



# Branch 2184 ... "Speaks"

Official Publication of Branch 2184, NALC, AFL-CIO

November/December 2008

**Branch 2184  
National Association  
of Letter Carriers**

**AFL - CIO**

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Web Site [www.nalc2184.org](http://www.nalc2184.org)

**Office Hours:**

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

Monday through Friday

**Calendar**

**Branch Meetings:**

January 7th

February 4th

7:30 p.m. - Union Hall

**Retirees Meetings:**

January 14th

February 11th

12:30 p.m. - Union Hall

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## President's Report

### MOU Minor Route Adjustment Process

On October 22, the NALC and the USPS signed a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the implementation of the new Interim Route Adjustment Process. Under this agreement the NALC would have a formal role in evaluating and adjusting routes. While our Branch had a similar Minor Route Adjustment agreement with the Detroit District the new agreement will now supersede it. Under the new expedited process the joint teams of NALC and USPS designees will jointly review the data from the selected months of May and October. Once the data is compiled and verified local teams from the individual offices get together to hold carrier consultations at which time they seek input from the carriers. Once the information is gathered the local teams head to the district office to make any of the necessary changes. National President Bill Young has chosen our own Branch Route Inspection Officer Dave Reise to head up one of the two local teams here in the Detroit District. Congratulations Dave!

### MOU Assignment of City Delivery

The other Memorandum of Understanding that was also signed on October 22, extends the existing moratorium on delivery outsourcing through November 20, 2011, it also sets new rules for assigning new deliveries in offices where city carriers work with Highway Contractors and Rural Letter Carriers. In part the agreement states that in offices with only city delivery and highway contract routes all new delivery points will be assigned to city delivery, except for the in-growth on existing HCR's. In offices with both city and rural carriers new delivery will be assigned in accordance with the boundaries developed by the NALC and NRCLA. In the absence of defined boundaries the new deliveries will be assigned to the city letter carrier craft. The only current exception would be in-growth on existing HCR routes.

(continued on page 3)

### Officers

President .....	Mark Judd
Executive Vice President .....	Jim Wolstencroft
Vice President .....	Carol Clark
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Financial Secretary Treasurer .....	Cathy Tondreau
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Retirees Officer .....	Leonard Zawisa
Trustee .....	Patricia Linna
Trustee .....	Gloria Warthen
Trustee .....	Casey Pennington
Editor .....	Leonard Zawisa
Branch Scribe .....	Joe Golonka
Web Site Design .....	Jim Hales
Injury Compensation .....	Joe Golonka

### Stewards

Belleville .....	Bruce Provost (alt)
Dearborn Main .....	Darryl Clay
.....	Jacqueline Wiggins
.....	Ed Williams (alt)
Dearborn Annex .....	Melvin MacDonald
.....	Roderick Lelental
.....	Cathy Tondreau (alt)
.....	Darrin Mifsud (alt)
.....	Tom Klecha (alt)
Teleford .....	John Czuchrak
Dearborn Heights .....	Jim Hales
.....	Greg Silvestri (alt)
.....	Ian Mair (Alt)
Flat Rock .....	Gloria Warthen
Grosse Ile .....	313-295-1640
Inkster .....	Bryon Hendricks
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Ypsilanti .....	Rick Rider
.....	Mike Treadway
.....	Jim Riddle (alt)



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

The opinions expressed in this publication, November/December 2008, 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.



### 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.

**Call 313-295-1640**

(Continued from page 1)

## President's Report

## Proposed Merger

Over the last month or so we have been in talks with Dundee Branch 3479 about a proposed merger, last week we received the merger vote from Dundee approving the merger and now it will be our turn to vote. The vote to approve the merger will be held at the January 7, 2008 Branch meeting.

## Election Results

Congratulations to our newly elected steward from Dearborn Heights, 48127, Jim Hales and to our two newly elected stewards from Westland main office Joan Hicks and Ray Tobin. (The official results can be found elsewhere in the newsletter.)

