



Branch 2184 ... "Speaks"

Official Publication of Branch 2184, NALC, AFL-CIO

November/December 2022

President's Report

TIAREAP IS SCHEDULED IN OUR BRANCH

TIREAP stands for Technology Integrated Alternate Route Evaluation and Adjustment Process 2022-2023. I have been notified by the USPS/NALC TIAREAP teams that our Dearborn Main office and our Ypsilanti offices, are scheduled for evaluations under this new process in January of 2023.

Branch 2184 Route Adjustment Officers David Reise and Erik Venzke, along with TIAREAP member Beth Bays, put on Route Adjustment classes via WebEx on 11/16/22 and 11/30/22. They presented a Power Point presentation to all of the Branch 2184 members that were on the WebEx meetings those two days. The members were allowed to ask any questions they had relating to the TIAREAP process. I will have more training scheduled as needed to prepare the members for this process as more offices are added to TIAREAP within our branch.

Other Branch 2184 offices that are tentatively scheduled for 2023 spring adjustments are Belleville, Inkster, Monroe and Taylor.

CONTINUED WEBEX/TELEPHONIC MEETINGS

The flu season is here and it has been spreading within our branch. There has been a few officers and stewards that have missed recent branch and steward meetings via Webex because of flu and covid-19 symptoms. For everyone's safety, I have decided to continue our steward and branch meetings via Webex until further notice. The Retirees and Executive Board meetings are still in person for now. The branch remains fully functional and will continue to provide services to the membership.



CONGRATULATIONS ARE IN ORDER

Within the last three months, I have had the pleasure of going to multiple Branch 2184 Retirees home and presenting some 50-year gold cards, pins and plaques to retirees with some other Branch 2184 officers. I've had the pleasure of also presenting some 55-year & 60-year pins and

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Branch 2184

Western Wayne County, MI

National Association

of Letter Carriers

AFL - CIO

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Taylor, MI 48180-1815

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NALC2184@sbcglobal.net

Web Site www.nalc2184.org

Office Hours:

9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Monday through Friday

Calendar

Branch Meetings:

January 4th, 2023

Via WebEx

Retirees Meetings

January 11th, 2023

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

In Person

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Officers

President.....	Walt McGregor
Executive VP	Jacqueline McGregor
Vice President	Darryl Clay
Recording Secretary.....	Melvin MacDonald
Financial Secretary Treas	Cathy Tondreau
Sergeant at Arms	Phil Ashford
Health Benefits Rep	Jim Powell
Retirees Officer	Leonard Zawisa
Trustee.....	Tracy Mitchell
Trustee.....	Gloria Warthen
Trustee.....	Felicia Davis
Editor.....	Leonard Zawisa
Arbitration Advocate.....	Walt McGregor
Route Adjustment Specialist.....	Dave Reise
Branch Scribe.....	Joe Golonka
Injury Compensation.....	Erik Venzke
Injury Compensation	Joe Golonka
Web Page Design	Jim Hales

Branch Contract Administration Unit

Joe Golonka	Chairperson
Walt McGregor	Member
Jackie McGregor	Member
Darryl Clay.....	Member
Dave Reise	Member



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

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

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

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

Stewards

Allen Park	Mark Owen
.....	Kris Shaw (alt)
.....	Karen Russell (alt)
.....	Tod Lilla (alt)
.....	Ryan Zyngier (alt)
.....	Scott Russel (alt)
Belleville.....	Bryon Hendricks
Dearborn (Main)	Darryl Clay
.....	Symone Coleman
.....	Yvonne Jackson (alt)
.....	Karl Tamburro (alt)
.....	Damon Green (alt)
Dearborn (Annex).....	Melvin MacDonald
.....	Jacqueline McGregor
.....	Rose Miller (alt)
.....	Jillian Hudgins (alt)
Dearborn Heights.....	Shaun Fowlkes
.....	Marwan Ghoiteimi (alt)
.....	Jacqueline McGregor (alt)
.....	Melvin MacDonald (alt)
.....	Chanal Harrison (alt)
Dundee.....	Gloria Warthen (alt)
Flat Rock	Lillian Bogosian
.....	Gloria Warthen (alt)
Grosse Ile.....	Gloria Warthen
.....	Kim Bumbul (alt)
Inkster.....	Phil Ashford
.....	Scherrie Lacey (alt)
Lincoln Park	Scott Watts
.....	Mark Owen (alt)
Monroe	Jacqueline McGregor (alt)
.....	Melvin MacDonald (alt)
.....	Keith Benedict (alt)
.....	Darryl Clay (alt)
Northville.....	Valerie Watkins
.....	Beth Bays (alt)
Plymouth.....	Kristie Nelson
.....	Diego Forshaw (alt)
.....	Otis Barney (alt)
Rockwood.....	Courtney Duran
.....	Gloria Warthen (alt)
.....	Tracy Mitchell (alt)
Taylor	Keith Benedict
.....	Victor Siemiesz (alt)
Temperance	Gloria Warthen (alt)
Trenton	William Douglas
.....	Jeffery Webb
.....	Tracy Mitchell (alt)
Westland.....	Ananias Epps
.....	Felicia Davis
.....	Nakia Whitfield
.....	Katrina Jones (alt)
.....	Walt McGregor (alt)
Canton	Ramon Robinson
.....	Denise Viola
Ypsilanti	Paul Bordine
.....	Mike Tredway
.....	Danita Hill (alt)

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Presidents Report

plaques to some Branch 2184 local Retirees. Other Branch 2184 50-year, 55-year and 60-year retirees that were not local, I was able to mail them their plaques and pins safely to their homes. Congratulations to all of Branch 2184 retirees on your years of service to our employer and a special thank you on behalf of the membership for paving the way for us active carriers.

