

CARL J. KENNEDY BRANCH 704 THE LETTER CARRIER REPORTER

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November 2022 <u>Email Address: nalcbranch704@outlook.com</u> Printed by Branch 704 WEBSITE:<u>www.nalcbranch704.org</u>

Monthly Branch 704 Meeting is Thursday, November 3, 2022, and begins promptly at 7:00 p.m. *Please call the Branch Office with your email address for reservations to attend remotely via the Web-Ex*



TO MAKE RESERVATIONS FOR THE ANNUAL RETIREES LUNCHEON. IT WILL BE ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4TH, 2022 @ DESERT DIAMOND CASINO. EACH RETIREE RECEIVES A FREE MEAL FOR THEMSELVES AND ONE GUEST. THERE WILL BE AWARDS HANDED OUT TO THOSE DUE & WE ALWAYS HAVE A GUEST FROM NATIONAL.

DON'T MISS OUT!!

NALC COLOR-CODED CALENDARS ARE IN!!

Each NALC member will receive one free at their station.

See your Union Steward. <u>AGAIN</u>, any Retiree wanting one, please call the Branch Office before they run out. The cost is \$3.50/each.

NOTICE FOR 2023 STATE DELEGATES

REMINDER - Your \$15.00 Delegate Fee is due by <u>November 6th</u>. Please bring or mail to Branch Office. Any problems or questions, you may contact Letty Ramos – Financial Secretary at 520-603-3230

President's Report

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Annual Retirement Luncheon will be held on December 4, 2022 at the Desert Dimond Casino at 11:30am. If you are a retiree and would like to attend, please call and make a reservation. You can bring one guest free and any additional guests are 25.00 dollars. Please call the branch office and let us know if you would like Roasted Salmon, Prosciutto Chicken, or Pot Roast for lunch. If you are due an award, let us know so we can have the pin ordered. This is a time to meet up with fellow retirees and catch up with them it is also a time to get information relevant to you as a retiree with our national officers attending the luncheon. This also is a time to acknowledge retirees that make this branch great, due in large part to your continued involvement in the Union. I am looking forward to spending time with you and having an opportunity to say thank you after two years of not being able to have any gathering due to COVID.

Nominated State Delegates from the October branch meeting per the by-laws Article V Section 7 Delegates to the State Convention are required to pay registration fees to the Branch as stated in Article V Section 1C and 4B of these by-laws, the fee is \$15.00 either check made out to NALC Branch 704 or cash due by November 6, 2022. If you fail to send in the registration fee you will be disqualified from attending State Convention so please make sure to turn it in before the due date.

Health Benefits (FEHB) Open Season this year is from November 14, 2022 thru December 12, 2022. During this period, you may enroll, change, or cancel your FEHB or FEDVIP coverage. For information on NALC Health Benefit Plan, you can go to the NALC.org and gather information on what is new in the plan and benefits. If you're interested in changing Health Benefits Plans, do not miss out on the open season to change plans.

The NALC and the Postal Service have agreed to a memorandum of understanding (M-01979) that increases the maximum allowable annual leave carryover amounts outlined in the Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM). For leave year 2023, regular work force career employees covered by the USPS-NALC National Agreement may carry over **520** hours of accumulated annual leave from leave year 2022 to leave year 2023. This means if you have **over 520** hours by December 31, 2022 you will lose those hours unless you use them before the end of the year. If you are carrying over 520 hours and have not requested annual leave to use it please call the branch office if you wish to donate those hours to carriers that are out due to medical reasons.

I would like to thank the Trustee's in their fiduciary duties, they exhibit professionalism when they conducted the audits on the officers and building and presented their findings to branch members at the October branch meeting, motion was made to accept the audits and passed by members.

In Solidarity,

Kathy Walter

<u>Pima Area Labor Federation - PALF</u> <u>Sign up for PALF Canvassing and Phone Bank</u> <u>PALF contact is Ryan Kelly at 520-548-9510</u>

The Letter Carrier Reporter is the official publication of NALC Branch 704. The Branch 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. 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.

