

Branch 2184 ... "Speaks"

Official Publication of Branch 2184, NALC, AFL-CIO

March/April 2009

**Branch 2184
National Association
of Letter Carriers
AFL - CIO**

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Web Site www.nalc2184.org

Office Hours:

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

Calendar

Branch Meetings:

June 3rd

July (no meeting)

7:30 p.m. - Union Hall

Retirees Meetings:

June 10th

July (no meeting)

12:30 p.m. - Union Hall

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President's Report National Rap Session

On April 24 – 26, 2009, the NALC National Union held a training and rap session in Las Vegas, Nevada. The rap session is required by the NALC's Constitution. It is to be scheduled during non-National Convention years. In attendance were more than 1600 letter carrier union representatives from NALC branches all over the United States. Branch 2184 sent four representatives to this important event; Branch President Mark Judd, Branch Route Inspection officer David Reise, Recording Secretary Cindy Trzeciak, and Financial Secretary-Treasurer Cathy Tondreau.

The following is our report:

Scheduled events began with registration for classes on Friday afternoon, April 24, followed by a welcoming reception on Friday evening. On Saturday, April 25, four workshops were conducted by NALC National Officers. The subjects were the latest Modified Interim Alternate Route Adjustment Process (MIARAP); a Contract Administration Unit briefing; the NALC's community service agenda; and a presentation about the economic crisis and its impact on the Postal Service.

The workshop on the Modified Interim Alternate Route Adjustment Process was conducted by NALC National Executive Vice-President Fred Rolando. Mr. Rolando provided an overview of the recent history of route adjustment agreements, beginning with Memorandum of Understanding in the 2006-2011 National Agreement that directed the parties to explore new and better ways to conduct route adjustments. The USPS felt that the continuing rapid decline in mail volume created an urgent need to capture time savings in the form of immediate route adjustments. Prior to the negotiation of the joint route adjustment process memorandums, management had proposed some radical "solutions" which they had threatened to unilaterally impose on the nation's letter carriers. Had they gone forward with the unilateral route adjustments, the only alternative for the

(Continued on page 3)

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Financial Secretary Treasurer	Cathy Tondreau
Sergeant at Arms	Walt Gregory
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Trustee	Gloria Warthen
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.....	Ed Williams (alt)
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.....	Greg Silvestri (alt)
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.....	Casey Pennington
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.....	Raymond Tobin
Canton	Dianne Daley
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.....	Mike Treadway
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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, March\April 2009, 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

union would be to file grievances and engage in the lengthy contractual process of attempting to correct the problems caused by management's actions.

These considerations were critical in the NALC's decision to negotiate the initial Interim Route Adjustment Process in 2008 and the recent Modified Interim Process in 2009. Postmaster General Potter testified before Congress NALC's agreement with the USPS would save the USPS \$1.3 billion, and he expected the elimination of 9200 routes nationwide when the process was completed. NALC President Young announced that as of today only 2400 routes were actually abolished. With the continuing drop in mail volume, the newest joint Adjustment Process was negotiated and signed on April 7, 2009. The new agreement calls for an added layer of oversight, consisting of an area official from the USPS and the NALC National Business Agent or his appointee. The NALC's National leaders stressed the historic importance of this agreement, which makes the route adjustment process truly a joint effort, with the NALC involved at every level.

Additionally, NALC National Director of City Delivery Dale Hart is now part of the national oversight team. During the workshop Mr. Hart gave a presentation on COR (Carrier Optimal Routing). This system is a computer-generated route adjustment program. The system reroutes travel patterns, reduces relays, and reconfigures delivery territory to create projected time savings.

The Contract Administration Unit/City Delivery Workshop was conducted by NALC National Vice President Gary Mullins and other members of the National Union's Contract Administration Unit. The workshop included an overview of recent arbitration decisions of significance as well as National level memorandums, agreements, and interpretive decisions. Some of the subjects covered included transitional employee issues, the modified route adjustment memorandums, "curtail and pivot" is-

issues, issues involving work assigned to injured employees, and a noteworthy regional arbitration decision where the arbitrator upheld the union's position that an abusive supervisor should be permanently removed from supervising letter carriers.