Our Retirement Committee is finalizing the details for our spring 2023 retirement dinner to recognize our retirees formally.

BRANCH 2184 FACEBOOK PAGE

As of 12/09/2022, there are 181 members. The page is growing daily. If you are on Facebook, please search for our page. You have to answer a few questions like who is your steward(s) and what building do you work out of or retired from and you will be approved. There is up to date information to what is going on within your branch, at the state, regional and national level of NALC. There are always contractual updates.

We are in the final month of 2022, on behalf of the Officers and Stewards at Branch 2184, we wish you and your loved ones a safe and happy holiday season.

-- *Walt McGregory*
President

EVP's Report**GENERAL WAGE INCREASE**

The fourth and final general wage increase of this contract is 1.3% for career carriers and 2.3% for CCAs. This took effect on 11/19/2022. For top rate career carriers that had already reached letter O of the pay chart, this included a step increase to Step P for table one and table two. That is \$444 more than Step O of the basic salary schedule in tables one and two. Of note: Carrier Technicians (T-6s) receive additional compensation equivalent to 2.1% of the employee's applicable hourly rate for all paid hours.

We still have one more COLA to be determined in this contract which is January of 2023.

TRAINING 2023

While Branch 2184 already has some of the best Contract Enforcers in the country, there is always room for improvement. The President and I will continue to work closely with the Branch 2184 CAU members and the NBA's office to provide training to keep our stewards up to date on information needed to properly defend the membership and enforce our national contract on the workroom floors. This is my number one priority as your Executive Vice President of the Branch.

CCA UNIFORM BANK

We have a lot of new CCA brothers and sisters hiring into our branch. We also have a few that resign within a month of being hired for different reasons. With that, please be sure and share with our new CCA brothers and sisters that they need at least 45 days of working before they are able to come



over to the branch to shop at the CCA Uniform Bank. In this time, most CCAs have decided if they are going to stay with the job and we want to make sure we are getting these uniforms to brothers and sisters who stick with the job and not take our uniforms and leave before 45 days of work.

We all were new carriers once upon a time in our careers. Reach out to our new brothers and sisters and encourage them to stick it out. Ask them how is it going? Give them a few pointers. This goes a long way and encourages our new brothers and sisters to hang in there. It will get better.

Happy Holidays from my family to yours!

-- *Jacqueline McGregory*
Executive Vice President

**OUR ADVERTISERS ARE YOUR
FRIENDS**

**MENTION YOU SAW THEM
IN OUR NEWSLETTER.**

VP's Report

Bumping Provisions

Does a T-6 have the right to select which route they can do when there are 2 or more vacant assignments open on their string? Yes, only if the regular of the route they are assigned to comes in. That is the action that must happen to "Trigger" a bump. If there is no Non-scheduled carrier coming in to trigger a bump, the T-6 does not have a choice. They must do their assignment for the day. Item 22, section 4 of branch 2184's Local Memorandum of Understanding, TEMPORARY ASSIGNMENT CHANGE FOR T-6 ASSIGNMENTS states:

"A fulltime regular carrier called in to work on a non-scheduled day shall work his/her full-time duty assignment provided there is a vacant route on the string which the T-6 carrier may be assigned"

This is inclusive of assignments that are temporary and have been opted on by PTF, reserve regular or unassigned regular carrier or CCA.

A regular must be called in to work her/his assignment in order for the T-6 to do a vacant route on their swing/string.

CCA Uniform Bank

New CCA's are now able to shop at the Union Hall by appointment only. If you are a new CCA, have worked at least 45 days, and are in need of gently used uniforms, we can help.

Call your Union Hall at 313-295-1640, ask for Walt McGregory, President, give him your sizes, and he will set your appointment.

CCA Opting

New CCAs must fulfill a 60-calendar day waiting period before they can opt on a hold-down assignment. Once the CCA has met this requirement, there is no additional waiting period for applying for/being awarded a hold-down.

Customer Connect

There is a new feature on our scanners. This feature allows us to submit leads directly on our scanners.

First...

- ✓ Select the **Street Menu** ~ choose "U"
- ✓ Select the **Lead Card Menu** ~ choose "#1"
- ✓ Select **Submit Lead**
- ✓ Enter **Company Name**
- ✓ Enter **Contact Person's first and last name**
- ✓ Enter **Phone Number**.

That's it. Your lead has been submitted.

As we know, this program encourages carriers to talk to business customers and tell them about the benefits of shipping with USPS.

Carriers are asked to look for competitors picking up packages, businesses that use a competitor's packaging products, and new businesses that have opened.

Customer Connect works. Since the program began in 2003, it has generated more than \$2.5 billion in estimated revenue.

Should I?

Yes, you should. Always request to be a part of any Informal Step A meeting. It's your right. Article 15.2 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement gives you that right. It is to everyone's advantage to have the grievant attend the Informal Step A meeting. The input of the grievant can be helpful for this meeting by providing relevant details pertaining to the issue that may not be discussed or known to the steward.

It is your option to attend or not, but I say always choose to exercise your right and attend any Informal Step A meeting.

Happy Holidays to you all!

