

Branch 2184 ... *Union Courier*

Official Publication of Branch 2184, NALC, AFL-CIO

September/October 2024

President's Report

NATIONAL CONVENTION

The NALC's 73rd Biennial Convention took place from August 5th through August 9th at Boston Convention and Exhibition Convention Center. Thirty-two (32) delegates represented the Branch at this convention, they were as follows: President Walt McGregory (Westland Main), Executive Vice President Jackie McGregory (Dearborn Annex), Vice President Darryl Clay (Retired Dearborn Main), Recording Secretary Katrina Jones (Westland), Financial Treasurer Mark Owen (Allen Park), Kris Shaw (Allen Park), Scott Russell (Allen Park), SGT @ Arms Paula Hall (Retired Lincoln Park), Dave Reise (retired Lincoln Park), Tracy Mitchell (Trustee Trenton), Jerry Cerpa Health Benefits Officer (Dearborn Main), Felicia Davis (Westland), Erik Venzke Step B (Monroe), Bryon Hendricks (Belleville), Karl Tamburro (Dearborn Main), Shaun Fowlkes (Dearborn Heights) Sherrie Lacey (Inkster), Kaliah Patrick (Inkster), Scott Watts (Retired Lincoln Park), Jennifer Rake (Northville), Janice Mitchum (Northville), Val Watkins (Northville), Dawn DeNoon (Northville), Nakia Whitfield (Westland), Ananias Epps (Westland), Mark Obermiller (Ypsilanti), Ashley Seper (Ypsilanti), Joe Golonka (Retired Canton), Rachel Blair (Grosse ILE), Patty Linna (retired Plymouth), Natalie Randazzo (Westland), Bryon Mikich (Westland).

President Brian Renfroe presided over the convention of 5000-plus delegates. One of many highlights of the convention was the membership overturned a letter President Renfroe sent to other delegates saying that the Article 10 charges against him (Renfroe) wouldn't be heard on at the convention. The membership is the supreme body and overturned President Renfroe's decision. The charges were voted on by the delegates that attended and the delegates voted to allow President Renfroe to keep his job.

Brothers and sisters, always remember, we may not agree on everything, but we are still NALC brothers and sisters at the end of the day. I will never turn my back on any brother or sister that doesn't agree with the way

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Branch 2184

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National Association
of Letter Carriers
AFL - CIO**

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Office Hours:

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

Monday through Friday

Calendar

Branch Meetings:

October 2nd, 2024

November 6th, 2024

(7:30 p.m. - Union Hall)

Retirees Meetings

October 10th, 2024

November 7th, 2024

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

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Vice President	Darryl Clay
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Financial Secretary Treas	Mark Owen
Sergeant at Arms.....	Paula Hall
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MBA Representative.....	Erik Venzke
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Branch Contract Administration Unit

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Walt McGregor	Member
Jackie McGregor.....	Member
Darryl Clay.....	Member
Dave Reise	Member



Branch 2184 Union Courier 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)
.....	Tod Lilla (alt)
.....	Scott Russel (alt)
Belleville	Bryon Hendricks
Dearborn (Main).....	Yvonne Jackson
.....	Karl Tamburro
Dearborn (Annex)	Jacqueline McGregor
.....	Jillian Hudgins
.....	Mohamad Rahal (alt)
.....	Kim Miller (alt)
Dearborn Heights	Shaun Fowlkes
.....	Chanel Harrison
.....	Marwan Ghotheimi (alt)
.....	Marquel Davis (alt)
.....	Jacqueline McGregor (alt)
Dundee	Walt McGregor (alt)
Flat Rock	Lillian Bogosian
Grosse Ile.....	Rachel Stachulski (alt)
.....	Tracy Mitchell (alt)
Inkster.....	Scherrie Lacey
.....	Phil Ashford (alt)
.....	Kaliah Patrick (alt)
Lincoln Park	Scott Watts
.....	Mark Owen (alt)
Monroe	Jacqueline McGregor (alt)
.....	Tracy Mitchell (alt)
.....	Keith Benedict (alt)
.....	Mark Owen (alt)
Northville	Jennifer Rake
Plymouth	Diego Forshaw
.....	Dan Marek
.....	Cassandra Mendrzycki (alt)
Rockwood.....	Courtney Duran
.....	Tracy Mitchell (alt)
Taylor	Keith Benedict
.....	Victor Siemiesz
Temperance.....	Walt McGregor (alt)
Trenton	Jeffery Webb
.....	William Douglas
.....	Tracy Mitchell (alt)
Westland.....	Ananias Epps
.....	Felicia Davis
.....	Nakia Whitfield
.....	Katrina Jones (alt)
.....	Walt McGregor (alt)
.....	Jacqueline McGregor (alt)
Canton	Ramon Robinson
.....	Shatyra T Young
Ypsilanti	Paul Bordine
.....	Ashley Seper

(Continued from page 1)

I vote or if a brother or sister disagrees with my position. That was on full display at this convention. There were national officers, current and former, as well as regional officials that flat out went out of their way not to speak to people that didn't agree with, the way they thought or voted on different matters. It was really a sad thing to see. We move on and continue to do the work of the members of this great union.

There are convention delegate articles in this Branch 2184 Courier as well. See you all at the branch membership meeting here at the hall on Wednesday October 02, 2024 at 7:30pm.

CONTRACT UPDATE

President Brian Renfroe didn't have any new updates regarding the contract. President Renfroe says that "we are close and should have a contract soon". Whenever soon is brothers and sisters, we will let you know as soon as we receive any information regarding our contract.

-- *Walt McGregory*
President

EVP's Report

I want to first thank the membership for allowing me to be a Convention Delegate and represent the membership at the 73rd Biennial Convention in Boston, MA, August 5-9, 2024. While at the convention I attended multiple workshops including Dignity and Respect in the Workplace, Training Opportunities for NALC Reps, Managing Branch Finances, Legislative and Political Update and Safety and Health. As a veteran NALC Activist, these workshops help strengthen the knowledge I have gained over the years and is priceless with helping me on a daily basis enforce the provisions of our collective bargaining agreement on behalf of our members.

