

NALCASTER

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS

Pagoda Branch 258

READING, PA.

April 13, 2022



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

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Many thanks to Paul Purcell, 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

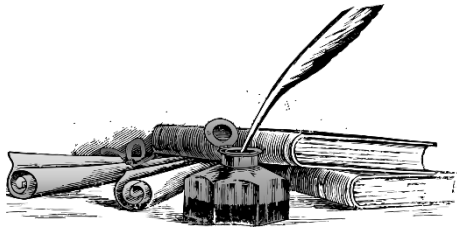
Victory at Last!

You may have heard about it – just a simple series of letters and numbers, yet the most important thing to happen regarding the Postal Service and our profession in 15 years.

HR3076

However, you will not see this number as often in the future. With passage, and it's accompanying increase in importance, comes a name: The Postal Service Reform Act of 2022. There have been many other number/letter combinations over the past decades – HR this, S that, HRes the-other-thing, with accompanying titles which never came to be, but this one was a winner. Why this one, and why now?

There are several reasons, and while some can be considered more important than others, we could not have done without any of them for this endeavor to succeed. The NALC spent years building and supporting a network of activists to keep the flow of information open, keeping all of our representatives informed, whether they agreed with us at the time or not. We encouraged, directed, begged, and supported our members to be in touch with Congress, to



show them the importance of our needs and the scope of our collective influence. While engaged with trying to craft legislation to help Letter Carriers, the NALC also successfully engaged many interests who attacked us and tried to take away the things we were fighting for (so that we wouldn't lose ground while trying to gain ground). The

law was well crafted, including those issues and reforms which garnered bi-partisan support, and resisting partisan amendments and "poison pills" (as happened in 2006 and created the prefunding burden in the first place). The bill was presented to a mostly receptive Congress, who listened, but overwhelmed, detractors – don't be fooled, there was opposition from some who are supported by interests who would rather destroy the Postal Service for their own gain, which tried to stall, amend, and otherwise torpedo passage. It was supported not only in a bi-partisan manner within the government, but also within the Postal Service itself – in this context, "bipartisan" referring to both labor and the highest levels of management. And finally, it was supported in the White House; regardless of your political beliefs, it was no secret that Presidents previous to the current one were either lukewarm, politically indifferent, or openly hostile toward the Postal Service.

So the lesser point of my letter in this issue is one of illumination and celebration. Know that your efforts made a difference, even when it was hard to believe for these many years. Know that you had a hand in making your life better, as well as the lives of those around you, and those that follow you. Enjoy the moment, and be proud of your participation in a union that has accomplished far more collectively than anything that could have been done individually.

The greater point of my letter is this – with power comes responsibility. No I'm not just ripping off an often used sentiment from Spiderman, I'm saying that we need to be aware of a few things. While the new law accomplishes a lot, the fact that it was designed to include issues that would have maximum support means there are several things that were not included, which we would like to see enacted in the future. Protections for door delivery, CSRS windfall

legislation, expansion of services, and strengthening mail voting are only a few issues that would further enhance our professional lives, and the NALC would like to see these things advance through Congress in the future. In addition, we cannot know what new ideas and opportunities will come in the future, but we need to be ready to act on them. Further, our opponents have not gone away. Call them privatizers, special interests, entrepreneurs, political opportunists, or insert your own description – they will seek their chances to attack us, and we must be ready to show our side, and to demonstrate our continued strength and solidarity. We will be called upon to help make those things a reality, too. It is my hope that this victory will not cause us to become complacent, with a sense of “mission accomplished.” Instead, let us be encouraged to, while enjoying the moment, also use it as momentum to work on making our Postal world even better.

