



Branch 2184 ... "Speaks"

Official Publication of Branch 2184, NALC, AFL-CIO

January/February 2019

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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:

February 6th, 2019

March 6th, 2019

(7:30 p.m. - Union Hall)

Retirees Meetings:

February 13th, 2019

March 13th, 2019

(12:30 p.m. - Union Hall)

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President's Report

Happy New Year!

The new year is off to a faster than normal start here at the Branch. On January 3rd Executive Vice President Walter McGregory, Vice President Joe Golonka and I were invited to attend Allen Park Branch 4779's Branch meeting. The purpose of which was to make a presentation on behalf of a merger between Branch 2184 and Branch 4779. When their meeting was finished I was informed by Allen Park Branch President Kris Shaw and Vice President Mark Owen that their membership had passed a motion, setting up a merger vote for Allen Park at their February 7th meeting. In accordance with the NALC National constitution each Branch involved in a merger vote must give their members at least 30 days' notice. In this edition of the "Speaks" you will find the meeting notice for the proposed vote along with the proposed merger agreement language. The vote to merge with Branch 4779 will be held on Wednesday March 6, 2019 at our regularly scheduled Branch meeting.

120 plus Years and Counting!

On December 7th, EVP Walt McGregory and I paid a visit to 70 year member Bill Bauman and his wife Peggy Bauman 52 year life member both from the Plymouth Installation. After we presented Bill with his plaque and letter from President Rolando we were able to have a visit and talk about their days of carrying mail. They both had some great stories to tell and we very much enjoyed visiting with them. Before leaving Peggy had a surprise gift for us to take back and to keep with our Branch archives. It was her original mint condition Letter Carrier issued winter coat from the 1970s, with all the trimmings including the matching hood and brass buttons. On behalf of the Branch I would like to congratulate them both for their many years of dedicated loyal membership to the NALC and Branch 2184.

-- *Mark Judd*
President

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
Injury Compensation	Michele Szafran
Web Page Design	Jim Hales

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	Jacqueline DeWaele
Flat Rock.....	Lillian Bogosian
Grosse Ile	Christopher Biegalski
.....	Kim Bumbul (alt)
.....	Gloria Warthen (alt)
Inkster.....	Phil Ashford
.....	Thad Dillard (alt)
.....	Scherrie Lacey (alt)
.....	Robert Clark (alt)
Lincoln Park.....	Scott Watts
.....	Dave Reise (alt)
Monroe	Erik Venzke
.....	Jacqueline DeWaele
.....	Joshua Nagy (alt)
Northville	Valerie Watkins
.....	Beth Bays (alt)
.....	Jennifer Rake (alt)
Plymouth	Tamara Bosman
.....	Diego Forshaw
.....	Kristie Nelson (alt)
Rockwood	Gloria Warthen
Taylor	Michele Szafran
.....	Scott Horn
Temperance.....	Jackie DeWaele
Trenton	Tracy Mitchell
Westland.....	Walter McGregory
.....	Felicia Davis
.....	Nakia Whitfield
.....	Katrina Jones (alt)
.....	Vina Stacy (alt)
.....	Tyler Haverstick (alt)
Canton	Ramon Robinson
.....	Lois Fritz (alt)
.....	John Hite
Ypsilanti	Paul Bordine
.....	Danita Smith
.....	Alan Grajczyk (alt)
.....	Rick Rider (alt)



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.

EVP's Report

Military Service/Annual Leave

I have received multiple calls at the union hall with carriers asking "does my military service get me additional hours of annual leave?" The Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM) 512.23 outlines what types of active military service is counted towards crediting carriers in which Leave Category:

1. Periods of active service terminated by honorable discharge or transfer to inactive reserves under honorable conditions. Active service may be in the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, and/or Coast Guard and their respective academies.
2. Service performed by employees who are members of the National Guard Service or Air National Guard Service only during periods of active duty with the U.S. Army or U.S. Air Force.
3. Service performed by Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps students during periods of active duty or training duty as members of the Naval or Marine Corps Reserve.