-- Darryl Clay
Vice President



EComp Registration

Injury Compensation

ECOMP - The Office of Workman's Compensation (OWCP) offers the digital review and submission of claim forms through their website ECOMP (<https://www.ecomp.dol.gov/#/>) After registering and creating an account.

The NALC is recommending that all letter carriers register and create an account in ECOMP even if they are not currently in need of filing a claim. In the unfortunate event, you may need to file a claim being registered with an account will expedite the process with form completion and the uploading of documentation. Or if you currently have a claim you can manage your case file, receive communications, and easily submit documents directly on the website.

Using ECOMP will allow you to take control of your claims process with the ability to submit forms such as CA-1, CA-2, or CA-7 directly to OWCP taking the reliance on postal management for initial form submission out of the equation. With the direct submission of a claim to OWCP by the claimant, OWCP has the form immediately and there is no more of your supervisor putting it in some drawer only to forget about it and delay the processing of the claim. When you file a claim using ECOMP, OWCP will send a copy of the claim to your supervisor and the USPS Occupational Health Office. The postal service then has ten working days to complete their portions of the form and submit it to OWCP.

Once registered in ECOMP you will also have the ability to view and manage your claim with access to the case history, forms, letters (communications from OWCP and the ability to respond), and case imaging (ability to view your entire case file). You can also track CA-7s (claims for compensation) you have submitted along with any compensation payment history.

Registering for an account is simple and can be done from a computer, laptop, smartphone, or tablet with ease by following the instructions below. The instructions can also be found on our branch

website <https://www.nalc2184.org>.

Registering for an account:

Once on the ECOMP webpage <https://www.ecomp.dol.gov/#/> there will be a link to click which says register.

First, enter your name, home telephone number, and email address. It is recommended that you use your personal email address. This address will be used for communications and to send notifications to you.

You must also enter your social security number (SSN) and confirm it. When you file forms CA-1, CA-2, or CA-7 in ECOMP you will need to enter your SSN, and it must match the one you entered in your account registration.

Scroll down through the Government Organization departments and click on UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE. Under the Filter by State, click on your state. Pick your performance cluster/ postal district (Michigan 1) under the Select Agency menu. After you have selected your performance cluster a message will be displayed informing you which forms the postal service allows to be filed via ECOMP.

Under Who Should Review your Form, ECOMP asks for your immediate supervisor's email address. If you don't know the email address, write your supervisor's first name followed by a period followed by supervisor@usps.gov. For example: sue.supervisor@usps.gov. The district injury compensation office will get a copy of the claim and should forward the claim to the appropriate supervisor.

Next, choose a password, which must be a minimum of 8 characters and contain at least one upper case letter, one lower case letter, one number, and one special character. You will need to use this password, along with your email address, to sign into ECOMP.

Finally, choose three security questions for your account, and provide your answers. If you forget your ECOMP password, you will need to answer these questions to reset it.

When you have entered all information, click

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ECOMP Registration

Create Account.

ECOMP will send a message to your email address asking you to confirm your account registration. Click on the link within the email message to confirm your account and complete the registration process. You will then be taken to ECOMP and a message will be displayed confirming that your account has been created. After clicking OK, you may then sign into ECOMP using your email address and ECOMP password.

After signing in, your Employee Dashboard will be displayed, which lists any forms you have filed in ECOMP. If you need to make any changes to your account settings, you may do so by clicking the Account link at the top of the page.

-- Erik Venzke
Branch 2184
Injury Compensation Specialist



National Convention Delegate's Report

I would like to thank the Branch 2184 membership for allowing me to represent you at the Chicago 2022 National Convention. While at the convention, I took multiple classes including the new route inspection class called TIAREAP, which is an acronym for Technology Integrated Alternative Route Evaluation and Process. This process will include a total of eight weeks, seven random weeks from seven months prior to the one live week. For more information about this process, please go to NALC.ORG and type in the search engine (M-01984).

Another interesting class I took was Health and Safety. In this class we were informed about many different ways to work safely and staying healthy. The instructors informed us about an App called OSHA/NIOSH HEAT, which has recommended standard occupational information for exposure to heat and hot environments. You can find this App at the Apple Store or Google Play store. Having this App on your phone may just help you recognize that you may be having a heat stroke. It can also help you plan your day accordingly so you can know what to wear and how much fluids you need in your body to stay hydrated. This App is equipped with many different features to help you stay safe whether you're at work or just out with your family at the park. So, check it out!

-- Felicia Davis
Trustee & Convention Delegate



"I have a Dream"

Letter Carrier

Winter Weather Safety

Snow, ice, and exposure to cold air cause or contribute to thousands of letter carrier injuries and illnesses each year. The actual number cannot be known because many letter carrier injuries are never reported because of fear, intimidation, and lack of knowledge. **However, the most effective method of preventing** on the job injuries always remains the same, and that is working proactively, safely, and under control at all times.

Additionally, some of our City Carrier Assistants (CCAs) are experiencing their first real Michigan winter season performing letter carrier work. Veteran letter carriers should make every effort to provide helpful suggestions and assistance to our newest brothers and sisters regarding protective clothing and safe work methods. A review of some practical winter weather safety guidelines for letter carriers follows.

COLD and WIND

Unlike reptiles, humans are warm-blooded creatures. As a result, our bodies must respond to and compensate for significant differences in temperature between the environment and our normal body temperature of about 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit. We normally assist this process by wearing clothing, which acts as a buffer between our skin and cold air, as well as cold surfaces.

