



# Branch 2184 ... "Speaks"

Official Publication of Branch 2184, NALC, AFL-CIO

January/February 2007

**Branch 2184**  
**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:**  
**March 7, 2007**  
**April 4, 2007**  
**7:30 p.m. - Union Hall**

**Retirees Meetings:**  
**March 14, 2007**  
**April 11, 2007**  
**12:30 p.m. - Union Hall**

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## President's Report

Under a banner proclaiming Job Security Now! NALC President William Young opened our biennial National RAP session. This year's session was held in Los Angeles on January 28, 2007. The theme and prevailing topic of the RAP session was Job Security and an overview of our contract negotiations with the USPS. Over 1500 Letter Carriers from across the country attended the emergency RAP session called by President Young, including four officers from our Branch, they are EVP Jim Wolstencroft, Secretary Cindy Trzeciak, Financial Secretary Treasurer Cathy Tondreau and myself. We listened as our National President outlined the negotiations that took place with our employer and the groundbreaking proposal laid out by the NALC.

Young went on to outline the concerns both parties had to the contract proposal from the NALC. The linchpin to agreeing to a negotiated contract is Job Security. Young went on to say that Job Security is the Holy Grail of every Union in the country. President Young told those in attendance that both parties during the late stages of negotiations appeared in agreement on virtually the entire contract, but the impasse occurred once postal management presented it to the USPS Board of Governors. The USPS was not willing to budge on the major issue of contracting out city letter carrier work. Critical to any agreement being reached would have been a ban or guarantee that City Letter Carrier work and territory would not be contracted out. Unfortunately those in charge of the USPS were unable to make that commitment which prevented the parties from coming to an agreement. Securing the future of letter carriers is what led the NALC to offer the far-reaching contract proposal. Young felt that the proposal submitted would have been a win – win for both sides. While the formal bargaining portion of our contract negotiations is over President Young did say that our final proposal was still on the table and also revealed that both sides were still communicating to ensure that

*(Continued on page 3)*

**Officers**

President.....	Mark Judd
Executive Vice President .....	Jim Wolstencroft
Vice President .....	Carol Clark
Recording Secretary.....	Cindy Trzeciak
Financial Secretary Treasurer .....	Cathy Tondreau
Sergeant at Arms.....	Walt Gregory
Health Benefits Representative.....	Jim Powell
Retirees Officer.....	Leonard Zawisa
Trustee .....	Casey Pennington
Trustee .....	Patricia Linna
Trustee .....	Gloria Warthen
Editor .....	Leonard Zawisa

**Stewards**

Belleville.....	Cindy Trzeciak
.....	Bruce Prevost (alt)
Dearborn Main .....	Cathy Tondreau
.....	Darryl Clay
.....	Ed Williams (alt)
.....	Nikki Passage (alt)
Dearborn Annex.....	Melvin MacDonald
.....	Darrin Mifsud
.....	Tom Klecha (alt)
Teleford.....	John Czuchrak
Dearborn Heights .....	Linda Pollack
.....	Jim Hales
.....	Greg Silvestri (alt)
.....	Ian Mair (Alt)
Flat Rock.....	Gloria Warthen
Grosse Ile .....	313-295-1640
Inkster .....	Bryon Hendricks
Lincoln Park.....	Dave Reise
Monroe.....	Chad Zion
.....	Chris Carmon
.....	Eric Venzke
Northville.....	Carol Clark
.....	Elizabeth Maliszewski (alt)
Plymouth .....	Don Oziemski
.....	Paul Pastula
.....	Bob Venning (alt)
.....	Heather Smallwood (alt)
.....	Ricky Rosales (alt)
.....	Patricia Linna (alt)
Rockwood .....	Gloria Warthen
Taylor.....	Carol Clark
.....	Andrea Smith
.....	Bob Parisi
Temperance.....	Kari Guthrie
Trenton.....	Casey Pennington
.....	Gwen Heffinger
Wayne .....	Walter Gregory
Westland.....	Ted Gagnon
.....	Joan Hicks
.....	Aaronette Howell
.....	Raymond Tobin (alt)
WW - Canton .....	Sue Broge
.....	Dianne Daley
.....	Kathy Hayes (alt)
Ypsilanti.....	Brian Mueller
.....	Alan Grajczyk
.....	Jim Riddle (alt)
.....	Scott Hurd (alt)



*Branch 2184 Speaks* is published 6 to 10 times a year by Branch 2184, National Association of Letter Carriers, AFL-CIO.