Career carriers with less than 3 years of creditable service earn 4 hours a pay period (two weeks at forty hours each). Career carriers with 3 years of creditable service but less than 15 years of service earn 6 hours a pay period. Career carriers with 15 years or more of creditable service earn 8 hours a pay period for annual leave purposes. For any other questions or concerns relating to annual leave, please see your steward or call the union hall for assistance.

Partial Government Shutdown

The branch has received numerous calls from carriers wanting to know if they were going to be paid because of the government partial shutdown. The answer is yes. The postal service is a self-funded part of the government. The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage stamps, products and

services to fund all of its operational cost.

For those CSRS and FERS retirees that may be wondering if they will still receive their annuity payments during the shutdown, the answer is yes, federal retirees under the CSRS and FERS retirement systems will still receive their scheduled annuity payments on the first business day of each month.

Safety

As the weather has changed from fall to winter, active carriers please make sure that you are dressing in layers to combat the harsh Michigan winters. Although we had a mild December with little to no snow, Michigan winters can be very brutal on letter carriers. Make sure you are utilizing the PS 3996, auxiliary assistance form to let your supervisor know that you expect that your route may take you longer than normal because of the weather conditions. We want you to go home to your loved ones the same way you came to work, SAFE! Make sure you are wearing proper winter gear from head to toes to avoid possible frostbite. Safety is all of our responsibilities!

LCPF

With the current administration and its allies still controlling the White House and the Senate, active and retired letter carriers all need to be contributing to our Letter Carrier political Fund (LCPF). It doesn't matter what political party you support; LCPF dollars only go to politicians in Congress that support letter carrier issues. Over the years, the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) has fought to fend off attacks in Congress that threaten letter carriers' collective bargaining rights, retirement benefits and livelihood. We have been successful thus far, but we can't get complacent. We must each continue to get the word out that there are politicians that would like to see us all in the Postal Service privatized without our collective bargaining rights.

Right now, our branch has a little over 12.49 percent of our total members contributing to LCPF.

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That is very low in a Branch with 1300 plus members. We can do better than that collectively. I challenge each member within our branch to talk to one co-worker about signing up for LCPF. If you are already signed up, you can increase your current contribution. If each member just got one person to sign up for LCPF, we could not only be at 100 percent, but we would most importantly doing our part to help our National Officers help secure what we have worked so hard for all these years.

Just like your homes, apartments, vehicles and things that are of value to you and your family, LCPF is like job insurance for our jobs. Call the Branch 2184 office at 313 295 1640 and a branch officer will be more than happy to assist you with signing up or increasing your LCPF contribution.

Always Grieve Discipline

I see time and time again in so many offices that I enforce our contract in where a letter carrier just settles for discipline that they have received from management and never informs their steward or the union hall. This is very dangerous and could cost you your job in the future if you receive discipline and don't grieve it. I find out about previous letters of warnings and 7 day suspensions that were never grieved by carriers when they receive removals and the past discipline is cited within the body of the removal notice.

Whether you are right or wrong about whatever you are charged with, always inform management after receiving that piece of discipline that you want to exercise your right to challenge it through the grievance procedure. Whether it is a letter of warning, 7 Day No Time Off (NTO) Suspension, 14 Day NTO Suspension or a removal notice, management has certain provisions that they must adhere to prior to issuing discipline. More times than not, management rushes to issue discipline and skips over mandatory things they must do prior to issuing that discipline. Then the union usually gets that discipline modified or in some instances, thrown out

entirely at some level of the grievance arbitration procedure.

As a member of Branch 2184, you have stewards and officers that have second to none contract enforcement training and will assist you with your discipline whether you are right or wrong, always grieve it!

In unionism,

-- *Walt McGregory*

Executive Vice President

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.

Call 313-295-1640

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 **Carmen Proffitt** (Northville), **Diego Forshaw** (Plymouth), **Lazandria Grimes** (Dearborn Main), **Keith Kelly** (Taylor), **Cheryl Randles** (Westland retired), **Brian Kalte** (Temperance retired), **Kuruvilla Thomas** (Dearborn Main retired), **John Dainus** (Dearborn Annex), **Michael Golles** (Dearborn Annex retired) for their donations.

CCAs please call prior to coming in so that we can make sure someone is available to assist you.

