



MEMO To The Branch 2184 Leadership Council, January 9, 2024

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Darryl Clay
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Jerry Cerpa
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Erik Venzke
Tracy Mitchell
Keith Benedict
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Dave Reise
Joe Golonka
Kris Shaw
Scott Russell
Ryan Zyngier
Tod Lilla
Bryon Hendricks
Jillian Hudgins
Mohanad Rahal
Kim Miller
Symone Coleman
Yvonne Jackson
Karl Tamburro
Shaun Fowlkes
Marwan Ghotemi
Chanel Harrison
Marquel Davis
Justin Leal
Lillian Bogosian
Rachel Stachulski
Scherrie Lacey
Jennifer Rake
Dan Marek
Diego Forshaw
Kristie Nelson
Courtney Duran
Victor Siemiesz
Jeff Webb
Casey Pennigton
William Douglas
Nakia Whitfield
Ananias Epps
Ramon Robinson
Shatyra Young
Paul Bordine
Ashley Seper

Our first Leadership Council Memo of the new calendar year will begin as usual with an update of Branch 2184 administrative matters. The next regular Branch membership meeting will take place on Wednesday, February 7 at 7:30 p.m. in our meeting area at the Branch 2184 union office. A steward meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 13 at 7:00 p.m. at the union office. This will be the only steward meeting in February. Dates, times, and formats of remaining executive board meetings in 2024 will be determined at the forthcoming executive board meeting on Monday, January 29.

Also at the January executive board meeting, funding parameters for the delegates attending the forthcoming NALC National Convention on August 5 - 9 in Boston will be determined. A reminder that all delegates planning to attend the convention in Boston MUST notify the Branch no later Thursday, February 1. Delegates are reminded that to be eligible for any convention funding, they must be in attendance at least 7 of the previous 10 Branch 2184 membership meetings immediately prior to the convention, per Article XII, section 5.c of the Branch Bylaws. The cycle of 10 meetings for Boston convention funding began in September 2023 and will continue through June 2024.

Also, regarding Branch administrative matters, those incurring lost time and submitting pay vouchers to the Branch should be aware that our payroll will now be called in to ADP on Friday, the last day each of each period, effective immediately. This change will allow for more complete and timely wage payments for Branch officers, stewards, and others doing work for the Branch. Additionally, anyone that is receiving payments from the Branch is strongly encouraged to set up a direct deposit to their financial accounts. The process is simple and will ensure a safe and more timely receipt of wage payments.

Next up on our calendar of events will be our second annual Retirement Dinner, which will take place on **Sunday, March 10 at 2:00 p.m. at the Prestige Banquet Hall, 6600 Allen Road in Allen Park**. This year's dinner will also include the formal installation of Branch 2184 officers and regular station stewards for the 2024-2026 term of office. This event will be free for all Branch 2184 retired members and one guest and also free for the officers and stewards being formally installed. The cost per ticket for all other Branch 2184 members and guests as well as for the guests of Branch officers and regular stewards will be \$40. The event will include dinner, music and dancing, a cash bar, and door prizes, and a NALC National Officer will be invited.

The beginning of a new calendar year is often a time of resolutions and commitments, or in the case of union representation, re-commitments. Anyone serving in a union capacity, whether elected or appointed, has one core responsibility that rises above all others, and that is consistent and effective enforcement of the National Agreement and all that it entails. This includes applicable provisions in USPS handbooks and manuals as well as all laws that are applicable to Postal Service letter carriers.

To ensure that this is accomplished, there are five basic guidelines for effective union representation that every steward and contract enforcer MUST fully accept and incorporate into their work. If you are unwilling or unable to meet these, then you have no business being in a union representative position to begin with. Last year our Branch had to deal with an unfortunate situation where a former steward used their position to attack the contractual as well as the legal and civil rights of other letter carriers. Such egregious behavior is antithetical to everything that a labor union stands for. It is fully expected that steward misconduct of this or a similar nature will NEVER occur again in Branch 2184.