Wind enhances the chilling effect of cold air by carrying heat and moisture away from our bodies. This effect is typically referred to as the windchill. Windchill also affects animals, but has no effect on inanimate objects such as automobiles. Windchill is not the actual temperature of the air, but rather it is a measure of the effect of the cold air plus the effect of wind on exposed skin.

Snow cover also enhances the effect of cold air because of its high reflectivity. Much of the sunlight that reaches snow covered surfaces is reflected right back into space and is not absorbed by the earth or its atmosphere. The surface air stays colder over snow cover than when the ground is bare. Cold air is also heavier than warm air and has a tendency to sink and pool near the ground, particularly at night.

During the winter season a letter carrier typically spends six to seven or more hours per day exposed to cold and wind, and the risk of cold-related injury is significant. The most common and a potentially serious cold-related injury incurred by letter carriers is frostbite. Frostbite can occur anywhere on the body, although the face, hands, and feet are most susceptible. The initial symptoms of frostbite are a loss of feeling and a white or pale appearance of the skin on extremities such as fingers, toes, earlobes, or the tip of the nose. If you detect these symptoms, stop and seek medical help immediately. Continuing to work with the initial symptoms of frostbite may result in serious and permanent tissue damage to the affected areas.

Job-related frostbite is considered to be a traumatic injury and should always be reported on U.S. Department of Labor OWCP Form CA-1 when it occurs. Frostbite is also considered a medical emergency. If medical treatment is not immediately available, slowly re-warm the affected area but do not immerse it in hot water. Since there is a loss of feeling with frostbite, burns can result. Frostbite is perhaps the most underreported winter season letter carrier injury, particularly among newer, less experienced letter carriers.

A less common but even more serious condition is hypothermia. Prolonged exposure to cold, wind, and moisture can result in a drop in body temperature that can be dangerous and potentially fatal. If the human body temperature drops below 95 degrees, immediate medical care is necessary. The most common sign of hypothermia is uncontrolled shivering.

The importance of protecting yourself by dressing properly before working in the cold cannot be overstated. It is better for a letter carrier to wear several layers of lighter clothing rather one very heavy garment, because body heat and warmer air gets trapped between the layers, providing an insulating effect. Wearing layers also allows you to adjust to changes in conditions while your work. The layer of clothing that is closest to your skin should be of a light material that will not trap moisture from perspiration next to your skin, but rather allows moisture to pass through the material.

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Winter Safety

About half of the body's heat loss in cold weather is through the top of the head, thus wearing a hat is essential for maintaining body heat. Insulated boots or other protective footwear is important for protection against both cold and moisture. Mittens are better than gloves but are usually not practical for letter carrier work.

It is helpful to eat more during periods of intense cold because the extra calories provide the body with fuel to keep it warm. We burn more calories performing the same task in cold weather than we do when it is warm. It is also helpful to drink plenty of liquids, for two reasons. First, sweating often occurs when working in cold weather as the body heats up under layers of protective clothing. Also, cold air is often extremely dry and it draws moisture away from the body. That is why dry and chapped skin is so common during the winter.

WINTER STORMS

Although they can be beautiful to observe, winter storms pose a potential risk to everyone. About 70% of winter storm-related deaths and serious injuries occur in automobile accidents. However, virtually all of the rest involve people who are caught out in winter storm without adequate protection or shelter or those such as letter carriers who must be outside in winter storm conditions as a result of their job requirements.

Snow is not frozen rain. The term for frozen raindrops is sleet. A snowflake can melt into a raindrop on its descent to the surface, but a raindrop cannot become a snowflake. Snowflakes are formed through an entirely separate process, where particles and crystals of frozen water vapor coalesce when the proper atmospheric conditions of temperature and moisture are present.

Two types of winter storms can affect us in Michigan. Organized areas of low atmospheric pressure can bring general heavy snowfall and other wintry precipitation to Michigan, particularly when they approach from the south and the west. Another frequent source of generally lighter snowfall in the winter season is the so-called "Alberta Clipper" systems that race to the southeast from the Canadian Prairies. Although snowfall from these "Clipper" systems is

generally not heavy, they are often quite energetic and are usually accompanied by a lot of wind and followed by very cold air.

Letter carriers in Western and Northern Michigan must also deal with heavy "lake effect" snowfall resulting from cold air moving over the relatively warmer water of the Great Lakes. Most of the Upper Peninsula, as well as the entire Lake Michigan shoreline and inland for 50 to 100 miles is commonly affected by lake effect snowfall. Lake effect snowfall can sometimes accumulate and cause problems even in Southeast Michigan.

Average annual winter season snowfall in Michigan ranges from about 40 to 45 inches in the Southeast corner of our State to 100 inches or more annually in some of the snowbelt regions of the Northern and Western Lower Peninsula. In parts of the Upper Peninsula as much as 150 to 200 inches or more may fall during the winter season.

OTHER WINTER HAZARDS

Freezing rain or ice storms occur when raindrops fall from warmer air aloft that is above freezing and then reach the where the temperature is below freezing. The liquid water then turns to ice upon contact with the ground, creating very hazardous conditions for letter carriers to walk or drive. Ice storms can also cause major property damage as well as widespread electric power outages. Freezing rain is most common in the Southern Lower Peninsula and a significant ice storm occurs in Michigan about once every two years.