I was also on the Credentials Committee, which allowed me to meet and speak with so many of our

delegate brothers and sisters from around the country as they came to register and pick up their convention bags.

2025 FEHB Open Season

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) officially announced the dates for the 2025 Federal Benefits Open Season which will run from **Monday November 11, 2024, through Monday December 9, 2024.**

When selecting health insurance for your family, if you are a career carrier then take a look at the NALC health Plan and see what they have to offer. Give us a try for at least a year, if you don't like it, you can always switch back or to another health plan next year.

CCA UNIFORM BANK

Thanks to all who have made our CCA uniform bank as successful as it has been throughout the years. The Covid-19 pandemic is behind us although Covid-19 still exists, so please continue to make donations to the uniform bank by bringing gently used uniforms and gear to your office. We especially need winter clothes and winter gear. Give them to your steward. He/she will make sure your donation gets to the local union hall. Your donation really makes a difference!

Management performing Letter Carrier Work

The hall has received several calls from carriers stating that management has been seen delivering mail or taking mail out to the carriers. Under no circumstance should management whether it's a 204b, title supervisor, manager, or postmaster deliver mail or packages.

Article 1.6.A Section 6. States: Performance of Bargaining Unit Work A.

Supervisors are prohibited from performing bargaining unit work at post offices with 100 or more bargaining unit employees, except:

1. in an emergency;

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2. for the purpose of training or instruction of employees;
3. to assure the proper operation of equipment; Page 1-5
4. to protect the safety of employees; or
5. to protect the property of the USPS.

The prohibition against supervisors performing bargaining unit work also applies to acting supervisors (204b).

Notify your steward if this is happening in your office.

Is your safety being compromised?

Under no circumstance should your safety be compromised! If you are being instructed or given a “direct order” by management to work unsafe, please notify your steward or call the hall immediately. Your safety is your safety. Management can’t tell you what is safe for you. Fill out the PS form 1767 “**Report of Hazard, Unsafe Condition or Practice Form**” notifying management of the safety hazard. The supervisor must investigate the alleged hazard during the same tour of duty in which the report was received and abate it if they can and record the action taken to eliminate the hazard. The approving official of the form should initiate action to eliminate or minimize the hazard, if management determines no hazard exists, they must notify the employee in writing.

Article 14.2 Section Safety 2.

Cooperation The Employer and the Union insist on the observance of safe rules and safe procedures by employees and insist on correction of unsafe conditions. Mechanization, vehicles, and vehicle equipment, and the workplace must be maintained in a safe and sanitary condition, including adequate occupational health and environmental conditions. The Employer shall make available at each installation forms to be used by employees in reporting unsafe and unhealthful conditions. If an employee believes he/she is being required to work under unsafe conditions, such employee may:

(a) notify such employee’s supervisor who will immediately investigate the condition and take corrective action if necessary.

(b) notify such employee’s steward, if available, who may discuss the alleged unsafe condition with such employee’s supervisor.

(c) file a grievance at Formal Step A of the grievance procedure within fourteen (14) days of notifying such employee’s supervisor if no corrective action is taken during the employee’s tour; and/or

(d) make a written report to the Union representative from the local Safety and Health Committee who may discuss the report with such employee’s supervisor.

Remember you don’t have to follow an unsafe instruction from management, make management aware and wait for additional instructions that do not compromise your safety.

DON’T FORGET TO VOTE

By now, most letter carriers have made up their minds on the candidates that they will be voting for in this 2024 election.

When you vote, remember to vote for your job and the security of it. We all have our “hot button issues;” however, potentially standing in the unemployment line debating with my neighbor or friend about a hot button issue won’t help me provide for my family. That is why I have already done my homework and researched each candidate. I spoke about my research of each candidate with my husband and 26-year-old son, (both are city letter carriers as well), and voted for the candidates that support our employer, the United States Postal Service.

We are voting via absentee ballot. It is very simple. I will actually take my ballot and drop it off at the City Clerk’s office myself.

Take a family member or two today to your township or clerk’s office. Ask for an Absentee Ballot application. Fill it out, and they will give you a ballot right then to vote.

If you decide to wait until November 05, 2024, take multiple people with you and vote for your job (s). The vote you cast just may save your own job!

--*Jacqueline McGregory*
Executive Vice President



VOTE
2024

Contract Corner:

“Soliciting” Grievances

Postal management in a few of our stations, apparently unhappy that Branch 2184 stewards are effectively enforcing the Collective Bargaining Agreement, recently complained that the Union was “soliciting” grievances, and thus implying that this is somehow improper. In another recent instance, a district management representative referred to Branch 2184 as “infamous,” apparently because of our nonsense approach to Contract enforcement. How dare we actually protect our members’ workplace rights by filing grievances!

For the record, the Union (the NALC) has every legal right to encourage its members to protect and enforce their contractual rights by investigating, initiating, and processing grievances. The union alone has the authority to investigate any member concern

and to determine if a grievance exists. **To be clear, we can and we WILL “solicit” any grievance that we deem as necessary to enforce the National Agreement and to protect our members’ rights.**

This right was unequivocally upheld by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) in 1970 decision (NLRB v. Lenkurt Electric 438 F. 2d 1102) wherein the NLRB noted that a labor union can even post notices on Union bulletin boards encouraging employees to file grievances when their contractually protected rights have been violated by management. A grievance is broadly defined as a dispute or disagreement pertaining to wages, hours, or conditions of employment. This definition covers a very wide range of work-related matters.

Management sometimes makes this phony and paranoid “soliciting” claim because they are resentful when Branch 2184 and its representatives enforce the National Agreement in a post office station or stations. Management must give stewards time to investigate and to process grievances, and they must provide relevant information requested by the Union. Even more importantly, rigorous Contract enforcement by the Union typically results in grievance settlements/decisions that instruct management to cease their violations of the Contract. In many instances, they are also required to make monetary payments to letter carriers whose Contractual rights have been violated.

