

NALCASTER

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS

Pagoda Branch 258

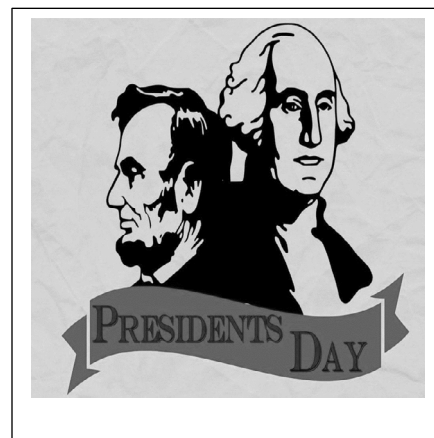
READING, PA.

February 9, 2022



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	610-413-8158
Director of Archives	Andy Gelsinger	610-413-8158



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	Dave Dry	484-797-7906
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
Labor Management Team		
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	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

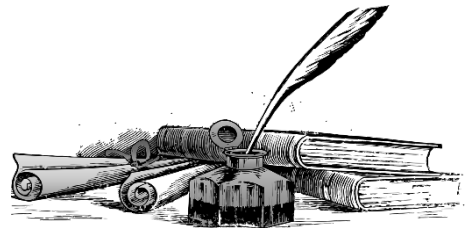
Many thanks to Paul Purcell, Bill Lodek, Sharon Unger, Dave Dry, and, as always, Branch President Fred Ranalli for contributing material for this issue. Please remember that this newsletter is for the Branch and by the Branch, and contributions can be submitted to the editor at any time.

Letter from the Editor

Welcome to a new year!

I know that many of us are looking around and trying to figure out what is new in this “new” year. We are still working a massive amount of hours in offices which cannot seem to fix their chronic understaffing. Covid (I’m sure we are all sick to death of that word) procedures and rules are still in place, with seemingly more, not less, of our co-workers sickened. It’s still dark when we still have lots of territory to deliver. It’s still cold. Many are still being forced to come in on days off and given unwanted assignments while forcing rules are being ignored. We are all tired and frustrated, even those who have signed on for lots of hours, at the 20 or so months of “COVID occupation.”

Trust me when I say that your Branch officers are frustrated as well. Many of your shop stewards struggle with management using Covid memos to “kick the can down the road” in moving grievances, as well as the tired old strategy of just not giving stewards union time. Of course, the stewards are working on delivery for as many hours as everyone else as well.



Our officers long for the opportunity to show our membership how well we have functioned for years before Covid happened, especially newer members who have only briefly, or not at all seen what the branch is capable of doing for them. Sure, there have been accomplishments in the past year, such as negotiating the best local contract we have ever had (many of us have already benefitted from the hourly AL bidding). However, the inability to meet in person consistently, and the cancellation of so many functions/activities has taken a great toll on our cohesion as a group, our ability to function as we should, and even in the simple steps of getting to know each other and developing positive relationships and trust.

So what, if anything, can we do? The answer is bittersweet. On the negative side, there is nothing, in my opinion, that can truly replace face to face contact. Certainly, there has been no true replacement for the many cancelled activities (yes, we still had adopt-a-family, which was important, but none can argue that it lost something without the in-person celebration). On the positive side, however, I do think that we have learned some important things (at least I have). I’ve learned a great deal about responding to adversity, especially long term adversity. I’ve learned how many people around me respond to adversity, and who I can depend on during these times. I have a greater appreciation that the greater our challenges, the greater the need to come together to cope with them, even when not physically together.

I also believe that we have also identified certain areas that we can improve upon as a Branch, and have been making progress in doing so. Keeping members informed via facebook posts, using a special mailer to communicate needs of the branch last summer, and starting to compile our email list of the membership are examples of ways to “stay in touch” that we have used during this time. We have also been working, as an executive board, in virtual meetings on ways to get interested people involved as we emerge into better times. While there is nothing that can replace in-person contact, we have at least been able to tread water in our functioning, until that time when we can thrive once again.