Sometimes rain that is falling from warmer air aloft will freeze into solid or nearly solid ice pellets before reaching the ground. This is known as sleet and it is generally less hazardous than freezing rain, although still a walking and driving hazard. Sleet is sometimes erroneously referred to as hail, but it is not the same as the true hail that falls from thunderstorm clouds during the warmer season.

A PRACTICAL RESPONSE

USPS management unrealistically expects mail delivery to be as efficient in deep snow or icy conditions as it is during warm and dry weather. Computer-generated workload information does not include weather factors and it is up to the supervisor to make real world considerations about our daily

work. Most often that does not occur. There is no reason to get upset when a supervisor fails to realistically assess your work. Don't argue; simply follow the established reporting procedures in the M-41 handbook, and notify management if you are subsequently unable to meet unrealistic time expectations.

Computer workload "numbers" are merely management's typically inaccurate estimates. Your actual work as a professional letter carrier is the only determinant of what is real. **Always take the necessary time and precautions** to avoid injury or illness due to hazardous weather conditions. Overexertion in deep snow and severe cold or during intense heat can be dangerous even for a healthy and well-conditioned person.

It is appropriate to list weather conditions on PS form 3996 as a reason for requesting assistance or overtime when it is clear to you that the weather will be impacting the time needed for street duties. It also does not help that letter carriers are routinely instructed to walk across lawns. As a result, in the winter the normal walkway is frequently covered with snow. Most customers do not shovel their lawns.

If existing or developing weather conditions result in the need for more time than was expected or authorized to complete deliveries, letter carriers should seek instructions. **You should NEVER skip any portion of your lunch or break times**, or perform their work in a manner that is unsafe for delivery conditions simply to make up time lost because of the weather. Stopping for food provides important fuel and energy for the body's internal warmth, as well as providing a respite from prolonged exposure to harsh conditions.

In summary, winter weather brings some unique and difficult hazards for all letter carriers. Postal management is concerned only with making their phony "numbers," and not with your health or well-being. It is ultimately up to YOU to do whatever is necessary to avoid winter weather-related injuries and illnesses.

-- Joe Golonka

Branch 2184 Contract Administration



Choosing Knowledge Over Fear at Work

18th Century philosopher and author Edmund Burke once observed that "no passion so effectively robs the mind of all its powers of acting and reasoning as fear." There is in fact no other human emotion that has a greater and more consistently negative and even destructive impact on our thinking and decision making.

Fear is either directly or substantially responsible for nearly every bad human decision. Although our species has evolved to sense and recognize genuine danger in our external environment, the overwhelming amount of human fear results not from real or valid threats to our physical safety or well-being. Rather, fear is most often the direct product of misdirected thinking caused by ignorance or misinformation, as well as from emotional manipulation by others.

Because of this, fear is very often effectively used as a political, social and cultural weapon. As a pertinent example, note the cynical appeals to fear and to ignorance that characterize so many political campaigns. Because fear is the most consistently irrational of all human emotions it is particularly useful for accomplishing political means that could not otherwise be attained through factual and reasoned debate.

Postal Service management usually makes no attempt to be subtle with their frequent use of fear tactics such as bullying and intimidation. In far too many instances it still becomes their "go to" strategy and their weapon of choice for intimidation in the workplace. Management's endless obsession with achieving meaningless numbers creates a Machiavellian work floor strategy where the ends justify the means, no matter how they are accomplished. This inevitably results in abusive management work floor conduct.

The development and application of computer-generated time estimates such as "DOIS" to a labor-intensive job that incorporates hundreds of daily variables is simply a fraud. Real time letter carrier work, especially in the street, can only be quantified when it actually occurs, not in advance. DOIS is a

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Choosing Knowledge

classic example of GIGO (garbage in, garbage out). However, this otherwise worthless and irrational program is frequently used as an excuse to browbeat hard working letter carriers. It is also used to provide cover for a ridiculous and unnecessary level of micromanagement, thereby creating a phony excuse for maintaining a bloated management corps in the USPS.

However, NONE of this should matter at all to a professional letter carrier. Employee fear in the Postal workplace is entirely misplaced and completely unnecessary, especially for those that have completed their probationary period of employment. Those in management that engage in abusive and intimidating conduct should NEVER be feared for ANY reason whatsoever. This begins with realizing that the childish and emotionally immature bullying behavior displayed by some in Postal Service management is ultimately an exercise in futility. Instead, such cowardly conduct should be documented, challenged, and shut down. In every instance, abusive management personnel are just very inadequate human beings that should be mocked and pitied – but never feared. Theirs is merely a “tin god” authority borne of personal insecurity and wholly inadequate supervisory and interpersonal skills.

The Universal Antidote for Fear

Most importantly, there is a 100% effective antidote to fear that has always existed. That remedy is simply the acquirement and application of knowledge. Ignorance is the constant traveling companion of fear, and overcoming ignorance will eliminate the presence of fear as well as effectively neutralize those that attempt to use it. **For Postal Service letter carriers, that means knowing ALL of your rights in the workplace and then working each day in a manner which clearly informs management that you know your rights and you WILL NOT be used or intimidated to accomplish their misguided and self-serving goals.**

Fully informed and professional letter carriers truly are management’s greatest nightmare. They know that the emperor really does have no clothes. There is NOTHING that management can ultimately

do that can negatively impact them or cause harm to their families, including phony disciplinary actions or threats thereof. Thus, they can just laugh at childish management behavior.