## Open Season Still Open!

The Federal Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has announced that the open season for the Federal Employees Health Benefit Programs (FEHBP) which had been scheduled to end on December 8 has been extended until January 31, 2009 for all Federal agencies. Even though OPM instructed all agencies in the Federal program to extend the enrollment period through the end of January, the USPS subsequently announced that "the new deadline to make employee self service FEHB elections using PostalEase is December 28, 2008, at 5:00pm Central Time." The USPS has indicated that their programmers will not have PostalEase available beyond the December 28, 2008 date. At this time they are still working on a solution for USPS employees so that they will not be denied to the extended Open Season. Early reports from the NALC Health Plan show that many letter carriers from across the country have indeed compared the plans and made the switch to the NALC plan. As of December 8, the NALC is reporting that they have already surpassed last year's

enrollment with over 13,300 new enrollees! It's not too late to make the NALC Plan your health care choice.

## The Winner Is??

This year's annual Branch Christmas raffle for MDA was again a success! This year we sold over 3,000 tickets for MDA. The top prize winner of \$1,000 dollars was Robert Grajczyk, ticket #1420, second prize of \$300 went to Catherine Tondreau, ticket #3581, and the third prize winner of \$200 went to Donna Bean, ticket #0126. On behalf of MDA I would like to thank everyone who bought and sold tickets for this worthy charity. Special thanks goes out to our raffle ticket chairman Len Zawisa for keeping track of the tickets and the event.

## Happy Holidays

I would like to wish you and your families the happiest of holidays and a healthy and prosperous New Year!

-- Mark Judd  
President

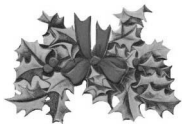


## Calendar of Events

Branch Meeting .....	January 7th at 7:30pm
Steward Meeting .....	January 13th at 7:30pm
Retirees Meeting .....	January 14th at 12:30pm
Martin Luther King .....	January 19th
Executive Board .....	January 26th at 7:00pm
Steward Meeting .....	January 26th at 7:30pm
Branch Meeting .....	February 4th at 7:30pm
Steward Meeting .....	February 10th at 7:30pm
Retirees Meeting .....	February 11th at 12:30pm
Presidents Day .....	February 16th
Executive Board .....	February 23rd at 7:00pm
Steward Meeting .....	February 23rd at 7:30pm

# EVP's Report

First I want I to wish everyone a Joyous Holiday Season and a Happy New Year.



Retirement is what everyone wishes to be able to attain when the time comes. It is what we work our whole life for. Some days are harder than others, but you come to work regardless. I have known many that have enjoyed their retirement for many years. They have nothing but good things to say – usually “I’m glad I got out of there when I did.”

When do you start planning your retirement? The answer is the minute you are hired. The worst thing that can happen is that you never plan for retirement. As soon as you became an employee of the Postal Service you should have started planning your retirement. As new employees you were put under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS). The idea of this retirement system is you will get what you put into it. The money that is put into your retirement depends on how much you want in. FERS retirement is often described as a three legged stool.

1. FERS basic monthly annuity pays 1% of the high-three average for each year of service.

2. Social security retirement benefits of letter carriers are based on carriers’ earnings in covered employment, including work under FERS and in the private sector.

3. Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) is a tax-deferred retirement savings plan. The benefits payable depend on how many years you participate, how much you save and the performance of your TSP investment fund.

If you currently put at least 5% of your gross pay into the TSP investment fund then you are on the right track. This is because the USPS will match your contribution up to 5%. If you contribute less than 5% you are throwing away

money that you could use when you retire. So, check and see just what you can afford to put away towards the big day. As we all know, retirement is not a sure thing. It’s there if you plan right and are able to reach that magical date.

