

Branch 2184 ... "Speaks"

Official Publication of Branch 2184, NALC, AFL-CIO

July/August 2021

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Office Hours:

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

Calendar Branch Meetings: Sept 1st, 2021 (7:30 p.m. - Teleconference)

Retirees Meetings: (12:30 p.m. - Union Hall) Due to COVID 19 meetings are

cancelled

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President's Report

LMOU STAYS THE SAME

Since no side chose to open up LMOU (Local Memorandum of Understanding, also known as our Local Contract) negotiations during the negotiations time frame of 04/29/2021 through 05/28/2021, the language within our LMOU remains the same. Our Local Contract is now good from September 20, 2019, to May 20, 2023, which is the end of our current National Agreement.

BRANCH ELECTIONS

We are almost done with our Branch elections of 2021. All Branch officer and steward positions have been filled except for the Grosse Ile office which is in the process of a runoff election for a steward. The election committee will meet on August 20th, 2021, to do the final tabulation of ballots for a Grosse Ile steward. On behalf of the Branch, I would like to thank the newly elected officers, stewards and thank the outgoing officers and stewards for their years of hard work for the membership of Branch 2184. (There will be election results in this edition of the Speaks). I want to also thank the election committee, which was led by veteran Committee Chairperson Dave Reise, as well as Joe Golonka, Mark Judd, Phil Ashford Jr., Erik Venzke, and alternates Katrina Jones and Mark Owen. We thank the committee for their long hours of work for the Branch in this election process.

DISPENSATION GRANTED

On July 29, 2021, NALC President Fred Rolando responded to my request to suspend our current Bylaw requirement of 30 members to be present at a branch meeting in order to have a quorum to a temporary quorum of 15 members being present. President Fred Rolando granted this request through the end of 2021. This will allow the business of the branch to continue during monthly branch meetings until the end of the year. As recent as our April and May 2021 membership branch meetings, we were unable to make the 30-member quorum.

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Officers

Officers	•
President	Walt McGregory
Executive Vice President	
Vice President	
Recording Secretary	Melvin MacDonald
Financial Secretary Treas	
Sergeant at Arms	
Health Benefits Rep	Jim Powell
Retirees Officer	Leonard Zawisa
Trustee	Joe Golonka
Trustee	
Trustee	
Editor	Leonard Zawisa
Branch Scribe	Joe Golonka
Injury Compensation	Erik Venzke
Injury Compensation	
Web Page Design	Jim Hales
Branch Contract Admin	istration Unit
Joe Golonka	Chairperson



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

Stewarus	Stewarus		
Allen Park	Kris Shaw (alt) Karen Russell (alt)		
Belleville	Bryon Hendricks		
Dearborn (Main)	Symone Coleman Yvonne Jackson (alt)		
Dearborn (Annex)	Jacqueline McGregory Rose Miller (alt)		
Dearborn Heights	Jacqueline McGregory (alt)		
Dundee	Gloria Warthen (alt)		
Flat Rock.	Gloria Warthen (alt)		
Grosse Ile	Gloria Warthen (alt)		
Inkster	Scherrie Lacey (alt)		
Lincoln Park	Scott Watts		
Monroe	Jacqueline McGregory (alt) Melvin MacDonald (alt)		
Northville			
Plymouth	Kristie Nelson Diego Forshaw (alt)		
Rockwood	Gloria Warthen (alt)		
Taylor	Darryl Clay (alt)		
Temperance	Gloria Warthen (alt)		
Trenton	Jeffery Webb (alt)		
Westland			
	Nakia Whitfield		
Canton	Jacqueline McGregory (alt)		
Ypsilanti			
	Danita Smith (alt)		

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President's Report

IN PERSON BRANCH MEETINGS

We were originally scheduled to meet in person for our monthly membership meeting on September 1st, 2021, at the Branch 2184 union hall. However, out of an abundance of caution, and with the rise in new Covid-19 cases around the state of Michigan, I am forced to change this Branch meeting back to a telephonic format as we have been doing during the last past year since the start of the pandemic.

NALC Region 6 National Business Agent Troy Clark will be swearing in the newly elected Branch 2184 Officers and stewards at 7:00 pm on 09/01/2021 via his WebEx system. I have sent out the invite to all the officers and stewards for this event via their email addresses.

50, 60, AND 70-YEAR RETIREES DIN-NER

We traditionally have our 50, 60, and 70-year Retirees Dinner at our September Branch meeting, to honor those retirees who paved the way for all of us as Letter Carriers. Unfortunately, because of the rise in Covid-19 cases, we have decided out of an abundance of caution for our retirees that it is best to postpone this dinner until a later date. I have assigned branch Executive Vice President Mark Judd to notify each of our 50, 60, and 70-year members who have Gold Cards, pins and Letters coming to them, to verify their current addresses and to send their Gold Cards, pins and letters to them via mail. We will get together in the future to celebrate safely with each other.

TRAINING

I have assigned Plymouth steward and Detroit District Safety Committee Member Kristie Nelson to attend the Virtual School of Stewards I training being conducted by our regional office on August 24, 2021 thru August 26, 2021. While Kristie is a veteran union official, this training will offer a refresher for Kristie as she has stepped up to be a titled steward in her office after being an alternate for years.

