

# NALCASTER

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS

## Pagoda Branch 258

READING, PA.

June 9, 2021



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

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President	Fred Ranalli, Jr	610-406-1131
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Treasurer	Jason Taylor	570-617-1124
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Trustees:		
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	Dominic Tumminello	610-775-4263
	Dave Dry	484-797-7906
HBR MBA OWCP	Bill Lodek	610-914-1253
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Sergeant at Arms	Ed Gensemer	484-638-3067
NALCaster Editor	Andy Gelsing	610-378-0417
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**SHOP STEWARDS**

<u>Zone</u>	<u>Steward</u>	<u>Telephone</u>
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19606-02	Jess Iezzi	610-914-4614
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19608-09	Paul Purcell	610-451-0244
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19522	Steve Fenstermacher	484-201-0193
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19540	Jessica Mountz	610-914-9843
19551	Rich McDonough	484-955-4267
19555	Robert Oswald	610-451-5114
19560	Terry Stefansky	610-781-3221
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19567	Robert Clark	610-589-1469

**COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

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	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

**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](http://www.nalc258.com)  
 Join our NALC Branch 258 Facebook page

Many thanks to Jason Taylor, Paul Purcell, Rich McDonough, 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

A little personal factoid about myself. During the vast majority of my lifetime, my attitude towards politics has been one of indifference at best and, more often, revulsion. Thinking back, I find it ironic that my father was an elected local official who voted a straight party ticket as long as I can remember, without successfully making the least bit of an impression on me to appreciate anything political. To this day, writing or talking about politics gives me the urge to become engrossed in a nice ballgame after getting out of a long, soapy, cleansing shower. This is true despite the fact that I hold an elected position in this organization which values the participation of its members in the political process. So, it was with no small degree of surprise that I found myself at a board meeting making the point that the NALC has a legislative opportunity that we have not had in many years, and MUST use during the next 2 years. We have a President and two houses of congress that seem willing to get behind our issues and strengthening the Postal Service. We have some of our issues in the public consciousness, with continued support from most Americans despite attempted sabotage of our service and reputation from high officials. We also have the sobering realization of what has happened when those who in charge are aggressively hostile and predatory toward the Postal Service. The undeniable truth is that the quality of our jobs makes improvement in all of your other priorities – family, self, financials, you name it – possible. As out of character as it is for me personally, I am grateful that our union has pressed the political initiative, with a resultant barrage of resolutions and bills that we can strongly support as letter carriers. Knowing that we, as any union, are only as strong as our membership, I recognize the need to support our causes, regardless of how much it has been my nature to be indifferent to such behaviors. And so, I ask all of you, whether it is your norm or not – please do something to be part of the political process – get informed to where your best interests are served, call and write your representatives to strengthen your job security, make your voice heard. Do it even if you have to hold your nose while you're at it – I know that I will.



Andy Gelsinger, Nalcaster Editor

## Meetings Back On!



The easing of Covid restrictions and immunizations of many of our members has enabled us to plan for a return to regular meetings. Therefore, we are happy to announce that we plan to resume our regular schedule and meet on June 9 and July 14. Food will be available at 7PM, and the meetings will start at 7:30. Given the current issue of long hours at the workplace, latecomers are expected and will be accommodated

as well as possible. “Stay tuned” for meeting locations, as the board will make that determination based on our needs for social distancing space and precautions.

## President's Message

Hello everyone, In the past few weeks several members of our executive board have worked diligently on local negotiations for the Reading Installation and all of our Associate offices. This process occurs immediately after a National Agreement is settled. I have been lucky to be involved with all of them for the Reading installation dating back to the early 1990's. In the early 2000's we were blessed to have then-NBA Tim O'Malley help us update Readings local. His guidance created the East and West vacation and overtime clauses. These principles worked for many years. We have made adjustments as our needs and management's needs called for the changes. Several years ago, management asked us to combine the overtime list to help them keep the list equitable and to have more flexibility to cover open assignments. Through the years we have heard complaints that the vacation boards should also be combined. Prior to this recent round of negotiations, we put out a survey to see how most of you felt about combining the lists. Many valid concerns on both sides of the argument were put forth. More surveys favored keeping the boards separate but many great points revealed the need to make some changes. Also, somewhere along the road, management decided we did not have incidental leave for less than 8 hours. This notion was only self-serving to autocratic managers who needed to feel they had the right to deny this leave. This practice benefited no one. We set out to address these issues and clear up several other issues in our agreement.