I’m deeply saddened by the news I heard on December 8, 2008. Dearborn Heights letter carrier Joyce Ashby passed away. Joyce had put in 27 years as a letter carrier in the Dearborn Heights office. She was a true professional and dedicated to her craft. Joyce would always know about her rights and if she wasn’t sure about something she would ask. In all my years working with Joyce she never had a bad word to say about anyone. She will be deeply missed. Mrs. Joyce Ashby was to retire on December 18, 2008.

-- James Wolstencroft  
*Executive Vice President*

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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 UNION REPRESENTATION**, then you are considered to have waived this valuable right.

*(Clip and keep with you while working)*

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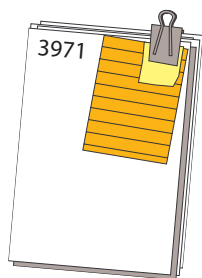
## Contract Corner:

**Q: Overtime desired list carriers in my office that are unable to work their nonscheduled day are told by management to fill out a form 3971 (Request for or Notification of Absence) for that day. How can leave be requested for a day that we are already scheduled off?**

**A:** Regular ODL carriers that are unable or unwilling to work on nonscheduled days where they would otherwise be needed should be charged with

a missed opportunity for purposes of determining quarterly equity. However, the use of a 3971 for this purpose is completely improper and a wholly inappropriate use of the form. There are many legitimate reasons for requesting leave on a

form 3971 and at least thirty "PSDS codes" for administratively recording employee absences that



occur during scheduled hours and on regularly scheduled days. However, there are no codes and there is no basis whatsoever for using a 3971 for any purpose other than for a leave request, which by definition must occur during *scheduled work hours*. Therefore it is improper to utilize form 3971 for declining an overtime opportunity (which by definition is always outside of the regular work schedule). The use of a 3971 in this manner constitutes a violation of Articles 8 and 10 of our Contract as well as USPS leave regulations set forth in Subchapter 510 of the Employee and Labor Relations Manual.

**Q: Management told me that I must list my mail**

(Continued on page 7)



## Boston Convention Report

The 2008 NALC Convention in Boston was an impressive sight to see. This being my first convention, it was overwhelming to see over 8,000 letter carriers in one room. We got to see the generosity of these letter carriers when one of the delegates from Santa Clara, California tragically passed away while in Boston. All of the delegates donated money from their own pockets, raising over \$27,000 for the family. Then in a vote decided to have the NALC match the amount for a grand total of \$54,000. It goes to show you the strength and dedication that the members of the NALC have.

As for the classes I attended: *City Delivery* and *Contract Administration*, they were very informative. The NALC is still trying to work with management on DOIS. The thinking on that is if we grieve the use of DOIS and win, then management will just create another system under a different title. The Contract Administration stressed that we need to make sure management is putting the correct data into the system. We all know they like to get creative with the volume numbers. It is still up to us to monitor what management is trying to do.

Most issues concerning TE's were unresolved. The NALC has still been in talks with the Postal Service regarding these issues. They were unable to get everything done before the convention. Some other topics of discussion were that the Postal Service reset the bid counter to zero effective November 21, 2006 and also that bargaining unit employees may submit written requests for transfers in addition to e-reassign.

Even though the classes were informative, I think I learned the most from discussing topics with other delegates from all throughout the U.S. I learned what issues they are going through and how they are grieving them. It gave me a different perspective on how to approach a grievance issue in the future.

-- Erik Venzke  
Steward Monroe Office

## Boston Convention Report

The 66th Biennial Convention was the first one I have attended. All of the meetings took place at the Boston Convention Center. The workshops started at 7:30 a.m. and 2:15p.m.. I attended the *Contract Administration Unit* workshop where I learned about grievance decisions and national memo's. I also attended a *City Delivery* workshop which covered minor route adjustments.