Trustee Elect and current Trenton steward Tracy Mitchell has attended virtual new branch officer's

training that was conducted by our National Officers starting back on July 11, 2021. Current trustee Felicia Davis attended this virtual training with sister Tracy Mitchell on the same day. Dearborn steward Darryl Clay attended By-Law Virtual Training put on by the National Officers along with Tracy Mitchell on July 25, 2021, as they will be on the Branch's upcoming Bylaw Committee. Recording Secretary Mel MacDonald and current trustee Gloria Warthen attended Virtual New Branch Officer Training on 08/08/2021.

The branch will continue to provide training and assistance to the officers and stewards to ensure that the membership of the branch is well represented.

ALL HANDS-ON DECK

I am proud to inform you that each and every one of your elected Branch Officers will be performing work in one or more of our 20 Branch 2184 offices. Where there are no stewards or union representation in any given office, a branch officer will be assigned to that office and each branch officer will have the ability if needed to perform Informal Step A grievances, Formal Step A grievances, or both, in all 20 offices of Branch 2184. If a steward or step A designee goes on vacation or is out of their office for an extended period, a branch officer will step in to make sure that the grievances are current and remain timely. All of the elected Branch 2184 officers are here to serve the membership with NALC pride!

-- Walt McGregory President

EVP's Report

Are You Ready to Take Action?

If so, then congratulations, for keeping up with your NALC member App and for doing your part in ensuring the passage of critically important legislation regarding the US Postal Service. If, on the other hand you have no idea what I am writing about, then you need to continue reading and prepare to take action. During a recent Region 6 teleconference, NALC National EVP Brian Renfroe said the

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EVP's Report

NALC expects that critical legislation currently pending in Congress will likely come up for a vote at the end of the summer or into the early fall.

There are a handful of bills on Capitol Hill regarding postal issues but the most important piece of legislation is HR 3076 / S 145, also known as the 2021 Postal Reform Act. This bill has three major parts. The first would repeal the prefunding requirement under the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act (PAEA) which was passed in 2006. 2006 PAEA law mandated that the USPS fund decades worth of health benefits for its future retirees. This prefunding requirement alone has cost the USPS an average of \$5.2 billion annually since its inception in 2007. The second part of the 2021 Postal Reform Act would allow the USPS to maximize savings on health insurance cost through Medicare integration, once an employee reaches the age of 65. The third part of the 2021 Postal Reform Act would require the USPS to maintain mail delivery six days a week.

The NALC has been working for years on comprehensive postal reform legislation that works for all the stakeholders involved, and this legislation looks like it has the best chance for passage. Now it is up to you to do your part and be ready "To Take Action". How do you do that? One of the simplest ways to keep informed on workplace issues and important legislation is through the free NALC Member App. All you have to do is go to the App Store or Google Play and search for "NALC Member App" to install for free.

For those of you who might be a little more technologically challenged or you still haven't mastered your flip phone, you can go to the NALC website, nalc.org and follow the news, or the Branch 2184 web site nalc2184.org. Last but certainly not least, you can keep up with this information in the *Postal Record* or your very own *Branch 2184 Speaks*. With so much information available (literally at your fingertips), to not stay informed would be a shame. After all, it involves the wellbeing of you and your family, as well as that of your employer.

As we have discussed many times before, another way is to put your money to work in passing

crucial legislation. You can easily do this through a contribution to our own letter carrier political action committee, the LCPF. Please remember that the LCPF uses your funds that you voluntarily donate and does not use any of your dues money to lobby and educate congress. If you need help signing up, please give the Branch office a call. One of your Branch officers would be glad to assist you. Please remember to stay informed, stay safe, mask up, be prepared to take action, and of course enjoy the rest of your summer!

-- Mark Judd Executive Vice President

VP's Report

Backpay Update

On 08/12/2021, I attended a Bi-weekly WebEx with NBA Troy Clark and guest speaker NALC Executive Vice President Brian Renfroe. EVP Renfroe reported to the leadership of Region 6 that our employer had given him and our national officers confirmation of our backpay being on our August 20th, 2021, paychecks. By the time you read this newsletter, you should have already received your backpay. If not, contact your steward for assistance.

COLA

The July 2021, (COLA) Cost of Living Allowance for regular carriers equals \$1934 annually for a Step O letter carrier, which equates to \$0.93 more per hour. All other steps will be prorated starting at \$0.57 more per hour for Step AA. This is the largest COLA we have received in the history of having collective bargaining with our employer which started in 1971. While COLAs are not applicable to CCAs, the CCAs will receive higher general wage increases over the life of our current contract.

Emergency Federal Employee Leave Still Available

On the Bi-weekly WebEx, we were informed that there is still plenty of money remaining in the funds for EFEL use. The funds disappear at the close of business on September 30th, 2021. To use EFEL Leave, you must fill out a PS 3971 and indicate one of the eight qualifying reasons for use.

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Documentation may be required by management.