Lets make our new members feel welcome.

For more information call

313-295-1640

Branch Merger Notification

ATTENTION: BRANCH 2184 MEMBERS

In accordance with Article 2, section 3 of the NALC Constitution, the following motion will be presented at the regular Branch 2184 membership meeting, to be held at the Branch 2184 office on Wednesday, March 6, 2019 at 7:30 p.m.

A motion for the merger of Branch 2184 NALC, AFL-CIO and Branch 4779 NALC, AFL-CIO, subject to the following listed terms and conditions:

- 1) Upon a majority affirmative vote for merger by the membership of Branch 2184 NALC, AFL-CIO and the membership of Branch 4779 NALC, AFL-CIO, and the subsequent effecting of this merger, it will be final and binding upon all members of both Branches.
- 2) The merged Branch shall be henceforth be known as Branch 2184 NALC, AFL-CIO.
- 3) The existing Bylaws and dues structure of Branch 2184 NALC, AFL-CIO will remain in effect for all members of the merged Branch. The elected officers of the merged Branch will be the officers of Branch 2184, NALC, AFL-CIO at the time of the merger. All assets of Branch 4779 NALC, AFL-CIO will be absorbed by Branch 2184 NALC, AFL-CIO at the effective date of merger. All existing liabilities of Branch 4779 NALC, AFL-CIO will be satisfied to the extent possible prior to the effective date of merger.
- 4) A majority affirmative vote of all regular members in good standing of Branch 2184 NALC AFL-CIO and all regular members in good standing of Branch 4779 NALC AFL-CIO present and voting at regular meetings or special meetings called for this purpose shall be necessary to authorize an application for this merger.

VP's Report

Just Give Us Some Truth

"All I want is the truth; just give me some truth..."

(John Lennon)

The United States Postal Service begins a new calendar year still dealing with most of its perennial problems, some generated by outside adversaries and some self-inflicted. Among those that are self-inflicted there is none more glaring and problematic than its near absence of competent leadership. Perhaps such is inevitable in an organization that is so bloated with endless layers of useless management personnel. However, for letter carriers that do the actual work of the Postal Service, it is yet another unnecessary impediment to their daily mission.

During more recent years a culture of arrogant ineptitude has thoroughly infested the organization at the work floor level. Although supervisory incompetence has always existed to some extent in the Postal Service just as it does elsewhere, it has of late become so widespread as to completely transform some post office stations into daily circuses.

Central to this culture of ineptitude is a near total absence of knowledge on the part of far too many postal management types about the letter carrier job itself, along with its work rules and procedures. CCAs are recruited into 204b positions without ever having actually learned the job, much less anything about its work rules and contractual requirements. The so-called "training" of new carrier supervisors is all but devoid of information about the job itself, instead focusing on numbers-driven and badly outdated tactics of micromanagement and intimidation.

The recent "Day of Observance" following the death of former President George H.W. Bush revealed just how comically inept local management has become with established work rules and procedures. Management in many Branch-2184 stations stumbled all over itself with misdirected responses and blatant misinformation, going so far in at least three of our stations as foolishly attempting to create

a "holiday schedule" for the proceeding day.

The sad reality of this all is that letter carriers cannot and should not ever rely on postal management for contractually accurate and truthful information about anything that is work-related. In most instances management representatives simply don't know what they are talking about – and they don't care.

In fairness, it should also be noted that some misguided letter carriers are also responsible for the spread of false information – either by repeating bad information they received from management or by simply guessing or making up their own Contractual and work rule misinformation. However, all of this can be overcome, and quite easily.

Shutting Down the Disinformation Machine

A personal practice of always questioning the answers – ALL of the answers, is first and foremost of great value with everything in life both inside and outside of work. Healthy skepticism and its companion virtue of critical thinking are the perfect antidotes to misinformation, whether it is willful in nature or the product of ignorance. Always demand factual and evidence-based support in response to anything that you are told, no matter what the source. Follow the facts and evidence wherever they lead, even if this challenges long-held beliefs. A lot of myth and misinformation persists in the Postal Service simply because erroneous beliefs have not been challenged.

