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# THE LETTER CARRIER REPORTER

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March 2019

*Email Address: [nalcbranch704@outlook.com](mailto:nalcbranch704@outlook.com)*

Printed by Branch 704

## CONGRATULATIONS... Jerry Pierce - 50 Year Member!



\*\*\*\*\*

### On Your Conversion to Career City Carrier!

Jose Barrera

Miguel Escalante

Stephanie Vasquez

Cynthia Davis

Rebecca Estrada

Dillon Vonborstel

**New Union Cell Phone: (520) 367-8210**

WEBSITE: [www.nalcbranch704.org](http://www.nalcbranch704.org)

**Next Union Meeting Thursday March 7, 2019,  
to begin promptly at 7:00 pm.**

# President's Report

Greetings Brothers and Sisters,

At the Branch meeting in January, I spoke about the upcoming Route Inspections for Mountain View-March 25-30, Coronado-April 8-13, Sun-April 15-20. Changes to the schedule are as follows: Mountain View will be having minor route inspections and instead San Xavier which has 6 vacant routes, will have Route Inspections on April 1-7. San Xavier routes are out of alignment and would benefit from having route inspections as very few people want to work at that station.

National Business Agent, Dan Versluis will be conducting the Route Inspection Training on March 14, 2019, starting at 6:30 pm at the branch office. I would encourage you to come to the training if you want to make sure you have an 8-hour route. The more you know about PS Form 1838-C (Carrier's Count Mail - Letter Carrier Routes Worksheet), the more representative your route will be for you. It is in your best interest to be informed of what will happen on this day. We have a lot of new regular carriers that have not been through a route inspection before, the day of the inspection is not the day you want to learn what you need to do.

Although route examiners are required to make a fair and reasonable evaluation of the route's workload, managers sometimes manipulate the figures to reduce the evaluated office time of a route. Correctly counting and classifying every piece of mail including DPS, S999, and any machine-counted mail, is critical to the proper completion of your 1838-C Work-sheet. The evaluation of your office time is derived solely from your counting the mail and recording each and every office function. I hope to see you at the Route Inspection training March 14<sup>th</sup>.

The Food Drive is May 11, 2019 (second Saturday in May). Tiffany Eggert volunteered to be the Food Drive Coordinator this year. With the Government Shutdown over 800,000 employees and their families needed help and used the food bank to get groceries because they did not get paid. We were fortunate that the USPS didn't get hit like other Federal offices; how many of us have savings for emergencies or are living payday to payday? This is a time for letter carriers and all USPS employees to come together and help replenish the food banks in our communities for the year. Let's make sure we do our part to help. If you have the day off on this day and would like to volunteer to pick up food at your station, please call the branch and let us know.

Mission Station visit was held January 25<sup>th</sup> at Mission Manor Park. We had a good turn out and shared information that would be helpful to the station. We also spoke about the discipline management is issuing on attendance in Tucson. An unscheduled absence is any absence from work that is not requested and approved in advance. Management does not care if you are sick or if you have a legitimate excuse, they will issue discipline. Please let your Stewards know when this happens.

FMLA protects Serious health condition — illness, injury, impairment, physical or mental condition that involves any of the following: (1)Hospital care — inpatient care (i.e., an overnight stay) in a hospital or residential medical care facility, including any period of incapacity or subsequent treatment in connection with or subsequent to such inpatient care. (2) Absence plus treatment—a period of incapacity of more than 3 consecutive full calendar days (including any subsequent treatment or period of incapacity relating to the same condition) that also involves either one of the following: (a)Treatment two or more times by a health care provider within 30 days of the first day of incapacity. (b)Treatment by a health care provider on at least one occasion within 7 days of the first day of incapacity that results in a regimen of continuing treatment under the supervision of the health care provider. (3)Pregnancy—any period of incapacity due to pregnancy or for prenatal care. (4)Chronic condition requiring treatments—a chronic condition that meets all of the three following conditions: (a)Requires periodic visits (i.e., at least twice a year) for treatment by a health care provider or by a nurse or physician's assistant under direct supervision of a health care provider. (b)Continues over an extended period of time (including recurring episodes of a single underlying condition). (c)May cause episodic, rather than a continuing period of, incapacity. Examples of such conditions include diabetes, asthma, and epilepsy.