From 10a.m. to 2p.m. every day they held the General Sessions where over 7,000 delegates were in attendance. There were debates on Contract Resolutions, Constitutional Amendments and General Resolutions. There were many guest speakers that included: Hillary Clinton, APWU President William Burrus and Past President Vince Som-brotto. Vince was honored by having the NALC headquarters building named the "Vincent R. Som-brotto Building".

-- Chris Carmon  
Steward Monroe Office

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HAPPY NEW YEAR

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DON'T FORGET  
COLCPE  
KAMINSKI - BR 589 - VERNON, CT.

(Continued from page 5)

Contract Corner

**volume in the "reasons" section of form 3996. Is that true?**

**A:** No, that is not true, with one limited exception. A series of National level interpretive grievance decisions have reiterated that the instructions for completion of PS form 3996 (found on the reverse side of a 3996) and also in the M-41 handbook, section 280, do not require a letter carrier to list volume figures on the form. However, if the request for assistance is related *only to volume*, management may require the carrier to note only the volume of mail *remaining to be cased* at the time the PS form 3996 is submitted, and may require that this volume be stated as a reasonable estimate in linear measurement terms. Otherwise, a carrier should list any and all reasons that he or she feels are pertinent to their request, including but not limited to full coverage ad mailings, excessive DPS,

*(Continued on page 9)***Branch 2184 Web Site**

Visit our web site for:

Branch Picnic Pictures

Branch Calendar

Carrier Pay Chart

Online NALC "FMLA" forms

**[www.nalc2184.org](http://www.nalc2184.org)****Attend Your  
Branch Meetings****January 7th 2009****7:30 p.m. at the Branch Hall****Retiree's Meeting****January 14th @ 12:30 p.m.****Brookfield® Uniforms**

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Branch 2184 Retired

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## **Working In The Dark – When Customer Service Meets Safety And Common Sense**

As Branch 2184's letter carriers deal with the many hazards of another Michigan winter season, one of the concerns frequently raised is the prospect of performing our duties in darkness or near-darkness for several months. Each year there is seemingly inevitable angst producing clashes between supervisors and letter carriers concerning this issue, and consequent grievances. Management wants the mail delivered, even while they create customer service problems by scheduling later letter carrier starting times and also by intentionally understaffing letter carrier station complements. More problems are created through unrealistic management expectations of letter carrier office and street performance, typically based on inaccurate and incomplete DOIS-generated nonsense. In some offices problems are further compounded by management's unwillingness to assign overtime work in the contractually prescribed manner. The result – the earth still rotates, the sun still sets, and letter carriers are still out in the street.

When this occurs, there should *not* be a blanket assumption by letter carriers that all delivery of mail is unsafe and therefore must immediately cease. Conversely, management should *not* ever assume that delivery of mail *is safe* under these conditions. Safety is first and foremost a matter of judgment and the application of common sense. It is of no value to debate in advance whether a specific delivery circumstance or set of circumstances is or will be unsafe, even when we have every expectation that this will indeed be the case. Your supervisor may have a different expectation and neither is going to change the other's mind. So why quibble about it? The truth will manifest itself soon enough.

If you believe that your assigned delivery duties will take you into darkness and that safety will then be a concern, simply inform your supervisor of this well in advance (in the morning if possible). Always complete and submit form 3996 when

you are unable to perform all assigned duties within eight hours. If a supervisor responds with an unrealistic assessment of your workload, don't argue or debate the issue. Merely respond that you will do the best that you can and that you have a safety concern about making deliveries in darkness. **DO NOT** inform the supervisor at that time that you are *refusing* to work in the dark. Later, when it becomes apparent that your own assessment of your workload was correct, call in a timely manner (well before the sun sets) to ask for instructions. Once again express your concern about delivering mail in darkness. Follow the instructions you are given, even if they are to continue until all mail is delivered.