Fortunately in the Postal Service, factual and well documented information can be quickly ascertained in response to any workplace issue or question. The source of this reliable and easily obtainable information is unfailingly your Union. Your NALC stewards and Branch 2184 officers are at the forefront of this unending effort to provide fact-based and accurate workplace information. Given the time, I along with other Branch 2184 officers and stewards would sit down with every member of this Branch for as long as it takes to answer every question and to provide every bit of necessary informa-

tion to counteract management's endless disinformation machine.

However, there is a faster and much more efficient way to do this. Comprehensive resources are immediately available 24/7 to every NALC member. These are vast in scope and go far beyond the presence of union officials at the branch, regional, and national levels. Available resources for Branch 2184 members include, but are not limited to the NALC App, the National Union's website (NALC.org), our Branch 2184 website (NALC2184.org), the *Postal Record* monthly magazine, and this publication. Collectively, these provide the information and answers to every possible Contractual, work rule, and postal-related question.

The postal management disinformation machine is thus easily defeated in the same manner that all sources of false and misleading information are defeated – by truth that is itself obtained through verifiable facts and evidence. An informed and professional letter carrier is forever management's greatest nightmare.

Replacing a Failed Postal Management Model

Only when (and if) the Postal Service entirely revamps its archaic and badly failed management model that seeks out and promotes incompetent and unqualified individuals into supervisory and management positions, can true leaders actually emerge. Only when knowledgeable supervisors and managers are effectively trained in cooperation, teamwork, and respectful interaction with others instead of engaging in ridiculous levels of micromanagement and intimidation can the dysfunctional postal workplace environment evolve into a professional delivery service.

The amazing work of United States Postal Service craft employees and especially letter carriers is the **ONLY** reason that the USPS survives. In its present form, the Postal Service and its craft employees would be much better served if most of its management just shut up and got out of the way.

-- Joe Golonka
Vice President

MDA REPORT

What does MDA stand for? (Muscular Dystrophy Association) When the freedom to walk, to talk, to run and play, to laugh, to hug, to eat and to breathe is taken away from kids and adults with muscular dystrophy, ALS and related diseases that weaken muscle strength and limit mobility.

What is our donation used for? Our donation is used to help fund research and services to help kids and adults with muscular dystrophy live longer and grow stronger.

With that being said:

Thanks for another great year! We set a new record for money raised for MDA. In 2018, Branch 2184 raised a total of \$12,082.17 beating our 2017 total of \$12,009.53. There are a few planned MDA events for 2019. The branch has scheduled a Bowl-a-thon, Fill the Satchel and the canister drive event, please plan on attending or volunteering to one or all of the activities planned this year for MDA. Our next scheduled MDA event will be our Bowl-a-thon in April, so bring your team and join in the fun for our annual Bowling Battle of the Branches! There will be prizes for our top individual fundraisers, remember it's not your bowling score that counts – it's the amount of money raised through donations and pledges that determine the winner. Thanks in advance and see at the Bowl-a-thon.

THANK YOU FROM THE GOODFELLOWS

The Goodfellows organizations that the branch gave ten \$100.00 donations to responded with a heartfelt Thank You to Branch 2184 for donating to the 2018 Christmas Campaign. Our donation has helped to provide 10 families in the communities with food and toys for the holiday and winter season.

-- Jacqueline McGregory
Recording Secretary

OWCP & ME

Letter carriers are among the most injured workers in the American workforce. The Great Lakes Area (our area) has reported the highest average accident frequency rate of all seven Postal Service areas for the past two years. Which means the chances of you being injured on-the-job or developing an injury over time due to the type of work we do are high.

What you do once you've been injured is crucial. First and foremost, **REPORT IT!** I've heard all the excuses, but the truth is, there is no excuse for not reporting an injury. It doesn't matter if you broke a nail, were stung by a bee or fell off a porch; an injury is an injury and must be reported immediately.

Dealing with OWCP (which is the Department of Labor's Office of Workers Compensation Programs) can be very difficult, especially if you've never had to deal with it before. Once management has been notified of your injury, make sure to inform your steward or contact us here at the hall. I encour-

age everyone who gets injured to have it checked out by **your doctor** (not Concentra or any other clinic utilized by the Postal Service). If you don't have a doctor, I strongly suggest you find one before you are injured and make sure they accept worker's compensation. If it's an emergency and/or your doctor isn't open, then go to the hospital (not Concentra).