If you need to find out whether your condition qualifies for FMLA protection go to the [NALC.org/workplace issues/contract administration Unit/FMLA](http://NALC.org/workplace/issues/contract_administration_Unit/FMLA). You can also ask for information from your steward, protect yourself.

I have received several calls concerning the Promotional Pay-Hold Down Rule and Hold In Place Rule-Pay Freeze, NALC National Vice President, Lew Drass, wrote his column in the The Postal Record 53 on this topic in Aug/Sep 2018. If you are one of these T6 carriers and have not received the Form-50 in the mail informing you your step increase as scheduled prior to being held in place and have the pay

*(President Article cont. on pg. 3)*

*(President Article cont. from pg. 2)*

calculated retroactive to the time you should have received the step increase, you should talk with your shop steward or call the branch office and let us know.

Q16N-4Q-C 17638188 (Promotional Pay—Hold in Place Rule) and Q16N-4Q-C 18025517 (Hold in Place Rule—Pay Freeze) NALC brought these cases to the national level. The first case concerns whether or not proposed revisions to the Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM), Section 422.2 regarding promotional pay rules and the unilateral so-called “Hold in Place” rule (which was not part of the proposed ELM revisions) are fair, reasonable and equitable. The second case concerns implementation of the unilateral so-called “Hold in Place” rule where USPS cut a PS Form 50 for 8,970 carrier technician letter carriers who received a two-step promotional pay increase, effectively freezing each of them at their current step for an additional 92 weeks. This case actually arose as a result of the Das award in January 2013, when the amount of each step increase was changed to be an equal percentage of top pay (Step O). Under the old promotional pay rules, this caused a letter carrier who was in Grade 1 and bid on a carrier technician position (Grade 2) to experience a two-step jump in pay, but it also started a new 46-week waiting period toward the next step increase. USPS believed those of you who were affected in this way were given a “cookie” that you were not entitled to, which justified sticking you in the pay “freezer” for an additional 92 weeks. We disagreed. These

cases were also settled on July 27, 2018 (M-01893), which states, in part: *The ‘Hold in Place’ rule will be rescinded. City letter carriers affected by this action will receive their step increases as scheduled prior to being held in place and have their pay calculated retroactive to the time they should have received their step increase(s).*

The one thing to remember about this settlement and the current promotional pay rules that has changed is that if you are one of the 8,970 letter carriers affected by this situation and bid from a carrier technician position to a route, you will lose the two-step pay increase you received when you bid from a route (Grade 1) to a carrier technician position (Grade 2) and be placed in the pay step you would have been in if you had never bid on a carrier technician position. The bottom line is, as a result of this settlement, if you are one of the 8,970 letter carriers affected by this settlement, you will reach top pay in approximately 10.5 to 11 years instead of 12.4 years, like everyone else, if you remain in a carrier technician position. If you bid to a route, you will lose the cookie we just negotiated for you to keep.

I want to send a thank you to everyone who volunteers and donate their time and service to the branch, you make a difference and it is much appreciated.

In Solidarity,  
Kathy Walter  
President

## Vice President Article

I would like to thank Kathy Walter, our Branch President, for the opportunity to be Vice President. During my time as an Arizona State Trustee, Branch Sergeant-at-arms, Branch Customer Connect Coordinator and as a Union Steward, I have met or gotten to know many of you. I just want to let you know that I am committed to doing the best I can for you, our union members.

I would like to remind our members that our National Agreement/Contract will be expiring in 2019. NALC National, in an effort to prepare for the next round of contract negotiations, sent out a letter to all active union members asking them to complete a survey regarding their experience working for the USPS. The survey questions are easy to answer, and the entire survey will probably take less than 10 minutes to complete.

You may say to yourself, “**Why should I complete this survey? I have better things to do with my time.**” Well, I will tell you why! The NALC is constantly working to improve the wages and working conditions for all letter

carriers and completing this survey will assist and provide needed information that can be used in negotiations. So, if you want better working conditions and/or regular pay increases you may want to complete the survey.