When darkness sets in, and you determine after attempting to deliver mail that continuing would be unsafe, again call and inform your supervisor of your concern. Again, follow instructions, even if they are to continue. However, if after attempting delivery one last time your judgment is that is still unsafe to continue, then (and **ONLY** then) bring the remaining undelivered mail back. When returning to the office immediately inform the supervisor of the undelivered mail, and *always* complete form 1571 (report of undelivered mail) before clocking out for the day.

Following the above guidelines will help ensure that you are not charged with failure to follow instructions or unauthorized curtailment of mail and possibly receive disciplinary action. USPS customers have the right to expect their mail to be delivered each day. Letter carriers have the right and the duty to perform their duties in a safe manner. It all comes down to common sense and realistic planning. In the end it also comes down to integrity, and that is where letter carriers should have the advantage, every time.

-- Joe Golonka  
*Injury Comp*



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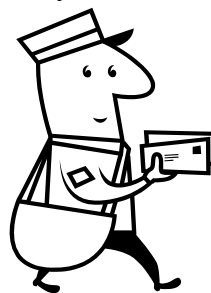
**(313) 292-7422**

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Contract Corner

excessive parcels, weather, late leaving, waiting for mail or any other reason as determined by the carrier. On a related note, management does not ever have the right to determine what an allegedly "acceptable" reason is for requesting auxiliary assistance or overtime on form 3996. Letter carriers can and should list any reasons on a 3996 that we choose as long as they are related to our work that day.

**Q: Management did a one-day mail count on my route last week. They never told me that they were going to count my mail until I came to work that morning. They also refused to let me verify their mail count. Was this wrong?**



**A:** Management's failure to provide you with at least one day's advance notice of that mail count and their refusal to allow you to verify the count are both violations of the Contract and as such are grievable issues. The M-39 handbook, section 141.2 states that "When management desires to determine the efficiency of a carrier in the office, a count of mail may be made. The carrier *must* be given one day's advance notification of this special count." Additionally, in accordance with M-39 handbook, section 222.131, the

*(Continued on page 11)*



**January, 19th 2009**

# 2008 COLCPE Contributors

## Belleville

- ✓ Cindy Trzeciak
- ✓ Bruce Prevost

## Dearborn Main

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

## Dearborn Annex

- Nancy Altman
- ✓ Timothy Bailey
- Hubert Brown
- Tony Calamita
- Joseph Caruana
- ✓ John Dainus
- Rhona Diamond
- David Gilbert\*
- ✓ Mark Judd
- Thomas Klecha
- ✓ Roderick LeLental
- ✓ Melvin MacDonald
- Carol Macieczni
- Darrin Mifsud
- Rosemary Miller
- Karen Regentik\*
- Jerry Taylor
- ✓ Cathy Tondreau
- Scott Wandyg

## Dearborn Teleford

- ✓ Michael Bergin
- John Czuchrak
- James Likeric
- ✓ Alan Swintek

## Dearborn Heights

- ✓ Roger Corpolongo
- Anthony Gretch
- Frank Grosso
- ✓ Jim Hales
- Linda Pollock

James Powell

- ✓ James Wolstencroft

## Flat Rock

## Grosse Isle

- ✓ Kimberly Bumbul
- ✓ John Nellis

## Inkster

- Thad Dillard
- ✓ Bryon Hendricks
- ✓ Roy McMahan

## Lincoln Park

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- Gayle Rohde
- ✓ Paula Hall
- Scott Watts

## Monroe

- ✓ Chris Carmon
- ✓ Kenneth Masserant
- ✓ Erik Venzke
- Chad Zion

## Northville

Elizabeth Karsten

## Plymouth

- ✓ Heather Childers
- ✓ James Crossey
- ✓ Patricia Linna
- ✓ Gary Macioce
- ✓ Dan Marek
- Don Oziemski
- Robert Venning
- Felecia Wallace

## Rockwood

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## Taylor

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- Jeff Connole
- Kuldip Gill

Roger Gilliam  
Victoria Hebda  
John Hundley  
✓ Bob Parisi  
Anthony Santy  
Irene Sly  
Andrea Smith  
Terri Theeck

