

# Letter Carrier's Review

FALL

Letter Carrier's Review

2024

## NALC BRANCH 210 RETIREES BREAKFAST



All retired NALC Branch 210 members,  
along with their spouses are invited to  
attend:

**\*\*\*\*\* FREE RETIREMENT BREAKFAST \*\*\*\*\***

**FRIDAY OCTOBER 4, 2024  
RIT INN & CONFERENCE CENTER  
5527 W. HENRIETTA RD.  
HENRIETTA, NY 14467  
Begins at 9:00 am**

please notify the Branch 210 office by 9/27/24 of your  
attendance at 427-2450



# National Association of Letter Carriers

## Branch 210

The Branch Union Office is located at  
2491 Brighton Henrietta Townline Rd.

Rochester New York

14623

and can be reached at (585) 427-2450

or

[www.NALC210.com](http://www.NALC210.com)

**Branch 210 Meetings:** 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of every month @ IBEW Hall  
2300 East River Rd. Rochester, NY 14623



*The Letter Carriers Review is a newsletter published by NALC Branch 210. Opinions expressed in this publication are those of the writers, and not necessarily the official view of the Branch Officers. The editor has written articles without a by-line. The editor reserves the right to edit or reject any material received for publication. Branch 210 members are invited to submit material to: Michael Masters, Editor, Letter Carrier's Review, 251 Edgett St. Newark, NY 14513, or e-mail me at [mjmbranch210@yahoo.com](mailto:mjmbranch210@yahoo.com).*

**EDITOR**

*Michael J. Masters*

## National Association of Letter Carriers

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Montgomery**  
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FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT,  
KENNETH A. MONTGOMERY



Having just attended the National Convention in Boston this past August many issues were discussed and debated including open bargaining for our national contract, as well as a host of other social and economic issues presented to the membership. You can read the resolutions on our Branch 210 website and see how the members at the convention voted on each resolution. The convention, for the nine Branch 210 delegates who attended, begins with getting together and discussing the provided resolutions so we fully understand what it is we are voting on. All nine delegates attended training sessions including retirement, city delivery training, contract compliance, grievance handling, safety, sorting and delivery centers (S&DC's), health benefits, dignity and respect, thrift savings plan, OWCP, Amazon, women's mentorship, estate planning, next generation vehicles (NGV's), social media and mail counts/inspection just to name a few. It was an extremely busy week, and our nine delegates did a great job! They put in the work and learned a lot to bring back to help our members. Big thanks to Monique Mate, Mike Masters, Tony Mangiavellano, Derek Lynch, Nicole Ward, Ann Pacher, Clifford Finn, and Gianna Triolo-Finn for taking the time out of their personal lives to go, learn, relay the information, and represent Branch 210.

On the political front, H.R. 82 by Congressman Garrett Graves (R, LA-6) concerning the Windfall Elimination Provision/Government Pension Offset (WEP/GPO), currently is stuck in the Ways and Means committee. The committee has at this point refused to move the bill. Congressman Graves is going to ask for a discharge petition which will take the bill out of committee without a vote and force it to the full house for an up or down vote. Currently the bill has 325 co-sponsors. The discharge petition needs 218 signatures to force the vote. As I write this Congress is currently in recess and will return September 9<sup>th</sup>. H.R. 5995 the Federal Retirement Fairness Act, which gives our non-career employees the ability to buy back their CCA and TE time towards retirement, has 120 co-sponsors including all the congressional reps from western NY.

This will be my final article as your Branch 210 President. Beginning my career as a letter carrier in central Florida in January 1988 and serving as a union representative of some type since 1992, my time has come to retire and turn things over to the next leaders of Branch 210. Over my 36 years and 9 months I can honestly say I am proud of our members and have always been proud to call myself a letter carrier for the United States Postal Service.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the membership for entrusting me to represent them as Branch 210 President for the nearly the last 14 years of my career. I can honestly say you have all made me a better union representative and a better person. It has truly been an honor for me.

As I reflect on the past decade, it gives me great pleasure to report Branch 210 could not be in a better place than it is today, not because of my actions but because of yours, the membership. Your dedication to our union and your commitment to making our branch stronger and well respected throughout the country is a testament to the strength of our membership, not its leaders.

When you elected me to office in December 2010 our general treasury was \$142,032 and as I write this article our treasury now sits at \$574,113. Our membership when I took office was 788 active carriers, 425 dues paying retirees and 87 life members (50+ years of membership who pay no dues) for a total membership of 1300. In contrast today our membership has increased to 850 active carriers, 495 dues paying retirees and 159 life members for a total membership of 1504. Together we have achieved a stronger, larger membership and have not raised dues other than the national mandatory increases. Locally we have successfully battled implementing 5 and 6 shelf cases and case consolidation. Together, we made it through multiple route inspections and filed nearly 5000 grievances: from Article 8 forced overtime to hold-down bumps, overtime equitability, not to mention discipline cases, we have stood strong against management's disregard for our contract. We achieved this with the combined efforts of our talented union stewards (way too many to mention), our Formal A reps (Michael Masters, Greg Karalias, Anthony Polidori, Derek Lynch, Tony Mangiavellano, Ann Pacher, and Scott Rauchfuss) and finally, the two amazing vice-presidents I have served with: John Wilson and Monique Mate. Together we have achieved settlements adding up to several million dollars paid to our members over the last 13 ½ years. As I leave, I am confident, the representation in Branch 210 is in a place that is better than it's ever been.