To take the survey, log into the Members Only section of the **NALC web-site**: [www.nalc.org](http://www.nalc.org). The link to the Members Only section of the website can be found in the top right-hand corner of the NALC home page just below the search bar. Once you are logged in, click on Member Survey. If this is the first time you are logging into the Members Only section, you will have to create an account. If you are unable to log in, contact the NALC Membership Department at (202) 393-4695. President Fredric V Rolando and I would like to thank you in advance for taking time to complete the survey.

President Trump requested a task force report, “United States Postal Service: A Sustainable Path Forward,” was issued on December 4, 2018.

*(Vice President Article cont. on pg. 4)*

***(Vice President Article cont. from pg. 3)***

This report is perhaps the most radically anti-union and anti-postal worker report ever issued by the federal government. It proposes repealing the collective bargaining rights of postal workers-eliminating NALC's right to directly negotiate pay and benefits that was won in 1970 and exposing us to the political whims of Congress with the return of "collective begging." Also, a Union Steward would not be able to represent members while on the clock as is now done. It calls for gutting the Federal Employees retirement System (FERS) by eliminating the FERS Basic Annuity and turning the program into a lower-value defined contribution plan. It urges the Postal Service to contract out postal workers' jobs. And it suggests massive cuts to workers' compensation benefits provided by the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA).

**But the report doesn't stop here. It targets tens of thousands of letter carrier jobs and the interests of the nation's households and businesses by calling for massive service cuts-by proposing to give the USPS the unilateral right to reduce the frequency of delivery at will. It even proposes to redefine the Postal Service's Universal Service Obligations (USO) to a limited number of products (mail delivery to rural areas, government mail, etc.) that the private sector would not provide on its own. It's just not profitable for the private sector. In fact, its proposal for defining the USO based on the purpose of letters (covering personal communications but excluding commercial mail is totally unworkable.**

These proposals are not just direct attacks on postal employees and the American people we service; these and other recommendations are designed to advance the commercial interests of private companies that compete with the Postal Service. The goal of the United Parcel Service (UPS) is to downsize and weaken the Postal Service. The White House task force fully embraces this agenda, calling of the Postal service to issue separate financial statements and balance sheets for its market-dominant and competitive services and for adopting UPS's proposals on pricing and cost allocation proposals that have been repeatedly rejected by the Postal regulatory Commission (PRC) as harmful to the Postal Service and the American public. Worse, creating a separate division for completive products is surely the first step in forcing the Postal Service out of the package delivery business.

However, only two items from the White House report may help or be a benefit to the USPS. First, the task force backed off the Office of Management and budget's

plan to restructure the Postal Service to privatize it. Second, the task force embraced one of NALC ideas for reducing the burden of prefunding by adopting a "vested liability target for prefunding. Funding for the actual number of retirees.

The USPS has changed the system that employees use to initiate a request for EEO counseling. You will now have to file online on the USPS EEO e-file website. Under the new system you will be able to initiate an EEO request, submit information about your EEO informal complaint and view the status of any EEO case you have filed under e-file. You go to [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com) and click on the careers link for more information. The 1-888-EEO-USPS phone is being discontinued.

Please everyone be safe!!

In Solidarity,  
Mark Follet  
Vice President

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\*APR= Annual Percentage Rate. Rate current as of 8/1/2017.  
Subject to change. Based on credit history.

# Formal Step-A Report

During the month of January, 40 grievances were resolved at the Formal Step-A level. A summary of the settled grievances is listed below:

## FORMAL STEP-A:

- Settled **6** Letters of Warning (LOW), 1 was rescinded, 2 reduced to Official Discussions, 1 reduced to a 2-month LOW, 1 reduced to a 3-month LOW and 1 reduced to a 6-month LOW.
- Settled **8** 7-Day Suspensions. 1 was rescinded, 1 reduced to an Official Discussion, 3 reduced to a 3-month LOW, 1 reduced to a 6-month LOW and 2 reduced to a 1-year LOW.
- Settled **3** 14-Day Suspensions by getting 2 reduced to a 1-year LOW and 1 reduced to an 18-month LOW.
- Settled **3** 16.7 emergency placements by getting the emergency placements rescinded and the carriers paid for 4 hours (**Total: \$403.74**)
- Settled **10** grievances, management improperly forced non-ODL carriers to work overtime by getting those carriers paid appropriate premium payment and ODL carriers paid for missed opportunities. (**Total: \$4,916.95**)