The workshop on the economic crisis and the postal service was conducted by the NALC's long-time economic adviser Jim Sauber and by National Secretary-Treasurer Jane Broedel. Mr. Sauber charted and articulated the causes of the major economic recession still impacting the USPS as well the dramatic decline in mail volume and consequent loss of USPS revenue. Amid the "doom and gloom" of the presentation was one potentially advantageous future consequence of the current recession for the USPS. The casualties of the recession have included many of the traditional competitors of the USPS for advertising revenue, such as newspapers and magazines. As our nation comes out of the recession, the USPS will be poised to

(Continued on page 4)

Calendar of Events

Steward Meeting	May 12th @ 7:30
Steward Meeting	May 18th @ 7:30
Memorial Day Holiday	May 25th
Executive Board	May 26th @ 7:30
State Convention ...	May 31st, June 1st & 2nd
Branch Meeting	June 3rd at 7:30pm
Steward Meeting	June 9th at 7:30pm
Retirees Meeting	June 10th at 12:30pm
Steward Meeting	June 15th at 7:30pm
Executive Board	June 29th at 7:30pm
Branch Meeting	July (no meeting)
Retirees Meeting	July (no meeting)
Holiday	July 4th
Steward Meeting	July 14th at 7:30pm
Steward Meeting	July 20th at 7:30pm
Executive Board	July 27th at 7:30pm

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Presidents Report

regain a greater share of advertising revenue because less competition will remain.

Secretary-Treasurer Broendel discussed strategies that NALC branches should consider implementing in response to the current climate of declining membership and dues income. Some of the suggestions made by Ms. Broendel included possible dues increases for both active and retired members, as well as carefully considered branch mergers.

The workshop on the NALC's community service agenda was presented by Ernest Kirkland, National Director of Retired Members, and Tim O'Malley, Director of the NALC Health Benefit Plan. Topics discussed included the NALC's yearly National Food Drive, the NALC's ongoing commitment to the Muscular Dystrophy Association, the Carrier Alert program, the NALC's program to honor letter carrier heroes, and our union's involvement and assistance with other charitable programs such as Toys for Tots. The workshop also highlighted some of the community service efforts of individual NALC branches.

On Sunday, April 26, NALC National President Bill Young conducted the Rap Session for the assembled attendees. He was accompanied by the NALC's other National Officers and National Business Agents and also by NALC President emeritus Vincent Sombrotto. President Young bluntly assessed the financial condition of the USPS, noting a projected \$9 billion loss during the next two years, even if proposed legislation to ease the USPS's burden of up front payments for retiree health benefits is passed by Congress this year. Mail volume declined dramatically to 170 billion pieces last year from 212 billion pieces the previous year. Because carrier office time is primarily determined by volume, the decline gives management every right to attempt to capture the savings through route adjustments. President Young noted that the USPS was exploring options regarding potential "cost-

savings" - i.e. givebacks - when he negotiated the latest Interim Route Adjustment Process.

President Young also noted that since 1989 the city carrier workforce had declined from about 243,000 to about 208,000, or about 35,000 positions. During the same period the clerk workforce had declined from about 301,000 to 187,000, or about 114,000 positions. He emphasized that the achievements of those who have gone before us must not be thrown away, and that the 2011 National Contract bargaining with the USPS will be the toughest ever for the NALC. One issue that can still be dealt with legislatively is that of contracting out, and we need to get this done before the next round of negotiations. President Young also stated unequivocally that a reduction to 5-day delivery will not occur, and noted that if it did occur it would be the "death knell" of the USPS. He also stated that Saturday delivery would likely continue even in a 5-day delivery environment.

President Young also discussed other pertinent issues, such as the USPS National Reassessment Process (NRP) for injured employees and the contractual legitimacy of withholding residual vacancies for excessed employees from other crafts. He also fielded a lengthy series of questions from those in attendance, regarding such matters as the flat sorting machines and transitional employees, the Dispute Resolution Process, COLCPE, and next year's National Convention in Anaheim.

Finally, following much speculation, National President Bill Young confirmed that he will soon be retiring and he will be stepping down as the NALC's National President. Current Executive Vice-President Fred Rolando will be taking over as the NALC's national president for the remainder of the current term of office.

-- Mark Judd, Dave Reise, Cindy Trzeciak, and Cathy Tondreau



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EVP's Report

In these uncertain economic times that we are facing there seems to be a lot of confusion as to what direction this huge Postal Service Ship is taking.

Is it on a course to make adjustments during these financially troubled times?

Is it on a course to keep the same old status quo?

Or is it on a course to just let it run into an iceberg?

Well the one thing I know that will be there, is the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). In any one of the above scenarios the CBA is what should be relied upon to chart that USPS Ship through these troubled waters. As Postmaster General Potter wrote in a Feb. 23, 2009 letter to Officers, PCES Managers;

"Our bond with our employees has never been more important than it is today. That bond is represented by the collective bargaining agreements with our unions".