The opinions expressed in this publication, January/February 2007, 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.

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*(Continued from page 1)**President's Report*

every avenue was explored before taking the next step.

If there is no agreement between the parties the next step would be a continuation of negotiations under the supervision of a federal mediator. This is a new step in our binding arbitration process as a result of the recently passed postal reform legislation. The Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service would appoint the mediator. If an agreement still cannot be reached after this point the final step is a referral of the impasse to an interest arbitration panel.

While Young continued to hold out hope a deal still could be arrived at, he also went on to assure us that he was fully prepared to take the contract to arbitration. Young outlined a plan for legislative action to prohibit the Postal Service from contracting out our jobs. Young has already met with House and Senate leaders who support our position as well as finding allies among the major mailers who realize that it is in their best interests and that of the USPS to have a full time professional work force delivering for America.

### **Article 32 Subcontracting**

- A. The Employer will give due consideration to public interest, cost, efficiency, availability of equipment, and qualification of employees when evaluating the needs to subcontract.

This is the key wording from our National Agreement that has both sides involved in this contractual standoff. For years our Branch has filed grievances over the issue of Highway Contract Routes or HCRs. These grievances have been held in arbitral limbo while the National parties tried to determine what it would exactly mean for our futures. At the RAP session we heard from our National leaders as well as Branch presidents about the new wave of contracting out that is now hitting fast growing communities in California, Nevada,

and Florida. The only difference that exists between our old Highway Contract problem is the name. They are now called Contract Delivery Services or CDS for short.

The impact of these new CDS routes and the impact they could have on the Letter Carrier craft are now only beginning to be felt by the rest of the Branches across the country just as the old HCRs impacted carriers in Michigan. If left unchecked and ignored the Board of Governors and the bean counters at L' Enfant Plaza would have a field day. It would mean the loss of carrier jobs across the country; it would mean low wage, low skilled contractors who do not know the meaning of customer service or professionalism. It could and would spell the end of the Postal Service as we know it. Many at the RAP session speculated that this was the game plan hatched all along by the Board of Governors. That widespread contracting out was only thwarted because of the gains in Congress that labor organizations made during the last round of national elections. Just think what the outcome could have been. One needs only to look at the insulting contract counterproposal that the USPS made. Where is this all leading up to? As mentioned by President Young if we cannot get the USPS to agree to stop contracting out carrier craft work we must pursue the only avenue that is left which is asking for help from our newly elected worker-friendly Congress. But beware no matter what occurs in the Congress we still face the real possibility that the President who appointed this Board of Governors could turn around and veto any plan to stop the contracting out of the City Letter Carrier jobs.

While we have assurances from our friends in Congress that they will support our cause, the fight we are about to embark on could make the recently passed Postal Reform look like a cakewalk. If the Board of Governors is truly determined to allow the wide scale of contracting out carrier craft work we will have to be prepared to

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*(Continued from page 3)**President's Report*

lobby and fight like we have never before. While the task may seem daunting we only have to look back to what we were able to accomplish in the last national elections. Everyone was writing off labor as a thing of the past. President Bush refused to even meet with the President of the AFL-CIO, becoming the first President in modern history to snub the largest labor organization in the country. The respect that we earned from our activism was clear at the installation of our national officers when AFL-CIO leader President John Sweeney praised the help and efforts the NALC made during the last election. Recently President Young and the State chairs from across the country lobbied Capitol Hill making sure that members of Congress knew of the fight for survival we were now in. These dedicated Unionists made sure that the worker-friendly Congress that we helped elect was aware of the USPS plan to outsource our work. The feedback was positive from our friends in Congress but the battle lines have been drawn. Do we wish to fight for our middle class jobs and pensions or will we let the robber Barons on the Board of Governors continue on their nefarious course of gutting the US Postal Service? If the answer is yes, (and why wouldn't it be) then we must resolve to do everything in our power to succeed.

