

Branch 2184 ... "Speaks"

Official Publication of Branch 2184, NALC, AFL-CIO

January/February 2018

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Western Wayne County, MI
National Association
of Letter Carriers
AFL - CIO
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Office Hours:

9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Monday through Friday

Calendar

Branch Meetings:

April 4th, 2018
May 2nd, 2018
(7:30 p.m. - Union Hall)

Retirees Meetings:

April 11th, 2018
May 9th, 2018
(12:30 p.m. - Union Hall)

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President's Report

In accordance with Article 6, section 1 of the NALC Constitution for the Government of Subordinate Branches, I hereby submit the Branch's Term Ending Report. The following is an overview of the Branch operations for the last three years. I have also asked the Branch's officers to submit summaries from their areas of responsibility.

Branch Finances

I am proud to report that the Branch has ended this last term with the strongest financial balance sheet in the history of the Branch. Through the use of a disciplined budgeting process, and avoiding unnecessary expenses we ended this past term with a surplus in each year of the last three years and ended December 2017 with a balance of \$395,588.53. Heading into the new term our financial position remains very strong, with no outstanding debts, loans or obligations.

Membership

We start the new term with 886 active members and 459 retired members. The number of active members is up from the last term ending report when we had 797 while the number of retirees has once again shown a marked increase from the 368 retired members during the last report.

Capital Improvements /Infrastructure

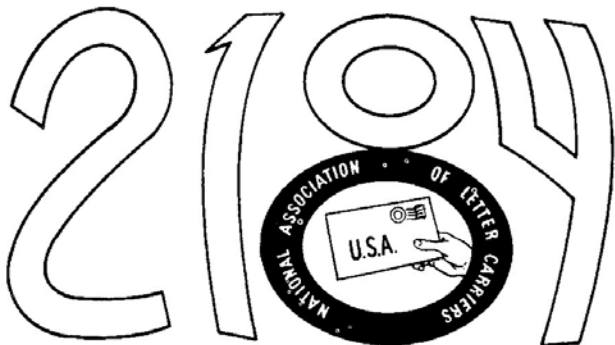
There were no major expenses involving the building or grounds during the last term. We continue to maintain a rigorous maintenance schedule of the building and grounds and have avoided any major repairs. On the technological front we have replaced two computers, our network server and our fax machine with one that allows for faxing and emailing. We also purchased a projector for power point presentations.

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Officers

President.....	Mark Judd
Executive Vice President	Walt McGregory
Vice President	Joe Golonka
Recording Secretary.....	Jacqueline McGregory
Financial Secretary Treas	Cathy Tondreau
Sergeant at Arms.....	Scott Watts
Health Benefits Rep.....	Jim Powell
Retirees Officer.....	Leonard Zawisa
Trustee.....	Tim Bailey
Trustee.....	Gloria Warthen
Trustee.....	Felicia Davis
Editor.....	Leonard Zawisa
Branch Scribe.....	Joe Golonka
Injury Compensation.....	Joe Golonka

NALC



AFL-CIO

Branch 2184 Speaks is published 6 times a year by Branch 2184, National Association of Letter Carriers.

The opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the editorial staff or the officers of the branch.

We invite all members to contribute articles for publication. Copy should be typed, double-spaced and signed by the contributor. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit, delete or reject the article for the good of the branch.

In the hope that material contained herein may be of benefit to the goals of the NALC, permission is hereby granted to copy or use material in this publication with our best wishes.

Stewards

Belleville	Bryon Hendricks
.....	Greg Bodziak (alt)
Dearborn (Main).....	Darryl Clay
.....	Symone Coleman
.....	Yvonne Jackson (alt)
Dearborn (Annex).....	Melvin MacDonald
.....	Jacqueline McGregory
.....	Rose Miller (alt)
.....	Tom Klecha (alt)
Dearborn Heights.....	Denise Viola
Dundee.....	313-295-1640
Flat Rock	Lillian Bogosian
Grosse Ile.....	Christopher Biegalski
.....	Kim Bumbul (alt)
.....	Gloria Warthen (alt)
Inkster.....	Phil Ashford
.....	Thad Dillard (alt)
.....	Scherrie Lacey (alt)
Lincoln Park	Scott Watts
.....	Dave Reise (alt)
Monroe	Erik Venzke
.....	Chris Carmon (alt)
.....	Jacqueline Belman (alt)
Northville	Valerie Watkins
.....	Beth Bays (alt)
Plymouth.....	Tamara Bosman
.....	Diego Forshaw
.....	Kristie Nelson (alt)
Rockwood.....	Gloria Warthen
Taylor	Michele Szafran
.....	Keith Benedict
Temperance	313-295-1640
Trenton	Tracy Mitchell
Westland	Walter McGregory
.....	Felicia Davis
.....	Nakia Whitfield
.....	Katrina Jones (alt)
.....	Vina Stacy (alt)
Canton	Ramon Robinson
.....	Tyler Haverstick
.....	Lois Fritz (alt)
Ypsilanti.....	Paul Bordine
.....	Stevi Hall
.....	Alan Grajczyk (alt)
.....	Rick Rider (alt)
.....	Danita Smith (alt)

Address Correction Requested

When you move, change your name, leave the letter carrier craft, retire, or your phone number changes, we need to hear from you. Your member benefits, newsletter and other mailings may be affected if we don't have the new information. It only takes a phone call or drop us a note. We will do the rest.

