



MEMO To The Branch 2184 Leadership Council, October 4, 2023

Walt McGregory
Jackie McGregory
Darryl Clay
Mel MacDonald
Cathy Tondreau
Jim Powell
Phil Ashford
Tracy Mitchell
Erik Venzke
Felicia Davis
Leonard Zawisa
Dave Reise
Joe Golonka
Kris Shaw
Mark Owen
Scott Russell
Karen Russell
Tod Lilla
Ryan Zyngier
Bryon Hendricks
Jillian Hudgins
Symone Coleman
Yvonne Jackson
Karl Tamburro
Shaun Fowlkes
Marwan Ghotemi
Chanel Harrison
Marquel Davis
Justin Leal
Lillian Bogosian
Rachel Stachulski
Scherrie Lacey
Kaliah Patrick
Scott Watts
Valerie Watkins
Kristie Nelson
Diego Forshaw
Keith Benedict
Victor Siemiesz
William Douglas
Jeffrey Webb
Casey Pennington
Nakia Whitfield
Katrina Jones
Ananias Epps
Ramon Robinson
Shatyra Young
Paul Bordine
Mike Tredway
Danita Hill

This month's Branch Leadership Council Memo will begin with an update concerning administrative matters. Our next regular membership meeting will take place on Wednesday, November 1 at 7:30 p.m. at the Branch 2184 office. As November is a busy month including two holidays, there will be just one steward meeting, on Tuesday, November 14. This meeting will take place at the Branch 2184 office beginning at 7:00 p.m. There will also be an executive board meeting on Monday, November 27 at the Branch 2184 office.

The Federal Employee Health Benefits open season for 2023 will begin on Monday, November 13 and continue through Monday, December 11. During this open season active and retired USPS employees can choose a FEHBP plan, make changes within their existing plan, or do nothing and they will continue to be enrolled in their existing plan in 2024. As always, our members are strongly encouraged to look closely at the NALC's own excellent plan.

Of note, the transition to the Postal Service Health Benefits Program (PSHB) effective on January 1, 2025 as mandated by the Postal Service Reform Act of 2022, will begin during the 2024 open season period. This will occur on November 11, 2024 through December 9, 2024. Much more information about this transition including plan options will be made available next year. It is expected that nearly all the current participating FEHB plans will continue to be available under the PSHB.

While our active members patiently (and in some cases not so patiently) await the resolution of the current contract negotiations impasse – either by a negotiated agreement or through the interest arbitration process, some have asked about pay raises, either contractual or COLA-related. Other than conversions, scheduled step increases, or bids to T-6 positions, all pay raises are on hold pending the outcome of negotiations. It is widely expected that either a negotiated or arbitrated resolution will result in some back pay to reflect contractual or COLA increases that might otherwise have occurred. However, that is not a sure thing and the devil as always will be in the details.

The Branch 2184 office has received calls from several CCAs and PTFs who have expressed concerns about snide and disrespectful remarks made not by management (in this case), but instead by a few misguided fulltime regular carriers in their stations. Specifically, the CCAs and PTFs are being quite incorrectly accused of taking "their overtime." As (hopefully) all stewards and contract enforcers know, management always has the right at any time to assign work as overtime to a CCA or PTF, up to 11.5 hours in a day and 7 days a week, instead of assigning it to a fulltime carrier on an Overtime Desired List.

Management can determine – within the negotiated rules of our Collective Bargaining Agreement, the assignment of ALL overtime work. **No one is "entitled" to overtime.** Stewards, if you learn of such disrespectful behavior on the part of one or more of our members, tactfully remind them that CCAs and PTFs are their coworkers and are there to make a living, the same as everyone.

With the conclusion of the postal quarter on September 30 (and the beginning of a new fiscal year for the USPS on October 1), stewards are reminded to carefully review quarterly overtime equitability for your carriers on the regular ODL during the postal quarter now ended. Any equitability-related grievances should be initiated and heard at the informal step of the grievance procedure no later than Saturday, October 14.

Stewards should also be preparing to meet with management for purposes of formulating the annual leave boards for next year. Also please be sure to thoroughly review Items #4 through #12 of the Branch 2184 Local Memorandum of Understanding (LMOU). Under no circumstances should management be unilaterally determining the formulation of the leave boards in any Branch 2184-represented station. A reminder that annual leave selections should begin in every station in our Branch on Friday, December 1. Active members that plan to be convention delegates and attend the NALC National Convention in Boston August 5 – 9, 2024, should notify management of their intent prior to the beginning of vacation selections.

Also, regarding our LMOU, the Branch has received a favorable arbitration decision on a grievance out of our Belleville office, where local management attempted to challenge the inclusion of CCAs in “the number of carriers earning annual leave” for purposes of applying the percentages of carriers allowed off during the choice and non-choice annual leave periods. The negotiated percentages are thus applied to the number of letter carriers on each installation’s authorized complement or the number of carriers on each station’s employment roster, whichever is greater (LMOU Item #4, section 1, and Item #9). Arbitrator Gilder sustained the grievance in favor of the union in its entirety.

Of note, during the 25 to 30 years since this specific LMOU language was first negotiated, this was just the second time that management attempted to challenge the Branch’s interpretation of it, all the way to arbitration. The previous challenge occurred in Westland/Canton in 2011, where the postmaster at that time balked at including transitional employees (TEs), who did earn annual leave, for purposes of applying the leave percentages. That grievance was also sustained in favor of the union in its entirety.

Periodically the Postmaster General and other members of USPS hierarchy will issue policy letters and directives to managers and supervisors at the USPS District and local level regarding various matters, such as a requirement for contractual compliance by management. Most recently PMG DeJoy issued such a policy letter, again admonishing local and regional management of the (alleged) requirement for contractual compliance. While such policy letters and directives are often useful for inclusion in union grievance contentions, they should NOT be cited in grievance issue statements made on PS Form 8190. This is because they were not negotiated with the NALC, unlike Memorandums of Understanding that are negotiated at the national level, or national level interpretive (Step 4) grievance settlements. Thus, internal USPS policy letters/directives are NOT enforceable by the NALC.

Stewards, our Branch uniform bank for newer members remains available, but NOT on a walk-in, no notice basis. Please advise them to always call the union office first and make an appointment. Branch officers and others working at the Branch 2184 office cannot just drop whatever they are doing on a moment’s notice to get the uniforms down from where they are stored and accompany a member while he or she looks through what is available. Additionally, many Branch officers have field duties in the various stations in our Branch as well as meetings with others in the NALC as well as District and local management.