So be that informed and professional letter carrier. Take the time to learn everything that you need to know about your job, your rights, and your responsibilities. Always work every minute of every day in a safe, sane and professional manner. NEVER work through any portion of your unpaid lunch period. Always take your union-negotiated 10-minute breaks and utilize ALL necessary comfort stops for personal needs. Let management be obsessed with their bogus numbers. Letter carriers should ONLY care about working safely and providing quality customer service. **Most of all, always remember that YOU are the sole owner of your job and your daily work - not your supervisor.**

Immediately report to your steward all instances of bullying and antagonistic management behavior towards any letter carrier and be ready to provide witness statements when asked. Always stay cool, do not engage, and let your UNION respond to all instances of management misbehavior. That’s what we do. There is NO place whatsoever for any form of fear in the United States Postal Service, especially a management-created hostile work environment.

Fear is ugly and primal, fear is toxic, and most of all fear is extremely harmful to your health and your personal well-being. Remember that each of us is the product of four billion years of evolutionary success. We all possess the capability for knowledge and rational thought. Use that capability each day at work and your job becomes only what it was intended to be – merely a means of providing for what actually matters in life.

-- Joe Golonka

Branch 2184 Contract Administration



**Postal Holiday
February 20, 2023**

National Association of Letter Carriers

100 Indiana Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20001-2144

Memorandum

Telephone:
(202) 393-4695

November 10, 2022

Contract COLA: Accumulated COLA is \$125 through October 2022

The projected accumulation toward the seventh regular COLA under the 2019-2023 National Agreement was \$125 in November following the release of the October 2022 Consumer Price Index.

On November 10, 2022, the Bureau of Labor Statistics announced that the CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W, 1967=100) stood at 872.767 in October, 127.391 points above the base level of 745.376 in July 2019. The accumulated COLA through October stood at 6 cents per hour or \$125 annually.

The seventh COLA will be based on the increase in the CPI-W between the base index month and January 2023, less any previously calculated COLAs, and will be payable the second full pay period following the release of the January 2023 index. The six COLAs that have been calculated under the 2019-2023 National Agreement, totaling 312 cents per hour, are as follows: the 1st COLA, 8 cents per hour (\$166 annually), the 2nd COLA, 9 cents per hour (\$188 annually), the 3rd COLA, 20 cents per hour (\$416 annually), the 4th COLA, 93 cents per hour (\$1,934 annually), the 5th COLA, 64 cents per hour (\$1,331 annually), and the 6th COLA, 118 cents per hour (\$2,455 annually).

2024 Retiree COLAs Projection: 0.4% as of October 2022

The 2024 COLAs for CSRS and FERS benefits are based on the increase in the average CPI-W between the 3rd quarter of 2022 (291.901) and the 3rd quarter of 2023 (TBA).

Based on the October 2022 CPI-W (1982-84) of 293.003, the 2023 CSRS and FERS COLAs are currently projected to be 0.4%. The 2024 retiree COLA calculation will be finalized in October 2023 with the release of the CPI-W for September 2023.

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

2023 FECA COLA Projection: 7.0% as of October 2022

Based on the release of the October 2022 CPI-W (1982-84=100), the 2022 FECA COLA projection is 7.0%. The October 2022 CPI-W of 293.003 was 7.0% above the December 2021 base index (273.925). The 2023 FECA COLA calculation will be finalized when the December 2022 CPI-W is published during the month of January 2023.

FECA COLAs are applicable only in cases where death or disability occurred more than one year prior to the adjustment's effective date.

Legislative Update

By Legislative and Political Organizer - *Anna Mudd*

As I reflect on this past year and what letter carriers have accomplished on the legislative front, I couldn't have better news to report. History was made in a way that should make you feel a sense of pride to have been a part of it. What am I talking about? The passage of the 2022 Postal Service Reform Act.

Passage of the 2022 Postal Service Reform Act was a long time coming. Letter carrier activists all over the country had been battling to repeal the unfair mandate to prefund retiree health benefits since shortly after it became law in 2006. No matter where our members carried mail or how active they were in their branch at the time, they knew of the negative impacts to the postal service. Work to repeal the law would be the focus of the NALC's legislative agenda for many years.

The beginning of 2022 saw momentum shift due to the hard work of carriers and the excitement ramped up. There was a strong feeling everyone's hard work would finally pay off. Many letters to our congressional representatives were written, phone calls were made, and our members of Congress heard the message of letter carriers.

Shortly after passage of postal reform in April, focus shifted to two other pieces of legislation affecting letter carriers. HR 82, The Social Security Fairness Act and HR 4268, The Federal Retirement Fairness Act had been introduced in the 117th Congress already, and letter carrier activists were working to educate members of Congress on why they needed to support these bills. Members of Congress were jumping on board to cosponsor these bills. While the number of cosponsors has steadily climbed on these bills, the 117th Congress is coming to an end.

So, while the 117th Congress was a great success, we still have work to do. The 118th Congress will be sworn in early January 2023 and will have some brand-new members. Letter carrier activists will need to quickly work to educate them on our issues. We will focus on getting the Social Security Fairness Act and Retirement Fairness Act re-introduced. There will be other issues to focus on as well and I know we will be ready for whatever comes our way.

I want to thank each and every one of you for the work you do to support the NALC's legislative agenda and for always being there when there is a call to action. When we stay involved, we can accomplish anything. The passage of postal reform is a great example of letter carriers doing what needs to be done. Happy Holidays to all of you and I am looking forward to working with you in 2023.