Covid-19 Memos Extended

The following Covid-19 memos have been extended through September 30th, 2021: temporary expanded sick leave for dependent care (M-01910); temporary use of the 7:01 rule (M-01913); temporary workplace changes to promote social distancing (M-01915); temporary use of TCAs (M-01916); and the suspension of MOU *Re: Temporary Additional Paid Leave for CCAs* (M-01941).

By joint agreement (M-01958), several COVID related memorandums of understanding have been further extended through September 30, 2021. These memoranda include: temporary expanded sick leave for dependent care (M-01910); temporary use of the 7:01 rule (M-01913); temporary workplace changes to promote social distancing (M-01915); temporary use of TCAs (M-01916); and the suspension of MOU *Re: Temporary Additional Paid Leave for CCAs* (M-01941).

NALC and the Postal Service also agreed, to another temporary time limit extension on Step B and arbitration appeals (M-01960), and an agreement giving local parties the ability to develop a sign-up process for full-time employees who previously did not, or could not, place their names on either the overtime desired list or work assignment list (M-01959). Both of these agreements will expire on September 30, 2021, as well.

Also extended through September 30, 2021, is a USPS memorandum (M-01914) which instructs managers and supervisors to allow liberal changes of schedule to accommodate employees who are dealing with childcare issues related to the pandemic. The memorandum also provides for liberal sick leave usage for employees who are sick and liberal annual and leave without pay (LWOP) to the extent operationally feasible, treats COVID-19 related leave as scheduled (as opposed to unscheduled) leave, and directs that leave taken for COVID-19 related reasons during this time not be cited in discipline for failing to maintain an assigned schedule.

CVS/COVID-19 Vaccinations

Now through the end of September 30th, 2021, letter carriers can use EFEL Covid-19 Leave to go to any CVS and receive a free Covid-19 vaccination

shot. It doesn't matter what kind of health insurance you have or even if you don't have any health insurance, you can get vaccinated for free at a CVS if you are a letter carrier. Letter carriers have the ability now to even walk in to any CVS without an appointment and get vaccinated.

-- Vice President
Jacqueline McGregory

From the Recording Secretary

First, thank you for reelecting me as your Recording Secretary.

I had Virtual New Branch Officer Training at the union office on a Sunday afternoon, 08/08/2021. I learned about cyberwarfare, fraud, and Email Compromise. Our national officers also talked about cyber criminals monetizing your data, fraud, scams, phishing, and more. Cyber criminals have made a big business since the pandemic.

By 2022, a new organization will fall victim to Ransomware every 11 seconds. By 2022, global damages related to cybercrime will be 6 trillion dollars. Since Covid-19 pandemic began, cyber-attacks are up 500%. Google has been blocking 18 million Covid-19 related phishing emails and malware daily. Covid-19 related phone scams are on the rise. Phishing websites have increased by 350%. Banks have experienced a 238% increase in cyber-attacks. Cyber criminals want to steal your money, steal your data, and scare you to steal your money.

We learned how to make a hackers life hard, as well as safe browsing, strong passwords (15-20 characters) the longer the better, how passwords fail, weak passwords (6-7 characters), reused passwords. When a company is breached, they get your password. New passwords should routinely be created for every site or service you use.

What can I do to be safe? Use a multifactor authentication or use a password manager. And for those security questions like, first car, first pet, mother's maiden name, DO NOT answer them correctly. Social engineering is the act of exploiting human error or emotion to gain private information

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Recording Secretary

or valuables.

Phishing is emails aimed at you to get you to do something you probably shouldn't do. Phishing defense.... First things first, is it too good to be true? Are there links to go to? DO NOT click them. The sign of the scam is bad English, weird return email addresses or "click here for something great". What should you do, is be aware and suspicious, THINK before you click!

Ransomware, it comes for your wallet. If it feels weird...STOP. Make sure you are downloading a file from a website you know and trust. Hackers are pain.... Follow these safety techniques to be safer on the computer: A two-factor password. Make passwords 15-18 characters long. Don't use the same password for every site. Technology should be making your life easier not harder.

Thanks for this opportunity to have this valuable training, it will help me represent you all in my Branch officer duties.

 Melvin MacDonald, Recording Secretary

Trustee Report

Branch Officers Training

Hello brothers and sisters of 2184. On July 11th, 2021, I had the pleasure of taking New Branch Officers training. The classes I took were inclusive of payroll, lost time issues, auditing branch records (Trustees), and cyber warfare. Although the training was virtual, it was great and very informational. I also learned about my fiduciary responsibilities as a branch officer. It is my job to work with other members of the executive board to ensure the books and property are intact.

This training taught me that everyone that is employed currently in the United States should have a Form I-9. Furthermore, if you are employed by the same employer, you only have to fill out a Form I-9 one time. Out of all the classes I took that day, the cyber class was the most informational because I am not a computer savvy individual. I found out a lot of things that I am doing wrong, like using your password more than one time is a big no-no.