Are you sensing a theme here? Not Concentra! I have had to work with many carriers who failed to request to see their own physician once they are injured. The people at the medical unit and at the Postal Service contract clinic (Concentra) are not acting in your best interest but are looking out for the interests of the Postal Service. Which usually means that they put injured carriers back to work as soon as possible regardless of the injured carriers well-being. I would only use Concentra as a last resort.

In order to get medical treatment, you must have with you a Ca-16 and Ca-17. You should have no out-of-pocket cost, and never give them your personal insurance information. The Ca-16 is the authorization to treat form. This gives your doctor a guarantee that he will be paid for all services



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Contact Your Brookfield Representative!

Denise Kreager

Retired Letter Carrier

4953 Sycamore Newport, MI 48166

313-478-5910 (voice)

rendered regarding your injury. This is like a gold card. It's good for 60 days once issued and can only be signed by a DO or MD. Check this before leaving the medical facility, because if it's signed by a PA (physician assistant) your claim will be denied.

A Ca-17 is a job duty status report (a.k.a restrictions). Management must fill out the left side before you go to the doctor, and your doctor fills out the right. If your doctor doesn't know how to fill this out, don't worry, just have him/her put your restrictions on his/her letter head and make sure they sign it.

What if the doctor prescribes you medication? Like, I said before, you should have no out-of-pocket expenses. The Postal Service has a prescription card that they can give you to cover any medication the doctor may prescribe. I recommend you get a copy of this before you get treatment just in case the doctor does write you a prescription. The prescription card is just a piece a paper with a picture of the card on it. You can use this anywhere, but I find that CVS never gives anyone any issues if you bring this into them.

There is also a letter the Postal Service has, explaining the process to medical providers. We are covered under the Federal Worker's Compensation Program and most medical providers only have experience dealing with State Worker's Compensation. We find that providers have a difficult time separating the two and the letter can help the provider understand.

If you suffered a traumatic injury, something that happened that day, you will need to fill out a Ca-1. This starts your claim and is very important. This can be filled out before or after you seek treatment. Management will try to get you to fill this out before treatment. If you can, fine; if your injury needs attention, the form can wait until after you are treated. If, for whatever reason, you choose not to get medical treatment immediately, fill out the Ca-1 that day. In the box that asks 'what happened'; write 'see attached' and write what happened, in detail, on a separate sheet of paper. Hint: writing 'on my route' for where it happened will not help you. Be specific,

for example; at 1234 Elm St. at approximately 2 pm on 12/27/18, I.....

You will also have to choose what leave to use. I recommend you check the COP (continuation of pay) box. In the event you will need time off due to your injury, the Postal Service will pay you your regular wages up to 45 calendar days. Last but not least, make copies of everything before turning it into management and place them into a folder for safe keeping.

You must turn in your initial set of paperwork into management. This should include the Ca-16, Ca-1, Ca-17 and your statement. After that, it's between you and the Department of Labor.

Just remember don't go to the doctor without a Ca-16 and Ca-17 in your hand. And ask for the prescription card and the letter from the Postal Service explaining the federal process to take also. Those two things are not crucial in getting treatment but will help.

You are not in this alone; we are here to help. Please, contact the hall if you have questions.

-- Michele Szafran

Injury Compensation Specialist

Leadership Academy

In July, 2018, I was notified that I was one of two people from our region to be selected for the NALC Leadership Academy. I attended the Academy with 29 other union activists (two from each region), where we were put through three, week-long class sessions with eight weeks in between. During the weeks between classes, we were tasked with doing a project that had to be completed before attending the next class session. Basically, it was non-stop work for a solid 5 months.

I finished all the requirements and graduated from the Academy in December. The experiences during my time at the Academy are like none other I have ever had. You entered the classroom during that first week not knowing anyone, and by the end

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of day three, it's like you're family. In reality, we are family; we are a union, and that's the biggest family you'll ever have. I've been to conventions and to trainings before, but the solidarity that you feel at the Academy is beyond anything I can describe. As union activists, we tend to build walls around us because we wear a lot of hats and we have to conduct ourselves in a way our roles need us to. The Academy addresses the many roles we have and then they break down those walls; they get to know the real you. This is the foundation of the solidarity that gets built on for the remaining weeks at the Academy.