While I am retiring as Branch 210 President, I will never stop fighting for our members. When asked to help... I will be there, when asked to write a letter... count me in, holding a rally... I will stand with you. My time as your branch President has come to an end, but my time as an active union member will never end.



Labor never quits. We never give up  
the fight - no matter how tough the  
odds, no matter how long it takes.

— George Meany —

I am NALC union strong FOREVER!!

## FROM THE DESK OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

~ MONIQUE MATE



Happy fall.... In the spring newsletter I wrote about TIAREAP. It stood for *Technology Integrated Alternate Route Evaluation and Adjustment Process*, and it was a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Postal Service and the NALC. M-1984 originally was signed on May 10, 2022, and was supposed to last until December 31, 2023, but was extended until May 31, 2024. TIAREAP was an alternate way to adjust the city carrier routes jointly using a new program called Digital Street Review (DSR) technology. To summarize instead of using Handbook M-39 as the guideline to inspect routes, the USPS and NALC jointly agreed to these MOU's where the source used to evaluate routes was no longer a person with management walking with the carrier for a week but instead the source of information came from the carrier's scanner which had the DSR technology linked and would track the carrier's moves. Jointly, a team of two comprising of a NALC person and management person who would then review the carrier's "numbers" and speak with the carrier and ultimately determine changes to the route if any.

TIAREAP expired this past May and depending on who you spoke to, it had mixed reviews. Personally, I am glad we are back to using the M-39. There are several reasons I feel this way, but the main issues were, as a branch we were unable to grieve anything in the process. They created a "dispute team" to resolve certain issues but not all. The team's decision was final, and this decision came with no input from the branch. To me one of the basic fundamental rights as a union is to be able to grieve if management is not upholding an agreement. To then sign these rights away to me is nothing short of catastrophic.

Secondly, the TIAREAP MOU's, eliminated the ability to have a special inspection done within a four-week timeframe which is spelled out in the M-39. Again, this was a disaster for our carriers who had an overburdened job and were stuck with it for months with no reprieve in sight. They had to wait until a TIAREAP team had an available opening. Again, a concession that hurt our carriers. No one is happier than me to see these MOU's expire. Bottomline, the bad far outweighed the good and with that let's hope our National officers learned from those mistakes and never take away our right to grieve again.

Now that the TIAREAP is gone, those who warrant and want a special inspection shall have it done timely. First, request a special inspection in writing. Make sure you date, sign and personally hand it to your supervisor. Request a copy, you can screen shot it but when requesting a copy from management, if we have to grieve, we can then use said management's name in grievance and that they personally were aware of request because they printed a copy for you. Ask management to sign it, contractually they don't have to, but you never know they may oblige.

Once the request is made the M-39 is the controlling contractual language via Article 19: Special Route Inspections

*271 g. If over any 6 consecutive week period (where work performance is otherwise satisfactory) a route shows over 30 minutes of overtime or auxiliary assistance on each of 3 days or more in each week during this period, the regular carrier assigned to such route shall, upon request, receive a special mail count and inspection to be completed within 4 weeks of the request. The month of December must be excluded from consideration when determining a 6 consecutive week period. However, if a period of overtime and/or auxiliary assistance begins in November and continues into January, then January is considered as a consecutive period even though December is omitted. A new 6 consecutive week period is not begun.*

If the request was warranted and the inspection was not given within four weeks of the request, contact your steward or union hall because THIS IS AN ABSOLUTE GRIEVANCE. Something our members have been missing for a while.





## INSURANCE REPORT

NALC Health Benefit Plan/MBA Insurances

Director of Insurance, Michael Masters



As Summer turns into Fall there is much to be excited about: football, cooler weather, fall foliage, multiple paid holidays off, and last but certainly not least my favorite – Open Season (please, hold back your excitement LOL). By now, many of you know this will be a very different open season than any before with the implementation of the new Postal Service Health Benefits (PSHB) program. The PSHB came to fruition through the Postal Reform Act of 2022. The PSHB is simply the new “umbrella” so to speak from which active and retired postal employees will choose their health benefits. The Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) program is still alive and well, but as postal employees we must now choose from the plans offered under this umbrella. This should not be news to many of you, and not to worry, the plan you have now will be offered under the new PSHB. Two things to note for this open season: first, you must make an election for the health benefit plan you would like during open season. Even if you like your current plan you must sign up for it under the new PSHB during this open season. Your plan’s basic benefits and services most likely have not changed due to the PSHB, again it is just the umbrella it falls under (although check with your specific plan’s representative for confirmation). The other thing to note is if you do not make an election and just let your benefits roll over (as many have done in years past) there is no guarantee you will be placed in the same plan. As of now it is being communicated you will be in the same or *comparable* plan. You would think placing the employee or retiree in the same plan would be obvious and make the most sense but remember who we’re dealing with brothers and sisters. We do know there will be a letter sent out informing you of this and *possibly* informing you what plan you will be placed in if you choose to take no action during the open season. Although the latter part of that statement is still not confirmed. The best advice I can give is simple – make the change. It takes very little effort to go on liteblue (active) or contact OPM (retiree) and elect to take the same plan you are currently enrolled in, if you so choose; or elect a different plan if that better fits your health care needs. I have spoken and written about this many times since the Postal Reform Act passed, but if there are any further questions, please reach out to me or the Branch 210 office with your concerns. **Open Season begins on November 11<sup>th</sup> and ends on December 9<sup>th</sup>.** For those retirees attending our Retirees Breakfast on October 4<sup>th</sup>, I’m sure we will address the matter there as well.