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 2022-11 Issue # 11 Organization: National Association of Letter Carriers,2950 N. Country Club Road, Tucson, AZ 85716-1912

Vice President Article

Have you heard the latest from Postmaster General Louis DeJoy? Postmaster General Louis DeJoy announced that all nonbargaining employees of the US Postal Service will get a 3% salary raise on their paychecks. The salary increase will go into effect on September 24 and employees should see the change reflected on their pay stubs beginning October 14. The raises will apply, regardless of current salary maximums, for all executive and Administrative Schedule (EAS) and non-bargaining unit employees. The Postal Service employs approximately 625,000 workers, with about 49,000 of whom are supervisors and other professional and administrative workers (EAS). (This will be above of what we will get from contractual and cost-of-living adjustments and step increases.)

The increase is due to the continued impact of COVID and record inflation. Here is what Postmaster General Louis DeJoy had to say: "Much has been accomplished this past year in the face of significant challenges - the continued impact of a global pandemic and record inflation. Our management team consistently rises to overcome these and other challenges and perform at a high level."

Management stated that it applauds the agency's recognition of financial hardship imposed by high costs of living, but it is not enough of a separation between EAS and non-bargaining employees. Management should receive additional increases to maintain an adequate salary differential above the craft! In my opinion, management will file yet another law suit against the Postal Service over the pay package, arguing to provide a pay differential between clerks and carriers and the supervisors that manage them,

We all have notice that the U.S. Postal Service's package volume and weight have increase while First-Class letters has declined. USPS calls this a change in mail mix. (This is due to the fact that as Americans we continue to embrace e-commerce.)

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) found a correlation between total package weight and letter carrier injuries between January 2020 and December 2021. The OIG identified certain carrier sub-groups that experienced more injuries than others, including pre-career carriers who delivered a ton or more of packages, newer carriers with less than one year of tenure, and carriers who work in medium-density population ZIP Codes.

Between October 2019 and December 2021, carrier worker's compensation claims for new lifting-related injuries cost the Postal Service more than \$79 million. Carriers represented 52 percent of all Postal employees during the scope period but 69 percent of the agency's worker's compensation claims. Reducing carrier injuries would lower the annual cost of injury claims and, thus, decrease the future liability for the Postal Service.

The OIG found that the Postal Service has no specific protocols in place outlining how a carrier should deliver a heavy package. The OIG recommended the USPS develop and implement standard operating procedures outlining how a carrier should safety handle and deliver packages that weigh 35 pounds or more.

The House Committee on Ways and Means, on September 20, 2022, approved the Social Security Fairness Act of 2021(H.R. 82). The bill would repeal the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) titles of the Social Security Act, which unfairly reduce or sometimes eliminate Social Security benefits for millions of federal workers, including letter carriers. On September 19,NALC, along with other postal unions, sent a letter to the House Committee on Ways and Means urging the passage of H.R. 82 without amendment. "After 30 years of inaction in Congress, it is time to repeal these unfair penalties that reduce retirees' incomes by thousands of dollars every year, taking away the benefits that they earned in private sector employment."

The legislation now awaits a score from the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) before it can be scheduled for a floor vote. With the congressional calendar coming to a close, it is imperative that letter carriers take action to tell their member of Congress and in the House to bring this bill to the floor right away. Please use the NALC app to contact your representative.

Did you know you can enter your own customer connect leads and receiving feedback on your submitted leads through the Mobile Delivery Device (MDD), when you are on street mode under option "U". You will now have the ability to enter your leads and access your individual Lead Status Report through one of the following online options when logging in using your 8-digit Employee Identification Number (EIN).

- 1. City letter carriers without ACE access can enter a lead through the "Submit a Lead" hyperlink on the USPS LiteBlue Website.
- 2. Employees with ACE (can use USPS computers) computer access can use the "Submit a Lead" hyperlink on the USPS main Blue page, found the "Featured Topics" tab.

By enabling city letter carriers to have access to their individual Lead Status Report, carriers can now follow their leads as they go through the sales process. They will know when and why a lead is closed, or when a lead was successfully sold and how much revenue was generated from their submitted lead.

If you do not wish to enter your own leads, you can continue to follow the current process of submitting a completed Lead Card to your supervisor, manager or postmaster for entry. These changes will shorten the lead follow up processes and improve the overall customer connect experience. The "Submit a Lead" button will be able on USPS LiteBlue website beginning Oct 1.