Ironically, Postal management in every USPS Installation already has the full ability to make grievances entirely nonexistent to begin with – merely by complying with the terms of the Labor Contract that they signed. Unfortunately, in most instances they appear to be entirely unwilling or unable to implement this simple solution. Willful contract violations committed by postal management and the resultant grievances remain part of litany of daily life in most Branch 2184 stations. And so, to put it in Yoda-like terms; solicit grievances, **we will!**

“Acceptable” Reasons on PS Form 3996

We periodically receive reports of situations where a supervisor has informed a letter carrier that one or more reasons for requesting overtime and/or

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auxiliary assistance listed on a PS Form 3996 is allegedly “unacceptable.” However, a supervisor has NO standing to arbitrarily determine what reasons for requesting overtime and/or assistance are allegedly “acceptable” – with one specific exception. USPS Handbook M-41 (City Carrier Duties and Responsibilities) section 280, which is the instructions for completing PS Form 3996, notes that “heavy mail” is not by itself a suitable explanation when completing the “reasons” section (part J) of PS form 3996 – Carrier Auxiliary Control.

Although greater detail than merely a notation of “heavy mail” is required, the specific content of even that detail is still determined solely by the carrier. Management otherwise has no authority to unilaterally determine what they believe are “acceptable” reasons for requesting overtime or assistance. It is of course always advisable to keep listed reasons relevant and focused on that day’s work duties, and include the carrier’s own estimate of the time they think is necessary to complete their work.

When completing PS Form 3996, a letter carrier should consider and list **EVERY reason that the carrier believes will** result in the need for more than eight hours to complete **all** assigned duties that day. This includes but by no means is limited to weather conditions, high parcel volume, excessive accountable items, so-called “pivots,” and delays in leaving for the street caused by any reason – such as late receipt of mail or parcels, safety and service talks, etc. Whatever **you think** is relevant to the time needed to complete your duties; those are the reasons which should appear on your form 3996.

Additionally, under NO circumstances can management deny a PS Form 3996 to any carrier that requests one. However, keep in mind that the decision to approve overtime and/or assistance is management’s to make. Finally, upon request a letter carrier is entitled to a **completed copy** of every 3996 that he or she submits, per the provisions of Article 41, section 3.G of the Contract. You should always request a copy of the form at the time you give it management.

--Joe Golonka
Branch 2184 Contract Administration

CONVENTION DELEGATE MEETING
October 23, 2024 7:00pm Here at the
Union Hall. Convention Funding, De-
partment of Labor Regulations re-
garding Funding will be discussed.

Retirees Officer

Dear Branch, 2184,

I am writing to update you on two important matters concerning our members and their benefits as we approach significant dates soon regarding the details of this matter. As you may be aware, we have just finished our current contract agreement and wait for a new contract to be disclosed or an upcoming arbitration date. While the exact date for arbitration has not yet been finalized, I wanted to assure branch members that we are closely monitoring the situation. We will notify you as soon as the arbitration date is announced and act accordingly in response.

Secondly, I would like to inform you about the special enrollment period for Medicare Part B has already begun and expires on October 1st of this year. This is an essential coverage component for our retiring members, and I urge you to communicate the importance of this enrollment period to anyone who doesn’t know. It is crucial that our members understand the timeline to ensure they do not miss the opportunity to enroll.

Regarding the coverage options and costs associated with our healthcare plans, detailed information will be available after October 1st. We will provide comprehensive details on the healthcare benefits and any associated costs as soon as they are made available to us, allowing members to make well-informed decisions about their healthcare needs. We are here to support our members through these processes and ensure they have access to all the necessary information.

Thank you for your attention to these matters and for your continued dedication to our members' welfare.

--Scott Watts
Retirement Officer

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.

CCAs please call prior to coming to the Union Hall so that we can make sure someone is available to assist you. Lets make our new members feel welcome.

For more information call
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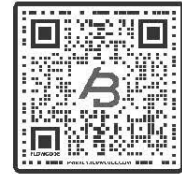
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- ✓ Nakia Whitfield

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 - ✓ Joe Golonka (R)
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National Convention Delegate Reports

Greetings all,

I had the pleasure to represent you and Branch 2184 as a delegate to the NALC 73rd Biennial Convention. The convention was held in Boston, MA the week of August 4. Our delegation returned on August 9th.

This convention was different from those in the past that I attended because of the controversy surrounding our National President, Brian Renfroe. Most of the general sessions were consumed with these matters. Fortunately, we were able to conclude the business of the convention.

Before and after the general sessions, classes were offered. There was an array of interesting classes for us to attend such as: EAP/ERT, branch trustee training, next generation delivery vehicle (NGDV), estate and trust planning, mail count and route inspection to name a few I attended the Next Generation Delivery Vehicle (NGDV).

The United States Postal Service's Next Generation Delivery Vehicle (NGDV) represents a significant leap forward in the modernization of mail delivery. Designed to replace the LLV's and FFV's. I found the enhanced safety systems, and the ability to accommodate a variety of delivery needs as a great advantage over our older vehicles. These vehicles are equipped with electric drivetrains, which align with the USPS's goals of reducing its carbon footprint and operational costs. They also have air conditioning. Additionally, the NGDV's ergonomic design aims to provide greater comfort and efficiency for us while working. Although the looks of the new truck are hard on the eyes, it offers many convenience and safety features to overcome the looks.

This year there was a class that followed the grievance procedure from start to finish. This was a very helpful and informative class for all, especially newer stewards. This class covered filing and resolving a grievance completely through each step.

1. ****Identification of the Issue****
2. ****Initial Discussion****
3. ****Formal Grievance Filing****
4. ****Grievance Submission****
5. ****Informal A meeting****
6. ****Formal A meeting (if necessary)****
7. ****Arbitration (if necessary)****

Throughout this process, the NALC provides support and representation to ensure that employees' rights are protected, and that the grievance is handled in accordance with the contract and applicable labor laws.

Thank you all again for the opportunity to represent you as a delegate to the NALC 73rd Biennial Convention.

--Darryl Clay Vice President

One of the classes I took at the National Convention was Managing Branch Finances. There was a lot in the class but I wanted to mention some of my highlights.

