

NALCASTER

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS

Pagoda Branch 258

READING, PA.

December 8, 2021



Happy Holidays

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

<u>Officer</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Telephone</u>
President	Fred Ranalli, Jr	610-406-1131
Vice President	Rich McDonough	484-955-4267
Treasurer	Jason Taylor	570-617-1124
Secretary	Paul Purcell	610-451-0244
Trustees:		
	Tammy Jones	610-960-7498
	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
NALCaster Editor	Andy Gelsinger	610-378-0417
Director of Archives	Andy Gelsinger	610-378-0417



SHOP STEWARDS

<u>Zone</u>	<u>Steward</u>	<u>Telephone</u>
19601	Darryl Shaak	484-219-7034
19604-05	Juan Munoz	610-373-8201
19606-02	Jess Iezzi	610-914-4614
19607	Mark Swarmer	610-856-1662
19608-09	Paul Purcell	610-451-0244
19610-11	Dave Dry	484-797-7906
19508	Rich McDonough	484-955-4267
19518	Russell Jackson	484-995-5874
19526	Chelsee Berger	570-516-0588
19522	Steve Fenstermacher	484-201-0193
19530	Tim Fisher	610-207-0204
19540	Jessica Mountz	610-914-9843
19551	Rich McDonough	484-955-4267
19555	Robert Oswald	610-451-5114
19560	Terry Stefansky	610-781-3221
19565	Kim Brunner	610-763-1674
19567	Robert Clark	610-589-1469

CONTACTING US

Visit us at: 1251 Front St. Reading, PA 19601
 Write us at: PO Box 12584 Reading, PA 19612
 View our website at www.nalc258.com
 Join our NALC Branch 258 Facebook page

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Step A designee	Jason Taylor	570-617-1124
Assoc. Off. Grievances	Rich McDonough	484-955-4267
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	Fred Ranalli Jr.	610-406-1131
	Rich McDonough	484-955-4267
Food Drive	Tammy Jones	610-960-7498
Legislative	Ed Gensemer	484 638-3067
HBR-MBA-OWCP		
	Bill Lodek	610-914-1253
MDA	Jason Taylor	570-617-1124
CCA Rep	Juan Munoz	610-373-8201
Dir. of Retirees	Jerome Kern	484-256-4906

Many thanks to Paul Purcell, Jason Taylor, Bill Lodek, 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

Welcome to the stretch run to what has been the most challenging year that I can remember. I suspect that it has been challenging, to say the least, for all of us. While I cannot admit to looking forward to the number of hours we will log in December, I do take some consolation in the fact that this is the time of the year that our efforts are most appreciated by the customers. I've heard it said many times that our service is all we have to offer to the customers in the USPS, and this time of year is the greatest opportunity to do just that.

I also wanted to point out the health incentive program offered by the NALC plan, and for which three pages of this issue is devoted. Even though this has been going on all year, it was not applied very well. Debit cards were sent out by an outfit called TASC, which did not mention its affiliation with our health plan in the documentation. Like many of us, I received the debit card in the mail and threw it away thinking that this was a predatory program for which I had not signed up. Therefore, in anticipation that the Wellness Incentive Program will continue, we reprinted pages from the plan website to inform our members so that they can benefit from this program. If you have any questions, our health plan rep, Bill Lodek, is available to help at 610-914-1253.



Andy Gelsinger, Nalcaster Editor

Upcoming Events

December 1 - Executive Board Meeting

December 8 – (Cancelled) Regular Branch Meeting. Traditionally, we have held our December meetings as a part meeting, part celebration with an extra special food spread, with greater

numbers of people attending to share in the fellowship. Due to the long December hours which will drive down attendance, as well as the difficulty to socially distance in our meeting area, we have decided to cancel the December meeting and have our celebration sometime in the New Year. It is extremely important, however, during these times, to keep lines of communication open, and we strongly encourage

everyone to use the available contact with your stewards and shop stewards to make any issues known to us.