- Settled **7** grievances where RCAs were performing City Carrier work delivering Amazon parcels by getting carriers who should have done the work paid. (**Total: \$3,603.63**)
- Settled **2** grievances where management failed to post vacant bid assignments in a timely manner by getting the successful bidders or assigned carriers of those routes paid \$250.00 each (**Total: \$1,750.00**)
- Settled **1** grievance where a Steward had to process grievances off the clock by getting that Steward paid (**Total: \$317.30**)

**Management's failure to follow the contract at the Formal A cost the USPS**

**\$10,991.62 this month.**

**Management's failure to follow the contract at the Informal A cost the USPS**

**\$2,513.59 this month.**

Management's failure to follow the contract cost the USPS **\$13,505.21** this month.

In Solidarity,  
Stuart Love

Formal Step-A Representative

## Health Benefit Report Veggies For Better Blood Sugar

A diet that is primarily-or completely-plant-based could make managing type 2 diabetes easier, according to a recent review in the United Kingdom of 11 studies.

They involved 433 adults; the average was 55 years of age. The researchers found that consuming a vegetarian or vegan diet was associated with more improvement in blood sugar and cholesterol levels, body weight, and mood compared with meal plans that included meat and dairy products. Vegetarian eaters also reported a drop in pain. The researchers say this suggests that plant-based eating might slow the progression of diabetes-related nerve damage, too. Source; BMJ Open Diabetes Research & Care, Oct. 30, 2018

### **Gum Health and Hypertension**

Here's another reason to take good care of your gums: A recent study found that among older adults with hypertension, those who had healthier gums had lower

blood pressure levels. The latter group also responded better to blood pressure drugs than those with gum disease. Researchers say that more study is needed to pinpoint the reason for the connection between the two conditions. Source; Hypertension, Oct 22, 2018

### **Can Cataract Surgery Benefit Your Brain?**

Yet another study has linked cataract surgery to a slowing of cognitive decline. Researchers say that improving eyesight may increase social and physical activity and boost mood, factors shown to reduce the likelihood of cognitive problems. Source: Plos One, Oct. 11, 2018

The best of health to you and yours,

Ray Root 885-4983

Health Benefits Representative

# Contract Talk

## Uniform Allowance

As a union representative, I get a lot of the new CCAs in our station asking about uniform allowances. A lot of the time CCAs ask management and they're always told that they have put in for it and month after month goes by and these CCAs don't get their vouchers. Sometimes it even gets too late and their anniversary date passes so they end up losing the yearly allowance.

It is very important for all carriers to be on top of it and make sure they're getting their uniform allowance in a timely manner which is stated under article 26 of our National Agreement. If any of our Letter Carriers are having a hard time getting their uniform allowance, get in touch with your shop steward or NALC Branch 704 ASAP.

**Q:** When does a CCA become eligible for a uniform allowance?

**A:** Upon completion of 90 work days 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 after September 29, 2007), become eligible for a uniform allowance when they begin their first CCA appointment.

### Annual Allowance:

A. Effective May 21, 2017 the annual allowance for all eligible employees shall be increased from present \$420.00 per annum to \$441.00 per annum. The increase shall become effective on the employee's anniversary date.

Effective May 21, 2018 the annual allowance for all eligible employees shall be increased from \$441.00 per annum to \$452.00 per annum. The increase shall become effective on the employee's anniversary date.

Effective May 21, 2019 the annual allowance for all eligible employees shall be increased from \$452.00 per annum to \$464.00 per annum. The increase shall become effective on the employee's anniversary date.

B. A newly eligible employee entering the reimbursable uniform program will receive an additional credit to the employee's allowance as follows:

Effective May 21, 2017 - \$102.00 if entitled to \$441.00 per annum.