LMRDA (Labor-Management Reporting Disclosure Act of 1959) requires certain things because we have a fiduciary responsibility. Managing union business for the sole benefit of members in accordance with union's Constitution and Bylaws • An officer or employee who embezzles or misappropriates union assets commits a federal crime punishable by a fine and/or imprisonment • Union must provide accounting and financial controls to assure fiscal integrity • Setting aside personal needs for the needs of the union membership • Managing the union for the benefit of members • Holding union money and property solely for the benefit of the organization and its members • Refraining from conflicts of interest • Upholding duties of loyalty, care, good faith, confidentiality, prudence, and disclosure

Some of the ways that we can help ensure this is followed is through transparency. Some of the ways you do that is to Give the members a financial report every month. Give the members the opportunity to ask questions and encourage questions. Have the membership approve the budget and all non-recurring expenditures. Have the trustees give their report directly to the membership. Remember that members have the right to inspect the books and records at any time

Lastly, Internal controls were really stressed. For instance, all disbursements should have supported documentation (Warrants) approved by someone of authority and the membership. Separation of duties – try to have more than 1 person involved in the payment of Branch expenses. Have someone other than the Treasurer/Bookkeeper prepare the bank reconciliations. Insist that bank reconciliations be prepared within 3 weeks following the close of the month. Branch President should review unopened bank statements.

--Mark Owen,
Allen Park Delegate

As a union delegate for the 73rd Biennial Convention held in Boston, I was able to take classes and learn more about our NALC health insurance benefits. I now know it covers everything that HAP, Blue Cross and Blue Care do! And in some cases, even more!! And, even better, at a much more affordable price! I will definitely be switching come open season!! Just make sure your doctor accepts it, unless you don't mind switching doctors.

I also took a class on retirement to learn, or should I say refresh my memory about! Make sure that if you served in the military that you buy back your time!! Also, it's in your best interest to deposit, at the very least, the 5% that the Post Office matches into your TSP account!

--Paula S. Hall
Retired-Lincoln Park

At the 2024 National Convention we learned about the past, present and future of the NALC and USPS. After classes pertaining to city delivery and the route inspection process, I now have a better understanding of the current and future state of delivery. I also learned about the process of route inspections. How to properly time your route as well as what managements duties are in the process.

USPS and the NALC are working together on many things to protect the city letter carrier. The new fleet of NGDVs being produced were designed with input from a diverse group of city letter carriers. They will offer modern safety features like air conditioning and have an airbag, however, they will not have a rear step in an effort to discourage carriers from working out of the back.

Mail counts and route inspections will span six days and are used by management as a tool to adjust routes. During the route inspection the supervisor is not to give instructions but to observe. Do not let management set

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the pace or cause you to feel rushed. Delivery takes the time that it takes to be done accurately and safely. The carrier will need to be attentive to make sure that they do not work against their own interest. Ten-minute breaks are to be taken as well as any comfort stops and restroom breaks which are to be counted in the timing of the route. If a manager wishes to deduct time from the inspection of the route they must explain their reasoning. Management will produce PS Form 3999 following the route inspection. It is important to review the form and to look for time incorrectly removed from the route.

--*Bryan Mikich*
Branch 2184 Convention Delegate

Effective writing is to “*Write like you’re speaking to the least knowledgeable member*”. Geotab Telematics produce driving reports that include location. This oversight is for vehicle maintenance facilities (VMF), not management. “Management personnel may not spy or see covert techniques.” (Handbook M-39, Section 134.21) It is a grievance if a carrier is not notified prior to use of a vehicle with this device. The geotag is being added to all devices, it works through a 2021 scanner update.

The Next Generation Delivery Vehicle (NGDV) is set to make up at least 60,000 of the postal replacement fleet. Of the 140,000 LLVs built, 135,000 are still in use. The first NGDVs will be at sorting and delivery centers where parking lots are already being renovated.

Mail Counts and Route Inspections span over six days. It will take extra time compared to a normal day at work, meaning there will be time from the inspection that the manager will not contribute to one’s credited route time. Under Chapter 2 of M-39, one is entitled to count their mail. Management is there to observe not to give instruction. Do not allow methods such as a manager walking ahead effect your pace. The two mandatory ten-minute breaks and comfort breaks are counted toward the route time. If the comfort break is deducted, an explanation is necessary. Do not allow the supervisor to dictate when you take one.

A completed PS-Form 3999 (a form used to record route inspections) does not create a street time standard for the route. It takes what it takes. Comparing local office contracts (LOC) with the manager’s edited 3999 is imperative to finding time incorrectly taken from a route. Wash up time is an example of this. Carrier optimal routing (COR) is a tool of management to rewrite routes.

--*Natalie Mikich*
Branch 2184 Convention Delegate

One of the workshops that I attended was “What you need to know about Sorting and Delivery Centers (SDCs)”. SDCs are part of Postmaster General DeJoy’s 10-Year Plan. There are currently 68 SDCs in operation today. 27 additional SDCs are scheduled, with plans for 400 SDCs over the next 10 years.

The presentation made things seem rosy. New amenities, new parking lots, improved breakrooms, restrooms, and accommodations for the electric vehicles. They went over the process for seniority lists being merged, LMOUs, and different branches in the same facility with no forced mergers, as 13 of these SDCs already have multiple NALC branches under one roof.

The floor was opened for questions, and this is where things became interesting. The President of Branch 444 in New Jersey spoke about how his branch was the gaining installation, and according to Article 12 should have maintained their Branch number. He said NALC President Renfroe unilaterally decided that the larger branch coming in to the facility was the gaining installation.

Another carrier from a SDC in New York State spoke of the horror stories of her SDC. For example, how the parking lots are so far away from the facility. That the Post Office failed to provide the necessary pedestrian bridge. There are so many carrier cases that the workroom floor is the length of two football fields. That

carriers typically walk 2.5-3 miles BEFORE they leave for the field. Drive times to routes of 40 minutes with no route adjustments to compensate. CCAs became tired of being bounced around multiple units and quit, which has led to endless mandating of overtime for non-ODL carriers.

The SDC plan sounds like a cocktail of dysfunction. As a Steward, the prospect that there would be no end to the Contract violations in such a facility is exciting. I wonder if they have upgraded union rooms for us in SDCs.