Finally, I see no other choice but to maintain hope for the future. After all, the alternative is despair, and I refuse to succumb to that, as easy as that may be. Those of you who know me well are aware that since August, in addition to the same job pressures facing all of us, I've also had to cope with the death of my father, seven (at last count) hospitalizations of my wife, and moving my place of residence, which is ongoing (IS ANYONE INTERESTED IN TAKING A CAT INTO THEIR HOME???). I'm not saying all of this to elicit pity or praise, just demonstrating that hope can be one of the most powerful tools that we can use to survive and grow in times like these. I hope that all of you can be encouraged to maintain hope as well.

Andy Gelsinger, Nalcaster Editor

Ps. I apologize to those people (I know of at least two) who have tried to contact me at my former home phone number, which was still listed in the December Nalcaster but has since been disconnected. I have replaced that number in this issue with my cell number, which I intend to continue using going forward.

Upcoming Events

Ongoing – Vacation bidding for prime time 2022 continues; check office bulletin boards or www.nalc258.com for the specific schedule of when you can bid

Februsry 9 – Regular branch meeting (tentative, check for status as meeting date approaches)

February 28 – Deadline to submit entries for the PA AFL-CIO scholarship essay contest

March 2 – Executive board meeting

March 9 – Regular branch meeting (tentative)

March 27 Branch 258 night at the Reading Royals

April 6 – Executive board meeting

It has come to my attention that the carrier calendars have mistakenly identified the pay days for October through December as a week off from the correct Fridays. We apologize for the oversight, and I have added all of the correct paydayes for 2022 to the calendar which appears on our website at nalc258.com.



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# _____

President's Message

Hello everyone, I hope this finds all of you healthy and well. February 1st marked the start of my 9th year of retirement from the USPS. Wow that time sure flew by. I wore the blue carrier uniform for 33 ½ years. After February 1, 2013, I no longer put that uniform on again. Even though I do not wear a letter carrier uniform, I along with many other retired letter carriers will always be letter carriers in our hearts. Remaining active in our branch as President has afforded me the opportunity to see many of my coworkers retire. It is my favorite duty of my position. I hope and pray that one day all of you will reach the retirement milestone. Staying involved as your president has also kept me up to date on the current issues letter carrier experience with their day-to-day challenges. I remember when I started, I would always hear the older carriers complain about how much harder it was to be a carrier back when they began. I hope that is not happening today. Every carrier I see off into retirement says "It's not the same place it used to be". My experience agrees whole heartedly with that statement. Anyone who has been retired for more than a few years would not recognize the USPS today. Many of the changes have been greatly magnified by the pandemic that we have now been enduring for the last two years. In Reading, we would always have hard times now and then but nothing like the current situation we have been experiencing. With every retirement we lose another carrier to deliver the mail. Forced overtime daily is caused by the depleted compliment of carriers. The USPS has been unable to hire new employees to replace all the job openings. Very few if any applicants show up at the job fairs. The several that do start the hiring process either do not show up or quit after working under these circumstances. It's very troubling. While most involved understand the problem this has caused, few have any solutions. Several years ago, the postal service had trouble replacing people in certain areas across the country. The solution was to hire new people on as PTF's. In the last contract negotiations we felt that the USPS would have learned from that and moved forward by hiring new employees as PTF's. They instead negotiated for CCA's. When the pandemic hit, the whole country was hit with a worker shortage. Amazon and other delivery companies pop up all over paying better wages and with better benefits. The postal service now cannot compete for these new workers. Adding to this has been the downsizing of the USPS. Plants closing and consolidations of districts added to this bad situation. The consolidations are viewed as a good thing but what we are now stuck with is inefficiency, unaccountability and total chaos. Many managers were in limbo not knowing what was going to happen to their jobs. Some retired. Others lost interest and didn't care and just did the least possible to get by. I sit on several telecoms every week listening to managers stating that we are trying but things are so backed up we cannot get caught up. None of this helps any of the situations we are experiencing. All of you, I am sure are more frustrated then I am. For over a year and a half I have been conversing weekly with our NBA Brian Thompson about what is happening here. Last June, I was promised all our grievances dealing with forcing and other issues would be cleaned up and that would stop some of the forcing. Management would be instructed on proper procedures relating to Article 8. That labor manager left and we were back to square one. Richie, NBA Brian Thompson, PA2 new Labor Manager Tim Brust and I met on November 30. We were promised the mess would be cleaned up and things would get better after the holidays. Now we are hit with the huge increase of Covid cases and I am told we need to wait a little longer. I have stressed over and over the toll these problems have had on every one of you. I feel so sorry that you and your families have been enduring the long hours and stress for more than a year and half. It's inexcusable. Just telling me this is happening all over doesn't make it any more bearable. Management's refusal to follow our contract when forcing needs to be addressed now. A plan needs to be put into place to hire much needed new employees. Carriers are overworked, windows are closed, mail is sitting and the public is in an uproar about what is happening to the USPS. I am sorry for my rant but I want everyone to know we have been trying to get all of you relief to these problems. At this point,