Call 313-295-1640

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Presidents Report

Activities

The yearly Branch Picnic continues to be very popular with our members and the Branch has continued its long practice of holding this family picnic and fundraiser for the Muscular Dystrophy Association. Interest in the picnic and other Branch activities continues to remain high with attendance increasing yearly for the many scheduled events. The NALC's national charity MDA continues to be our main focus and beneficiary of the events we sponsor such as the MDA Bowl-a-Thon, Fill the Satchel, Picnic Raffles, Calendar Sale, and our Labor Day weekend canister drive. In 2017 we set a new Branch record for monies raised for MDA (\$11,696.53)! During the last three year period we also set a Branch record for monies collected on behalf of MDA (\$20,875.33).

We continue our participation in the annual Labor Day parade. Over the past three years we have averaged between 25 and 35 members and family in attendance. Our efforts on behalf of the Food Drive the largest one day collection of food for the needy also continues. With the economy continuing to pick up and turn positive, the Branch has shown a marked increase in food collections; in 2017 alone our total was 310,081 pounds collected bringing our three year total to 851,682!

Retirement Services

We continue to offer assistance to our members who are looking to retire, and those who are ready to call it a career. As always the last three years have been very busy. During the 2015-2017 time period the branch fielded hundreds of calls regarding retirement and retirement related issues. Over the past three years we have assisted 82 members in retiring. Any member in good standing is eligible to receive assistance from the Branch when making this most important life decision.

Injury Comp / OWCP

Our Branch continues to offer comprehensive assistance to our members who have on the job injuries with their claims and questions. This long standing Branch practice of helping our injured members with their OWCP claims has proven to be an invaluable asset to our members. The Branch handles calls daily from injured carriers seeking our assistance with help filling out forms and perfecting their claims. Over the course of the last three years more than 140 members have received help with getting their claims accepted. Please remember you must be a member in good standing to be eligible for this most important benefit.

Contract Enforcement

The past three years have once again have proven to be a very busy time for our Branch Stewards and Step A Designees, with over 2469 grievances being filed. Of the 2469 grievances that were filed, 390 were appealed to Step B of the Dispute Resolution Process (DRP). The Branch continues its commitment and support of our stewards and Step A Designees by providing them with the necessary training and resources to defend and represent our members in the grievance / arbitration process. The Branch membership should be very proud of their "contract enforcers" whose dedication and commitment is second to none.

In closing, the last three years should have proven to all those naysayers who questioned the need for a U.S. Postal Service they were wrong, and that by working together and staying united we can accomplish great things. The future of our Union remains strong, now all we need is the long term legislative relief our employer so sorely needs to take us into a more secure future. It has been a privilege and honor to represent the members of Branch 2184, I am extremely proud of what we have accomplished together and look forward to what the next three years will bring.

-- *Mark Judd*
President

EVP's Report

Term Ending Report

During the past three years (January 2015 through December 2017), Branch 2184 has invested in extensive contract enforcement training for your stewards. This knowledge is paying dividends daily for the members of Branch 2184, as evidenced by the number of grievances that have been filed in some of our stations. In other stations our management counterparts are adhering to the provisions of our contract, where they were not in the past.

In October 2017, at our NALC Region 6 (Kentucky, Indiana, Michigan) training held at the Motor City Casino in Detroit MI, Branch 2184 was represented by its largest ever number of Stewards and Branch officers to attend a training session. There were over 30 Branch 2184 contract enforcers at this training including three of our own that served as instructors: EVP Walt McGregory, VP Joe Golonka and Taylor Steward Michele Szafran.

"Advanced Formal A and Beyond" Training Program

In 2016, Branch 2184 sent four Formal Step A union representatives to this training; Jackie McGregory from the Dearborn Annex; Michele Szafran from Taylor; Chris Carmon and Erik Venzke, both from Monroe. This advanced training has helped not only the members in their own USPS installations, but also other members throughout Branch 2184. Each of the Formal Step A designees have assisted in other Branch 2184 offices with grievances. The leadership of Branch 2184 plans to send additional Formal A designees to this cutting-edge training for the benefit our members.

Region 6 School of Stewards Training

Branch 2184 recently sent the following station stewards to this training that was conducted by the National Business Agent's office on January 30 through February 2, 2018: Phil Ashford from Inkster; Beth Bays from Northville; Tracy Mitchell from

Trenton; Tamara Bosman from Plymouth; and Paul Bordine from Ypsilanti. This training reinforced basic principles of investigating and processing grievances at the initial step of the grievance -arbitration procedure. All five stewards successfully completed the four-day training and they are now applying what they learned in their offices.

Along with what has already been set in place during previous years of contract-related instruction, Branch 2184's current leadership will continue to provide training and guidance for your stewards.

Contract COLA: 4th COLA is \$520

The fourth regular COLA under the 2016-2019 National Agreement is \$520 annually, following the release of the January 2018 Consumer Price Index.

On February 14, the Bureau of Labor Statistics announced that the CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W, 1967=100) stood at 720.604 in January, 22.024 points above the base index of 698.580 in July 2014. After adding the 0.465 cents carried forward from the third adjustment period, the accumulated COLA through February stood at 25 cents per hour or \$520 annually.

The fifth COLA will be based on the increase in the CPI-W between the base index month and July 2018, less any previously calculated COLAs, and will be payable the second full pay period following the release of the July 2018 index. The four COLAs that have been calculated under the 2016-2019 National Agreement, totaling 55 cents per hour, are as follows: 1st COLA, 1 cent per hour (\$21 annually), 2nd COLA, 16 cents per hour (\$333 annually), 3rd COLA, 13 cents per hour (\$270 annually), and the 4th COLA, 25 cents per hour (\$520 annually).