Andy Gelsinger, Nalcaster Editor

Upcoming Events

April 13 – Regular Branch Meeting
April 15 – Bidding begins for non-prime weeks/days/hours to the end of 2022
April 20 – Worker’s memorial
April 21 – Retiree breakfast
April 27-29 – Washington Congressional trip
May 4 – Executive Board Meeting
May 7 – Labor Council union appreciation night at the
Reading Fightin’ Phils
May 11 – Regular Branch Meeting
May 14 – NALC national food drive
May 19 – Retiree breakfast
June 1 – Executive board meeting



Our project to compile, and 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 would like to thank everyone who called and wrote emails/letters to our Congressman/woman urging them to support HR3076 Postal Reform Act. We have fought to get postal reform passed for 15 years. The bill passed in both the House and Senate overwhelmingly with bipartisan support. A big Thank You goes out to our Congress members who supported this bill. A few of us attended the Region 12 Rap session in AC. NALC President Fred Rolando, and VP Brian Renfro explained what this bill accomplishes.

First, it will make the USPS viable and on sound financial ground. That is the first priority. We all need the USPS to be strong to solidify our benefits and employment as letter carriers. The bill will eliminate the unfair burden of pre-funding the Future Retiree Healthcare fund for 75 years within 10 years. The fund already has \$50 Billion in it. Right now, the fund is projected to last 12-13 years. What we owe is now forgiven and the USPS can fund this account periodically like any other business.

Secondly, the bill secures 6 day delivery. Every year we fought the attacks on 6 day delivery by our competitors. In the past, we needed an appropriations bill to guarantee 6 day delivery. That process is no longer needed because it is now written into law. We are currently delivering 7 days a week.

Thirdly, with the prefunding mandate gone the USPS can look at ways to grow the business instead of conceding by cutting service to our customers. Several past PMGs just accepted the losses the prefunding mandate created and implemented the cuts and downsizing.

Next, is Prospective Medicare Integration. Medicare A is free to most who sign up at age 65. Starting in 2025, new USPS retirees will be required to enroll in Medicare B. The only exceptions will be future retirees who have alternate coverage such as VA benefits or they live outside of the US where no Medicare facilities are available. 8 out of 10 current NALC retirees currently are enrolled in Medicare. Medicare A and B enrollment covers all expenses incurred from hospitalization. Any current retiree 64 years old or younger can do whatever they choose. If you are retired and 65 years or older and have not chosen to get in Medicare, you will be given a 90 day period to now enroll with no penalty cost to you. The USPS will pick up the penalty costs for those individuals. Every plan in FEHB will now be required to have a separate plan just for postal employees. The NALC is currently looking at plans that fit better with Medicare. The Medicare

integration will hopefully reduce premiums for all of us. The new postal plans will be PEHB. This will be a big undertaking and the NALC will keep us all informed as these changes are worked out.

Fred and Brian gave updates on other current happenings important to all of us. They are as follows. The NALC is also watching President Biden's Build Back Better through Reconciliation Bill. Within that bill is \$6.9 billion dollars to help the USPS pay for new electric vehicles ordered by the USPS. The order right now only has 10% of them being electric. If this bill passes 70% will be electric. They also spoke about OPM's CSRS liability calculations and the Segal Formula. This deals with OPM miscalculation of our existing funds and how they were funded. If an executive order would be issued in our favor the USPS could be owed \$80-100 billion. This would extend the current retiree funding from 12-13 years to 25 years. Other bills relating to Windfall laws are also being watched. Juneteenth, June 19th will be added as a holiday in 2022 for all career employees. New members are being appointed to the Postal Board of Governors. The NALC is helping the



Teamsters to try to unionize Amazon workers. There is a concern that Amazons low wages will drive delivery wages down for everyone. We also need to stop them from trying to steal our business and get them unionized.