National Association of Letter Carriers

Fact Sheet

Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) The WEP (enacted in 1982) reduces the Social Security benefits of retired public employees (federal, state and local) who also worked in Social Security-covered private sector employment—if they receive a government annuity for their non-Social Security-covered government employment. This provision hits CSRS retirees directly (but not FERS retirees). In all, nearly two million Americans have been adversely affected by the WEP provision—a number that will grow as more CSRS employees retire.

The Social Security Fairness Act of 2021 (H.R. 82 and S. 1302) would eliminate the GPO and the WEP titles of the Social Security Act for benefits payable for months after December 2021. By repealing the GPO and the WEP, the bill would change the current law that reduces Social Security benefits for individuals who receive other benefits. NALC fully supports H.R. 82 and S. 1302 and urges Congress to cosponsor and pass into law this important legislation.

Branch 2184 New Members

Mahmood Alkhuzae I	Dearborn Main
Kyle Atwood	Monroe
Page Bledsos	Northville
Derry Caldwell	Canton
Larry Clark	Dearborn Heights
Fox Foster	Belleville
Jamal Gilmer	Dearborn Main
Deonna Grubb	Canton
Shantese Jennings	Inkster
Tezron Lewis	Canton
Antonio Moore	Dearborn Main
Riley Newton	Trentonq
Taylor Oliver	Dearborn Main
Gabrielle Smith	Taylor
Marquita Tillman	Dearborn Heights
Crisandra Welch	Westland
Preciouos Bridget	Canton
Fermin Perez	Dearborn Annex
Devan Ragland	Dearborn Main
Chiquita Turner	Dearborn Annex
Quentin Williams	Canton
Jessica Crawford	Allen Park
Paul Ivison	Dearborn Main
Joseph McKenzie	Allen Park
Freddie McKinney	Canton
Raphael Thompson Jr	Dearborn Main
Manuel Williams	Dearborn Heights
Lonnie Allgood	Westland
Madison Amegah	Taylor
Timia Carter	Dearborn Heights
Kevin Earnest	Dearborn Heights
Robin Grover	Inkster
Tanisha Hughes	Inkster
Rami Jadallah	Dearborn Annex

Jason Janovits	Westland
Vincent Latta	Canton
Alexandra Mack	Taylor
Charles Miller Jr	Inkster
Tayler Oatis	Dearborn Heights
Elizabeth Sloan	Plymouth
Davonna Toland	Canton
Devell Winston	Dearborn Annex
Jasmine Coleman	Belleville
Raymond Ford	Dearborn Annex
Joshua Irick	Trenton
Dorothy Monier	Dearborn Annex
Sherin Nssar	Dearborn Annex
Kaliah Patrick	Inkster
Renee Seng	Westland
Emanuel Tanks	Westland
Chelay Young	Canton

Retirements

Retirements from pay periods
21, 22, 23, 24/2022

Scott Wandyg	Dearborn Annex
Chauncey Payne	Taylor
Michelle Rodrigues	Belleville

Milestone Members

50 year members

Glenn Baske	Dearborn Heights
Timothy Dickinson	Northville
Mary Ferrari	Plymouth
James Johnson	Inkster
Linda Peterson	Belleville
Ismail Ramirez	Dearborn
Rita Constantakis	Allen Park
Joyce Marx	Allen Park
Wallace Roach	Allen Park
Andrew Sueta	Allen Park

Deaths

Frank Gorski	Dearborn Main
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Welcome

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.

Even during this pandemic, you can still make donations to the uniform bank by bringing in gently used uniforms and gear to your office. Give it to your steward and he/she will make sure your donation gets to the Branch 2184 office.

Lets make our new members feel welcome.

For more information call
313-295-1640

Branch 2184 Web Site www.nalc2184.org

"FMLA" forms
OWCP Information
Carrier Pay Chart
CCA Information
2184 Memo of Understanding
National Agreement
Grievance Forms
Grievance Guidelines
Grievance Issue Statements
JCAM, MRS, M-39, M-41
Newest Covid 19 Relief Plan
Retirement Information
Contract Agreement
E-COMP for Covid

Contract Corner:

Family Medical Leave Act and Medical Documentation

A subject of increasing concern for letter carriers involves arbitrary documentation demands made by Postal Service management for absences due to accepted Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) claims. Some employees mistakenly believe that once their medical condition or that of a qualifying family member has been accepted as FMLA-protected, USPS management no longer has the right to request documentation of any absences related to the FMLA claim. However, if paid leave such as sick leave is being requested, management in fact can require supporting documentation, as explained below.

The FMLA itself specifically and only guarantees the use of **unpaid leave** for qualifying absences. However, Postal Service regulations in the Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM) section 515.42 allow employees to substitute paid leave for FMLA absences – either sick or annual leave. If paid leave is requested by the employee, then USPS regulations for the use of paid leave are fully applicable, even if the reason for the absence itself is the subject of a current FMLA claim.

In November 2015 the NALC and the Postal Service signed a National-level settlement that covered a wide range of FMLA-related issues. This settlement can be found in the NALC's Materials Reference System (MRS) and is numbered M-01866. **One of the subjects specifically addressed in M-01866 is a requirement for supporting documentation for an absence of three days or less:**

In answer to whether management can require "supporting documentation" for an absence of three days or less in order for an employee's absence to be protected under the FMLA, the parties agreed that:

The Postal Service may require an employee's leave to be supported by an FMLA medical certification, unless waived by management, in order for the absence to be protected. When an employee uses leave due to a condition already supported by an

FMLA certification, the employee is not required to provide another certification in order for the absence to be FMLA protected.