2019 Retiree COLAs Projection: 0.9% as of January 2018

The 2019 COLAs for CSRS and FERS benefits are based on the increase in the average CPI-W between the 3rd quarter of 2017 (239.668) and the 3rd quarter of 2018 (TBA).

Based on the January 2018 CPI-W

(1982-84=100) of 241.919, the 2019 CSRS and FERS COLAs are currently projected to be 0.9%. **The 2019 retiree COLA calculation will be finalized in October 2018 with the release of the CPI-W for September 2018.**

CSRS annuities receive full COLAs; COLAs for FERS annuities are payable for retirees 62 and older and may be reduced by up to one percentage point from the increase in the CPI.

CCA back pay update

The Postal Service notified NALC that the retroactive payments for city carrier assistants (CCAs) resulting from implementation of the 2016-2019 National Agreement would be delayed by one pay period. The payments originally scheduled to be included in Pay Period 3 paychecks payable on Feb. 9 will now be in Pay Period 4 paychecks payable on Feb. 23.

The back pay period covers Nov. 26, 2016, through Sept. 15, 2017. This payment will include the 2.2 percent general wage increase and the addition of two \$0.50-per-hour step increases in the new CCA pay scale where applicable. The two \$0.50-per-hour step increases are payable at 12 and 52 weeks of service.

Eligible employees are those that served as CCA letter carriers between Nov. 26, 2016, and Sept. 15, 2017 and were employees of the Postal Service on or after Aug. 7, 2017. Former CCA letter carriers who were active on Aug. 7, 2017, and have since separated from the Postal Service should check back for further updates on when and how their back pay will be distributed.

EDITORS NOTE:

As we go to press the National has issued this statement: **CCA Backpay Update** - As letter carriers eligible for retroactive pay began reviewing their earning statements over the weekend, errors were discovered. NALC has been and will continue to work with USPS to identify those affected and correct the errors as soon as possible. We will provide more information as it becomes available.

LCPF: Why it is so important!

The following is from the current administration's Fiscal Year 2019 Federal Budget proposal:

Federal Retirement

Increase FERS contributions. For active federal and postal employees covered by the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), the budget calls for gradually equalizing employee and agency payroll contributions for pension benefits. This would cut our pay and raise our pension contributions by 1 percent of pay per year for up to six years, costing active carriers up to \$3,600 annually after six years. (The actual impact would depend on when FERS employees are hired: Letter carriers hired before 2013 now pay 0.8 percent, while letter carriers hired after 2013 pay 3.1 percent or 4.4 percent, depending on their exact date of hire. The FERS contribution rate, which would eventually be split 50-50 for all letter carriers under this budget proposal, now stands at 14.5 percent.)

High-5 average. The pension cuts don't stop there for active employees. The budget calls for reducing Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) and FERS pension benefits for new retirees by basing annuities on workers' highest average pay over five years (high-5) instead of over the highest three years (high-3), thereby reducing annuity calculations.

Eliminate annuity supplement. It also would eliminate the annuity supplement that covers the gap for employees who retire under FERS before they qualify for Social Security benefits at age 62. For letter carriers and other blue-collar federal employees with physically taxing jobs, this cut would be especially painful.

Slash COLAs. For all retirees, the administration's budget calls for eliminating or reducing cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs). For current and future annuitants under FERS (which covers any employee hired after 1984), the budget would eliminate basic annuity COLAs entirely. For those under CSRS, COLAs would be reduced by 0.5 percent

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each year. These changes would devastate the finances of retirees who rely on annual COLAs to keep up with the cost of living.

TSP-only coverage for new employees. In media reports about the budget, the administration is also said to be studying a policy to end the defined benefit portion of FERS for all new federal employees (including new career city carriers), leaving new employees with only the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), the defined contribution plan for FERS participants.

Reduce the TSP's G Fund interest rate. This proposal includes a change to the government bond fund ("G" fund), the largest and most popular investment vehicle available in the TSP. Millions of active and retired G Fund investors would receive a reduced rate of return. The new rate would be tied to the interest rate on 90 day Treasury bills instead of an average of medium and long term Treasury bond rates. This would reduce the rate from 2.33 percent (in the 12 months ending in January) to 1.55 percent -- which translates into a \$1.4 billion annual loss for TSP participants. The cost of this proposal to participants would rise dramatically if longer-term interest rates continue to rise.

Federal Employees Health Benefits

Higher premiums for workers. For both active and retired federal employees, the budget proposes decreasing the federal government's contribution to the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) to 65 to 75 percent, down from the current 72 to 75 percent range.

Although details for how the new contribution levels would work in practice have not been specified, this proposal would likely increase contributions for all retired members, cutting significantly into their monthly take home pay. A 7 percentage point cost shift for a \$20,000 per year family health plan would raise retiree contributions by more than \$1,000 annually.

The impact of the FEHBP proposal on active letter carriers would be minimal in the near term,

since contribution levels are set in the NALC labor contract. But this change would drive the Postal Service to continue to try to shift costs to employees during collective bargaining.

WE ALL MUST DO OUR PART! Help protect what we have already fought so hard for thus far! Call the Branch 2184 office at 313 295 1640, and a branch officer will help you sign up for our Letter Carrier Political Fund. \$5 a pay period is all that you need to sign up for. Don't wait, ask your steward for more details.