Effective May 21, 2018 - \$104.00 if entitled to \$452.00 per annum.

Effective May 21, 2019 - \$107.00 if entitled to \$464.00 per annum.

In Solidarity,  
Claudio Retes  
Green Valley Steward

**Would you be interested in attending an outing to see a Tucson Roadrunners or an AZ Coyotes Hockey game? Or, might you be interested in watching an AZ Baseball Game? If you are interested, please call the union office at (520) 323-2117, leave your name and phone number. If there are enough members interested, we might be able to get a group discount to attend some of these games.**

## Meeting Dates

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

**Stewards Meeting-Thursday,  
March 21, 2019 @ 6:00 pm**

**Executive Board Meeting-  
Thursday, March 28, 2019  
@ 6:00 pm**

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 2019-03 Issue #03  
Organization:  
National Association of Letter Carriers,  
2950 N. Country Club Road, Tucson, AZ 85716-1912

# OWCP Article

Hello Brothers and Sisters of Branch 704. It seems the old adage of out of sight out of mind holds more truth than I thought.

My name is Keith Gaub. I have been a member of this Branch since 1980. I have been active in the Union for all that time and working on workman's comp injury claims since 1995. I became the Branch OWCP representative in probably about 1999 while Paul Winger was president.

I was appointed formally by Dan Versluis about 2002. I have been and still am available to assist any injured Branch Member in their OWCP claim. You have not seen me at Branch Meetings because after I retired, I began a new Career that currently has me scheduled to work from 0500-1350 M-F and

then will change to 0400-1250 M-F in March. Due to this I have trouble staying awake long enough to make the meetings, so I very rarely attend. I am always available however, should you need my assistance. I can be reached at either the Union office through the Branch Secretary or my cell phone (520) 275-8737. Leave a message with either and I will return your call as soon as possible.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Sincerely in Unionism,  
Keith R. Gaub  
OWCP Representative Branch 704

## Chaplain's Corner What God Sees

In his book, Rocket Men, Robert Kurson describes the turmoil of 1968 with its riots, assassinations and political unrest. But in December of that year, three astronauts flew to the moon, a quarter million miles away. No one had ever traveled farther than 853 miles into space and the Apollo 8 mission was the most daring enterprise NASA had attempted.

Peering through the window of the aircraft, Frank Borman viewed the troubled world from a greater distance than any other human in history. He thought to himself, "This must be what God sees."

In a scriptural sense, we need to see our world as God does and view our own lives from an eternal perspective. We don't have to go to the moon for that-only the bible. Simon Peter wrote, "With minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed" (1 Peter1:13 NIV)

Change the way you're looking at your problems, your priorities, your schedule, your world. Look at life from God's perspective and set your hope on

the grace of Christ's return. "The entire space achievement is put in proper perspective when one realizes that God walking on the earth is more important than man walking on the moon." James Irwin, astronaut.

By David Jeremiah

Chaplain  
Rick Evans  
[Rick7evans@gmail.com](mailto:Rick7evans@gmail.com)  
520-248-9643

### Condolences

Irving Crespo on the loss  
of your mother.

David Chambers on the loss  
of your mother.

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

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**FORMAL A REPRESENTATIVE**

STUART LOVE	323-2117
<b>SHOP STEWARDS</b>	
VACANT	BISBEE 520-432-2626
WADE ALFORD	CASA GRANDE 520-836-7221
BOB CRAMER	CASAS ADOBES 531-0693
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GEORGE DALEY	COOLIDGE 520-723-3011
MARK FOLLET	CORONADO 571-7245
DIMAS GONZALEZ	CORONADO 571-7279
MIKE DONNELLY	DESERT FOOTHILLS 615-9032
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LILLIAN VALDEZ	MISSION 889-8828
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JC MENA	SUN 881-1276
JOE SCARAMELLA	SUN 881-1254
VACANT	WILLCOX 520-384-2689



**TRUSTEES**

PETE TADEO

MIKE CARNAHAN	BRUCE JENKINS
CATHY POULIN	CLAUDIO RETES

**CHAPLAIN**

RICK EVANS