## Temperance

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## Trenton

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- ✓ Dennis Lucas
- ✓ Casey Pennington

## Wayne

- ✓ Walter Gregory
- ✓ Edward Sikora
- Krystal White

## Westland

- ✓ Wenoia Clark
- ✓ Ted Gagnon
- ✓ Joan Hicks
- Aaronette Howell
- ✓ Katrina Jones
- ✓ Raymond Tobin
- Calvin Winbush

## Canton

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

## Ypsilanti

- ✓ Alan Grajczyk
- ✓ Richard Rider
- ✓ Michael Miller

## Retired

- ✓ Mary Abbott
- Rito Bela\*
- Carl Belvees\*
- Cary Black
- John Bostek\*
- Patricia Davis
- James Garrell
- ✓ Joe Golonka
- James Kelly
- Joanne Kuzala
- William Lowe
- William Mason\*
- William Mather
- Brian Rodden
- Clarence Schukofsky\*
- ✓ Gino Stellabuto
- Margaret Zawicki
- ✓ Leonard Zawisa

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

\*Asterisk indicates that your yearly check contribution has or is about to expire. Renew your commitment to COLCPE.



## Steward Election Results from Branch 2184 Offices.

### Westland

Election results for the Westland office for the 2009-2011 term are as follows:

The two receiving the most votes are elected.

Raymond Tobin	35 votes
Joan Hicks	32 votes
Ted Gagnon	19 votes

There were 3 spoiled ballots.  
 There were 2 challenged ballots.  
 There were 4 void envelopes.

-- *David Reise*  
*Election Committee Chairperson*

### Dearborn Heights

Election results for the Dearborn Heights office for the 2009-2011 term are as follows:

The two receiving the most votes are elected.

Jim Hales	15 votes
Tony Gretch	12 votes

There were 2 spoiled ballots.  
 There were 2 challenged ballots.  
 There were 4 void envelopes.

-- *David Reise*  
*Election Committee Chairperson*

(Continued from page 9)

carrier may, upon request, verify the *entire mail count*. The right of a letter carrier to verify the *entire* count applies both to regular mail count and inspections as well as to one day mail counts, per Step 4 decisions NC-W-7059 (M-00632) and H4N-5T-C 42333 (M-00814). Additionally, the carrier must be provided with a copy of the results of the mail count (form 1838-C) and the results must be discussed with him or her.

**Q: Can management set an appropriate pace at which letter carriers must walk?**

**A:** False. The provisions in (Pre-arb) M-00304 indicates that there is no set pace at which carriers must walk and no street standard for walking.



### NALC HEALTH BENEFIT PLAN PHONE NUMBERS

- Main Office NALC HBP ..... 1-703-729-4677
- Customer Service ..... 1-888-636-6252
- 7 days a week, 24 hours a day**
- 24-hour Nurse Line ..... 1-800-622-6252
- Mental Health ..... 1-877-468-1016
- Substance Abuse ..... 1-877-468-1016
- PPO Locator Service..... 1-800-622-6252
- Hospital Precertification ..... 1-800-622-6252
- Prescription Drug Program .. 1-800-933-6252

For additional information, visit the national website at [www.nalc.org/depart/hbp](http://www.nalc.org/depart/hbp)

**T**he 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.



**Mark Judd, *President***

**Patricia Linna, *Trustee***

**Gloria Warthen, *Trustee***

**Casey Pennington, *Trustee***

**Carol Clark, *Vice President***

**Leonard Zawisa, *Retirees Officer***

**James Wolstencroft, *Executive VP***

**Cindy Trzeciak, *Recording Secretary***

**Walter McGregory, *Sergeant at Arms***

**Jim Powell, *Health Benefits Representative***

**Cathy Tondreau, *Financial Secretary Treasurer***



Taylor, MI 48180

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