--Kris Shaw

NALC Branch 2184 Delegate Allen Park Post Office

During the 73rd Biennial Convention in August held in Boston I had the opportunity to attend multiple classes towards further educating myself about multiple topics involving the NALC. One of the classes I chose to attend was the Women's Roundtable Discussion. This informative class was led by Kori Blalock, Deputy Chief of Staff and Director of Legislative and Political Affairs at headquarters. The panel also included Stephanie Stewart, Director of Health Benefit plan, Sandy Laemel, Branch 1 President and National Trustee, Keisha Lewis, Region 1 NBA and Larissa Pardee, Region 5 RAA. They each discussed their own rise to the top and the various struggles they faced as women in a dominant man's world. They described the challenges and victories in getting to where they are now at and how important it is to "extend the ladder down" rather than pull it up after yourself. In other words, help the person below you rise to success. How important it is in laying the groundwork for success and using the negative to keep you motivated to continue onward. Being a woman myself I found this discussion to be helpful in knowing if you choose to move to another path, you can succeed as long as you keep forging ahead and use the ladder held down to you. And then extend that ladder down instead of pulling it up after yourself. Thank you, Brothers and sisters for allowing me the opportunity to be your representative as a delegate once again.

--Jennifer Rake

Branch 2184 Northville Delegate

Hello everyone,

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the NALC for allowing me to be a part of the 73rd Biennial Convention. It has been a remarkable experience. I attended several classes, all of which were excellent, but one stood out: Dignity and Respect in the Workplace. This resonates deeply, especially with the ongoing issues we face at the Inkster Post Office in Michigan.

The insights and tools provided in this class are essential for tackling the real challenges we encounter daily. Jason delivered an outstanding presentation on developing a strong case from the outset, particularly at the informal and Formal Step A levels. He emphasized that addressing joint statement cases is more critical where we, as stewards, are involved. One key takeaway was to imagine documenting every incident as if captured on video.

This mental exercise highlighted the importance of gathering evidence and witness statements meticulously. We must bring every detail to light, articulate what happened, what rules were violated, and what remedies we seek for an Informal A interdiction. Any remedies proposed must be fair and appropriate at every stage. If a case escalates, we must show the arbitrator our commitment to being reasonable and constructive.

By advocating for dignity and respect at our workplace, we can create a more positive environment for everyone involved. With the right tools and a focus on these principles, we can make significant strides in resolving our issues. Let's continue to empower ourselves with the knowledge and resources required to effect real change.

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Thank you again for the incredible experience at the convention. I look forward to continuing this important work at Inkster Post Office.

Best regards,
--*Scherrie Lacey*
Inkster Post Office

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Branch 2184 for providing me with the opportunity to attend our NALC 73rd Biennial Convention in Boston on August 5, 2024. I will share some things that were highly informative in the workshop classes that I attended.

Branch Trustee Training: During a Branch Audit trustees confirm that the Branch receipts from all other sources have been properly documented and deposited. Trustees verify all Assets, identify all bank accounts, their final balances, review withdrawals and transfers. The LMRDA requires unions to submit an annual financial report within 90 days after the end of their fiscal year. Additionally, LMRDA Compliance ensures that all officers and employees who handle funds are adequately bonded.

Following Grievances from Start to Finish: Part 4 OSHA stance on workplace violence is any act or threat of physical violence harassment intimidation or other threatening disruptive behavior that occurs at the work site it ranges from threats and verbal abuse to physical assaults and even homicide it can affect and involve employees' client's customers and visitors. The OSHA workplace violence investigation manual provides general enforcement guidance to be applied in determining whether to make an initial response and or site and employer an instance of workplace violence is presumed to be work related if it results from an event occurred in the workplace.

Thank you, Brothers and Sisters of Branch 2184, the classes were detailed, and the time was well spent.

--*Tracy Mitchell*
Trenton Delegate

Hello brothers and sisters of the great Branch 2184. One of the classes I took at the National convention was "Changing mail industry and the USPS Delivering for America plan". Universal Service Obligation or the USO used to be financed by letters, periodicals and parcels. Mail volume took a sharp dive in the late 2000's. Since the 2010's parcels have taken over. So now the USO is primarily financed by parcels, but there is a fierce competitor.

Which brings me to another class. "Amazon Delivery Labor Practices". Amazon started out by selling books in the mid 90's, and now are selling just about anything you can think of. I joke that you probably could buy a person on Amazon if you knew the correct keyword to search. They started delivering some of their own parcels in 2014. USPS still had a big chunk of their service, but Amazon began to grow their fleet rapidly.

Though they were growing, their workers weren't the happiest. Low wages and long grueling workdays were some of the workers' complaints. If you tried to unionize, you would get suspended and/or fired. Without unions, employer power is rapidly growing, to the detriment of workers. With unions, workers can get higher wages and access to better benefits just to name a few. So, in the long run, raising wages and improved working conditions for Amazon will benefit letter carriers.

Which takes me to another class. "Finding your union voice". Which basically says, make sure when you communicate with your brothers and sisters, keep it simple and to the point. I hope I did just that. Thank you all for putting your trust in me as a delegate for this 73rd biennial National Convention.

--*Katrina Jones*
Recording Secretary Westland Convention Delegate

Let's go Branch 2184. I had a blast at this year's NALC convention. The workshops on the vehicles were exciting. Replacing our 1990s and 2000s fleet with the Canoo Vans and the Next generation delivery vehicles is going to be a game changer in the delivery experience. The electric design is a significant upgrade, eliminating carbon emissions and reducing the environmental impact of daily deliveries. The spacious interior is accessible, providing ample room to stand and sort mail and packages with ease. The organization system is thoughtful and maneuverable making it easy to navigate and find what you need.

Safety features abound, including airbags, street view window, the encrypted keys, and 4-wheel drive, giving drivers confidence in any condition. The vehicle's climate control and fans create a comfortable working environment, especially on extreme days. Convenient charging access ensures the vehicle is always ready to go. The unique, animated design is a bonus, setting this vehicle apart from others on the road. Overall, this vehicle is a significant improvement for postal delivery comfortable, safe, sustainable, and efficient. It's clear that careful thought went into designing a vehicle that meets the needs of postal workers and the environment. I'm excited to see these vehicles on the road, serving our communities!