Recently we received notice that our contributions as a Branch to COLCPE have more than doubled since 2005. While doubling our COLCPE contributions is highly commendable, the printout also showed less than 10% of our active and retired members are making a contribution to COLCPE. Maybe we as Branch leaders need to do a better job of explaining the necessity of these funds. They are only used to elect worker friendly candidates, and that we as a labor organization are constrained from using your Union dues to lobby on your behalf. Surely we must all realize the threat we face as an organization now? This month in our Branch newsletter we will list those who have contributed

to COLCPE in 2006. The question we now ask is how many more of our brothers and sisters will join in the fight with us to protect our jobs, our pensions, and our way of lives by writing out a check to COLCPE or by joining on line for direct deposit. A good first start in the upcoming legislative battle would be for all carriers to enroll for a payroll deduction for COLCPE. The proposition does not get much clearer, we either choose to fight or we will cease to exist. The choice is an easy one, mail your checks made out to COLCPE to the Branch office and our retiree's officer will forward them, show up at a Branch meeting and we will have our COLCPE director Walt McGregory assist you in signing up, bring in a voided check and Walt will ensure that your contribution is withdrawn monthly from your checking account. And do not forget to join up as an e-Activist and volunteer to help in the next elections. Hopefully more than 10% of our members believe that our jobs are worth fighting for. The choice is now yours.

"The proposal delivers an all-regular workforce with weekends off as well as a significant reduction in the level of forced overtime. For the Postal Service, the proposal offers savings in the billions from reduced overtime and benefit costs in the future. However, it was offered only on the

*(Continued on page 5)*

## Calendar of Upcoming Branch Events 2007

Steward Meeting .....	March 13th at 7:30pm
Steward Meeting .....	March 19th at 7:30pm
Executive Board Meeting ...	March 26th at 7:30pm
Steward Meeting.....	April 17th at 7:30pm
Steward Meeting.....	April 23rd at 7:30pm
Executive Board Meeting .....	April 30th at 7:30pm
State Convention .....	May 18th - 19th

*(Continued from page 3)**President's Report*

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*(Continued from page 4)**President's Report*

condition that the USPS give us new protections against contracting out and that it share its financial savings in the form of higher general wage increases" – President Young

Here are the key elements of NALC's bargaining proposal for a new National Agreement:

- ◆ A prohibition against contracting out any work within territory now served by city delivery letter carriers, including in-fill development and natural additions to existing routes.
- ◆ Five –year contract, with annual wage increases and continued twice a year cost-of-living adjustments.
- ◆ A dramatic change in the health benefits whereby the Postal Service would pay 85 percent of premiums in the NALC Plan, and 72 percent in other Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) plans. This proposal would result in substantial savings to the Postal Service. Unlike the health benefit concessions recently accepted by three other postal unions, NALC's proposal calls for letter carriers to receive a share of these savings in the form of general wage increases. In addition, the incentive to join the NALC Plan will allow the plan to be tailored to the needs of letter carriers and to promote better health.
- ◆ A major restructuring of the city carrier workforce: All letter carriers would become full-time regulars with Monday-Friday schedules by the end of the contract. Grade 2 carriers would be retained with revamped duties. All casuals and transitional employees would be eliminated. A Saturday-only workforce of NALC represented bargaining unit carriers would be created. NALC and the Postal Service would jointly approach OPM and, if necessary, Congress to secure regulatory or legislative changes to ensure that retired letter carriers may be employed on Saturdays with no diminution of their annuities. New hires would be Step A and retirees Step O.

Retirees would have preference for positions. Saturday new hires would have priority for vacancies in Monday-Friday workforce. USPS would request from OPM authority to offer an early out. A task force would be created to implement the workforce reorganization plan. Finally, the substantial savings to the Postal Service resulting from this restructuring will be shared with all letter carriers in the form of general wage increases.

*Respectfully Submitted by*  
*Mark Judd, Jim Wolstencroft*  
*Cindy Trzeciak, and Cathy Tondreau*

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### EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

Date: January 29, 2007

Absent: Patti Linna

The X-Board voted to keep the Board meetings on the same day, the last Monday prior to the Branch meeting.