UNIFORM BANK

Thanks to all of those both active and retired who have contributed to our uniform bank. We are still in need of all types of gently used letter carrier uniforms. Stop in at the Branch 2184 office or give them to your steward.

In unionism,

-- *Walt McGregory*

Executive Vice president

VP's Report

The Myth of the "Sanctity" of the Mail

Throughout the entire span of time since I first began work as a letter carrier June 1971 I have frequently heard references made to the so-called "sanctity" of the mail. Behind this noble sounding phrase is a real and exceedingly important truth; that the mail processed by the Postal Service and delivered by its letter carriers should be subject to the highest standards of integrity and customer service. After all, America's public Postal Service is first and foremost just that – a service, paid for by hundreds of millions of postal customers that utilize the USPS to send mail and parcels of every conceivable kind. Paramount to this service is an immutable trust that mailed matter for which postage has been paid will be delivered to its intended recipients.

Letter carriers faithfully provide this service and they do so with an exceedingly high level of

efficiency and integrity that is unparalleled anywhere in the world. Yet, sometimes mail that should be delivered is not delivered, although when this occurs it is very rarely the willful intent of Postal Service City Letter Carriers. Instead, this is nearly always the result of improper training and accepted local practices that exist with the full knowledge and consent of Postal management – that is until a complaint is made or when outside entities show up and begin investigating. Management then immediately shifts into scapegoating mode, and the primary targets of their deflection of blame are typically (you guessed it) letter carriers.

Management's Dirty Little (not so) Secret

In the obsessive, numbers-driven world of USPS management, a Machiavellian philosophy where the ends are justified by any means is very well-established. This is an inevitable result of a deeply engrained Postal Service culture at every level that intrinsically disrespects letter carriers and their work. Management representatives at the station level have but a single concern, a concern which has nothing whatsoever to do with quality customer service or the reliable delivery of mail. Instead, everything revolves around making the numbers. This means getting the mail out the door and letter carriers back off the clock while using as little time as possible, no matter what it takes to accomplish this.

At first that might seem to be a reasonable business concern, but the way in which it is undertaken is anything but reasonable, as our active letter carriers know very well. Antagonistic management workplace behavior and attempted intimidation are standard operating procedure, and in many places blatant violations of letter carrier Contractual rights are merely an aspect of daily business. The dirty little (not so) secret here is that once the mail is out the post office door, management could not care less how, or even if it is delivered. It could be dumped in a river for all they care. Only when issues arise such as when OIG agents or Postal Inspectors make inquiries about the disposition of the mail or customer complaints are lodged, will management care to

respond, and only then because they have no choice.

Typically, such responses will take the form of feigned indignation and pearl clutching as they get the vapors in displays of phony outrage. This is accompanied by immediate and focused attempts to blame everything possible on letter carriers instead of those whose self-serving policies and selective application of delivery rules and standards led directly to the problems to begin with. Although this is not (by far) the only example of consistent USPS management hypocrisy, it is perhaps the most blatant and troubling. For a letter carrier, there is only ONE sure way to avoid getting caught up in this web of management deceit and cowardice.

Protecting Your Interests from Management's Hypocrisy

It is commonly stated that knowledge is power and there is no more important application of this than with letter carrier duties. Again, keep in mind that management typically does not care if mail is delivered in the correct manner (or is even delivered at all), as long the time used amounts to as little as possible. Thus, it is entirely up to YOU to know and to apply the proper procedures for every aspect of your letter carrier duties.

Although new CCAs do receive extensive training and information at the "Carrier Academies" during the initial days of their USPS employment, thereafter they are quickly overwhelmed by management intimidation and unrealistic expectations. Bad habits are formed, proper procedures for the handling and disposition of all mail go by the wayside, and the probationary period becomes a time not of learning but instead a time of survival. These bad habits and improper procedures are then carried forth into a letter carrier's post-probationary employment. Customer service and the integrity of the Postal Service are routinely sacrificed at the altar of "making the numbers," and this occurs with the full knowledge and even the tacit encouragement of management at every level.

However, it is NOT just NALC Union

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representatives that should be able to quote or at least make a reference to the M-41 Handbook (City Letter Carrier Delivery Duties and Responsibilities). Perhaps you read it a long time ago, and perhaps you have never even read it at all. Look inside the route book at your case. It should be there. The M-41 Handbook is also widely available online, including on the NALC App and the NALC National Website. When reading it, pay thorough attention to Chapters 1 through 4 as well as Chapter 8, which detail the responsibilities of a letter carrier from start to finish of a typical delivery day.

Working "By the Book"

Although Postal management has the right to assign work and to instruct letter carriers to perform this work, you should never rely solely on numbers-obsessed supervisors to properly instruct you about *how* to perform this work. That is what USPS Handbooks are for, as well as the well-defined work rules

set forth in the Collective Bargaining Agreement negotiated by the NALC with the USPS. Most of all, this is what your UNION is for. Management will misinform and even outright lie to you. We will not. You will never go wrong by performing every aspect of your letter carrier job "by the book" every minute of every day.

Unfortunately, in their endlessly misguided quest to save time at all costs, USPS management constantly discourages and impedes professional, topnotch customer service – the single most important thing that the Postal Service has to sell. Day in and day out it is the work of America's letter carriers that makes the USPS the world's most efficient delivery service. Ultimately it is the work of dedicated letter carriers that repeatedly saves the Postal Service from its own inept and misguided leadership, as occurred once again during the recent Christmas season. We've done it before, and we will most certainly do it again.

-- *Joe Golonka*
Vice President



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Contact Your Brookfield Representative!