We met on several mornings at 6 am with PM Greg Irvin and Stephanie Centeno Heydt. With great cooperation from both sides, I feel we have signed an agreement that is both good for management and all of you. I will write on some of the highlighted changes to the 2016 agreement. Item 4 contains several changes that need to be identified and clarified. The first change concerns incidental leave of hours being included as a bid option. All incidental A/L bids for hour blocks will now be approved utilizing the vacation board. Those requests will be approved if slots are open instead of at management's discretion. Request for less than 4 hours will block half of one day. Request of more than 4 hours will block the whole day.

The East and West boards remain separate. After all the initial bidding is done there are some changes that will be classified as "Crossover Bids". Two slots will always be held for only original side classification employees. When one side of the A/L board is full, and more than 2 slots are open on the opposite side those weeks will be classified as Crossover bids. Any

carrier regardless of which side he/she is assigned may bid on these Crossover slots 30 days before the date requested. Seniority will prevail. Weeks supersede days, which supersede hours, when bids are put in on the same day. We believe this compromise will positively address concerns put forth in the surveys. While saving 2 open slots and opening the rest, we feel everyone should be more able to get whatever annual leave they might want.

We also shortened the period required to rescind unwanted leave. To rescind weeks with a full board, we shortened the time requirement to 10 calendar days instead of 14 days. We also made a change to include both

sides as the determiner in considering the board to be full. For a board to be considered full both sides must be totally full. When the board is full, a carrier will need 5 calendar days to rescind days or hours. If the leave board is not full, carriers will need 24 hours' notice to rescind days or hours.

A change was also made for requesting incidental annual leave for a Monday. The deadline of close of Business Thursday has been changed to Friday by 10am. You need to put slips in by Friday 10AM to be approved leave for Monday.

We also had complaints that carriers had to wait until August to bid time off for non-choice dates from October through December. We moved that bid period to start on April 1. Starting next year, carriers will know what annual leave they will have approved for the rest of the year in April.



I hope you find these changes favorable to the needs of most carriers working in the installation. We felt these changes are a happy medium for everyone, and will provide the best way to move forward in protecting both senior and newer carriers. We hope you feel the same.

All of the new agreements will be posted in offices and on our website. Please check them out. Print yours out and if you have any questions give me a call. Knowledge is power. Learn your local and know your rights. On another issue bothering many of you every day is the forced overtime and long work hours. The NALC is part of a taskforce identifying delayed mail and Article 8 violations. This includes Non OTDL carriers being forced to work and over 12/60 hour violations. Reports are done daily, and hopefully some solutions will be realized for this craziness to cease. Management continues to blame these issues on employees not coming to work for one reason or another. There is also their inability to hire and keep new employees. All these issues (and more) compound to make these times unbearable with the light in the tunnel so far away. When able, please come to work and help end this employee shortfall. Our fellow workers and customers depend on us to be at work and to provide the service they are accustomed to. We are all in this together. Please stay vigilant in keeping yourself and fellow workers safe. With summer heat upon us, please drink constantly throughout the day and stay hydrated. I have all of you in my thoughts and prayers always.

Sincerely,  
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 Gelsing at 610-413-8158 (text) or [slice710@aol.com](mailto:slice710@aol.com) (email), Ed Gensemer at [caddy1217@aol.com](mailto: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.