we will continue to press for our grievances and concerns to be heard. We need all of you to be made whole. I promise you, that is our goal.

With the winter weather here, please remember your safety is always the first priority. As carriers we must attempt our duties. If you attempt to do that and you feel it is unsafe or you could get hurt, contact your supervisor and tell them you feel unsafe and take the mail back. If any issues arise from this, let us know. We should always try our best to deliver the mail but we do not want to have an accident that might cause us to be unable to do our job or even suffer a lifelong injury. We all want you to return home in the same condition you went to work in. I cannot thank all of you enough for the continued great job you do every day. I

know if we all stay united, help each other and do our best we will soon make it through this tough time. If any old guy tells you about how much harder being a carrier was when he worked, don't believe them. It's Baloney!

Sincerely,

Fred Ranalli

Pamela Heyman, MS, LPC

EAP District Consultant

Tel (610) 688-2180

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1-800-EAP4YOU (1-800-327-4968)

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.

**NALC NIGHT AT
THE READING ROYALS**

SUNDAY MARCH 27, 2022

GAME TIME 3 PM

TICKETS \$ 17 EACH

DEADLINE TO ORDER IS JANUARY 31ST

YOU CAN GIVE YOUR TICKET ORDER ALONG WITH THE MONEY TO YOUR SHOP STEWARD OR
SEND IT IN TO THE BRANCH MAILING ADDRESS :

NALC BRANCH 258

PO BOX 12584

READING PA 19612

HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!!!



2022 Scholarship Essay Contest

The Pennsylvania AFL-CIO Scholarship Essay Contest is a chance for students to learn more about the importance of Organized Labor in America. Over the years, we have awarded tens of thousands of dollars to students furthering their education.

Scholarship Awards

First Place	\$2,000
Second Place	\$1,000
Third Place	\$500

Scholarships are available exclusively to Pennsylvania AFL-CIO affiliated union members and their families.

Scholarships are offered to students in two categories: graduating high school seniors (Class of 2022), and all post-secondary students.

Deadline is February 28, 2022

Thank You to Our 2021 Sponsors!

AFGE Local 1916	IBEW Local 126	IUOE Local 95	Neshaminy Federation of Teachers	UFCW Local 1776
Allegheny County CLC	IBEW Local 1319	Jubelirer, Pass & Intrieri, P.C.	OPEIU Local 1937	UMWA Local 1318
ATU Local 85	IBEW Local 201	Lehigh Valley CLC	Pittsburgh Metro Area Postal Workers' Union	Unite Here Local 54
Bucks County CLC	IBEW Local 81	Montgomery County CLC	Plumbers Local 690	USW Local 14693
Community & Social Agency Local 1739	Indiana-Armstrong CLC	NABET CWA Local 28	SEIU Local 668	York-Adams CLC
CWA Local 13000	IUOE Local 66		Sheet Metal Workers Local 44	

PA AFL-CIO Education Committee

Jerry Jordan Chairman AFT	Dennis Andrews USW	Jim Irwin AFSCME	Bryon Shane ATU
Gregory Vogt Vice Chair IBEW	Craig Bialek CWA	Gwendolyn Johnson CBTU	Arthur Steinberg AFT
Tara Wilson Secretary AFSCME	Nina Esposito-Visgitis AFT	Ron Oliver Erie-Crawford CLC	Ronald Webb IBEW
	Sylvia Hovington UFCW	Ann Marie Ruggiero PA JBWU	Donna Welch APWU

2022 Scholarship Essay Contest

The late AFL-CIO President and Pennsylvania native Richard Trumka left an indelible impact on the Labor movement as we know it today. The 2022 Scholarship Essay Contest theme is based on his life and work in honor of his memory.