The Academy was designed to enhance our skills. It pushes us out of our comfort zones so that we can better represent our membership. Week one focused on Unionism and the Labor Movement. If you haven't done so, I strongly recommend reading "*Carriers in a Common Cause*". This book goes back to the beginnings of the NALC and the struggles our union went through just to give us the rights and benefits we have today.

Week two focused on public speaking. Those of you that know me, know I don't have a problem with this. I did however, find it a bit uncomfortable standing up in front of our National Officers and giving a two-minute speech. Week three focused on paying it forward. The true test of a leader is not what they have done, but what they can do for their membership. I will finish out my experience during the first week of February, when I work for our National Business Agent; Troy Clark.

We had the rare opportunity of having President Rolando's undivided attention for about two hours during week two. During that time he talked about the issues currently facing the Postal Service and our union. We were encouraged to ask questions; no question was off limits. And believe me, we asked a lot of questions. I have never heard of any other union or company doing anything like that. That to me spoke volumes about the type of union we have. It shows that he is just like us; a carrier.

We all share that common bond.

I am honored by being selected to represent Region 6. I want to thank our branch officers and my mentors for encouraging me, and giving me the skills needed to attend such an elite training. I am truly thankful for being given this unique opportunity and I am ready to pay it forward to all of you; the membership.

-- Michele Szafran

Leadership Academy Class 23 — 'Rise Above'

FOOD DRIVE 2019

The 27th 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 278,200 pounds of food from our 19 offices. According to NALC Headquarters since 1992 the start of our national annual food drive, the total food collected is 1.6 billion pounds of food.

Our goal is to collect as much food as we can; 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 steward 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 27th Annual Food Drive this May 11, 2019.

-- Jacqueline McGregory

-- Cathy Tondreau

Branch Food Drive Coordinators

**OUR ADVERTISERS ARE YOUR
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IN OUR NEWSLETTER.**

Contract Corner:

Q: I called in sick for one day and was told that I had to provide medical documentation of my absence. Does management have the right to do this?

A: The short answer is yes, management "can" request documentation for a single day absence. **However, there is much more to consider with this issue, and as is usually the case, the devil is in the details.** The Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM) section 513.361 states, in part: "For periods of absence of 3 days or less, supervisors may accept the employee's statement explaining the absence. Medical documentation or other acceptable evidence of incapacity for work or need to care for a family member is required only when the employee is on restricted sick leave or when the supervisor deems documentation desirable for the protection of the interests of the Postal Service."

This language simply means that normally an employee sick leave absence of 3 scheduled workdays or less does NOT require documentation. However, the last portion of that language allows for two exceptions. "Restricted Sick Leave" is an administrative action that management can take under the provisions of the ELM 513.391. However, to legitimately place an employee on restricted sick leave, management must first follow a sequence of attendance reviews and discussions that takes at least 9 months to complete. So instead, management typically relies on the "or when the supervisor deems documentation desirable for the protection of the interests of the Postal Service" language.

This is precisely what management's internal "deems desirable" program was created to do, and is why they can request documentation even of a single-day absence. The real purpose of such demands is to retaliate against an already ill employee by inconveniencing them to the extent possible, with the not so subtle intent of trying to get them to come into work anyway.

So what should a letter carrier in this situation do? If notified by management that you have been placed on a "deems desirable" list," merely respond that you intend to initiate a grievance anytime that you are required to provide documentation of a sick leave absence of 3 work days or less. Then follow

up, the first time and every time. **The most effective response to arbitrary medical documentation demands to consistently make management pay for deliberately inconveniencing you while you or a family member is ill.**

Customary grievance remedy in such situations is for payment for any out-of-pocket expenses incurred by complying with the documentation demand, such as copays and mileage. Other form(s) of remedy might also be appropriate. Additionally, grievance processing and grievance meeting time also costs management work hours and expenses. In summary, management "can" require documentation of a short term absence. However, there is plenty that you can do and should do about it in response.

