

NALCASTER

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS

Pagoda Branch 258

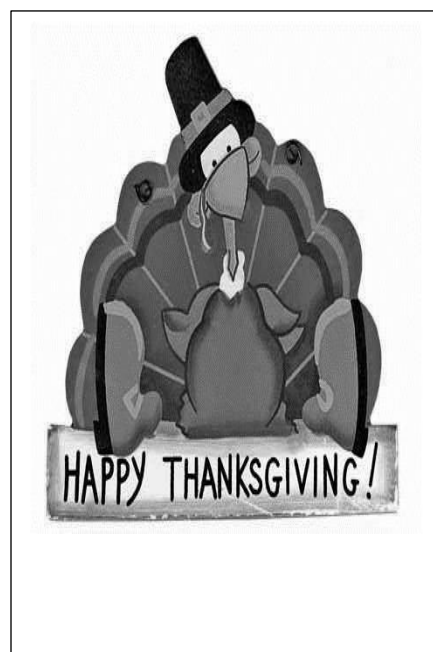
READING, PA.

October 13, 2021



N.A.L.C. PAGODA BRANCH 258 READING PA OFFICERS 2021

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Treasurer	Jason Taylor	570-617-1124
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	Dominic Tumminello	610-775-4263
	Dave Dry	484-797-7906
HBR MBA OWCP	Bill Lodek	610-914-1253
AFL-CIO	Sharon Unger	610-921-0394
Sergeant at Arms	Ed Gensemer	484-638-3067
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19555	Robert Oswald	610-451-5114
19560	Terry Stefansky	610-781-3221
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Many thanks to Paul Purcell, Breakthrough Visuals.com, and, as always, Branch President Fred Ranalli for contributing material for this issue. Please remember that this newsletter is for the Branch and by the Branch, and contributions can be submitted to the editor at any time.

Letter from the Editor

November 2, 1891. What does this date mean to you? Maybe an ancestor was born on this date, maybe something happened locally where you grew up. I googled this date and it turns out that very little happened historically on this date – Granville T. Woods patented the electric railway, ho hum. To most of us, November 2, 1891 means nothing. Or does it?

If you were to go into our Union office and take a close look at the charter for NALC Branch 258, you would find that our branch came into existence on November 2, 1891. As it happens, this date did have a very fundamental impact on all of our professional lives. It struck me to think about how long ago this happened, and how many challenges we have needed to face and overcome in order to grow, thrive, and, at times, survive throughout our history.



It also occurred to me that this year, during the term of this Nalcaster issue, we will mark the 130th anniversary of our branch. As far as I know, people do not get particularly festive about a 130th anniversary. There is no special term for it (the next one of those would be our Sesquicentennial twenty years from now), and we have no special events or activities planned. However, when I thought about it, I did find some significance in the number 130 that I used and want to share with you.

At the same time that I was thinking about our history, current events involved work on supporting the passage of postal reform through congress, getting a large lump sum payment pursuant to retroactive pay from our new contract, and receiving a huge (perhaps the largest in our history) COLA raise, which went into effect with our pay of September 17. None of these things would be possible without how we are seen by upper management regarding the strength and solidarity of our union, and in the political clout that we need to accomplish our goals. Make no mistake, we get nowhere without the support of our members – the buck starts here.

To that end, I decided, as a result of our raises and current political needs, to increase my current support of the Letter Carrier Political Fund, which supports candidates and members of congress who share our views on improving the Postal Service and our jobs. A couple of months ago, I increased my regular contribution to the LCPF by \$5 per pay period.

So, how did I start with an anniversary and fly off into a political fundraising tangent? Well, let's take a moment for just a tiny bit of math. Five dollars a pay period, times 26 pay periods in the year, comes out to – that's right - \$130! Synchronicity!

So, in a nutshell, I have commemorated our 130th anniversary by matching those years of service with my increased donation to the LCPF, and I wholeheartedly invite you to do the same. The time is right and the support is needed. Whether you would be establishing a new contribution or increasing an existing one, \$5 a pay – a Starbucks drink - is all it takes. I will include space in this Nalcaster which details the ease and options for making contributions. In closing, I just simply want to say thank you, and happy anniversary!

Andy Gelsinger, Nalcaster Editor

Meetings Back On!

The easing of Covid restrictions and immunizations of many of our members has enabled us to hold our regular meetings in person. Therefore, we are happy to announce that we have



resumed our regular schedule, and will meet on October 13 and November 10. Food will be available at 7PM, and the meetings will start at 7:30. We want to thank our members for their patience and flexibility as we have been forced to endure cancelled meetings, changing locations, and zoom calls for these past many months. Given the current issue of long hours at the workplace, latecomers are expected and will be accommodated as well as possible. We have also

returned to our traditional meeting location at 1251 Front St. Information is power! Come out to stay informed, participate in the betterment of your job, and enjoy some good eats and fellowship!