Did you know that hacking is a business? Since the pandemic, cyber-attacks have gone up 500%. Ransomware attacks have increased by 148%. The FBI complaint center for Internet crimes has received over 3,600 covid-19 related scam complaints. In summary, when you're on the computer, make sure you have a strong security password.

Thanks for investing in me, and a special thanks to President Walt McGregory for considering me for this very important Branch Officer training. I am truly grateful.

Your Trustee, Felicia Davis

Virtual Branch Officers Training

I would like to personally thank the membership first and foremost for electing me as a Branch 2184 Trustee for the 2021-2023 term of office, and the opportunity to attend my second Virtual Branch Officer training. I would also like to thank President Walt McGregory for considering me for this training. There were three different classes that I virtually attended on Sunday, July 25, 2021

- Constitution and Bylaws
- Branch Elections.
- Policies and Minutes

The NALC Constitution has three main parts. The first part covers the national union; the second part is local branches; and the third part is state associations. The National committee of laws maintains a chronological record of each bylaws submission. It is also the duty of each branch and state association to maintain a complete and current set of bylaws. If a branch cannot locate its bylaws, the committee recommends that the branch prepare a new set of bylaws, which should be submitted to the Committee of Laws for approval after they have been voted on by the branch. The bylaws of a branch may be amended at any regular meeting of the branch, as long as the amendment has been submitted in writing at the last previous regular branch meeting. All members shall be notified at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting that the proposed changes are to be voted on.

The Constitution for the Government of Subordinate and Federal Branches (CGSFB) lists the required officers of a branch: President, Executive

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Vice President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, Sargent-at-Arms, a Health Benefits Representative and a Board of Trustees composed of either three or five members. The branch may provide for additional elective offices in its bylaws. All officers shall be elected for a term of one (1), two (2), or three (3) years, at the option of the Branch, or until their successors are duly elected and installed.

Branch elections should take place at a time specified in branch bylaws, but at least every three (3) years for local officers or other elected branch positions. The President or other body as authorized by the branch bylaws have 21 days before the election to appoint a committee to conduct and supervise all aspects of the election. No candidate for any office can be appointed to the election committee. One member of the election committee is appointed as chairperson.

When counting the ballots, if there is a tie for the highest vote, a run-off election of the candidates who tied must be held within 30 days of the original election. A notice of the run-off election must be mailed to each member 15 days before the date of the election. If the run-off election results in another tie vote the election shall be decided by a toss of a coin.

In conclusion, this training was time well spent and we learned a lot. I look forward to working with the branch officers, stewards and members of Branch 2184 for this 2021 - 2023 term of office.

-- Tracy Mitchell Trustee-Elect

NALC Officers Training

Greetings brothers and sisters of Branch 2184. On July 25, 2021 I participated in training at the union office. The classes I took were NALC Constitution, Bylaws, and Elections.

The NALC Constitution governs the way things are done. It gives order to the way our union runs at the national, state and branch levels. It requires that we will have and operate a Headquarters, a Health Plan, a Mutual Benefit plan, as well as a Political Action Committee. The Constitution even tells us the order of business for our branch meetings.

The bylaws class was very informative and explained in detail how to submit changes and/or ad-

ditions to your branch's bylaws. President Rolando has appointed three Officers to sit on "the Committee of Laws." Their job is to make sure that any bylaw changes do not conflict with the NALC Constitution. If a change does conflict, the branch will be notified and asked to clarify their intent.

In the elections class I learned about the different types of election. Some branches may have an election at their branch meeting or vote at each station for up to 7 days. A member of the election committee must be present at each station or polling place.

The NALC Regulations governing branch election procedures is very detailed and specific. It covered everything from who must be elected to how to properly appeal an outcome of an election. Overall, the training was well worth my time, I look forward to using this training to serve the membership. Thanks for the opportunity to learn on your behalf.

-- Darryl Clay Dearborn Main Steward

Branch 2184 Web Site www.nalc2184.org

Contract Agreement
CSRS & FERS Annuity Payments
 "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
(Includes Paid Leave)

Retirement Information

BRANCH 2184 MEETING NOTICE ALL BRANCH 2184 MEMBERS:

Until further notice, all of Branch 2184's Regular Membership Meetings will be conducted by Teleconference.

These meetings will take place on the first Wednesday of each month except for July and August and will begin at 7:30 p.m.

All active and retired Branch 2184 members are encouraged to participate. To do so, please call 1-234-203-2766. When prompted, enter the access code, which is 310-744-427. Once you are connected to the meeting, please MUTE your phone.

Meetings will include Officer reports, Contractual information, and other business of the Branch.

Positive COVID-19 Diagnosis? File that OWCP Claim NOW

Elsewhere in this issue of our Branch publication you will find a document published and distributed by the United States Department of Labor's Office of Workers Compensation Programs (OWCP). The Department of Labor is strongly encouraging any federal worker that contracted the COVID-19 virus OR that is subsequently infected between the dates of January 27, 2020 and January 27, 2023, even if your case was or is asymptomatic, to establish coverage under the Federal Employees Compensation Act (FECA) by initiating a claim. The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, signed by President Joe Biden on March 11, 2021 makes it **much easier** for federal workers to establish this coverage.