Due to a disabled printing press, Mosaic, the print communications company retained to print the ballots for the NALC national and regional elections, will begin to print on September 20 until done. Starting on Sept 26 and continuing through Sept 30, ballots will be prepared, inserted into envelopes and mailed. Ballots must be received by 5 pm ET on Friday, Oct 21, to be counted.

To be eligible to vote, a person must be a regular member of NALC and in good standing as of June 1, 2022. Should you not receive a ballot by Oct 7 you must notify the branch immediately! The branch must then contact NALC Membership Department to request a duplicate, replacement ballot by 4 pm ET by Oct 11. Please stay safe and drink plenty of water!

In Solidarity, Mark Follet - Vice President

Meeting Dates

Branch Meeting-Thursday, November 3 , 2022 @ 7pm Stewards' Meeting-Thursday, November 17 , 2022 @ 5:30pm E-Board Meeting-Thursday, November 24, 2022 @ 6pm (Subject to change)

New Conversions





Cherishing Friends

We all have a lot of interaction with so many different people in our lives. Just a few places where we meet with others; work, school, church, grocery store, department stores, auto mechanic, hair salons, sports teams, social clubs, bible studies and of course so many other places, too numerous to list here. But how many of the people do we meet or interact with in life are truly friends or just acquaintances? A friend is someone who is there for you in the good times and bad times. Just to lend a listening ear, to be there to support you, offer encouragement to help you with a project, to walk alongside you. A friend is there if we fall down to help pick us up. If you have friends like this, I would encourage you to take the time to let them know how thankful you are for them. Ecclesiastes 4:10 says "If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!"

Blessings to All Rick Evans 520-248-9643 Chaplain

Sending Our Deepest Sympathies To

Rincon Carrier Tracie Reed on the loss of her Mother Retiree Royce Kelly on the loss of his Son

<u>Health Benefits Report</u>

Open season is coming. Open enrollment is November 14 to December 12. During this time, members will have the opportunity to select a health plan that meets their financial and health needs, or make changes to their existing coverage. This is a crucial decision and should not be taken lightly, as it could affect your life in every sense of the word.

What should you consider when making this decision? Although many individuals consider the premium amount first, which is important, you also should thoroughly review the benefit structure and patient liability that may be passed down to you. Examples of these costs may include deductible, co-insurance, co-payments, and the maximum out-of-pocket amount for the year. Unfortunately, these amounts can add up quickly depending on the required care.

It also is very important to review the health plan networks to determine if your individual and family needs will be met within the area you live or locations where you may travel. While some insurers may place strict perimeters around which health providers, hospitals and pharmacies you can use, others may only encourage members to use their network to obtain the most comprehensive and cost-effective benefit package. Be sure you understand how the insurance network operates, and determine whether you can continue to see your current providers.

Another area to consider is wellness programs and incentives. From weight loss, certain preventative care, help kicking the nicotine habit, and much more, these programs can be beneficial to your overall health and wallet.

With that said, I would be remiss not to ask you to include the NALC Health Benefit Plan in your comparison. I believe you will find that it is a competitive choice for all your health insurance needs. From premiums and notable benefits to a network of quality providers for your medical care, our plan is an outstanding choice.

I'm here to help. If you have questions or need guidance and explanations, reach out. Use all available information to make your best informed decision.

-excerpted from The Postal Record September/October 2022

Make your health a Priority. Amber Underwood 520.323.2117

Retiree Representative Report

The annual Retiree Luncheon is scheduled for Sunday December 4, 2022, starting at 11:30AM at the Desert Diamond Casino Conference Center located at 7350 S. Old Nogales Highway. All retired branch members are welcome to attend along with one guest without charge. If you wish to invite additional guests, the cost will be \$25.00 per person. Menu choices are: Slow Roasted Pot Roast, Prosciutto Wrapped Stuffed Chicken, or Herb Roasted Salmon. All entrees come with a salad and a Duo Desert of Turtle Cheesecake and Carrot Cake Squares. If you are planning to attend and have not already made reservations, please call the Branch Office at 520-323-2117 no later than Friday November 4th to inform us that you are attending, along with number of guests, and meal choice for each individual. Also, let us know if you are due a membership pin so we can order them from National Headquarters and receive the award in time to be presented to you at the luncheon.