How To Apply

Essays must be a minimum of 1,500 words on the topic in your respective category; essays less than 1500 words will be disqualified.

Titles must be kept the same as their respective category.

Your application form must be included in your essay PDF file, or as a separate PDF attachment.

Entries must be emailed to dmadsen@paafcio.org by February 28, 2022.

The PDF version of this flier is on paafcio.org.

**If you have questions please
call 717-231-2842, or
email dmadsen@paafcio.org.**



Category 1

Graduating High School Seniors

From his Pennsylvania roots to his work serving the United Mine Workers of America, through his leadership guiding the national AFL-CIO and beyond, President Trumka dedicated his life to making sure that working people around the globe had the best future possible. Please provide a brief biographical overview on President Trumka's life and choose a highlight of his career that inspires you, including why.

Category 2

Post-Secondary Students

At 33 years old, President Trumka was elected President of the United Mineworkers of America (UMWA), where his leadership stood out during the Pittston strike of 1989. Please provide a brief overview and analysis of Richard Trumka's leadership during his tenure with the UMWA, including its historic context/significance in relation to the labor movement.

APPLICATION FORM

Please complete this form and include its information with your entry.

NAME

ADDRESS

PHONE NUMBER

EMAIL ADDRESS

UNION AFFILIATION & LOCAL

CENTRAL LABOR COUNCIL (if known)

NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE SCHOOL AND OR PROGRAM YOU CURRENTLY ATTEND

☐ I agree to provide proof of school

Last Minute COVID – Related Editor's Note

Per Branch President Ranalli, carriers who have had COVID AND believe that they contracted it at work should fill out a CA-1 with the Department of Labor. For more information, details will be posted on our Facebook page and the nalc258.com website

5 Reasons Why This is the Most Important Flu Shot of your Lifetime

When it comes to viruses, most people are only thinking about COVID-19. But there's another virus that remains a medical focus of attention every fall, and is especially important to think about this year. It's the seasonal flu.

You might be surprised to learn that according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention the impact of the flu in the United States has been huge:

- 5.5 million illnesses
- 16.5 million medical visits
- 500,000 hospitalizations
- 34,200 deaths



Still, only about half of eligible Americans choose to get immunized in any given year. And common reasons for the hesitation are often based on lack of accurate information and rumors – “it's not that serious” or “the vaccine will give me the flu.”

It's time to set the record straight, because in this year of the global COVID-19 pandemic, getting a flu shot is more important than ever. Remember the following:

1. A Flu Shot Can Save your Life

The flu is a serious disease and its complications are significant. There's a risk of bacterial pneumonia, ear and sinus infections, and worsening of chronic diseases like diabetes, heart disease and asthma. Like other viruses, those at increased risk are people over 65, children under age 5, pregnant women, and those with compromised immune systems.

2. Flu Shots Can Help in the Fight Against COVID-19

A vaccination can help prevent the flu in about half of those receiving it, and also lessen the severity of the illness if you do get it. That's especially important now because the same hospital medical resources are used for the flu and for COVID-19 infections. And without a vaccine for COVID-19, protection from the flu helps both individuals and available medical care.

Hospitals approach peak capacity during flu season. By cutting down on flu-related hospitalizations, the risk of overwhelming the medical care system, with added COVID-19 patients, is largely reduced.

And a milder case of the flu (if you do get it) could make you less likely to head to the doctor or emergency room— just when they are filled with COVID-19 patients.

3. Flu Shots Do NOT Cause the Flu

Most people only have a bit of arm soreness at the injection site for a few hours. But some might experience a mild reaction – slightly feverish or achy – which simply shows that your immune system is working. It is NOT the flu.