To be eligible, an employee merely needs to establish 1) a positive COVID-19 diagnosis anytime during this three-year period, and 2) that your work duties include any risk of exposure within 21 days prior to the diagnosis. This simply means that you carried out duties that required contact with patients, members of the public, or coworkers, or included a risk of exposure to the novel coronavirus.

These criteria clearly provide coverage for ANY Postal Service letter carrier that was work-

ing during the 21-day period prior to their COVID-19 diagnosis. Branch 2184 members that have contracted the COVID-19 virus OR that have a positive diagnosis before January 27. 2023 should notify their steward or the Branch 2184 office. This information will then be provided to our National Business Agent's office, who will prove expert assistance to the member with the development of their claim.

Also, the question will be asked - why those that have had previous positive COVID-19 diagnoses and believe that they are okay now should still file a claim? This is because the coronavirus has been well-documented as responsible for the subsequent development of many potentially serious and long-term physical and neurological conditions. Filing a claim NOW will facilitate the processing of any future claim for such consequential condition or impairment.

-- Joe Golonka

Not So Candid Camera

USPS letter carriers in the performance of their duties should always keep in mind that in this 21st Century world of mail and parcel delivery in the United States, there are cameras and recording devices everywhere. We are all familiar with the prevalence of doorbell cameras and similar video as well as audio monitoring devices that are quite common in private residences as well as most businesses.

As such, every letter carrier should perform all delivery duties at all times in a manner which assumes that you are on video and/or audio while working. In other words, simply perform all of your duties professionally and safely every minute of every day, being especially careful to avoid inappropriate actions and words that could result in serious disciplinary consequences for a letter carrier.

During the course of your daily work, you will at times encounter annoying individuals as well as unexpected delivery circumstances. That is part of the job. However, when these situations occur, always keep your thoughts and words to yourself, and never act in any manner that could reflect unfavorably on the Postal Service. You don't know who – or what, is watching and listening. However, this reality is nothing to be fearful or paranoid about. As long as you are working and conducting yourself in as safe

and professional manner, there is nothing to be concerned about.

Finally, should you find yourself in an investigation of ANY sort being conducted by anyone in management, whether it is your supervisor or an OIG agent or postal inspector, NEVER say or write anything without first requesting and then being provided with union representation. Be aware that representation is NOT automatically provided; it must be specifically requested by the employee. Your Weingarten rights are printed elsewhere in this issue of the Branch publication.

Although USPS employees are required to cooperate in postal investigations, under NO circumstances is a letter carrier required to participate without first being provided with union representation after it has been requested. If you have questions or concerns about your rights in postal investigations, request to see your steward or contact the Branch 2184 office.

Joe Golonka Chairperson, Branch 2184 Contract Administration Unit

Retiree's Report

Branch 2184 has been providing expanded retirement assistance ever since the Postal Service discontinued local retirement counseling. In the past two year members have been provided assistance by phone.

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

Eligibility for CSRS Retirement

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

Eligibility for FERS Retirement

<u>Immediate</u>	<u>Age</u>	Service (years)
	62	5
	60	20
1	MRA	30
MRA = Min	nimum	Retirement Age

Year of birth determines MRA - Example: (If you

were born in 1953 through 1964 your MRA is age 56. Years after 1965 increases your MRA.

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

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

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

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

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

90 days prior to retirement:

- 1. Request retirement paper work (Blue Book) from Shared Services (1-877-477-3273 Option 5) 90-days prior to planned retirement date.
- 2. Fill out retirement application (Blue Book). If you need assistance or are confused by any decisions you have to make you can contact the Union Office for assistance. Help will be provided by phone with the Branch Retirees Officer.
- 3. Call Shared Services for an individual phone counseling appointment 90 days prior to your retirement date. Phone counseling can be held at the Post Office on the clock or at your home. At home would be on your own time. The Shared Services counselor will go over your Blue Book with you line by line.
- 4. Remove completed pages from Blue Book, make copies for yourself and mail to address listed in book. Retirement date is your last work day.

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

-- Leonard Zawisa Retirees Officer

Did you hear it's Easier to File a FECA Claim for COVID-19 now?

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 that President Biden signed on March 11, 2021, makes it **much easier** for federal workers diagnosed with COVID-19 to establish coverage under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act. To establish a COVID-19 claim, you simply need to establish that you are a "covered employee," meaning that:

- 1. You were diagnosed with COVID-19. Specifically, you were diagnosed with COVID-19 while employed in the Federal service at any time during the period of January 27, 2020 to January 27, 2023; and,
- Your duties include any risk of exposure. Specifically, within 21 days of your diagnosis of COVID-19, you carried out duties that
 - a. required contact with patients, members of the public, or co-workers; or
 - b. included a risk of exposure to the novel coronavirus.



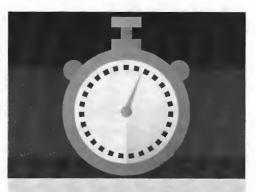
What Does the Change in the Law Mean?