We Remember

Recently, America commemorated the 20th anniversary of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and the foiled attack that resulted in the flight 93 plane crash near Shanksville, Pennsylvania. In this issue of the Nalcaster, this space is dedicated to remembering and honoring all who lost their lives, health, and loved ones on that day. We also want to recognize the contributions of all those who worked and sacrificed in the aftermath of these events, especially the employees of the Church Street Station Post Office, the closest station to the doomed towers. If you haven't already, please take a moment to reflect upon the actions taken on and after that day, and to honor the heroes who took these actions.



President's Message

Hello everyone,

2021 was the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks on our country and on our way of life. As I watched the many news shows and memorial ceremonies in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania, it brought back many memories. That day, I was delivering mail on Merritt Parkway and one of my customers asked me if I knew what was going on. I said I wasn't sure what she meant. She had me step in and showed me both towers on fire and smoke coming out of the World Trade center on her TV. We both stood in shock as the reporters described what was happening. How could this be happening? Who was responsible? These events led to so much uncertainty for all of us. This tragedy was similar to the first time a human walked on the moon – in that you will always remember what you were doing and where you were when these things happened. As I watched the thousands of names of people who were victims of those horrible attacks, it brought me to tears. Family members of victims spoke of the heartache their families have suffered - children who never meet their parents who passed. As I listened to all the names something stuck out so much to me. The more than 5000 victim's names pointed out to me came from all different nationalities, race, backgrounds, occupations, political parties and were all different in many ways. After contemplating this, I came to realize that all of these people had so many differences, but they also had a few things that made them similar. They all found themselves at the

They Did Their Share

On Veterans' Day we honor
Soldiers who protect our nation.
For their service as our warriors,
They deserve our admiration.
Some of them were drafted;
Some were volunteers.
For some it was just yesterday;
For some it's been many years.
We owe so much to them,
Who kept us safe from terror.
So when we see a uniform,
Let's say "thank you" to every wearer.

by Joanna Fuchs



wrong place or on the wrong flight at the worst time. But most importantly, they were all Americans or were here because they believed in the American Dream of freedom.

One show featured Flight 93 and documented the last minutes where everyone on board that flight made a decision to fight back and spare so many others from losing their lives while surely losing their own. Last phone calls to love ones telling them they love them - so much sadness.

These brave individuals, while all different, chose to join together for other Americans that they didn't even know. Their differences didn't matter. Doing the right thing to save other people. Sacrificing their lives and not complaining or taking their own comfort or wellbeing before others. Heroes. They were not in the military or law enforcement. They were just

ordinary people from every background, gender, religious affiliation, sacrificing themselves for others. How honorable. Heroes. Every day I hear about how other American citizens take action against injustice and sacrifice their lives and wellbeing for others. This is the America I know. This is the America my education and experience has taught me to know.

A lot has happened in our country since that horrific day which we all will never forget. Recessions, government and science mistrust, misinformation, companies moving overseas seeking cheaper labor, climate change and pandemics are all issues I didn't experience as a child. Honesty, truth, humility, sacrifice for others, caring for the less fortunate have been replaced by distrust, selfishness and greed. Somewhere along the way our differences have become what has become most important. Religious, political, scientific beliefs and difference in race, gender, nationality, and social standing have become our main focus. Acceptance of different opinions is nonexistent and blaming each other for every issue has become the new normal.

Today, people argue and refuse to wear a mask to protect their co-workers, friends and families. Some question science with regard to their protection and vaccinations. Some refuse to get a shot that might save their life. The Covid numbers have increased and it was reported today that hundreds of thousands new cases are reported every week. The facts state that 95% of the new cases are unvaccinated. More and more children are becoming seriously ill, with some losing their lives. Children under 12 cannot be vaccinated at this time. I am asking all of you to "Be a Hero". Please wear a mask correctly, social distance, and if you have not been vaccinated please speak to your family physician and your children's pediatrician for their advice. I cannot think of one reason they would advise you to do something detrimental to your best interest. With all the misinformation and the continued new statistics and changes I surely would trust the experts and not what I read on social media.