# Branch Members Urged to Contact Their Congressional Representatives Regarding the Postal Service Reform Act

The Postal Service Reform Act has been introduced into both houses of Congress as a measure to increase the long term health of the Postal Service. The two identical bills (H.R. 3076 and S. 1720) have been co-sponsored in a bi-partisan manner: in the House, H.R. 3076 was introduced by Democrat Carolyn Maloney and Republican James Comer, and S. 1720 was introduced by 20 co-sponsors - 10 Democrats and 10 Republicans. Take note of the number 10 in the Senate co-sponsorship - with 60 votes required to have a filibuster-proof majority, the 10 co-sponsors from each party indicates the number needed to pass with otherwise full support from either side of the aisle. This rare and visible showing of bi-partisanship is a strong indicator that the Act can make it through a normally contentious congress and into law. However, we should not simply assume the best, as the NALC and our friends in Congress have spent well over a decade trying to craft and pass meaningful Postal reform legislation. All carriers, friends, relatives, and interested parties are strongly encouraged to contact their representatives to support this important legislation.

Highlights of the Postal Service Reform Act are:

- Repealing the mandate to pre-fund health benefits for future retirees
- Permanent provision for six day delivery (negating the need to renew this mandate on a yearly basis)
- Medicare participation for retirees aged 65 and over to the maximum extent practicable
- Measures to provide Congress and the public with transparency regarding performance
- Expanding the authority and responsibilities of the Postal Regulatory Commission in several ways

For more information on these bills, expanded coverage and descriptions are available on the [www.NALC.org](http://www.NALC.org) national website.

## What About The Other Stuff That You've Been Telling Me To Support???

There have been several resolutions and bills in the past few months which we have asked the membership to support – H.R.695, S.145, H.Res. 47, H.Res. 114, H.Res., 109, H.Res. 119, H.Res. 82, and H.R.3077. While the Postal Service Reform Act is certainly the top priority at this point in time, we should continue to support these other measures and talk about them with our representatives. Some of the issues covered in this legislation overlap one another, but much of it also does not, and since none of it is a “done deal,” it is all just as important, or more so, than ever. Also, if the Postal Service Reform Act does get passed, it could create momentum to bring our other legislative goals to fruition.

## USPS Employee COVID Update

As reported in the April issue of the Nalcaster, emergency federal employee leave (EFEL) is available to all carriers, as a result of the recent passage of the American Rescue Plan Act. We now have an update to give our members in the taking and crediting of this leave.

In review, EFEL is paid leave which may be granted for certain reasons related to COVID – 19, including an order from a health care provider to quarantine (or caring for such an individual), experiencing symptoms and seeking a diagnosis, caring for a child whose normal school or childcare is unavailable due to COVID precautions, caring for someone who is disabled and 55+ years of age where their normal care is unavailable due to COVID precautions, obtaining COVID immunization or recovering from aftereffects related to immunization.

The Office of Personnel Management has instituted a series of forms which must be completed and given to management in order to receive this special type of leave. In emphasis, these forms MUST be completed, turned in to management, and sent to the OPM by their deadlines, or either your leave time or pay will be taken instead of EFEL leave. The first form is a promissory note which must be signed – it is a note stating that you will repay funds that are given in excess of what has been made available by law, and are taking funds legitimately. The other is a form to list the dates of leave taken (planned and/or already done), the qualifying reason under which EFEL should be given, and supporting documentation for this qualifying reason (required documentation, if any, is specified for each qualifying reason on the form).

Employees who are record as having taken EFEL leave before the above procedure was established should have received these forms in the mail by now – please see your supervisor and/or shop steward immediately if this has not happened.

In addition to the above forms, carriers are required to fill out the standard time off request for leave taken/to be taken, indicating EFEL leave.

Members are reminded that, as of this writing, mask wearing and social distancing remain mandatory for all Postal Employees while at work, despite any loosening of local or state restrictions which have and may occur.

We encourage people to get vaccinated, as this will both greatly increase your personal protection against illness, as well as speed the progress toward “normalization” in our daily activities and interactions. We also want to encourage our members to stay informed and comply with USPS, federal, and state guidelines. Stay safe!

### **Colleen Gensemer, MA, LPC**

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TTY: 1-877-493-7341

[www.EAP4YOU.com](http://www.EAP4YOU.com)

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

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Best Phone# \_\_\_\_\_

## Informational Tidbits – Items of Varying Importance Which Do Not Take Up Lots Of Space On Their Own

There will be a special open season opportunity for health care flexible spending accounts, where members will be able to make an election for 2021 if they failed to do so in the normal open season. This will also be the only way to use leftover money from 2020. See the website for details.