--Mark Obermiller
Ypsilanti Delegate

This was my first time attending the National Convention. As a new steward and convention attendee, it was empowering to get to see and learn more about the union that I am a part of. One of the things I learned about while attending one of the classes that was offered: "Finding My Union Voice" was to be mindful of the words I use, whether it be what I say or when I'm processing a case file and understanding the impact of my platform. As a person that has been a steward for a little under a year now, it can be easy to lose focus on that.

Another key take-away I learned was how important it is to be clear and concise with the least knowledgeable person in mind. I want to be able to educate my fellow carriers during the grievance process and in order to do that I can't over saturate the language because it can be overwhelming for them. I want to be able to educate so that my fellow carriers are more informed.

Another class I took at the Convention was: "Following a Grievance." I got the chance to see the grievance process from start to finish through a presentation of a mock grievance. I could witness how a grievance is built and how important each step of the grievance procedure is. As a person that is still new to being a part of a union, it was very informative to learn about the union at the national level. To meet people from all over the country, and all that the NALC has to offer was amazing.

--Kaliah Patrick,
Inkster Post Office Delegate

I would like to thank the membership for allowing me to be a convention delegate to the 2024 Boston Convention.

These are a few of the things that I learned from the courses at this national convention:
*Grievance best chance of success "stewards should be able to answer yes to questions"

1. Is there a violation of the National Agreement
 2. Did we properly frame the issue?
 3. Did we determine all the facts of the case and document each one?
 4. Do our contentions clearly explain the documented facts and how the National Agreement was violated?
 5. Did we request an appropriate remedy for the contract violation?
- * What else can we do?

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- Request a labor Management Meeting.
- Turn in a 1767.
- Request information relating to the offending supervisors) training and discipline.
- File Complaint with OSHA

I also learned about The Electronic Key Pilot Test. Keys are set to last 12 hours in assigned address/locks. Engineers can configure this 'rule' in different ways, more/less time, set address/locks, etc. Keys rendered useless after 'rule' duration runs out. If key gets lost/stolen within the 'rule', USPS engineers or OIG have the ability disassociate the locks from lost/stolen key. Each key can hold up to 5,000 addresses/locks

I also learned about the different fleet of vehicles our employer has such as:

COTS Vehicle - Ford E-Transit
COTS Vehicle - Rivian Delivery 500
COTS Vehicle - Morgan Olson C250
COTS - Canoo Lifestyle Delivery Vehicle (LDV) 190

--*Ananias Epps*
Westland Convention Delegate

The 2024 NALC Biennial National Convention was held August 5-9th where between 5,000 and 8,000 Letter Carriers attended from all 50 states and even a few U.S. territories. It's a unique experience to get to meet fellow brothers and sisters from all over and share our experiences as letter carriers and I would like to thank you the membership for allowing me to attend as a delegate.

The one thing that I know each and every one of you is anticipating is an update on where we are at with a new contract, so I'll get that out of the way first. We still do not have a new contract nor has a date been set for arbitration. Although President Renfro did reiterate that he believes we are close to reaching an agreement he did not share the specifics on what exactly that agreement would look like, nor did he give a timetable on when he thought it would get done.

As for the convention itself, it consisted of a daily general session where business was done on proposed resolutions for upcoming negotiations and had a multitude of classes that could be taken with topics ranging from city delivery, contract enforcement, branch finances, and more. One of the classes I attended was the Contract Administration Unit (CAU) Workshop. In this class they gave us updates on everything from where we are at currently with National Level grievances, Regional Arbitrations, and the Step B caseload. They spoke about how there are over 10,596 cases pending at Step B and that they are activating backup teams nationally to get through the backlog. They also gave an update on the National Arbitration case for the PostalEase hack (4B19N-4B-C 23120456) which effected many letter carriers pay nationwide even some here in our own branch. The PostalEase case was heard on January 23rd and 24th of 2023, however, we are still awaiting the decision to be issued from Arbitrator Nolan and hope to have it soon.

In solidarity,

--*Erik Venzke*
Mutual Benefits Representative (MBR)
Monroe Convention Delegate



POLITICALLY INCORRECT? AN OVERVIEW OF LETTER CARRIER POLITICAL RIGHTS AND PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES

With a critical National election rapidly approaching, the buzz of partisan electoral politics is filling the air. Every letter carrier is strongly encouraged to exercise their civic duty and constitutional right to make their voice heard by voting in the November 5 general election.

Partisan political matters are often a subject of frank discussion and at times heated debate on the post office work floor. Letter carriers and all postal employees are fully enfranchised United States citizens. However, there are some very specific prohibitions on partisan political activity - especially that which occurs in the workplace or while wearing a USPS uniform. What letter carriers can and cannot do in terms of partisan politics is often the subject of MUCH misinformation and misunderstanding, most of this management-generated. With that in mind, the following is a listing of general guidelines.

1. As a good rule of thumb, the adage “off the clock and out of uniform” should ALWAYS be kept in mind. Letter carriers are always prohibited from engaging in partisan political activity during work hours. This is defined as actively campaigning for or soliciting campaign funds for a candidate or candidates for partisan (affiliated with a political party) political office while on post office time, while on post office property, or while wearing a post office uniform. Letter carriers do have every right to work for or assist a partisan campaign for public office or make personal monetary donations to such campaigns – on our own time. However, letter carriers may not organize or personally oversee partisan political fundraisers, even while off the clock. Letter carriers may also serve as delegates to local, State and National political conventions. Again, in all instances letter carriers must be on their own time, out of uniform, and off post office property when engaging in any form of partisan political activity.
2. The M-41 handbook, section 112.25 requires letter carriers to “attend quietly and diligently to our work and refrain from loud talking or the use of profane language.” However, contrary to the misinformed opinion of some management types and even a few misguided craft level employees, the above does NOT prohibit us from engaging in ordinary conversation with nearby co-workers about any subject that we wish to