December 13 – Presentation of Adopt-a-Family donations

January 5 – Executive Board meeting

January 12 – Regular Branch meeting

March 27 – NEW on the calendar, the Branch will be scheduling a group night at the Reading Royals. Game time is 3 PM. More information coming soon, look for a flyer and sign-up sheet in the coming weeks!



President's Message

Hello everyone, it is hard to believe we are at the end of another year. The past two years have been trying at best. So much has changed but so much remains the same. Letter carriers still show up and do their job every day. Neither pandemic, bad weather nor worker shortage has changed that. Being a letter carrier has never been easy. I thank all of you for everything you do every day. All of you are true heroes to America. I am very proud of all of you. I have to admit I am at a loss of what to write about because not much has changed except a few carriers have left due to starting other jobs or retirements.

With the growing number of Covid cases and so many of you working long hours our executive board has voted not to have our usual Christmas celebration at our December meeting. The December meeting is cancelled. We decided to postpone the celebration to a later date and maybe have something special if things calm down next summer. We also will not have a party for the George Cook Memorial Adopt a Family program. As last year, everything else will be the same. Money is being collected and will be used to help several causes and families. Thank you to all who have donated to keep this program going through the years. It is a great way to help the less fortunate and keep George's legacy alive. This program grew out of a little girl's Christmas list to Santa. How beautiful!

Lately, I have attended too many meetings and telecons dealing with the issues facing us today. Most of these problems relate to the fact that we just have been unable to hire and keep new employees. People have voiced many reasons to support this fact; but, no one has come up with a solution. We are not alone with this issue. Everywhere you go there are help wanted and hiring signs in everyone's window. At one time there was not enough jobs now we have plenty but no one to do them. Sadly, I don't have an answer for this but I pray someone comes up with one soon. I know several suggestions are being discussed at the national level. Hopefully something will be put into place that makes employment in the USPS enticing again. I have been very troubled and feel very sorry that all of you are faced with this every day. Please just continue to do your best. That's all anyone can expect or ask. If you ever feel unsafe because of being overworked or working in the dark, please stop, and call your supervisor and take the mail back. **Your safety always comes first!**

I ask that all of you stay united. Help each other. Keep giving your customers the best service you can provide. We will get through this hard time. If we can help you at any time please reach out to any of us. We will continue to try to make your job as a letter carrier better.

On behalf of our executive board I want to wish Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and a Blessed New Year to all of you and your families.

Fraternal Yours,
Fred A. Ranalli

Safety & Health Hypothermia

OSHA Issues Cold Stress Card Providing Workplace Guidance

Workers in construction, commercial fishing, maritime, agriculture, or who otherwise spend time outdoors or in unheated environments need to take precautions against hypothermia and related illnesses, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration said in guidelines issued Dec. 21.

In releasing its “Cold Stress Card” in English and Spanish, OSHA reminded employers and workers that hypothermia is a medical emergency caused when the body is unable to warm itself. Cold-related illness can slowly overcome a person who has been chilled by low temperatures, brisk winds, or wet clothing. Serious cold-related illnesses and injuries include permanent tissue damage and possibly death.

Injury at Lower Temperatures

It does not have to be bitterly cold to cause damage, OSHA emphasized. Hypothermia can strike workers when land temperatures are above freezing or when water temperatures are above freezing or when water temperatures are just below 98.6 degrees, the body’s natural temperature. Under either circumstance, when the body’s temperature drops below 98.6 degrees, a worker can become fatigued or drowsy, with uncontrollable shivering, cold bluish skin, slurred speech, clumsy movements, and irritable, irrational, or confused behavior, it said. The person can slowly lose body control and mental sharpness, conditions that can lead to accidental death, or, over time, serious injury and death from the cold itself.

Frostbite is a condition most commonly associated with bitter cold. It can slowly overwhelm a worker outdoors, freezing deep layers of skin and tissue, which turn pale, and waxy-white as the skin becomes hard and numb. It usually affects the fingers, hands, toes, feet, ears, and nose, OSHA warned. Without intervention, frostbite can lead to amputation of these areas, and to death.