Open season for 2023 Health Benefits will be from Monday, November 14, 2022 through Monday, December 12, 2022. Plan information should be available soon from OPM including change in premiums and benefit coverage. For those planning to retire soon, keep in mind that to maintain your health benefits into retirement, you must be enrolled in the Federal Employee Health Benefit (FEHB) Program for five consecutive years prior to retirement, or if less than five years, for all service since your first opportunity to enroll. The same five year rule applies to Federal Employee Group Life Insurance (FEGLI).

Good news for retirees! The COLA for 2023 is 8.7 percent for CSRS and 7.7 percent for FERS. Those on Social Security will also receive an 8.7 percent increase in January 2023. With inflation affecting everyone, this is welcome information.

We want to thank all the retirees who volunteer their valuable time helping out at the Branch Office. All your assistance is very much appreciated, including the preparation of the monthly newsletter for mailing. Be Well.

In Solidarity, Art Higven 520-304-4196



Keep US Posted! Have you moved?

-To ensure delivery of your monthly newsletter and other Union correspondence, please notify the NALC Branch 704 Office when you have an address or phone number change. Drop us an email at <u>NALCBranch704@outlook.com</u> or call us at 520-323-2117.

) Keep us up-to-date and WE will keep YOU Posted!

Contract Talk

TRAINING AND DEVELOPING FUTURE CARRIERS

It is my opinion there are three very important jobs that are necessary to ensure the professional development of a city letter carrier. These jobs are the CCA Academy/driver training Instructor, the OJI (On-the-job instructor) and a newly created job called the Mentor.

CCA Academy Instructors are seasoned veteran city letter carriers. The instructors follow a strict curriculum. They teach on how to hold and case mail, how to process different types of mail, what is standard as opposed to first-class mail, and how to complete a time card or a 1260. The CCAs practice casing mail, pulling down, delivering mail, etc. There are many subjects that they review and practice.

No matter how excellent the trainers and the training may be, there is nothing like the day-to-day issues that occur in the office or the feeling of actually being on the street. That is where the OJI training comes in. Hopefully, the OJI and the teaching from the academy will go smoothly, like tagging your friend in at a soccer game or passing the baton to the next runner, to take the CCA on the next phase of their career.

This is where the OJI comes in! The on-the-job instructor is extremely important! The OJI is the first person that teaches a CCA what is the appropriate way to handle all aspects of being a letter carrier. The OJI explains what and why you are delivering in a particular manner. Such as, this is how we address situations when a dog is visible or there is evidence that a dog is in the yard, and why we never, never, ever believe a customer when they say, "my dog doesn't bite." How many times have we all heard that one? Sure, your dog doesn't bite you, but as long as the dog has teeth there is a chance that the dog will bite the letter carrier. All dogs, all breeds, big and tiny can bite and can cause damage. There are times when NOT delivering the mail is the safe and right thing to do.

OJIs help to answer all kinds of questions. How do you manage difficult customers? What if a customer becomes aggressive? What do you do with mail that customers leave on top of the mailbox or NBU? What happens if a customer refuses to sign for a package until they inspect the contents? What do you do when you deliver a package that you know has broken glass inside? What do you do when you do when you find another route's DPS in with your mail? What do you do if you are injured on the job or someone backs into your postal vehicle?

As an OJI, they need to make sure that they are teaching the CCAs good habits that they will continue to practice throughout their carrier career. They must teach them to always take their lunch. They can take it whenever they want to, but please make sure that they do take it. In addition, they make sure to take their two 10-minute breaks every day. Like most city carriers these days, we don't always know how long our day will be; we may have a section/split waiting for us when we get back or the dreaded call at about 3:30 that we need to go look up another carrier and split what they have left. It is vital that an OJI make it aware to a CCA that they must take care of themselves, hydrate often, and always make sure that they have something to eat, even if it's just a snack during the day. Eat something. Also, make sure the CCA knows that when they are ready to take their 30-minute lunch, to make time to replenish, eat, rest, and drink.

An OJI doesn't just teach information out of a workbook; they show the CCA what it is really like on the street, on their own, by themselves and making choices independently. As we all know, the letter carrier is the last line of defense to making sure a customer gets good service. No matter how many obstacles management, the plant, the weather, Amazon, CFS, or anything else put in our way, we need to get it done!