The X-Board made a motion to purchase 15 Soar Breakfast tickets and anyone else interested in attending, the Branch will cover half the expense. The Soar Breakfast is March 11, 2007 at the Burton Manor in Livonia at 9:00 a.m.

A motion was made to bring to the membership a motion to spend up to \$4000.00 for the Branch Picnic being held June 24, 2007.

Mark Judd reported on the L.A. Rap Session.

--Carol Clark  
Vice President

## Retired Members

James Linderman Taylor  
Katherine Lucier Lincoln Park  
John Till Canton  
Joe Pare Dearborn Annex

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## The Weingarten Declaration

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## National Association of Letter Carriers 65th Biennial Convention Delegates Workshop Report

--J.B. Likeric

*Dearborn Teleford Delegate*

Is the private post office the wave of the future? Looking at what is happening overseas, we may want to keep our eyes and ears open for the signs of change. Over the past 10 years, the global postal industry has been in transition. Deregulation and privatization is happening. In the U.K., the 250 year old postal monopoly of Royal Mail has been repealed, The 25 country European Union is in the process of deregulation. And the Japanese government has adopted a plan to break up and privatize their postal operations. A three member panel spoke to us on these matters, and here are a few excerpts from the class I attended.

John Baldwin of the Communication Workers Union of the U.K. led off. He said the governments goal was suppose to safeguard

universal service and promote competition. And ultimately this led to privatization, and a weak monopoly. The telecom and utilities are already deregulated. And in the mail business, competition for bulk mail began in 2003, with total competition by the end of 2006. Currently there are 17 licensed postal operators. Although there are only 3 main players right now with Royal Mail as still the main delivery organization. However, in the past 12 months the Royal Mail share of the business has fallen by 2.5% (99.5% to 97%) Royal Mail is owned by the government, but would like to open it up to the public. The CWU is fighting this. He said that they are facing the same frustrations that we have here in the states, namely dealing with management and supervisors that do not understand the delivery system. The push is on for a part time workforce like Walmart. The fear is that private investment will demand return on investment. Poor service might be the result with rural areas being hurt the most. He said the battle will go on for their union.

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John Peterson of Union Network International was next up. He stressed the importance of organizing. It is becoming harder due to the private sector profit driven mentality. Their operation is 50% organized, compared to our 92% in the NALC. Strength is in numbers he stated. The European Union consists of 25 countries. Having dialog where cross border rules vary creates unique problems. The way he explained it, it reminded me of our own resolutions being passed only to later be ruled out of order due to bylaws interpretations. In 1989 a mandate to open up the mail market by 1993 was established. The unions fight to stop this has stretched the process out. However, they are preparing for the inevitable. They continue to try to convince their allies of their cause. The public is not necessarily in favor of privatization, but business has more influence. Only 5 of the 25 countries have fully open markets, with a new mandate for open markets through out Europe by 2009. He said some countries are approaching the issue cautiously, but who knows, it is very political process. Service reduction, fewer employees, rural area delivery are all concerns. Big mailers win, while others could-lose. The fight will go on. What happens in one part of the world effects the whole world. Unions need to stick together is the message.

Finally, Kanako Osaki, director of internal affairs for the Japan Postal Workers Union spoke on the changes in Japans operations over the past 3 years. Three postal services have been formed that are all financially independent. Workers are paid from profits. A public corporation was formed in 2003. She said discussions are the same as here in the U.S.. Privatize and competition will stimulate the economy. Their concerns are the same also. Such as elimination of services and territory. There is strong public support for the JPWU position. Opposition to privatization in Japan is strong. Resolutions have been passed to oppose

privatization in the lower house assemblies, however they have been overturned by the upper house and the Prime Minister. As it is now stands, a holding company will handle postal operations of the four companies. The Unions have gained assurances of continued employment. A revisit of the operations will be made every 3 years. The battle will continue. Ms. Osaki stated how we are very lucky here in the states to have such a strong union.

After attending the classes at the convention and listening to the speakers it made aware of how we must continue to push our objectives as an organization so that we can remain the greatest postal service in the world. One way to insure our survival is if we all give to COLCPE.