- 1. You are only required to establish that your duties included a risk of exposure to COVID-19. You do not have to prove you were engaged in high-risk employment; that you were actually exposed to the virus; or that you were exposed to someone who had the virus while performing your duties.
- If you establish that you are a "covered employee," any diagnosed COVID-19 will be deemed to have been proximately caused by your Federal employment. You no longer have to establish a causal link between your employment and your COVID-19 diagnosis.



What to Do:

You can quickly and easily file a CA-1 Claim for COVID-19 through the Employees' Compensation Operations and Management Portal (ECOMP). You can access ECOMP at ecomp.dol.gov. If you have never used ECOMP, you can view this instructional video to learn how to register for an ECOMP account, and this video to learn how to file a COVID-19 claim. If you don't have access to a computer, contact your supervisor.



Why File Now? What if I Think I Am OK?

If you were previously diagnosed with COVID-19 or even if you believe you just have a mild case of COVID-19, you should consider filing a COVID-19 FECA claim **now** even if you have fully recovered and/or had an asymptomatic infection.

- In the event you develop a consequential injury, impairment or illness later as a result of your COVID-19 diagnosis, timely filing your claim now will facilitate the processing of any future claim for any such consequential condition or impairment.
- If you wait until you experience a consequential injury or illness to file your COVID-19 claim, your claim may be subject to time limitation and you will have to establish **both** the initial COVID-19 claim and the consequential condition claim before benefits can begin.



SIGN ME UP!

How to contribute to the Letter Carrier Political Fund using PostalEASE — ONLINE Enrollment

Through PostalEASE, active letter carriers can contribute directly from their USPS paychecks to the Letter Carrier Political Fund (NALC's PAC) by designating the Political Fund as one of the three payroll "allotments."

Online Enrollment

- 1. Login to USPS's Postal Ease website at https://ewss.usps.gov You may also get to the Postal Ease website through the USPS LiteBlue website See the instructions below
- 2. Click "l agree"
- 3. Enter your Employee ID number and Password and click "Submit" If you have not yet set up a password click the link provided on the page or go to:

https://ssp.usps.gov/ssp-web/welcome.xhtml

If you forgot your password click the link provided on the page or go

https://ssp.usps.gov/ssp-web/einVerification.xhtml

- 4. Under Payroll click "Allotments / Payroll Net To Bank"
- 5. Click "Continue"
- 6. Click "Allotments"
- 7. Enter the 9-digit Financial Institution Routing Number: 0 6 4 0 0 0 0 1 7
- Enter your 17-digit Account Number _ _ _ _ 0 0 3 4 9 5 2 5 3 5 See instructions in step D at right
- 9. Enter Account type as "checking"
- 10. Enter amount of your Allotment: \$ The maximum yearly amount is \$5,000
- 11. Click VALIDATE
- 12. Click SUBMIT
- 13. Print or write down your confirmation number for your records

To get to Postal Ease through Lite Blue:

- Got to www.liteblue.usps.gov
- Enter you employee ID and Password and click "Log On"
- Click "My HR"
- Click "Employee Apps"
- Click "PoastalEASE"
- Begin at step 1 above

BEFORE YOU START, YOU'LL NEED:

- A. Your 8-digit Employee ID Number (on your paystub)
- B. Your USPS password
- C. Your Postal Record Number (Located on the back cover of your Postal Record magazine, above your name. Or call 202.393.4695 to get your Postal Record Number). See the example below.

**** AUTO** 5- DIGIT 54321 XXXXXXX89 LC 9876 W 13 08 1234 Main Street Anywhere, US 54321-9999

D. To create your personal account number, insert the seven digits of your Postal Record Number to the spaces

_____0034952535

By making a contribution to the Letter Carrier Political Fund, you are doing so voluntarily with the understanding that your contribution is not a condition of membership in the National Association of Letter Carriers or of employment by the Postal Service, nor is it part of union dues. You have a right to refuse to contribute without any reprisal. Any guideline amounts are merely suggestions, and you may contribute more or less than the guidelines suggest and the union will not favor or disadvantage you by reason of the amount of your contribution or your decision not to contribute. The Letter Carrier Political Fund will use the money it receives to contribute to candidates for federal office and undertake other political spending as permitted by law. Your selection shall remain in full force and effect until cancelled. Contributions to the Letter Carrier Political Fund are not deductible for federal income tax purposes. Federal law prohibits the Letter Carrier Political Fund from soliciting contributions from individuals who are not NALC members, executive and administrative staff or their families. Any contribution received from such an individual will be refunded to that contributor. Federal law requires us to use our best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, name of employer and occupation of individuals whose contributions exceed \$200 in a calendar year.

Contract Corner:

Letter Carrier Work and Time Standards

A subject of widespread misunderstanding and misinformation — most of the latter coming from postal management, is letter carrier work and time standards. Article 34 of the NALC/USPS Collective Bargaining Agreement begins with the following: "The principle of a fair day's work for a fair day's pay is recognized by all parties to this Agreement." However, the question inevitably follows — by what, by whom, and just how is a "fair day's work" determined? There is a clear answer to this question, and it might surprise some of you.