Our differences is what makes our country great. Listening and considering everyone's experience and opinions has helped the best decisions to be made by our leaders. Our country has a greater diversity now than ever before. We could continue to oppress minority groups or

learn from their experiences to make our country better. Every group of immigrants faced oppression and mistrust when they came to America seeking a better life for their families. Many of the immigrants have come to America to escape the oppression and dangers in their own countries. All of our families emigrated here except the Native Americans. Every one of us and every culture has worth and importance to benefit and add to our country. Many of these groups make up the workers who do the necessary low paying services that make our lives easier. The pandemic should have shown all of us this fact. Many minorities process our food, provide transportation, make deliveries, and take care of our elderly, to name a few of these essential occupations. We should all be grateful.

Pamela Heyman, MS, LPC

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www.EAP4YOU.com

You can call the EAP or go to the website
24 hours a day for information and help.

The anniversary of 911 has made me challenge myself to do better. I challenge all of you to join me. As the song says, I am going to start with "The man in the mirror". I will strive to look for my similarities instead of my differences. I will look for the good in everyone and every situation. I will try to be more considerate of the less fortunate. I will listen better and even if I do not agree, I will try to better accept other's opinions. I know it will be hard and I might stumble but I promise you I will try and start again and again. Maybe we can start a movement and make someone's life better every day. Maybe people will look at their own faults instead of others. Maybe people will be more considerate of other people's needs. Maybe one of us will be faced with putting ourselves in harm's way to save someone's life. Maybe we can make a better America and not the divided, self-centered mistrusting people we have now become.

Fraternally Yours,

Fred A. Ranalli
Branch 258, NALC



Open Season for Health Care

Open season for making changes or enrolling in health care, dental, vision, and flexible spending accounts begins on November 8, 2021 and concludes on December 13. During this time, branch members can make changes in their coverages, and will be able to designate an amount of money to set aside for their 2022 flexible spending account. Members are reminded that a) if they do not want to make any changes in their health, dental, or vision coverages, nothing needs to be done; b) if they want to take advantage of the money saving aspects of an FSA, an election for 2022 must be made during the open season.





SIGN ME UP!

How to contribute to the Letter Carrier Political Fund

Online Enrollment – by designating the Political Fund as one of the three payroll “allotments”

BEFORE YOU START, YOU’LL NEED:

- A. Your 8-digit Employee ID Number (on your paystub)
- B. Your USPS password
- C. You’re Postal Record Number (Located on the back cover of your Postal Record magazine, above your name. Or call 202.393.4695 to get your Postal Record Number). See the example below.
- D. To create your personal account number, insert the seven digits of your Postal Record number to the space below
 _____0034952535

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

1. Login to USPS’s Postal Ease website at <https://ewss.usps.gov> You may also get to the Postal Ease website through the USPS LiteBlue website See the instructions below
2. Click “I agree”
3. Enter your Employee ID number and Password and click “Submit”
 If you have not yet set up a password click the link provided on the page or go to:
<https://ssp.usps.gov/ssp-web/welcome.xhtml>
 If you forgot your password click the link provided on the page or go to:
<https://ssp.usps.gov/ssp-web/einVerification.xhtml>
4. Under Payroll click “Allotments / Payroll Net To Bank”
5. Click “Continue”
6. Click “Allotments”
7. Enter the 9-digit Financial Institution Routing Number: 0 6 4 0 0 0 1 7
8. Enter your 17-digit Account Number _____ 0 0 3 4 9 5 2 5 3 5
See instructions in step D at right
9. Enter Account type as “checking”
10. Enter amount of your Allotment: \$ _____
The maximum yearly amount is \$5,000
11. Click VALIDATE
12. Click SUBMIT
13. Print or write down your confirmation number for your records

1. To get to Postal Ease through Lite Blue:

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

Through a **MONTHLY** Electronic Fund Transfer, NALC members can contribute directly from their bank account to the Letter Carrier Political Fund (NALC's PAC). On the 1st of every month, the Political Fund will automatically (and without a fee) deduct from your bank account the amount you choose to contribute (ex: \$5 donation each month for twelve months, totaling \$60 for the year).

Electronic Fund Transfer Authorization

Fill out and return this form with a **voided check** to the address below

I, _____ (your name) hereby authorize my bank to deduct from my checking account the **MONTHLY** sum of:

☐ \$25 ☐ \$20 ☐ \$15 ☐ \$10 ☐ \$5 ☐ Other: \$_____ PER MONTH and forward that amount to the Letter Carrier Political Fund (NALC's PAC) (Maximum amount per year is \$5,000). I make this authorization voluntarily and may revoke it at any time by notifying the Letter Carrier Political Fund in writing.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Full Name (please print): _____

Social Security Number: _____ OR Postal Record number: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

ATTACH A VOIDED CHECK HERE.