Robert Kreager

Branch 2184 Retired

1802 Ford Blvd. Lincoln Park, MI 48146-3956
313-386-0527 (voice) 313-386-4037 (fax)

Retiree's Report

Branch 2184 has been providing expanded retirement assistance ever since the Postal Service discontinued local retirement counseling. In the past three year term 91 members have retired and in excess of 200 members have been provided assistance by appointment or by phone.

The following is basic information you will need to determine your retirement eligibility.

Eligibility for **CSRS** Retirement

<u>Optional</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Service (years)</u>
	62	5
	60	20
	55	30

Eligibility for **FERS** Retirement

<u>Immediate</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Service (years)</u>
	62	5
	60	20
MRA		30

MRA = Minimum Retirement Age

Year of birth determines MRA - Example: (If you were born in 1953 through 1964 your MRA is age 56. Years after 1965 increases your MRA.

If you meet the age and years of service requirements listed above, you are eligible for a CSRS Optional or a FERS Immediate retirement. Booklets have been prepared and updated to provide CSRS and FERS carriers with answers to their retirement choices and decisions. Both booklets are available at the Branch.

Follow the below steps to insure a trouble free retirement process.

At least **ONE YEAR** prior to retirement:

Request an annuity estimate, which will help in personal financial planning. This computation will also aid in making decisions about waiving military pay, and paying deposits or re-deposits.

Apply to make any deposits for civilian and post-1956 military service if applicable or find out how such service would be credited if deposits are not made.

90 days prior to retirement:

1. Request retirement paper work (Blue Book) from Shared Services (1-877-477-3273 Option 5) 90-days prior to planned retirement date.

2. Fill out retirement application (Blue Book). If you need assistance or are confused by any decisions you have to make you can contact the Union Office for assistance. Help will be provided by phone or an appointment can be made to meet with the Retirees Officer at the Branch.

3. Call Shared Services for an individual phone counseling appointment 60 days prior to your retirement date. Phone counseling can be held at the Post Office on the clock, at your home or if you prefer at the union hall with the assistance of the retirees officer. At home or the union hall would be on your own time. The Shared Services counselor will go over your Blue Book with you line by line.

4. Remove completed pages from Blue Book, make copies for yourself and mail to address listed in book. Retirement date is your last work day.

Branch 2184 provides assistance to any member, in good standing, involving any aspect of the retirement process. Just call the Branch office or notify your steward that you want the union's assistance.

Military Service Credit

Anyone employed on or after October 1, 1982, is required to make a deposit for the military time credit for such time to count towards retirement eligibility and their annuity amount. This deposit is required regardless of being in the CSRS, CSRS-offset, or FERS retirement category.

If you are interested in looking into military deposits, you should fill out and submit OPM Form RI 20-97 and submit it to the appropriate Military Finance Center. A copy of the DD 214 must be attached to the RI 20-97. Form is available at the branch or can be downloaded from the Office of Personnel Management website at opm.gov.

-- Leonard Zawisa
Retirees Officer

Term Ending Report Vice President

Letter Carrier On-The-Job Injuries

The injury compensation summary for 2015-2017 in Branch 2184 is decidedly one of both notable success and also of significant frustration. We provided comprehensive assistance to more than 140 members that incurred job related traumatic injuries (OWCP form CA-1) or that developed job-related medical conditions (OWCP form CA-2). This assistance ranged from providing initial guidance and intervention (more on that below) to more complex matters such as developing appeal strategies for denied OWCP claims, initiating claims for schedule awards, and medical care/billing issues.

A personal highlight was the successful appeal of an OWCP claim for one of our members that had been unjustly denied due to a fraudulent second opinion medical report made by an OWCP-contracted quack doctor. This so-called physician with a "Star Wars" sounding name has long been the nemesis of injured letter carriers in both Branch 2184 and elsewhere in the Southeast Michigan area because of his bizarre and even hostile demeanor as well as his fanciful and contrived "medical opinions." In this specific situation, he deceitfully recreated our member's life history without even a shred of evidence to support his nonsensical fairy tale. Fortunately, actual facts and documented medical evidence were sufficient to overturn his bogus report.

Another positive development occurred during the recent local implementation period, when Branch 2184 successfully negotiated and incorporated language into our Local Memorandum of Understanding (LMOU) which requires management to notify the Union of **EVERY** job-related injury reported by a letter carrier in any of our stations. That should enable us to respond in a more timely and effective manner to the widespread station level problems that are the next subject of this report.

Unfortunately, there has also been an end-

lessly frustrating aspect of the injury compensation process for Branch 2184's members. There exists a widespread and dangerous level of management incompetence in our stations that frequently results in the serious mishandling of letter carrier injuries. In many instances local management's ineptness is accompanied by a blatant obstruction of letter carrier rights after they have reported job-related injuries. After several decades of involvement with the injury compensation process, I will unequivocally state that postal management's response to letter carrier injuries in Branch 2184-represented stations has never been more inept and even pathetic than it is at the present time. Yes, there a few (very few) knowledgeable supervisors that can and usually will competently respond to letter carrier on the job injuries; but this is very much the exception and not the rule.

In some Branch 2184-represented USPS Installations the incompetence of management has long ceased being just a joke and it now represents a direct threat to the well-being of any injured letter carrier. Moreover, local management in these and other installations is not solely to blame for this profound level of ignorance regarding employee injuries. Decades of District level arrogance, combined with a willful USPS strategy of refusing to properly train local management representatives regarding injury compensation procedures, has directly enabled the existence of widespread station level management ineptitude.