Hint: This is NOT ever determined by postal management.

Office Work Standards

Provisions of the M-39 and M-41 Handbooks establish minimum office "standards" for letter carriers when casing mail and performing other morning office functions. However, as a practical matter, these numbers (18 letters or 8 flats per minute, 70 pieces a minute "pulldown" time, and a minimum of 33 minutes for other office functions), have little meaning except for purposes of adjusting a route following a 6-day mail count and inspection. The M-39 Handbook, section 242.332 provides that:

"No carrier shall be disciplined for failure to meet office standards, except in cases of unsatisfactory effort which must be based on documented, unacceptable conduct that led to the carrier's failure to meet standards".

This was reinforced in a National level Step 4 grievance settlement (M-00386 in the NALC Materials Reference System), which also states, in part: "In such circumstances, management has the burden of proving that the carrier was making an "unsatisfactory effort" to establish just cause for any discipline imposed."

Why is this significant? Management will frequently badger letter carriers with unsubstantiated claims that they (the carriers) allegedly "are not making their office time." However, such claims are

specious in nature and thus are meaningless, because they are based on DOIS time estimates — which are notoriously inaccurate and conveniently leave out or minimize time credit for many letter carrier office functions. The ONLY valid method for determining a letter carriers office performance is by a mail count conducted on form 1838-C. Anything else is just a subjective and undocumented opinion.

As with all other aspects of letter carrier work, the best way to approach office duties is to keep it simple – show up to work on time, stay at your case and do your work, pull the route down, clock to street time, load your vehicle and proceed to your route. Leave management to their silly blather and bluster. Unlike them, you actually have real work to do.

Taking it to the Street

The more pertinent battle with postal management involving letter carrier work as it currently exists is not in the office, but it is instead in the street. It has often been said that "management owns the office, but a letter carrier owns the street." That adage now rings truer than ever. You DO own the street simply because it is your work, not management's.

Even more than with office time, "Mr. DOIS" – management's computer workload god, is the cause of most of the badgering and attempted intimidation of letter carriers with their street times, especially newer carriers. From day one of their USPS employment, letter carriers are intentionally and falsely led to believe that management determines how much time they are "allowed" to perform their street duties. In fact, the opposite is true. In every situation, a letter carrier is the SOLE determinant of exactly how long it takes to perform each of their delivery duties on a daily basis.

Nothing makes postal management cringe more than the undeniable fact that every letter carrier delivery function takes whatever time it takes, no more and no less. There are simply NO existing time standards for any letter carrier delivery function, period. More specifically...

 There is no set number of walking deliveries that must be completed within any specific period of time, and no specific walking pace that letter carriers must meet. On curbline (mounted) routes, there is also no set number of deliveries that must be completed within a specific timeframe.

- There is no set time for the completion of other specific delivery functions such as the delivery of a parcel. The time necessary for each of these can and will vary considerably.
- Other street time functions such as loading the vehicle, driving, and relay time (preparing mail for delivery to blocks, sections of a route, or "loops") also takes as long as necessary to safely and accurately perform.
- Other factors such as hazardous weather that impact delivery conditions can and often will necessitate an adjustment in delivery pace and work methods. It is your responsibility to make these adjustments when needed. Your personal safety, health, and well-being is of NO concern whatsoever to postal management; they could not care less about this. USPS management talks a lot about an alleged commitment to employee safety, but this claim is utterly phony and in fact an outright fraud.

Cutting Through the Crap

So, what to do when you believe that you will need more time that has been authorized by management?

Per the M-41 Handbook, City Delivery Carrier Duties and Responsibilities:

131.41: It is your responsibility to verbally inform management when you are of the opinion that you will be unable to case all mail distributed to the route, perform other required duties, and leave on schedule or when you will be unable to complete delivery of all mail.

If this is in the morning in the office, it will necessitate the completion and submission of PS Form 3996. If you come to this realization during the performance street duties, you should notify management ASAP and then follow the instructions you are given. A reminder that you are not required to use your personal cell phone to communicate with management for any postal-related business. In fact, you are not required to even own or possess a phone.

In all situations, always remember to keep it simple and to play it straight. You have one job—to case and deliver mail, and to so in a safe and efficient manner, using only the time necessary to do so. However, it always is your determination and not management's about how much time is actually necessary in any delivery situation. Truth is defined by your reality, not by management's fairytale computer estimates.

Many years ago, during my active letter carrier days a particularly obnoxious supervisor in my office that didn't have a real job would just drive around much of the day watching letter carriers who actually had real jobs do their work. He would often show up on my route to watch me do what I did every day – deliver the mail. Sometimes he would stop, and not having anything intelligent to say, he would always ask me the same question, "when are you going to be back?" I always gave him the same answer – "when I am finished."

That was most truthful possible answer to his inane question, because I always WAS back after I had completed my delivery duties. So, just do your work and don't allow yourself to be bogged down by management's game playing. Or, to borrow a line from the 1980s film "War Games," the only way to win - is not to play.

-- Joe Golonka Chairperson Branch 2184 Contract Administration Unit

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.

