin@330-207-7656.

A BOOZE BARROW RAFFLE Yes, it's a wheelbarrow full of Booze

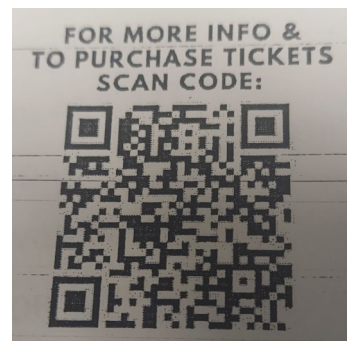
Tickets \$5 , 5 for \$20

Wheely Good Cause: Sip & Support for MDA

Drawing Held March 17

Az Merged Branch 1902 262 W. 2nd Ave Mesa

(480)464-0383



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