Contract Enforcement

During the mid-1970s when then Plymouth NALC Branch 1794 merged with Branch 2184, this relatively new Plymouth steward was not aware of the already existing level of contract enforcement excellence that was and still is the hallmark of Branch 2184. Then Branch President Richard Adams and his successors Tim Manning, Paul Diebolt, and now Mark Judd have each placed the highest priority on day to day representation of our members and consistent enforcement of each letter carrier's contractual and workplace rights.

During the past three years we have refocused

our contract enforcement efforts into a team approach that has resulted in a cohesive and activist strategy of support and communication at the work floor level. Branch 2184's stewards range from newly elected or appointed letter carriers that are just beginning their work on your behalf, to highly knowledgeable and experienced stewards with years and even decades of contract enforcement savvy. Of particular value to our efforts has been a restructuring of our steward meetings, which are facilitated by Executive Vice-President Walt McGregory in a collaborative manner by utilizing a team that includes Branch President Judd, veteran NALC Step B Dispute Resolution Process representative Tim Bailey, and me.

My role in our Contract enforcement process has increasingly been focused on teaching and mentoring, along with composing our internal Leadership Council memos. Branch 2184 is fortunate to have an abundance of up and coming talent, those who will be the future leaders of our Branch. The purchase of a Branch projector has enabled us to utilize Power-Point presentations that I have developed for training purposes. Additionally, our leadership team is always seeking training opportunities provided for our stewards by the NALC at the regional and national levels, as well as other means of instruction and skill-building. Effective contract enforcement is very much a matter of continuing education, even for the most experienced stewards. Finally, I continue to write articles on a variety of topics for our Branch publication, as well as the "Contract Corner" questions and answers.

Other Branch 2184 Matters

One specific requirement of the Branch 2184 Vice President as defined in our Bylaws is to see that the decisions of our Executive Board are carried out. The Executive Board, which consists of the elected officers of the Branch and is chaired by the Branch President, is charged with overseeing the internal business of the Branch. This multi-faceted responsibility involves both our contractual and as well as our administrative functions, including but not lim-

ited to finances, member services, and our numerous membership activities. The past three years have been a time of both financial stability in Branch 2184 as well as a markedly increased level of participation in membership activities such as MDA fundraising and our annual summer picnic for members and their families.

A Look Ahead

Branch 2184 and the NALC begin 2018 in a time of relative calm but with great uncertainty and looming threats quickly approaching. The Postal Service remains at significant risk to legislative and political attacks, as all three branches of the Federal government remain under the control of stridently anti-union and anti-worker factions that also have shown contempt for a public postal service in America. However, we also have a tremendous opportunity in November this year to reclaim our nation as well as our own State of Michigan on behalf the common good of ALL of its citizens. Yes, the political noise in America will get very loud again later this year. But our time is no longer in the future. This **MUST** be a year of action, and our time is **NOW**.

-- *Joe Golonka*
Vice President

Branch 2184 Web Site

www.nalc2184.org

Retirement Information
CSRS & FERS Annuity Payments
OWCP Information
Branch Calendar
"FMLA" forms
Carrier Pay Chart
Online Forms 3971, 3996, 3189
CCA Information
2184 Memo of Understanding
National Agreement

Financial Secretary Treasurers 2015-2017 Term Ending Report

During the past three years Branch 2184 financial obligations have been met in a timely manner. All required yearly and monthly financial reports have been completed and submitted in a timely manner. All branch assets have been fully accounted for by the trustees during the six audits they have done. In the past three years I have been working with them to make sure the property and finances have been kept in order and balance. I expect the branch to be able to maintain its strong financial position in the next three years.

-- Catherine Tondreau

Financial Secretary Treasurer

Report for 2015	
Savings-Assets	
Checkbook balance	179,653.61
Convention Account	21,511.17
D&R Account	3,481.83
Savings Account &	129,049.76
Total Assets	333,696.37
Report for 2016	
Savings-Assets	
Checkbook Balance	156,907.82
Convention Account	5,207.93
D&R Account	4,543.70
Savings Account &	184,095.86
Total Assets	350,755.31
Report 2017	
Savings-Assets	
Checkbook Balance	20,413.48
Convention Account	18,097.08
D&R Account	9,835.06
Savings Account &	347,242.91
Total Assets	395,588.53

Contract Corner:

Q: My assignment is overburdened and I would like a special route inspection done. How do I go about doing this?

A: Special route inspections are conducted under the provisions of the M-39 Handbook (Management of Delivery Services), section 271.g. To qualify for a special route inspection, a letter carrier assignment must show at least 30 minutes of overtime and/or assistance on three or more days per week for any period of six consecutive weeks (where work performance is otherwise "satisfactory"), excluding the month of December. Of note, if the qualification period begins in November and continues into January, this is considered as a consecutive period even though December is omitted.

Of importance, the qualification criteria is about the assignment and not the regular carrier assigned to it, and thus any days where .50 or more overtime and/or assistance occur during the six week qualifying period are counted, regardless of who does the assignment. **Additionally, the six-week qualifying period does NOT have to occur immediately prior to a letter carrier's special inspection request. However, it should be based on reasonable current data for the assignment.**

The provisions of 271.g further state that when these qualification criteria have been met, the regular carrier assigned to the route shall, upon request, receive a special mail count and inspection **to be completed within four weeks of the request.** In accordance with the M-39 Handbook section 272, this mail count and inspection must be conducted in the same manner as a formal count and inspection – that is over a period of one full week.