The Super Bowl Squares and March Madness contests raised a combined \$1340 for MDA

The new local agreement went into effect on June 2, 2021

# Nomination Notice

This is official notice to the members of NALC Branch 258, Reading Pa that nominations for the following will take place Wednesday October 13, 2021 at October monthly union meeting 7:30 PM

One Trustee ( 3 year term) , and delegates to the 2022 National Convention, all members must be present at the time of nomination or have an acceptance letter sent to the branch prior to the start of monthly meeting stating you accept your nomination.

Our May 21 Sandwich sale added \$175 to the scholarship fund

Independence Day is the first holiday where members can opt for 8 hours of annual leave credit instead of holiday straight time if they volunteer to work the holiday schedule

Members are now required to establish a unique user ID (instead of using their employee number) to access their Thrift Savings plan online. Go to the TSP.gov site and follow the instructions to update your account

The NALC was founded on August 29, 1889

# The William Beck and Robert Bear Scholarship Awards

Local 258 National Association of Letter Carriers has established two scholarship awards, \$500.00 each, payable for students attending a college, university, or trade school.

**Term of Award:** Each scholarship shall be awarded for one academic year and will not be renewed.

The intent of this award is to help a son or daughter of a member of Local 258 NALC with a trade school or college education.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

Eligibility is to a son or daughter of any DUES-paying member that is in good standing in Local 258 NALC.

Applying students must have graduated from high school in 2021.

All applicants are required to be freshman or first year student.

All applicants are required to have a letter of acceptance from the college or trade school that they plan on attending.

## **METHOD OF SELECTION**

Applications will be reviewed, then put into a drawing box and selected by pulling a name from the drawing box at the union meeting of Local 258 NALC during the August 2021 union meeting.

The selected winners will be notified by mail.

We will pick an alternate if the first one picked does not meet all of the qualifications.

The Local 258 NALC Scholarship Awards will be presented at the September 2021 Union meeting.

The Beck and Bear Scholarship Award Committee must receive your completed application and acceptance letter by August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Please mail to:

**William Beck & Robert Bear Scholarship Award Committee  
NALC BRANCH 258  
P.O. Box 12584  
Reading, PA 19612**

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## **SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I am the son/daughter of active/retired member of Local 258 Reading, PA.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of NALC Parent: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Branch Officer: \_\_\_\_\_

# About Our Members



## Congrats to...

Branch 258 is proud to congratulate Kenny Rhoads on his recent retirement after 36 years carrying mail in the Reading area. Time to hang up the bag for good and enjoy the permanent leave that you've earned!

We also want to congratulate Emine McDonough, Daughter of Branch VP Richard McDonough, for winning the Berks Labor Council Scholarship essay contest. Our best wishes go out to you as you continue your personal and professional

development via higher education!

## In Memorium

We are saddened to learn of the passing of three retired Branch 258 members: Ted Malecki, aged 83, who carried in Mount Penn; Gene Kasper, aged 92, who carried in the 19604 zone; and Joe Buono, aged 92, who carried in Northwest and Northeast Reading. Deepest condolences go out to all who held these fine men dear to them.



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

Jolyn Megonigal, 25 years; John Pelker, 21 years; Erik Roshong, 15 years; Anthony Laboy, 7 years; Ethan Bennicoff, 7 years; Benjamin Neubauer, 7 years; Alison Riley, 7 years; Pamella Tonkinson, 7 years; Eric Krotee, 5 years; Sandra Speakman, 3 years; Katira Santiago, 1 year; Katrina Callendar, 1 year, and in CCA service time: Alexa Althouse, 2 years; Alana McDougal, 1 year; Paul Davis, Jr., 1 year; Dannielle Peters, 1 year; Bobby Marshall, 1 year; Anthony Guzman, 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

**VISIONS**  
**FEDERAL CREDIT UNION**



Serving US Postal Service  
Over 55 Years!

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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