We further agree that the documentation requirements for leave for an absence of three days or less are found in Section 513.361 of the Employee and Labor Relations Manual which states in pertinent part that:

- *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 (see 513.39) or when the supervisor deems documentation desirable for the protection of the interests of the Postal Service. (Pre-arbitration Settlement, Q98N-4Q-C 01090839, December 9, 2002, M-01474).*

This settlement is intended to distinguish the documentation requirements for approved leave and the certification requirements for leave to be protected under the FMLA. However, in order for the leave to receive FMLA protection, management may require certification of a serious health condition from a health care provider as defined in the FMLA.

This settlement does not prejudice management's right to request "recertification" of a serious health condition. However, requests for recertification must be done on a case-by-case basis and in accordance with FMLA. FMLA does not permit the employer to require recertification for qualifying exigency leave or military caregiver leave.

Of note, the ELM 513.361 citation listed above also provided the genesis for the Postal Service's controversial and often misapplied "Deems Desirable" program, a subject which will be discussed in much more detail in a future "Contract Corner."

Meanwhile, letter carriers should be aware that although management in some instances has the right to request documentation of an absence of 3 days or less, this is **NOT** an unfettered or unconditional right. Such requests cannot be arbitrary or capricious in nature, meaning that **management must have a valid basis for them.** If a supervisor "deems docu-

mentation desirable" for the protection of the interests of the Postal Service, **it then becomes their obligation to prove an alleged "protection of interests" need as applied to that specific employee absence.**

Because management typically cannot prove a valid "protection of interests" need, in nearly every situation where documentation is requested for an absence of 3 days or less, including absences for FMLA-related situations, **after the complying with the request the employee should immediately initiate a grievance after returning to work.** Requested grievance remedy typically includes but is not limited to payment of any documented out of pocket expenses such as copays and mileage. Documented repeat violations of this nature by management could potentially warrant additional grievance remedies.

USPS Seatbelt Regulations

There continues to be a significant amount of misunderstanding and unfortunately, the spread of misinformation regarding Postal Service regulations pertaining to the use of seatbelts by employees while in the performance of their duties. The Postal Service seatbelt policy, which is found in Postal Employee's Guide to Safety (Handbook EL-814, section 10.D.2) is as follows:

- *You must wear safety belts **at all times** when the vehicle is in motion. When driving a long-life vehicle (LLV) or the carrier route vehicle (CRV), **you must wear the lap belt and shoulder belt whenever the vehicle is motion.** Exception: When shoulder belts prevent you from reaching to deliver or collect from curbside mailboxes, you may unfasten the shoulder belt, **but never the lap belt.***

Current USPS seatbelt regulations are also found in the M-41 Handbook (City Carriers Duties and Responsibilities), section 812.3. M-41 regulations pertaining to vehicle operations further state:

- ***"When traveling to and from the route, when moving between park and relay points, and when entering or crossing intersecting roadways, all vehicle doors must***

(Continued on page 16)

(Continued from page 15)

Contract Corner

be closed. When operating a vehicle on delivery routes and traveling in intervals of 500 feet (1/10 mile) or less at speeds not exceeding 15 MPH between delivery stops, the door on the driver's side may be left open. Do not finger mail while driving or hold mail in your hands while the vehicle is in motion. You must use mirror to check for pedestrians ahead, in back, and on both sides before placing the vehicle in motion."

Unfortunately, Postal Service seatbelt and vehicle operations rules are frequently ignored by some letter carriers who are in too much of a rush to take the time to comply with them, thereby seriously jeopardizing their safety as well as that of others. Additionally, they are risking serious disciplinary action. What's your hurry, anyway?

-- Joe Golonka
Chairperson
Branch 2184
Contract Administration Unit

Attention Branch

2184 Retirees and Members!!!

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313-659-8827 (voice & text)

NALC High Option Plan — Aetna Medicare Advantage

You must be a member of the NALC Health Benefit Plan High Option to opt in to the new NALC High Option Plan — Aetna Medicare Advantage As with all plan options offered by the NALC Health Benefit Plan, if you are a non-Postal employee, annuitant, survivor annuitant, or a former spouse eligible for coverage under the Spouse Equity Law or eligible for Temporary Continuation of Coverage (TCC) you become an associate member of National Association of Letter Carriers (the union) when you enroll in the NALC Health Benefit Plan. Associate members will be billed by the National Association of Letter Carriers for the \$36 annual membership fee.

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- \$0 deductible and coinsurance for medical care (you have this with your existing coverage if you are enrolled in Medicare Parts A and B)
- Unlimited physical, occupational and speech therapy visits
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- Continued access to your doctors (see any doctor who is eligible to receive Medicare payment and accepts the NALC High Option Plan — Aetna Medicare Advantage). Call the Aetna Retiree Solutions service center at 866-241-0262 (TTY: 711) for assistance • Additional programs, like the SilverSneakers® fitness program, Healthy Home Visits, all at no extra cost.

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The Branch 2184 Officers and Stewards would like to extend to you and your families best wishes for a happy and joyous holiday season and a healthy, happy and prosperous new year.

May you enjoy all the blessings of peace and liberty, and the benefits of the special strength that flows from solidarity.



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