Easier said than done. I say this because there is a long way to go when it comes to contract compliance with Postal Management. I know that there will always be an issue that needs to be settled or arbitrated. For those of us who remember the thousands of grievances and how long they used to take to hear at arbitration, we have come a long way.

Now we have a new (temporary) route evaluation process that will eliminate week long inspections and save the Postal Service millions of dollars. This process will expedite the evaluating and adjusting routes across the country by the end of the year. If you told me 20 years ago that every route in the country would be evaluated and adjusted by the end of the year, I would say you're crazy.

These are a couple of agreements that have been made between Management and NALC that can be seen as making adjustments to keep the course true. There will be more if we are to survive.

As for the status quo nothing can be more

(Continued on page 11)

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David Lehman (Wayne) - \$5,000.00
David Layman (Wayne) - \$1,300.00
Cindy Gibson (Plymouth) - \$3,200.00
Ed Sikora (Wayne) - \$9,000.00
Barb Allen (Westland) - \$1,500.00
Barb Allen (Westland) - \$1,000.00
Deborah Bjerk (Westland) - \$2,000.00
Jennifer Curtis (Northville) - \$3,500.00
William Gallan (Monroe) - \$3,000.00
Marilyn Fields-Johnson (Inkster) - \$900.00
Darlene Samfilippo (Westland) - \$5,850.00
Roy Reges (Belleville) - \$1,000.00
Lance Braziel (Belleville) \$1,250.00
Michele, Manley (Wayne) - \$9,000.00
Nina Grider (Plymouth) - \$5,000.00
Jim Crossey (Plymouth) - \$2,000.00
Bruce Robbins (Westland) \$2,000.00
Tonya Rutledge (Canton) - \$1,000.00
Pamela Vanderburg (Taylor) - \$27,500.00

Branch 2184 Web Site

Visit our web site for:

FERS & CSRS Annuity Estimates

FERS & CSRS Retirement Q&A

Branch Calendar

Carrier Pay Chart

Online NALC "FMLA" forms

Steward Resources Link

www.nalc2184.org

Voluntary Early Retirement Update

The Postal Service has extended the deadline to elect the Voluntary Early Retirement (VER) option for eligible carriers until **June 19, 2009**.

Carriers who are **50 with at least 20 years** of service, or any **age with at least 25 years** of service, may choose to take the option and may select one of three effective dates: May 31, June 30 or July 31.

Those covered by CSRS must accept a **permanent reduction** in their annuities of 2 percent for each year they are under age 55 on the effective date of their early retirement. There is no reduction for eligible carriers covered by FERS, but those carriers would not receive the special supplemental annuity benefits payable to annuitants under age 62 until they reach their minimum retirement age (age 55-57, depending on the employee's year of birth). The Postal Service's VER offer **does not** provide any financial incentives (lump-sums, special severance payments, etc.) to choose early retirement.

Eligible letter carriers were sent VER offer letters and annuity estimates (based on the July 31 retirement date) between April 6 and April 10. The letter included a special form to choose the VER. This form must be signed and returned by mail (postmarked) by June 19 to Human Resources Shared Services Center. Faxed or e-mailed copies of the form will not be accepted. The decision to accept the VER is **irrevocable** after June 19.

N.A.L.C. President Young reiterated his advice to union members: *"The decision to retire is one of the most important decisions you have to make—take your time, think hard about all the implications for your loved ones in today's economy, and talk it over with your family before you decide."*

Further details and FAQs information are provided on the Postal Service's intranet site for employees.

Want to know more about Early Retirement?

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Sunday, June 28th 2009**

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PPO Locator Service 1-800-622-6252

Hospital Precertification..... 1-800-622-6252

Prescription Drug Program .. 1-800-933-6252

For additional information, visit the national website at www.nalc.org/depart/hbp

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.