Management sometimes attempts to avoid doing special route inspections by subsequently claiming that work performance during the qualifying period was allegedly not "satisfactory." However, such after-the-fact claims are typically bogus and undocumented. In order to substantiate such claims, management must provide actual evidence of any specific work deficiencies as well as evidence

that these alleged deficiencies were brought to the attention of the carrier during the qualifying period. Computer generated workload numbers such as DOIS data are by themselves worthless for purposes of claiming alleged performance deficiencies.

Finally, failure to conduct a special route inspection within four weeks of the carrier's request or failure to adjust the assignment within 52 days of the completion of a special inspection is grounds for entering into the grievance procedure. Additionally, any management denial of a special route inspection request based on alleged non-qualification of the assignment OR bogus claims of unsatisfactory performance should be immediately investigated and reviewed by the union and the appropriate grievance (s) initiated if deemed necessary.

Q: I was off work for several months because of job-related injury and was paid wage compensation by OWCP. During this time, the Postal Service made deductions from my annual leave balance. Why is this?

A: Fulltime career USPS employees that incur periods of Leave Without Pay (LWOP) totaling 80 hours or more (one pay period) in a pay year will see an impact on their leave balances, regardless of the reason for LWOP. The Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM) section 514.24 provides that such employees "have their leave credit reduced by the amount earned in one pay period." Thus, for every 80 hours of LWOP used during a pay year, either four, six or eight hours of annual leave (depending on leave earnings category) will be deducted from the leave that was credited to them at the beginning of the year. Additionally, one pay period's worth of sick leave (four hours) will not be earned and thus not credited in the usual manner.

It is important to always remember that the new annual leave balances that are credited to all fulltime employees each year in January do NOT represent leave that has already been earned at that time. Instead, it merely credited in advance for vacation planning and other purposes. Letter carriers will sometimes find that they no longer have sufficient

leave to cover a scheduled vacation because of excess LWOP usage earlier during that year. Those planning to retire should also carefully monitor their annual leave usage to ensure that they did not use more leave than had actually been earned at the time of retirement.

Finally, as discussed in a previous Contract Corner Q and A, excess LWOP (regardless of amount) does not impact retirement credit for Postal Service employees with accepted OWCP claims and that are drawing wage loss compensation from OWCP, or those that are working fulltime for an employee organization such as the NALC. However, if more than six months (1040 hours) of LWOP is used during a single pay year for other reasons such as a non-job related illness or injury, this likely will impact retirement credit.

Branch 2184 Official Election Results

Canton Steward Election (Elect 1)

Lori Boljesic	10
Ramon Robinson	15

-- *David Reise*

Branch 2184

Election Committee Chairperson

The Weingarten Declaration

"If the discussion I am being asked to enter could in any way lead to my discipline or termination or impact my personal working conditions, I ask that a union steward, representative or officer be present. Unless I have representation I respectfully choose not to participate in this discussion."

Keep in mind if you do not **REQUEST UNION REPRESENTATION**, then you are considered to have waived this valuable right.

Letter Carrier Political Fund Contributors

Belleville

- ✓ Gregory Bodziak
- ✓ Orlando Allen
- ✓ Bruce Prevost
- ✓ Lynn Taylor (R)
- ✓ Cindy Trzeciak (R)

Dearborn Main

- ✓ James Bryant
- ✓ Darryl Clay
- ✓ Symone Coleman
- ✓ Wanda Ellison
- ✓ Lisa Franklin
- ✓ Yvonne Jackson
- ✓ Patricia MacDonald
- ✓ Robert Panchenko (R)
 - ✓ Dan Smith (R)
 - ✓ Ed Waldon
 - ✓ Tammy Wheeler
- ✓ Leonard Zawisa (R)
- ✓ Margaret Zywicki (R)

Dearborn Annex

- ✓ Timothy Bailey
- ✓ Mark Cornett
- ✓ Sherry Garcia
- ✓ Joe Garcia
- ✓ Mark Judd
- ✓ Thomas Klecha
- Joanne Kuzala (R)
- ✓ Roderick Leental (R)
- ✓ Melvin MacDonald
- William Mather (R)
- ✓ Jackie McGregory
- ✓ Rosemary Miller
 - ✓ Ted Nowc
- ✓ Karen Regentik (R)
- Brian Rodden (R)
 - ✓ Darren Smith
 - ✓ Jerry Taylor
- ✓ Cathy Tondreau (R)

- ✓ Steven White

Dearborn Heights

- ✓ Jerry Holowka (R)
- ✓ Ian Mair (R)
- James Powell (R)
- ✓ Scott Russell
- ✓ Alan Swintek
- ✓ Christopher Tostige
- ✓ Denise Viola
- ✓ James Wolstencroft

Dundee

- ✓ Jerome Mannlein (R)

Flat Rock

- ✓ Lillian Bogosian
- ✓ Larysa, Larson

Grosse Isle

- ✓ Christopher Biegalski
- ✓ Kimberly Bumbul
- ✓ Mary Renaud
- ✓ Gloria Warthen

Inkster

- Phil Ashford
- ✓ Robert Clark
- ✓ Thad Dillard
- ✓ Scherrie Lacey

Lincoln Park

- ✓ Thelma Balogh (R)
- Rodney Bonner
- ✓ Laura Fitzgerald
- Gary Gore (R)
- Jennifer Green
- ✓ Paula Hall
- ✓ Ronald Hausch (R)
- Patricia Manning (R)
- Timothy Manning (R)
- William Mason (R)
- Donald Massey
- ✓ Nicole Pace