Q: There are Documents in my Personnel Folder (eOPF) that should not be there. How do I get them removed?

A: The Official Personnel Folder, or OPF, documents the employment history of individuals employed by the federal government. An OPF is established and maintained for each Postal Service employee regardless of appointment type or duration. In 2008, the Postal Service converted all Official Personnel Folders for active employees from paper to electronic Official personnel Folders (eOPF). A Postal Service employee's eOPF can only be accessed by the employee (from LiteBlue with your Employee Identification Number and PIN) and by certain Postal Service administrative personnel in the performance of their duties.

To add or remove documents from your eOPF, a request is made in writing on PS Form 8043. The PS 8043 is readily accessible online, including fillable, printable versions. To add documents (for example a DD 214 for military service), they should be attached to the PS 8043 and the request mailed or delivered to the USPS district personnel (HR) office. To remove documents, the PS 8043 should specify exactly which document(s) you want removed, and the form should then be mailed or delivered to the USPS district personnel (HR) office. Of note, if mailing a PS 8043 to the USPS personnel office, al-

ways make copies of everything before mailing it and request delivery confirmation or other proof of delivery.

By far the most common reason for requesting the removal of documents from an employee's eOPF is because of expunged or expired disciplinary actions. A letter carrier should never expect that management will do this on their own, even when a grievance decision or other reason warrants the removal of the disciplinary action from the eOPF. Because discipline can only be removed from an employee's eOPF in accordance with Collective Bargaining Agreements (specifically, Article 15 of the Contract and our negotiated grievance procedure), it is essential that EVERY letter carrier routinely monitor their eOPF and scrutinize its contents carefully. Notify your steward immediately if management fails or refuses to remove disciplinary actions as required from your eOPF after being requested to do so by use of the PS 8043.

Q: How Does the Leave Sharing Program work?

A: The Postal Service has negotiated a Leave Sharing program with its unions under which career postal employees are able to donate annual leave from their earned annual leave account to another career postal employee, within the same geographic area serviced by a postal district. In addition, career postal employees may donate annual leave to other family members that are career postal employees without restriction as to geographic location. Eligible family members include son or daughter, parent, and spouse as defined in Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM) Section 515.2.

To be eligible to receive donated leave, a career employee (a) must be incapacitated for available postal duties due to serious personal health conditions or pregnancy and (b) must be known or expected to miss at least 40 more hours from work than his or her own annual leave and/or sick leave balance (s), as applicable, will cover, and (c) must have his or her absence approved pursuant to standard attendance policies. Donated leave may be used to cover the 40 hours of leave without pay (LWOP) required

to be eligible for leave sharing.

Single donations must be of 8 or more whole hours and may not exceed half of the amount of annual leave earned each year based on the leave earnings category of the donor at the time of donation. Sick leave, unearned annual leave, and annual leave hours subject to forfeiture (leave in excess of the maximum carryover - 440 hours, which the employee would not be permitted to use before the end of the leave year), may not be donated. Employees may not donate leave to their immediate supervisors.

For purposes other than pay and legally required payroll deductions, employees using donated leave will be subject to regulations applicable to employees in LWOP status and will not earn any type of leave while using donated leave. Donated leave may be carried over from one leave year to the next without limitation. Donated leave not actually used remains in the recipient's account (i.e., is not restored to donors). Such residual donated leave at any time may be applied against negative leave balances caused by medical issues. At separation, any remaining donated leave balance will be paid in a lump sum.

Branch 2184 Web Site

www.nalc2184.org

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

Steward Resources:

Grievance Forms
 Grievance Guidelines
 Grievance Issue Statements

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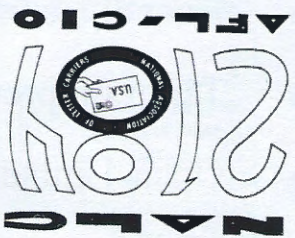
Branch President Mark Judd presenting Bill Bauman with his 70 year plaque and letter from NALC President Rolando.

Mark with Peggy Bauman (life member 52 years) and her husband Bill. Both from the Plymouth Post Office.



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