(Clip and keep with you while working)

2009 COLCPE Contributors

Belleville

- ✓ Gregory Bodziak
- ✓ Bruce Prevost

Dearborn Main

- ✓ Kim Baker
- ✓ Darryl Clay
- Robert Kraus*
- ✓ Daniel Smith
- ✓ Henry Strange
- Jackie Wiggins*
- ✓ Ed Williams

Dearborn Annex

- Nancy Altman*
- ✓ Timothy Bailey
- Hubert Brown*
- Tony Calamita*
- Joseph Caruana*
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- Karen Regentik*
- Jerry Taylor*
- ✓ Cathy Tondreau
- Scott Wandyg*

Dearborn Teleford

- ✓ Michael Bergin
- John Czuchrak*
- James Likeric*

- ✓ Alan Swinteck

Dearborn Heights

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- Anthony Gretch*
- Frank Grosso*
- ✓ Jim Hales
- Linda Pollock*
- ✓ James Wolstencroft

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Grosse Isle

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- ✓ John Nellis

Inkster

- Thad Dillard*
- ✓ Bryon Hendricks
- ✓ Roy McMahan

Lincoln Park

- Dave Reise*
- Gayle Rohde*
- ✓ Paula Hall
- Scott Watts*

Monroe

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- ✓ Kenneth Masserant
- ✓ Erik Venzke

Northville

- Elizabeth Karsten*

Plymouth

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- ✓ James Crossey
- ✓ Patricia Linna
- ✓ Gary Macioce
- ✓ Dan Marek
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- Anthony Santy*

Irene Sly*

- ✓ Andrea Smith
- Terri Theeck*

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Trenton

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- ✓ Dennis Lucas
- ✓ Casey Pennington

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- ✓ Edward Sikora
- Krystal White*

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- ✓ Joan Hicks
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- ✓ Katrina Jones
- ✓ Raymond Tobin
- Calvin Winbush*

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- ✓ Felicia Bryant
- ✓ Dianne Daley
- ✓ Lois Fritz
- Gilbert Pruiett*

Ypsilanti

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- ✓ Richard Rider
- ✓ Michael Miller

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- Rhona Diamond*
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- Joanne Kuzala*
- William Lowe
- William Mason*
- William Mather
- John Meleski
- James Powell
- Brian Rodden*
- Leo Rosol
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- ✓ Cindy Trzeciak
- Margaret Zawicki*
- ✓ Leonard Zawisa

- ✓ Check mark indicates you are signed up for automatic COLCPE contributions.

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(Continued from page 5)

EVP Report

evident than the number of Article 8 violations that are occurring in this branch. This fiscal year 2009 (which began in September of 2008) the Detroit District has paid approximately \$1,000,000 in grievance settlements. This is truly bittersweet from the unions' perspective. First the contract was violated by management then it was enforced by the union, with remedy. Please note that which came first. If the contract was not violated then there is no monetary remedy. This is clearly not what the NALC wants to do, but it has to do. The national parties are the only ones who can make any adjustments to the CBA, *not the local parties*. So don't fall for what the local supervisor says in trying to create their own CBA or it's the unions' fault the Postal Service is in trouble.

There are some theories that the powers to be actually want the Postal Service to fail and open

it up to the private sector. Even in this case the CBA should be trusted to get us over this hurdle. Congress has the ultimate decision making authority if there is to be a USPS or not. Actions by management lately point to taking away services for our costumers. Talk of a 5 day delivery sounds good on the surface to most carriers, but is very dangerous. If you take our product off the street for one day, the competition will surely pick-up the day. This in turn will lose revenue. This is the last thing the postal service needs. Also taking the blue collection boxes off the street is another indicator of taking the product off the street. When the collection and delivery of mail is reduced or eliminated so goes the revenue. Out of site out of mind as the saying goes. All we can do is trust the contract.

In Solidarity,

-- James Wolstencroft

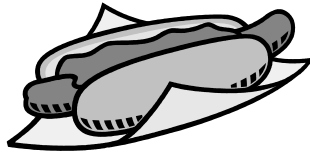
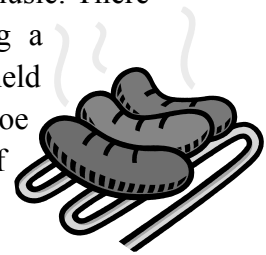
Executive Vice President

Annual Branch Picnic

Sunday June 28th



On Sunday, June 28, 2009, from Noon – 6 p.m. Branch 2184 will once again host a picnic for our members and their families. Along with Union fellowship you will be able to enjoy good food and beverages. A DJ will provide music. There are activities planned for children of all ages, including a moonwalk, dunk tank, and pony rides. The picnic will be held on the grounds of the Branch 2184 Office at 6969 Monroe Street in Taylor (just north of Ecorse Road). This day of family fun is free to all members and their families.



Watch for further information as it becomes available, including information that will be posted on Union Bulletin Boards in each station. **Circle Sunday, June 28th on your calendars and make plans to attend!**

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