4. The Flu Shot Changes Every Year

Flu shots are recommended every year for almost everyone over the age of 6 months. But always check you're your doctor for personal guidance. Flu shots are generally about 50 percent effective in preventing infection by the main strains of virus expected to be circulating. It's never going to be 100 percent effective, because vaccine development is not a perfect process. At the end of every flu season, the new vaccine for the following year is modelled after the strains seen earlier in a "best guess" of what strains will be circulating. Even so, a 50 percent response is highly impactful for disease prevention.

5. The Flu Shot Helps with "Herd Immunity"

It's important to get a flu shot because it protects more than you, and can cut the risk of everyone around you. When many people get vaccinated, there are fewer germs around, and fewer people get the flu. That concept is called "herd immunity" – we all protect each other. It's especially important because it helps protect people who are not able to get vaccinated including babies, and people with weak immune systems. The flu spreads easily, the same way as COVID-19, so when everyone is "at risk" – you can protect yourself and your community.

When to Get your Flu Shot

The CDC recommends getting your flu shot by the end of October, as it takes about 2 weeks to develop full immunity for the season. Most seasons stretch from late October to early April, but this can vary, with some seasons active until early May. And while fall is the ideal time for a flu shot, anytime during the season is a good time – don't think it's too late, and you've missed your "protective window."

By: Madelyn Fernstrom, Ph.D. is the NBC News' health editor.
<https://www.nbcnews.com/know-your-value/feature/5-reasons-why-most-important-flu-shot-your-lifetime-ncna1241251#anchor-2Flushotscanhelpin-thefightagainstCOVID19>

Health Benefits for 2022

The NALC Health Benefit Plan prides itself in offering excellent benefits to our membership. The benefit package is designed to empower each member to take an active role in their health and wellness. The benefits evolve and change each year so that the Plan can continue providing excellent benefits to cover all aspects of your healthcare needs.

As the new year approaches, listed below are some of the new benefit changes for 2022. The Plan constantly monitors our benefits to ensure that we are giving our members access to the quality care that they need and deserve.

There are many new benefits for 2022. Some of the changes to existing benefits include:

- We now cover colorectal cancer screenings for eligible adults age 45 to 85 per USPSTF guidelines.
- We removed the calendar year dollar maximum limit to diagnose and treat infertility.
- For High Option only, we now cover up to 21 days of skilled nursing facility care after a qualified hospital stay.

Some of the new benefits we have added for 2022 include:

- We now offer an online therapy program to address musculoskeletal issues.
- We now cover in and out-of-network telehealth (virtual) visits.
- We now cover fertility preservation for individuals with iatrogenic infertility.
- We now cover genetic counseling when related to covered genetic testing.
- We now cover one pair of diabetic shoes per calendar year.

Along with the new benefits mentioned above, the Plan will continue to offer valuable health savings rewards that can be used toward eligible medical expenses. From receiving a flu or pneumococcal vaccine, quitting a nicotine habit, or asking your provider for an annual biometric screening, the Plan wants to reward your efforts with valuable health savings.

About Our Members



Congrats to...

Branch 258 is proud to congratulate Daniel Rosario and Roy Kline, who have retired after 16+ and 38+ years of service. We hope that you enjoy a well earned next stage of life as you move on, and hope that you stay in touch from time to time!



In Memorium

Our deepest condolences go out to the family and friends of Randy Reimert, who passed away after a long battle with cancer, and of Floyd Readinger. Both served for many years in the Reading area, and are known and missed by many in our Branch.



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

David Dry – 36 years; David Bohrman - 35 years; Daniel Gresoi - 27 years; James Schlouch - 26 years; Michelle Schaeffer - 21 years; Gregory Clarke – 21 years; Bryan Becker – 21 years; David Soroko – 20 years; Christine Butler – 20 years; Michael Albitz – 15 years; Andrew Pilman – 6 years; Dennis Callaghan – 6 years; Richard Miller – 6 years; Albert Dalley – 5 years; Raysa Bueno – 4 years; Kevin Stephen – 3 years; Wildris Rodriguez, - 3 years; Thomas Welch – 3 years; Jose Colon Cruz – 3 years; Jeffrey Soto – 2 years; Juan Rivera – 1 year; and in CCA service time: Scott Wysocki – 1 year; Citozz Douglas-Wooden – 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
NALCASTER
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READING, PA 19612-2584
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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