First, the Duty of Fair Representation: This is not a choice or a personal option. It is a legally binding requirement. **This means that you MUST fully represent ALL city letter carriers, all of the time, with NO exceptions.** Your personal opinions concerning other letter carriers or work issues are irrelevant. Additionally, never gossip, spread rumors, or provide any information that you are not absolutely sure of. No one in the “union business” knows everything. Instead, if you are unsure about a question or an issue, then you should do the research, seek guidance, verify the facts, and only then respond to the question.

Second, Consistent Enforcement of the Labor Contract: Again, not a choice or an option. This means ALL of the NALC/USPS Collective Bargaining Agreement, as interpreted by the current JCAM as well as our Branch 2184 LMOU - not just what you think is important. This must be done at all times, with no exceptions. NEVER make any agreement or even engage in any discussion which is contrary to negotiated work rules and procedures, whether national or local in nature. Nothing is more damaging to the union’s integrity and effectiveness on the post office work floor than a steward that makes “deals” or that ignores contract violations.

Third, Avoiding even the Appearance of Self-Serving Behavior: NEVER use your union position for any kind of personal advantage or for the benefit of just certain letter carriers, whether inside or outside of work. For example, if you become aware of local information that is advantageous for your members to know about such as route postings or vacation cancellations, you must ensure that everyone is made aware of it. Always be sure that the specific terms of negotiated grievance settlements are applied to ALL affected letter carriers.

Fourth, Wearing the Union Label, 24/7: You set an example with all that you say and do. This means performing your letter carrier duties each day in a consistently professional manner. It also means taking an active and visible leadership role in supporting the NALC at the Branch and National levels as well as actively supporting the mission of Organized Labor, not just with your words but with your actions.

Fifth, the need for Continuing Education: It is not possible to effectively represent letter carriers without attending and actively participating in every possible educational and training opportunity. Failing to do so will quickly hinder your effectiveness. Branch 2184 as well as NALC Region 6 are widely recognized leaders in providing these educational and training opportunities. Additionally, if you have proven through your level of involvement that you are a candidate for advanced union training and education, such opportunities WILL be offered to you.

A pertinent example of effective union work occurred recently in our Ypsilanti office, where management attempted to impose an arbitrary policy that required carriers to take a lunch if working overtime, in violation of a long-established past practice where Ypsilanti carriers working overtime had the option of requesting a “no lunch.” The grievance file supported the existence of a binding past practice, and management was found in violation of contractual requirements that unilateral changes to established past practices must be done by engaging in good faith bargaining with the union, which did not occur. A Step B decision found management in violation of Article 5 of the National Agreement and ordered management to stop their blanket denials of “no lunch” requests. Kudos to Ypsilanti Steward Paul Bordine and to Step A designee Mark Owen for their excellent work in this matter.

On Saturday, December 30, NALC Election committee members Dave Reise and Karl Tamburro opened and counted the ballots for the runoff election to fill the final steward position in the Westland office. Ananias Epps was elected by a vote of 25 to 17 over Bryan Mikich. This completes the Branch election process that began with nominations last October. The next cycle of Branch 2184 officer, steward, and convention delegate nominations and elections will take place beginning in October 2026.

What is certain to be a contentious and perhaps ugly United States Presidential election, along with elections of U.S. House of Representative members and 1/3 of the United States Senate (including a Senate race here in Michigan) will take place on November 5 this year. In this era of rampant political disinformation, ignorance, and widespread social media idiocy, letter carriers and their families will be faced with a critical outcome that potentially impact every aspect of their lives, as well as the very future of American democracy. With this in mind, there will be Hatch Act reminders along with other political “do’s and don’ts” in Leadership Council Memos, Branch newspaper articles, and Branch website items during the coming months. Stewards are expected to be work floor leaders to help ensure that our members do not engage in any conduct or other actions that could potentially lead to serious disciplinary action because of Hatch Act violations.