Workers are at increased risk for frostbite and hypothermia when they have health conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and hypertension, according to OSHA. Other risks include taking certain medications. Individuals who are older, are in poor physical condition, or have a poor diet are at increased risk.

OSHA recommendations for addressing the risk of hypothermia and frostbite include:

- Recognize the environmental and workplace conditions that lead to potential cold-induced illnesses and injuries.
- Learn the signs and symptoms of cold-induced illnesses/injuries and what to do to help workers.
- Train workers about cold-induced illnesses and injuries.

- Select proper clothing for cold, wet, and windy conditions. Layer clothing to adjust to changing environmental temperatures. Wear a hat and gloves, in addition to underwear that will keep water away from the skin.
- Take frequent short breaks in warm, dry shelters to allow the body to warm up.
- Perform work during the warmest part of the day.
- Avoid exhaustion or fatigue because energy is needed to keep muscles warm.
- Use the buddy system of working in pairs.
- Drink warm beverages and avoid drinks with caffeine like coffee, tea, or hot chocolate, and alcohol.
- Eat warm, high-calorie foods.

The first response to any sign of frostbite or hypothermia must be to call for emergency help, followed by efforts to move the worker to a warm, dry area, according to the OSHA guidelines. Do not rub the affected areas, or place the worker in a warm water bath, as this may stop his or her heart, OSHA warned.

OSHA's Cold Stress Card reference guide and recommendations to prevent cold-related illnesses and injuries is available in English and Spanish online at <http://www.osha.gov/index.html>, or can be ordered in bulk by calling 800-321-6742.

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TTY: 1-877-492-7341

www.EAP4YOU.com

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

Penalty Exclusion

The 2021 period for penalty exclusion will begin on December 4, and will continue thru December 31.

Branch 258 to Again Continue Adapted Adopt-a-Family Program

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Christmas will soon be upon us. In the past years we were able to bring everyone together to celebrate the season, however, due to the pandemic this cannot be the case once again this year.

However, we are still keeping our tradition alive by helping two Reading families, Mary's Shelter, and Veterans Making a Difference.

You have always gone above and beyond in the past and we know you will again this year. Please contribute to the George Cook Christmas Family Adoption program and help those in need have a bright Christmas.

Please see your shop steward, or any union officer to make a donation.

Thank You,

Fred Ranalli

Our project to compile 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 to the branch.

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

Name _____

Email _____

Best Phone# _____

NEW for 2021 **NALC Health Benefit Plan**

Wellness Incentive Program for High Option Members

Beginning January 1, 2021, you and your eligible family members age 18 and older can earn valuable health savings rewards by participating in several wellness incentive programs. Upon completion of one or more of the wellness programs, screenings, or preventive services listed below, each eligible member will receive a debit card. The corresponding monetary reward will be loaded to the card. The money you earn can be used on eligible medical expenses not covered by your insurance plan. Eligible expenses are defined by Section 213 (d) of the Internal Revenue Code. A description of each activity can be found in our 2021 Plan brochure or on our website.

Your Health First Disease Management
Program - \$50

Healthy Pregnancies, Healthy
Babies® - \$50

Quit for Life® Tobacco Cessation
Program - \$50

Annual biometric
screening - \$50

Health
Assessment - \$30

Annual influenza vaccine -
\$10

Annual pneumococcal
vaccine - \$10

COVID-19 vaccine -
\$50*

NEW for 2021
NALC Health Benefit Plan
Wellness Incentive Program for
CDHP/Value Option Members

Beginning January 1, 2021, you and your eligible family members age 18 and older can earn valuable health savings rewards by participating in several wellness incentive programs. Upon completion of one or more of the wellness programs, screenings, or preventive services listed below, each eligible member will receive a debit card. The corresponding monetary reward will be loaded to the card. The money you earn can be used on eligible medical expenses not covered by your insurance plan. Eligible expenses are defined by Section 213 (d) of the Internal Revenue Code. A description of each activity can be found in our 2021 Plan brochure or on our website.