- ✓ Karen Purvis

- ✓ David Reise
- ✓ Barbara Scaggs (R)
- ✓ Scott Watts

Monroe

- ✓ Jacqueline Belman
- ✓ Chris Carmon
- ✓ Joanna MacKinnon
- ✓ Kenneth Masserant (R)
 - ✓ Erik Venzke

Northville

- ✓ Keshya Boudreaux
- ✓ Elizabeth Bays
- ✓ Janice Mitchum
- ✓ Valerie Watkins

Plymouth

- ✓ James Crossey (R)
- ✓ Mary Ferrari (R)
- ✓ Tiffani Howell (R)
- ✓ Patricia Linna (R)
 - ✓ Gary Macioce
 - ✓ Kristie Nelson
 - ✓ Ricky Rosales

Taylor

- ✓ Keith Benedict
 - ✓ Patricia Davis (R)
 - Dawn Gable
 - ✓ Roger Gilliam
 - ✓ James Kelly (R)
 - ✓ Walter Modelski (R)
 - ✓ Bob Parisi
 - ✓ Ryan Judd
 - ✓ Bob Sedore (R)
 - ✓ Irene Sly (R)
 - ✓ Michele Szafran
 - ✓ Darius Williams
 - Jeanie Youtsey (R)
- ## Temperance
- ✓ Kari McLachlin

Trenton

- ✓ Anthony Conley
- ✓ Dwayne Conley
- ✓ Gwen Heffinger (R)
 - ✓ Tracy Mitchell
- ✓ Casey Pennington

Westland

- ✓ Arnita Adams
- ✓ Bertha Battista
- ✓ Felicia Davis
- ✓ Albert Gilliespie
- ✓ Cynthia Harris
- Katrina Jones
- David Marshall (R)
- ✓ Walter McGregory
 - ✓ Ladonna Miller
 - ✓ Vina Stacy
- ✓ Nakia Whitfield

Canton

- ✓ Lori Boljesic
- ✓ Joe Golonka (R)
- ✓ Bonnie Price (R)
- ✓ Tyler Haverstick
- ✓ Ramon Robinson

Ypsilanti

- ✓ Paul Bordine
- ✓ Timothy Bowsher (R)
 - ✓ Alan Grajczyk
 - ✓ Stevi Hall
- ✓ Giovanna Jordan
- ✓ Tanisha Payne
- ✓ Richard Rider
- ✓ Larry Rowland (R)
- ✓ Randall Sano (R)
 - ✓ Danita Smith
- ✓ Michael Tredway
- ✓ Ricco Wilson

Protect your job "Give to the Letter Carrier
Political Fund today!"
Call 313-295-1640

- ✓ Check mark indicates you are signed up for automatic contributions.
- R - Indicates retired members.

GIMME 5

Attend Your Branch Meetings

Branch Meetings

1st Wednesday of the month
7:30 pm @ Union Hall

Retirees Meetings

2nd Wednesday of the month
12:30 pm @ Union Hall

Branch Uniform Bank Now Open!

As our new CCA Brothers and Sisters join us as new members, Branch 2184 is asking our retired and active carriers to donate new or used uniforms that they no longer need. If you would like to donate please bring them to the Branch office or give them to your Steward to drop off.

Thank you to **Kena Kendrick** (Dearborn Heights), **Mary Bommarito** (Westland Retired), **Robert Crandall** (Westland Retired), and **Gerald Skocen** (Dearborn Annex) for their donations.

Lets make our new members feel welcome.

For more information call
313-295-1640

Allie Brothers Uniform Store

"Family Owned and Operated"

- ◆ Complete inventory of postal uniforms and shoes
- ◆ Friendly, expert service
- ◆ Tailor on premises
- ◆ Open Thursday until 8:00 p.m.

HOURS	
M, T, W, F	9:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Thursday	9:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Saturday	9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

◆ **WE GUARANTEE YOUR SATISFACTION**

1-248-477-4434 • 1-800-35-ALLIE

20295 MIDDLEBELT ROAD LIVONIA, MI 48152
(3 blocks south of 8 mile)
www.alliebrothers.com

Food Drive 2018

The 26th Annual NALC Food Drive is fast approaching. We are still looking for food drive coordinators in some of the offices. If you are interested in being a coordinator, contact your Steward or the Branch (phone # 313-295-1640) to see if a coordinator is still needed for your office. Last year, Branch 2184 collected 310,081 pounds of food from our 19 offices. According to NALC headquarters, last year the food drive collected over 75 million pounds. We would like to surpass that this year, there is still a great necessity for this type of assistance for people in need. We know that letter carriers are up for the challenge; we know we can count on the letter carriers, rural carriers and the clerks to help out with this effort. If you would like to volunteer to help with the food drive, contact your stewards to find out who your coordinator is in your office to offer your help with the food drive this year. We would like to thank you in advance for all your help in the 26th Annual Food Drive held on May 12, 2018.

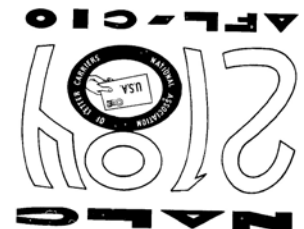
-- *Jacqueline McGregory and Cathy Tondreau*
Branch Food Drive Coordinators



SAT., MAY 12, 2018

PUT YOUR NON-PERISHABLE DONATION IN A BAG BY YOUR MAILBOX.
 WE'LL DELIVER IT TO A LOCAL FOOD BANK.

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