Please send this completed form and your voided check to:

The Letter Carrier Political Fund
100 Indiana Ave NW,
Washington, DC 20001-2144

Your Postal Record Number (circled):

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

Staple your voided check here

For any questions regarding contributing to the Letter Carrier Political Fund, including how to contribute as a retiree from your annuity, or how to contribute as a family member, please contact our LCPF specialists Dave Dry and Ed Gensemer, or go to www.nalc.org

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

USPS Employee COVID Update

As of the writing of this Nalcaster, the COVID related mask policy for employees has been changed. A copy of the new policy appears below:

Mandatory Stand-Up Talk

Sept. 8, 2021

Face coverings policy reinstated

Due to the uncertainty associated with the COVID-19 delta variant, the Postal Service reinstated its previous face coverings policy for all mail processing and logistics, retail and delivery, and vehicle operations facilities on Aug. 27.

Under the reinstated policy, all employees and contractors who interact with the public—regardless of the employee or contractor's vaccination status—must wear face coverings when there is a state, local or tribal directive in place that requires face coverings to be worn.

Additionally, face coverings are required for employees and contractors who do not deal directly with the public and who cannot achieve or maintain social distancing in the workplace, regardless of the employee or contractor's vaccination status.

Employees and contractors in administrative office buildings who cannot maintain social distance must likewise wear a face covering regardless of vaccination status.

You may request a face covering from your supervisor.

The Postal Service encourages all employees who wish to get vaccinated to do so. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, widespread vaccination for COVID-19 is a critical tool to help stop the spread of the virus.

Our project to compile, keep up to date, a master email and best phone list of the membership is ongoing. To add your information, please contact Andy Gelsinger at 610-413-8158 (text) or slice710@aol.com (email), Ed Gensemer at caddy1217@aol.com (email), or pass the info through any shop steward or board member. You can also use the sample form in this issue to mail your information

Simple Form Which Can Be Used to Send in Your
Contact Information

Name _____

Email _____

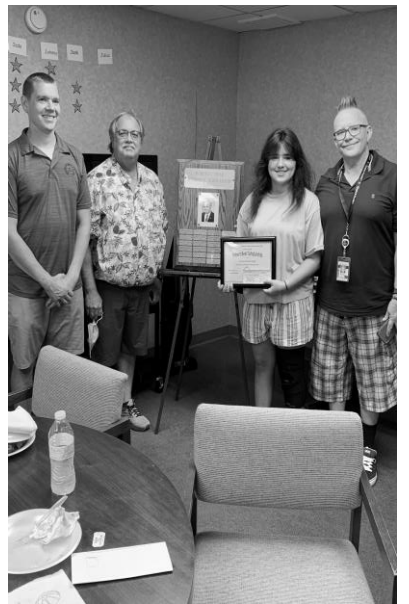
Best Phone# _____

About Our Members



Congrats to...

Branch 258 is proud to congratulate Erik DeLarosa, son of Erick DeLarosa and Emine McDonough, daughter of Richie McDonough, who are the recipients of the 2021 Branch 258 Beck and Bear memorial scholarships. We hope that you develop into productive and successful young professionals in your next stages of life. Best wishes to you both!



The following carriers have completed years on the seniority list* since the publication date of our last newsletter:

Leann Brigle – 27 years; Ed Gensemer – 27 years; Tammy Parker – 27 years; Mark Swarmer – 27 years; Charlotte Lydixsen – 23 years; Anna Perez, 21 years; Andy Gelsinger – 20 years; Mike Mengel – 16 years; Dean Mathias, 16 years; Marc Dries, 16 years; Jason Taylor, 16 years; Dan Greco, 15 years; Ken Kessock, 15 years; Larry Grove, 13 years; Brad Adams, 11 years; Erick DeLarosa, 8 years; Linda Webber, 7 years; Jeff Young, 6 years; Stephanie Horrigan, 5 years; Juan Filpo – 3 years; Jess Iezzi, 3 years; Oscar Torres, 2 years; and in CCA service time: Jade Paris, 1 year; Emily Benn, 1 Year

*list is taken directly from the Reading installation seniority report, and reflects time since entered into full time carrier appointment in the Reading area, it does not reflect time before transferring or before career carrier appointment; carriers at AO's can be included on this list by forwarding a seniority list for that office to the editor

NALC-BRANCH 258
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TIME VALUE-PLEASE DO NOT DELAY



The NALCASTER is a publication of, by, and for the members of Pagoda Branch #258, NALC, Reading, PA. The opinions expressed herein, may but do not necessarily reflect those of the editor or Branch #258. All contributions are welcome. Members of NALC may use any items in this newsletter, just inform your readers of the source.



Serving US Postal Service
Over 55 Years!

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