---

--John Dainus

*Dearborn Teleford Delegate*

On Wednesday, August 16, I attended a workshop entitled "Managing Your Thrift Savings Plan Account". It was held after the general session of the NALC National Convention. To say that it was well attended would be an understatement. The room in which it was being offered was filled to capacity and a separate overflow room had to be set up for all the interested delegates who wished to attend. A remote audio and video projection system was established in the overflow room so that we could see and hear the presentation that was going on in the main room. I think those who were hosting the workshop did not realize how many delegates would be interested in this particular session. One of the reasons for the interest in this presentation was due to what has been happening in the private sector in regards to retirement programs. Many companies have been reducing or eliminating pension benefits as a way to reduce costs. Whether we like it or not, it is something that should give all of us cause for concern. The Thrift Savings Plan or TSP is something that everyone in the Postal Service should be involved in. In a way, you

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already are just by working at the USPS. The Postal Service automatically puts 1 % of your pay each pay period into a TSP account for you, even if you are not making any contributions of your own. Since you are already getting an automatic contribution to your account, why not put some of your own money into it and have the Postal Service match that amount also? There is a limit to the matching funds that the USPS will contribute. Check out the website at TSP.gov.

With 3.6 million participants worldwide and \$187 billion in assets, the TSP is the largest defined contribution plan in the world. Postal employees account for 606,075 of these participants. Participation rates in the TSP are as follows: 87% for FERS employees, with an average account balance of \$61,000 per person, 67% for CSRS employees, with an average account balance of \$52,000 per person.

When I was first hired in, I did not know about the TSP. When I went through orientation, I do not recall it being mentioned, what with all the things that were being thrown at me, like probation period and the like. I just wanted to get back to work after being laid off from GM for about a year. I heard about TSP when I started to attend union meetings. The vice president at the time was speaking and asked if anyone would like to have some free money that the Post Office was giving away. That sure got the attention of most everyone there. He then went on to explain that by contributing to your own TSP account, the Post Office would put in a matching amount of money (up to a limit). The next day at work I made sure to fill out a form for the contributions to be taken from my check automatically.

The TSP is only one part of your retirement plan from the Postal Service, but it could be the most crucial part. With all the talk going on about the future of pensions and Social Security being so uncertain, getting into the TSP should be a "no brainer", at least in my opinion. •

## 2006 COLCPE Contributors

### Belleville

Cindy Trzeciak

Bruce Prevost

### Dearborn Main

Cathy Tondreau

Darryl Clay

Robert Kraus

### Dearborn Annex

Timothy Bailey

John Dainus

Rhona Diamond

David Gilbert

Joanne Kuzala

Mark Judd

Thomas Klecha

Melvin MacDonald

Darrin Mifsud

Karen Regentik

Daniel Smith

Scott Wandyg

### Dearborn Teleford

James Likeric

### Dearborn Heights

James Wolstencroft

James Powell

Linda Pollock

Jim Hales

Roger Corpolongo

Frank Grosso

### Flat Rock

### Grosse Isle

### Inkster

Bryon Hendricks

Thad Dillard

Roy McMahan

### Lincoln Park

Dave Reise

### Monroe

Kenneth Masserant

Erik Venzke

Chris Carmon

### Northville

### Plymouth

Patricia Linna

Robert Venning

Heather Smallwood

Felecia Wallace

### Rockwood

Gloria Warthen

### Taylor

Carol Clark

Andrea Smith

### Temperance

### Trenton

Casey Pennington

Dennis Lucas

Benita Gilchrist

### Wayne

Walter Gregory

Tim Brayman

### Westland

Ted Gagnon

Joan Hicks

Aaronette Howell

Raymond Tobin

### Canton

Sue Broge

Dianne Daley

Joe Golonka

### Ypsilanti

Brian Mueller

### Retired

Leonard Zawisa

Carl Belvees

John Bostek

William Lowe

Brian Rodden

William Mason

Clarence Schukofsky

William Mather

Bela Rito

## Contract Corner...

**Q: My supervisor told me that he can make me work up to a half hour of overtime anytime he wants. I am not on any overtime desired list. How can this be?**