Brian talked about several task forces. They are close to a new joint route inspection process that will utilize the scanners along with other pertinent information to adjust routes. Management has stopped their Safety Ambassadors program and are discussing a joint NALC/USPS safety program again. The New Employee Experience Program has proved to be successful and CCA retention has increased. Staffing is our biggest challenge right now. Outside higher wages, management's inability to admit to an employee shortage along with their failure to utilize a plan to correct this problem has prolonged forced overtime, increased grievances and poor service for too long. USPS headquarters has finally forwarded a plan and the NALC is reviewing it. We will respond with our issues and offer our suggestions. Hiring workers as PTF's instead of CCA's would be included in that response. Programs for same day delivery, scanner improvements, uniforms, increased leave carry over and dedicated Parcel Post routes are

being discussed. National is preparing to get ready for contract negotiations that will begin early next year. Let's hope the employee shortage is solved and these other issues are worked out in a positive manner. We will forward new information on these issues as we receive them.

I am also pleased to announce that we have come to an agreement on a settlement for the past forced overtime and management's failure to follow Article 8 of the National Agreement. The promised meeting to resolve these violations had never come to fruition. This delay forced our hand to come to a settlement with the local parties. I will credit several stewards for their hard work on creating and figuring out a fair and simple way to administer the remedy with management. More information will be shared when those processes are all figured out. Many variables need to be considered. What disturbs me though is management's failure to stop these violations after agreeing to a sizable remedy for the violation. This failure is irresponsible and inexcusable. It seems that no one is being held responsible for their actions. I am still being promised a meeting and training will take place to stop this insanity.

Finally, we have had several carriers hurt while performing their duties. I have been asked to remind all of you that if you hurt yourself at work or are involved in a motor vehicle accident you must inform management immediately. We have had several carriers get hurt and they continued to deliver the remainder of their assignment before reporting the accident. By not reporting it when it happens, it hampers getting an OWCP claim approved. You will not get fired for reporting an accident but you might if you don't report it.

Sincerely,

Fred Ranalli

Nalcaster Now Available Via Email

In order to compensate for service delays which have occasionally caused late delivery of your Nalcaster, I am making PDF copies available via email to anyone that requests it. Simply let me know your desire for me to email it to you, and the email address where you wish to receive it. Your paper copy will continue to be mailed as always. In addition, Nalcasters will be posted on the Branch website, www.nalc258.com.

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

Health Benefits for 2022

All members and dependents age 18 and older who complete an incentive-eligible program or activity will receive a debit card from TASC with the associated savings reward amount ready to be used. Once an additional program or activity is completed, the health savings reward amount associated with the completed program will be added to the card and can be used immediately. Below is a list of programs, screenings, and preventive services that are eligible for a health savings reward. See the Wellness Incentive Programs section in our brochure for guidelines and details.

HIGH OPTION

- Your Health First Disease Management Program - \$50
- Healthy Pregnancies, Healthy Babies® Program - \$50
- Quit for Life® Tobacco Cessation Program - \$50
- Annual biometric screening - \$50
- Health Assessment - \$30
- Annual influenza vaccine - \$10
- Annual pneumococcal vaccine - \$10

CDHP & VALUE OPTION

- Your Health First Disease Management Program - \$30
- Healthy Pregnancies, Healthy Babies® Program - \$30
- Tobacco Cessation Program - \$30
- Annual biometric screening - \$30
- Health Assessment - \$20
- Annual influenza vaccine - \$5
- Annual pneumococcal vaccine - \$5



Note: You are only eligible to receive one reward amount per person, per program or wellness activity, per calendar year. If you leave the Plan, you forfeit your reward amounts.

To learn about all of the new benefits for 2022, visit our website at www.nalchbp.org. There is a Quicklinks section on the home page to access our 2022 brochure and other benefit information. For a complete listing of all 2022 changes, please refer to page 16 in the 2022 Plan brochure. For more information on our new Wellness Incentives Programs, please refer to pages 90 and 157 of our 2022 Plan brochure.

If you have any questions about the upcoming benefits, do not hesitate to contact us here at the Plan! Call our Customer Service Department toll-free at 888-636-NALC (6252).

BLOOD DONATION REGULATIONS – ELRM 17.3, APRIL 2003

519.4 Medical Events

519.41 Blood Donations

519.411 Policy

All postal employees are urged to cooperate fully with the public blood donation programs for the health and security of their community. The time necessary includes the time required for travel and the time required by the medical facility to process the blood donations.