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discuss – including politics. **Do keep in mind that your co-workers usually have little interest in your personal political opinions. Be respectful of their right not to be subjected to unsolicited political discussion.**

3. Postal vehicles and work floor equipment (including carrier cases) may not display **ANY** partisan political stickers, banners, or similar material. The Union may post material on Union bulletin boards regarding the voting records and positions of candidates for partisan office **only as they pertain to postal or labor issues**. The Union may not otherwise post any material that endorses a specific candidate for partisan political office.
4. Letter carriers may not wear buttons, clothing, or stickers that endorse candidates for partisan office while engaged in official business or while we are wearing a post office uniform. However, we may place such material on our personal vehicles that are parked on post office property, as long as such vehicles are not used for official postal business. Additionally, letter carriers may wear buttons, clothing, and stickers that endorse candidates for partisan office *while off the clock and out of uniform*. They may also post yard signs or other campaign items on our personal, non-postal property.
5. Letter carriers may be candidates for any non-partisan political office, but are prohibited from running for any partisan (party-affiliated) political office during their tenure of USPS employment. USPS retirees are not restricted in this manner, and they may run for any political office at any time, as well as engage in fundraising activities for candidates for partisan political office – away from post office property.

If you have specific concerns or need additional information about your political rights during and outside of work, please notify your steward or contact the Branch 2184 office.

--Joe Golonka
Branch 2184 Contract Administration

Branch 2184 New Members

Ashley Kolbusz	Westland
Juanita Henry	Dearborn Annex
Christina Graves	Rockwood
Danielle Luhman	Trenton
Samellia Memel	Inkster
Ashley Sapp	Westland
Cierra Wright	Dearborn Heights
Sandeep Sandhu	Canton
DeAndre Braswell	Inkster
Joshua Strouse	Trenton
Steven Campbell	Plymouth
LaShawn Hines	Plymouth
Alec Sheldon	Westland
Savanna Sorensen	Northville
Nafeesah Tharpe	Dearborn

Welcome to

Branch 2184

Attend Your Branch Meetings

Next Branch Meeting

October 2nd, 2024

7:30 pm @ Union Hall

Next Retirees Meeting

October 10th, 2024

12:30 pm @ Union Hall

BRANCH 2184'S 100TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Please join us for a Special Gala Celebration of NALC Branch 2184's 100th Anniversary, taking place on Sunday, November 10, 2024 from 2:00 until 6:00 p.m. at:

**The Prestige Banquet Hall
6600 Allen Road, Allen Park MI 48101**

Tickets are only \$20 for ALL active and Retired Branch 2184 Members and their Guests. Please, no Children or USPS Management.

The Festivities will Include a Buffet Dinner, a Cash Bar, Music, Dancing, Special Guest Speakers, and a LOT of Union Solidarity as we Celebrate Branch 2184's Storied Past, while Looking Ahead to the Next 100 Years!

To RSVP, Please Call the Union Office at (313) 295-1640



FACT SHEET

Postal Service Health Benefits (PSHB)

USPS EMPLOYEES

The Postal Service Reform Act of 2022 (PSRA) was signed into law in April 2022. Since then, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), in conjunction with the Postal Service, has been working to implement a new Postal Service Health Benefits (PSHB) Program, as required under the new law. PSHB is a new, separate program within the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program and will be administered by OPM. Coverage under the PSHB Program will be effective January 1, 2025. Below is a list of facts regarding the PSHB Program for active employees:

1. You are required to select a health insurance plan in the PSHB Program during the 2024 open season period, from November 11, 2024 – December 9, 2024.
2. PSHB plan options and premium information will be available in October 2024.
3. OPM will launch a new enrollment platform for health insurance. Information on how to make elections using the new system will be available prior to the 2024 open season.
4. If you are an **active employee age 64 or older as of January 1, 2025**, you ARE NOT required to enroll in Medicare Part B to continue your PSHB health insurance coverage once you retire. However, upon your retirement and entitlement to Medicare Part A (typically at age 65), you will have the option to enroll in Medicare Part B during a special enrollment period.
 - If you are the primary subscriber, your covered family members will not be required to enroll in Medicare Part B to stay on your PSHB plan; however, enrollment in Medicare Part B may reduce your overall costs for health care-related expenses and may provide better value for you and your family.
5. If you are an **active employee under the age of 64 as of January 1, 2025**, to continue your PSHB health insurance coverage in retirement, you WILL BE required to enroll in Medicare Part B after you retire and become entitled to Medicare Part A (typically at age 65).
 - If you are the primary PSHB enrollee, your covered family members will also be required to enroll in Medicare Part B when you retire, upon their entitlement to Medicare Part A, if they wish to remain covered by your PSHB insurance.
 - If you **retire on or after January 1, 2025, and you are under 64**, you WILL BE required to enroll in Medicare Part B when you become entitled to Medicare Part A (typically at age 65) to remain enrolled in a PSHB plan. The Social Security Administration (SSA) will mail you a notice when you are eligible to enroll in Medicare Part B during your initial enrollment period. Your initial enrollment period starts three months prior to your 65th birthday and ends three months after your 65th birthday. If you are the primary PSHB subscriber, your covered family members will also be required to enroll in Medicare Part B upon their entitlement to Medicare Part A, if they wish to remain covered by your PSHB insurance.
6. There are exceptions to the requirement to enroll in Medicare Part B as an annuitant. These exceptions will also apply to your covered family members. Annuitants may be responsible for providing proof of eligibility for the applicable exception(s) to the designated agency. These exceptions are:
 - You are residing outside of the United States and its territories. You are required to follow the policy and procedure set forth by the Postal Service to be eligible for this exception; or
 - You are enrolled in health care benefits provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs; or
 - You are eligible for health services provided by Indian Health Services.
7. As a general rule, spousal and family member PSHB coverage is based on the primary enrollee's eligibility. If the primary subscriber is required to enroll in Medicare Part B, dependent family members will also be required to enroll when they are eligible.



Looking Ahead

Benefits can change over time. Annuitants are encouraged to review available plans each year and stay abreast of health insurance options.