Finally, a Mentor is generally an experienced and trusted adviser. Not to be confused with the OJI, a Mentor is more focused on the long-term growth of the Mentee. Mentors can teach, provide wisdom, advise and support. An on-the-job instructor isn't necessarily a Mentor. What better way to establish a relationship with a new carrier than to provide immediate on-the-job training and then maintain a relationship with the new carrier? As the carrier progresses and continues to learn more about the job, the Mentor will be there to provide support.

Most carriers, whether they realized it or not, had a Mentor when they started. Typically, it was a veteran carrier who showed you the ropes. Whether they gave us safety reminders or tips on how to perform the day-to-day functions of carrying, we've all benefited from our fellow carriers' knowledge and willingness to help. Experienced letter carriers can take an active role in mentoring other carriers.

New carriers have a lot to learn besides how to deliver the mail, which we all know is harder than just "following the mail". Learning the technology, the procedures and protocols and dealing with management are a lot to absorb all at once. Especially in the fast-paced, productivity-at-all-costs mentality that is prevalent on most workroom floors. A Mentoring relationship can provide new employees with a resource to ask questions, get feedback and begin their journey to become a professional letter carrier.

Besides the day-to-day tasks that revolve around getting the mail delivered, you can Mentor by teaching about the Union. This can include reminding a CCA about the monthly union meeting, getting them involved with the annual food drive, telling them about legislative issues or teaching them how the National Agreement is organized so they can learn more about their rights and how to enforce them. Even simple things, like making sure they understand their Weingarten rights and learning to consult with the Union Steward when there are possible violations to the agreement, can be invaluable for new members.

There are a lot of resources out there for letter carriers. A number of postal handbooks and manuals cover the many aspects of

delivering and handling the mail. NALC has dozens of active publications: one in particular, the Letter Carrier Resource Guide, condenses a plethora of useful information for all carriers, but especially for new carriers. But these resources cannot and do not replace a Mentor. These are just tools, to be used in conjunction with a hands-on, personal relationship from a Mentor, which can help show them the big picture and focus on their priorities, whatever those may be at the time. Pass on your knowledge and skills.

A reminder for a potential Mentee/CCA - try to take an active role in seeking out a Mentor. To get the most from a Mentor and become a professional carrier, you should try to learn from all of your coworkers and glean some of their wisdom. When you engage with other carriers, ask questions and listen, you'll find that somebody is mentoring you, whether the other carrier realizes it or not.

I would like to thank all those Academy Instructors, On-the-job instructors (OJIs) and Mentors who have taken on the mission to train our future professional letter carriers. It is not an easy job! Also, what you do will affect the CCA now and for their future!

As always, much respect to the most important and hardest working employees in the Postal Service, city letter carriers! Be safe! In Solidarity,

Mark Follet - Vice President



The Postal Service helps carriers avoid bad encounters with dogs by giving advice in training sessions, stand-up talks and written material, as well as by providing dog spray, dog warning cards, and notifications in scanners to alert carriers of dangerous dogs at certain addresses.

New carriers who don't have experience dealing with dogs and who may not be familiar with the dogs located on their routes are especially vulnerable to dog attacks, NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "Letter carriers who are still learning the job have so many things to remember, but they shouldn't forget the threat of dog bites," he said. "Knowing where the

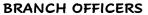
dogs are, is important, but you also need to know what to do when you encounter a dog. "Whether or not you are warned in advance of a dangerous dog, here are some dos and don'ts for avoiding dog trouble on your route:

- Do check for dog warning cards, carry dog spray and keep an eye out for dogs at all times.
- Don't run past a dog. The dog's natural instinct is to chase people who run.
- Don't scream if a dog threatens you. Avoid eye contact. Try to remain still until the dog leaves, and then back away slowly until the dog is out of sight.
- Don't approach an unfamiliar dog, especially one that's tethered or confined.

- Do try to place something between yourself and the dog, such as a satchel or backpack, if a dog threatens to attack.
- Do report it to a supervisor if you observe a potentially dangerous situation involving a dog, or if you are attacked or threatened by one.

-July 2021 The Postal Record CARL J. KENNEDY BRANCH 704 NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS 2950 N. COUNTRY CLUB ROAD TUCSON, AZ 85716-1912 TELEPHONE: 520-323-2117 NOVEMBER 2022 NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION U.S. POSTAGE TUCSON, AZ PERMIT 982

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