Your First Health First Disease Management
Program - \$30

Healthy Pregnancies, Healthy
Babies® - \$30

Quit for Life® Tobacco Cessation
Program - \$30

Annual biometric
screening - \$30

Health
Assessment -
\$20

Annual influenza
vaccine - \$5

Annual pneumococcal
vaccine - \$5

COVID-19 vaccine - \$50*

Frequently Asked Questions about our Wellness Incentives

1. How long does it take after completing an activity before the money is available for use on my TASC debit card?

A: It may take up to two weeks after the wellness activity is completed before the reward amount is loaded to your card. For the biometric screening, pneumococcal vaccine, and the flu vaccine, the Plan must receive a bill or statement verifying that you had the services.

2. Will I get a new card each year?

A: No. Please keep the TASC card you receive for future use while you are enrolled in one of the NALC Health Benefit Plans.

3. Can I keep the money if I am no longer a NALC Health Benefit Plan member?

A: Any monetary rewards you earn while a member of the NALC Health Benefit Plan are available for use up to 30 days after disenrollment.

4. Can I participate if I have Medicare?

A: Yes. All members age 18 and older are eligible to participate in the incentive programs, whether or not they are Medicare primary. Keep in mind that the Plan must receive a statement or bill showing you received a biometric screening, pneumococcal vaccine or a flu vaccine. These services are often paid at 100% by Medicare and no bill is sent to the Plan.

5. What types of items can be purchased with my health savings dollars?

A: Like a flexible spending account or FSA, funds can be used to purchase medical items or services not covered by your health insurance. Examples include dental treatment, eye glasses, and over the counter medication. The complete list can be found on our website.

6. Can I earn more than one reward?

A: You can earn health savings rewards for all wellness incentives that you qualify for. You may not qualify for all programs. However; you are only eligible to receive one (1) reward amount per person, per program or wellness activity, per calendar year.

7. How can I check the balance of available funds on my card?

A: You can contact TASC by phone at 800-422-4661 or visit their website, www.tasconline.com.

8. Where can I get additional information on the wellness programs and incentives?

A: You can visit the NALC Health Benefit Plan website at www.nalchbp.org where you will find links to our Wellness Incentives page and the list of eligible medical expenses. You may also call our Customer Service Department at 888-636-6252, M-F 8:00 AM to 3:30 PM EST.

* Not part of the original incentive package. Subject to dosing requirements. May be discontinued in the future.

About Our Members



Congrats to...

Branch 258 is proud to congratulate Tim McMichael, Mitch Given, and Cheryl Newton on their recent retirements after 34, 27 and 20 years of carrying mail in the



Reading area. For her sendoff, Cheryl chose to show us the broom she used to ride into retirement!



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

Roger Heckman, 37 years; Timothy McMichael, 34 years; David Guiles, 33 years; Paul Purcell, 33 years; Lawrence Bendetti, 28 years; Richard McDonough, 27 years; Wayne Miller, 27 years; David Vega, 23 years; Paul Kanigowski, 23 years; Richard Kennedy, 23 years; Brenda Conrad, 23 years; Thomas Krick, 23 years; Robin Smith, 20 years; Bradley Snyder, 14 years; Randill Deasis, 8 years; Mark Cornish, 7 years; Alexander Manroot, 7 years; Douglas Garipoli, 7 years; Stephen Grande, 6 years; Gary Brendle, 6 years; Jessica Penrose, 5 years; Joshua Baez-Vargas, 5 years; Arlinda Justiniano, 4 years; Rachel Biondo, 4 years; Jamie Gofus, 3 years; Geoffrey Maniaci, 2 years; Patrick Almodovar, 2 years; Robert Fletcher, 1 year, and in CCA service time: Ernst Joseph, 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

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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.



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