Branch 2184 Election Results

* Denotes Elected

Recording Secretary:	Melvin MacDonald	211*
	Danita Smith	116
Health Benefits Representative:	Jim Powell	147*
	Darryl Clay	140
	Jerry Cerpa	43
Dearborn Main Office Steward:	Symone Coleman	27*
	Darryl Clay	25*
	Jerry Cerpa	4
Grosse Ile Steward:	Gloria Warthen	4
	Chris Biegalski, Jr.	4
Trenton Steward:	William Douglas	22*
	Jake Szor	16*
	Tracy Mitchell	8
Westland/Wayne Steward:	Nakia Whitfield	17*
	Felicia Davis	17*
	Ananias Epps	15*
	Jaclyn Jacoby	11

Note: The Grosse Ile Steward election will have a run-off due to the tie vote.

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Address Correction Requested

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

Branch 2184 2021 Scholarship Application

Qualifications:

- 1. Must be a dependent child of a Branch 2184 member in good standing (active or retired) or a child of a member now
- 2. Applicant's parent must be a member in good standing of Branch 2184 for at least one (1) year prior to making application, with the exception of children of members now deceased who were previously members in good standing of Branch 2184 at the time of their death.
- 3. Must be a high school senior, high school graduate, GED recipient, or attending college or technical school (undergraduate) at the time of submitting the application, and attending an eligible school in the fall. **
- 4. Only one application per child per year. Only one scholarship per family will be awarded each year.
- 5. Student must have maintained a 2.0 grade point average or above. A copy of grade transcript or equivalent must accompany application for scholarship.
- 6. If the NALC parent of a successful applicant is suspended by the Branch or makes an application for a supervisory position before monies are paid, the scholarship will be cancelled. Children of members who have applied for a supervisory position are excluded from making application for two (2) years following withdrawal of the supervisory application.
- 7. Students with full scholarships are not eligible.
- 8. Eligible schools: accredited and licensed colleges, trade schools, community colleges and schools of higher education only. The institution's eligibility shall be determined by the scholarship committee.
- 9. All decisions of the scholarship committee will be final.

** TO BE ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR THIS SCHOLARSHIP YOU MUST BE ENROLLED IN OR ENTERING AN ELIGIBLE SCHOOL FULL OR PART-TIME IN THE FALL OF 2021.

Awards:

- 1. The scholarship committee shall award the scholarships by random drawing of all eligible applicants.
- 2. Scholarships will be on a yearly basis and will be awarded at the October monthly meeting.
- 3. Scholarships will be awarded in allotments of \$500.00. Four (4) scholarships of \$500.00 shall be allocated.
- 4. Four (4) alternates will be selected in the event that any scholarship winners are later ruled ineligible. The alternates' names will not be disclosed.
- 5. The scholarship will be disbursed to the student when a copy of a receipt for tuition, room and board, or books is provided to the committee. The student must be full-time or part-time as established by their school or college.

Member's Name:	Member's Phone Number:	THIS APPLICATION
Member's Stati	on:	MUST BE MAILED TO THE FOLLOWING
Applicant's Name and (Date of Birth):	Name of School:	ADDRESS:
Address:	Address:	SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE BRANCH 2184, NALC 6969 Monroe Taylor, MI 48180-1815
Signature of Member:	Date:	Applications Must be Received by
Signature of Applicant:	Date:	SEPTEMBER 27, 2021
Signature of Steward or Officer:	Date:	

ATTENTION BRANCH 2184 MEMBERS:

There will be a virtual Retirement Seminar conducted by NALC Region 6 National Business Agent Troy Clark's office on Sunday afternoon, September 19, 2021, beginning at 1:00 p.m.

Any Branch 2184 member that is considering retirement during the next several years is strongly encouraged to attend this valuable seminar. All you need is Internet access and a few hours of your time.

If you wish to participate, please notify your Steward or the Branch 2184 office (313-295-1640), and Branch 2184 President Walt McGregory will register you on the NALC "Members Only" Web Portal.

Don't miss out on this great opportunity to receive essential information regarding the USPS Retirement process!



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Carl Ramsey

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17

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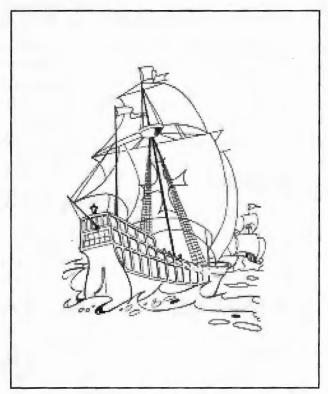
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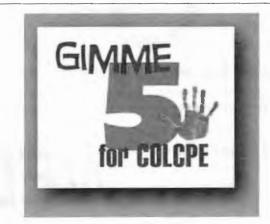
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The Weingarten Declaration

"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 UN-ION REPRESENTATION, then you are considered to have waived this valuable right.

Remember the magic words --

"I WANT TO SEE MY STEWARD"



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Hannah Schulman	CCA	Canton
Kristana Spearmen	CCA	Dearborn Main
Joshua Sparkman	Regular	Westland
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