519.412 Time Allowed

The following provisions concern time allowed for blood donations:

a. *General Allowance*. Postal employees may be excused for that period of time deemed reasonably necessary to cover any absence from regular tours of duty to make voluntary blood donations, without remuneration, to the Red Cross, the community, or other nonprofit blood bank. This regulation does not apply to those employees who participate in this program on their own time, off duty.

b. *Additional Time*. In the case of employees in occupations for which the blood bank recommends additional time off following the blood donation, the time necessary includes the additional time recommended by the blood bank. Every effort should be made to have blood donations for such employees scheduled near the end of their tour of duty.

519.413 Restrictions

The following provisions concern restrictions on time allowed for blood donations:

a. The time allowed may in no instance exceed 8 hours. A full day's administrative leave may be granted only when there are unusual circumstances, such as in rural areas where considerable travel may be involved. It is not intended that a full day's administrative leave be granted any employee for donating blood when the blood bank or facility is nearby.

b. Administrative leave for blood donation may be granted during a regular tour of the employee's basic workweek, but only on the date of the blood donation. It is not granted to employees on suspension or in any non-pay status.

519.414 Facility Arrangements

For group donations, postmasters or installation heads make arrangements with the blood bank to provide facilities (mobile) for on-site participation or arrange the hours of donation to present the least interruption and cost to the Postal Service.

519.42 Bone Marrow, Stem Cell, Blood Platelet, and Organ Donations

519.421 Policy

Career postal employees who wish to donate bone marrow, stem cells, blood platelets, or organs may be granted administrative leave, subject to the limitations in 519.422, with appropriate management approval. Administrative leave is *not* available to bone marrow or organ *recipients*.

519.422 Time Limitations

The maximum administrative leave that can be granted per leave year to cover qualification and donation is limited to the following:

a. To a full-time career employee:

- (1) For bone marrow, 3 days.
- (2) For stem cells, 3 days.
- (3) For blood platelets, 3 days.
- (4) For organs, 14 days.

b. To a part-time career employee:

- (1) For bone marrow, 1 1/2 days.
- (2) For stem cells, 1 1/2 days.
- (3) For blood platelets, 1 1/2 days.
- (4) For organs, 7 days.

About Our Members

Congrats to...

Branch 258 is proud to congratulate all sons and daughters of our members who are approaching graduation from high school, college, or trade school this spring. We wish you the best of luck and success in your next life challenges, and offer our support by reminding you to check for scholarship opportunities, if eligible. Also, we want to wish Matt Swarmer, son of Shillington carrier Mark Swarmer, the best as he continues to pursue his Major League dreams as a pitcher for the AAA Iowa Cubs this season!



In Matrimony

A huge congratulations to Jessie Iezzi as she has announced her engagement to be married later this year. Best wishes for this next shared chapter of your life!



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

Brian Sternowski – 39 years; Patricia Sohon – 33 years; Stephen Capozello – 31 years; Charles Miller – 27 years; Aaron O'Brien – 23 years; Diane Furillo – 22 years; James Boris – 22 years; Juan Munoz – 21 years; Eric Kline – 20 years; Brian Hausman – 20 years; Joann Graeff – 18 years; Michael Mulligan – 11 years; Tammy Jones – 6 years; James Buhler – 6 years; Randy Gallardo – 5 years; Katherine Laboy – 4 years; Paul Tanis – 4 years; Anthony Colaianni – 4 years; Santos Gomez – 3 years; Brunilda Cheveres – 3 years; Kevin Alvodomar, 2 years; Jennifer Urieta – 2 years; Juliana Correa Rosario – 2 years; Naomi Torres – 1 year; Nolberto Delarosa – 1 year; Felicia Coleman – 1 year; Marcus Jackson – 1 year; and in CCA service time: Bianca Santiago – 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.



Serving US Postal Service
Over 55 Years!

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