**A:** It can't be – because the supervisor is simply wrong. However, many supervisors (and even a few Union representatives) incorrectly believe that this is allowed because of the so-called "rule of reason." The "rule of reason" was first codified in a December 20, 1988 National Memorandum of Understanding between the NALC and the USPS and states that management would not be required to utilize an ODL carrier to provide assistance if doing so would require excessive travel time to provide the assistance. This situation typically occurs when a Non-ODL carrier calls from the field to report that he or she will be unable to complete their assignment in eight hours as previously instructed. Management would not be required to send auxiliary assistance out to the employee if, for example, doing so would require a twenty minutes of travel to do thirty minutes of work. In this specific situation management could instruct the employee to complete their assignment or to bring the unfinished portion back. However, under NO circumstances does this mean that management can schedule a Non-ODL employee *in advance* (i.e. in response to a 3996 submitted in the morning) to work *any* amount of overtime when available assistance can be scheduled at that time to perform the work instead. The "rule of reason" is simply that, and not an excuse to otherwise arbitrarily disregard the clearly defined provisions of Article 8 pertaining to the assignment of overtime work.

**Q: Management told me that I must list my mail volume in the "reasons" section of form 3996. Is that true?**

**A:** No, that is not true, with one limited exception. A series of National level interpretive grievance decisions have reiterated that the instructions for

completion of PS form 3996 (found on the reverse side of a 3996) and also in the M-41 handbook, section 280, do not require a letter carrier to list volume figures on the form. However, if the request for assistance is related *only to volume*, management may require the carrier to note only the volume of mail *remaining to be cased* at the time the PS form 3996 is submitted, and may require that this volume be stated as a reasonable estimate in linear measurement terms. Otherwise, a carrier should list any and all reasons that he or she feels are pertinent to their request, including but not limited to full coverage ad mailings, excessive DPS, excessive parcels, weather, late leaving, or any other reason as determined by the carrier. On a related note, management does not ever have the right to determine what an allegedly "acceptable" reason is for requesting auxiliary assistance or overtime on form 3996. Letter carriers can and should list any reasons on a 3996 that we choose as long as they are related to our work that day.

**Q: I signed the regular overtime desired list and wanted switch to the work assignment overtime list, but was told that I could only do this during the sign up period before each quarter. Is that correct?**

**A:** Yes, that is correct. During the two weeks prior to each postal quarter, which is the last two weeks of March, June, September, and December, fulltime letter carriers can sign overtime lists or make changes from one list to the other. Changes from one list to the other cannot otherwise be made during the postal quarter under any circumstances, per Article 8, section 5.A. of the NALC/USPS Collective Bargaining Agreement. If a letter carrier wishes to remove their name from the regular or work assignment overtime list during the quarter, he or she may do so at any time. However, they must wait until the next sign up period to re-sign either overtime list.

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## Branch 2184 Injury Compensation Summary, 2006

2006 was another busy year for Branch 2184's officers and stewards when seeing to the needs of our members, both in response to management's violations of the Contract and also by providing other forms of assistance with other employment-related matters. One specialized form of assistance that is available only to our members involves the often complicated response to on-the-job injuries and job-related medical conditions. The Federal Employees Compensation Act (FECA), as administered by the United States Department of Labor's Office of Workers Compensation Programs (OWCP) is a complex and often daunting mountain of regulations by itself.

In 2006 we received numerous requests for assistance from members involving every aspect of injury compensation, typically because management obstruction and interference with their rights under the Law. We provided detailed advice concerning the development and perfection of occupational illness/disease claims (CA-2) and are proud that every Branch 2184 member requesting our assistance had their claim accepted by OWCP. Letter carriers that have undertaken such claims know that the process of acceptance by the Department of Labor is often tedious and requires detailed factual and medical information.

Because USPS management's antagonistic and obstructionist response to employee reports of on-the-job injuries is very likely to continue, whether they are traumatic injuries (occurring in a single incident or workday) or occupational illness/disease claims (conditions that develop over a period of time), Branch 2184 will continue to provide timely and competent assistance to any member who requests it. Our stewards will also continue to receive frequent training concerning injury compensation and the enforcement of your rights under the FECA Law and as prescribed by USPS regulations. Count on it!

--Joe Golonka

*Branch Injury Comp Specialist*

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