Additional information will be communicated in the coming months. You can also visit or contact us via any of the following methods:

Online – <https://www.keepingposted.org>



www.OPM.gov

Email – retirementbenefits@usps.gov

PostalRetireeHealthBenefits@opm.gov

Mail – 475 L'Enfant Plaza SW
Suite 9670
Washington, DC 20260

Fax – 202-268-3337

Accessibility – Federal Relay Service: 1- 800-877-8339

You can also receive information and updates by signing up for our text messaging notifications by texting "PSHBP" to **39369**.

It is not the intent of this document to amend or conflict with the provisions of 5 U.S.C. chapter 89, 5 C.F.R. part 890, or the collective bargaining agreements between the Postal Service and its labor unions, nor with provisions of the Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM). The specific benefits authorized for an employee covered by a collective bargaining agreement are determined by the terms of that agreement, or the ELM.

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Branch 2184 Archives

As we approach Branch 2184's 100th anniversary in November, we are looking for items such as pictures as well as other documents and items from our Branch's past, especially the years from about 1950 to 2000. We will display them at our 100th anniversary gala on November 10 and we also hope to create a permanent archive for display at the Branch 2184 office.

Any Branch 2184 member who has items that they would like to lend or donate to the Branch for this purpose is highly encouraged to do so by contacting the Union office at (313) 295-1640, or stop by the office during regular business hours of 9:00am to 5:00pm Monday through Friday.

--Branch 2184 100th Anniversary Committee



FACT SHEET

Postal Service Health Benefits (PSHB)

USPS ANNUITANTS

The Postal Service Reform Act of 2022 (PSRA) was signed into law in April 2022. Since then, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), in conjunction with the Postal Service, has been working to implement a new Postal Service Health Benefits (PSHB) Program, as required under the new law. PSHB is a new, separate program within the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program and will be administered by OPM. Coverage under the PSHB Program will be effective January 1, 2025. Below is a list of facts regarding the PSHB Program for current annuitants:

1. You are required to select a health insurance plan in the PSHB Program during the 2024 open season period, from November 11, 2024 – December 9, 2024.
2. PSHB plan options and premium information will be available in October 2024.
3. OPM will launch a new enrollment platform for health insurance. Information on how to make elections using the new system will be available prior to the 2024 open season.
4. If you are an **annuitant as of January 1, 2025, and not currently participating in Medicare Part B**, you ARE NOT required to enroll in Medicare Part B to continue your health insurance coverage in the new PSHB Program. Participation in Medicare Part B is voluntary; however, enrollment in Medicare Part B may reduce your overall costs for health care-related expenses and may provide greater value.
 - a) Your covered spouse and eligible family members will also not be required to enroll in Medicare Part B even if they are age 65 or older; however, enrollment in Medicare Part B may reduce overall costs for health care-related expenses and may provide greater value.
 - b) **Note:** If you are an **annuitant as of January 1, 2025, and are already enrolled in Medicare Part B**, you ARE required to remain enrolled in Medicare Part B to continue coverage under PSHB.
5. If you are an **annuitant entitled to Medicare Part A (typically at age 65) prior to January 1, 2024, and have not enrolled in Medicare Part B**, you and your covered, eligible family members may be able to participate in the special enrollment period (SEP) for Medicare Part B that starts on April 1, 2024. Those who enroll during the SEP will not need to pay the late enrollment penalty. Eligibility letters will be sent to annuitants and eligible family members in early 2024.
6. If you **retire between October 31, 2024, and December 31, 2024, and are entitled to Medicare Part A (typically at age 65)**, you will have the option to enroll in Medicare Part B during a specific eight-month special enrollment period immediately following your retirement date. If you wish to enroll, you **MUST** contact the Social Security Administration (SSA) to initiate enrollment if you are over the age of 65.
7. As a general rule, spousal and family member PSHB coverage is based on the primary subscriber's eligibility. If the primary subscriber is not required to join Medicare Part B, neither will dependent family members. Likewise, if you qualify for the SEP, so will your covered family members.



Looking Ahead

Benefits can change over time. Annuitants are encouraged to review available plans each year and stay abreast of health insurance options.

Additional information will be communicated in the coming months. You can also visit or contact us via any of the following methods:

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Retirement Counseling

If you are planning on retiring from the USPS, Branch 2184 is offering Retirement Counseling Assistance. Our Branch 2184 Retirees Officer will have a one-on-one with you and will answer questions and assist in filling out your retirement papers.

It is recommended that you order your Blue book at least 90 days in advance of your retirement date.

After you get your blue book contact the branch office so we can help you fill out the proper forms and schedule your HR Shared Services retirement counseling appointment.

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.

Remember the magic words --

“I WANT TO SEE MY STEWARD”

BRANCH 2184 • WESTERN WAYNE COUNTY, MI
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS • AFL-CIO
6969 Monroe
Taylor, MI 48180



Finding Your Union Voice

The purpose of this workshop was to assist us in effectively communicating with our members. It also discussed the importance of proper tone when writing to, or for our union members. As a legislative liaison, I have written to our members of Congress on legislative issues that have an impact on our jobs at the Postal Service and on our lives as letter carriers, active and retired. I found this workshop very informative and wish I had taken it years ago when I first started writing.

You should start with an outline, know your target audience, know your subject and your intended message. Your purpose of writing is to be informative while also being thoughtful, professional, authoritative, and approachable. To begin, always make your most important point the lead sentence of the paragraph, which summarizes or introduces the rest of the paragraph.

In order to hold the attention of the reader, when writing, we should always use short, easily understandable simple words. Keep sentences short, getting your point across using the least number of words. And each paragraph should be short and focused and have its own purpose separate from others.

Here are a few tips for writing: 1) Be clear and concise 2) Always write for the least knowledgeable member 3) Understand your impact 4) Be conscious of word choices - avoid repetition and using words like 'always' and 'never' 5) When in doubt, read it out loud 6) Approach writing collaboratively - get feedback, use an editor.

I hope to encourage anyone that has a story to tell, or something they've been wanting to share, to submit it in writing for consideration, to be published in this, our Branch newsletter. Email it to walt2184@prodigy.net

In solidarity,

--Patricia Linna