Turning to the Medicare B special enrollment period (SEP), **the last day you may sign up for Medicare B through the SEP is Monday September 30<sup>th</sup>.** I’ve mentioned this many times in my articles and phone conversations with many of you; signing up for Medicare B during the SEP or when you turn 65 is your personal choice. Only you know your personal health and your financial situation. Medicare B working in conjunction with some PSHB plans does offer many benefits. Specifically with BlueCross/BlueShield and the NALC Aetna Advantage Plan, you will have the benefit of zero copays, deductibles and coinsurance. Both plans offer rebates to offset the Medicare B cost (\$800 and \$900 per year, respectively). Although that does not mean it is the right choice for everyone. Those of us retiring after 2025 will not have a choice, so there’s not much to think about, we must enroll in Medicare B. One possible determining factor I was just made aware of in the last few months is this: if you choose to enroll in Medicare B along with your PSHB, **you cannot drop Medicare B and keep your PSHB plan.** Please read that statement again to make sure you all understand. If you do drop Medicare B, you will be dropped from your PSHB plan and thus, be uninsured. This is a very important factor when determining what course to take. If you have already enrolled in Medicare B, at this point you can still drop it and retain your PSHB plan if you do so prior to December 31, 2024 (which is the official end of Medicare’s regular open season). After that you must retain Medicare B or forfeit your postal retiree health benefits. Again, much of this will be discussed at the Retirees Breakfast on October 4<sup>th</sup>, but please call myself or the Branch 210 office with any questions.

As of the printing of this newsletter, the new rates for PSHB in 2025 have yet to be released. Rest assured, Branch 210 will mail its usual flier to both active and retired members with the rates (NALC Plan and BC/BS only) as soon as they become available. Wishing everyone great health and wellness into the Fall and throughout the upcoming holiday.

# **COLUMBUS DAY NALC BRANCH 210 GOLF TOURNAMENT**

**WHEN:** MONDAY OCTOBER 14, 2024

**SHOTGUN START 10:00 AM**

**WHERE:** TIMBER RIDGE GOLF COURSE

**7061 W. RIDGE RD,**

**BROCKPORT, NY 14420**



**FORMAT:** 4-MAN SCRAMBLE

**\$75 PER PERSON**

**(INCLUDES SKINS)**

**\$300 PER TEAM**

**\*\*LONGEST DRIVE\*\***

**\*\*CLOSEST TO THE PIN\*\***

**\*\*SKINS\*\***

**INCLUDES:** GOLF  
CART

**HAMBURGERS & HOT DOGS AT THE TURN (and the end)**

**\*\*\*NALC Branch 210 kindly requests golfers to BYOB (bring your own beverages)\*\*\***



# **Employee Assistance Program**

**Branch 210 EAP Coordinator, Ann Pacher**

For those of you who don't know me, I'm Ann Pacher. I am a letter carrier in Irondequoit Station, shop steward 14617, Formal A Rep, and Branch 210 EAP Coordinator. I just wanted to take a moment to remind everyone the Employee Assistance Program, or EAP, is available to all of us. I'm sure you've heard it before, but everyone needs some assistance from time to time. The stress of daily life and the world we live in can become overwhelming at times; EAP is here for that very reason. Remember, it's okay to not be okay. There is no shame in seeking assistance from the resources at your disposal. Eap is one of those great resources. Below are some basic facts and information about EAP:

## ***What is EAP?***

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a voluntary, work-based program that offers free and confidential assessments, short-term counseling, referrals, and follow-up services to employees who have personal and/or work-related problems. EAPs address a broad and complex body of issues affecting mental and emotional well-being, such as alcohol and other substance abuse, stress, grief, family problems, and psychological disorders. (opm.gov)



## ***How do employees access EAP services?***

USPS has contracted with New Directions Behavioral Health (NDBH) to provide services to employees. To access EAP services, use the hotline 1800EAP4You (1-800-327-4968) or the website EAP4YOU.com. Individuals will be connected to a provider based on the needs expressed during the initial phone call. Professional counselors are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Services can be provided through in-person, telephone, or web-based sessions.

## ***Who is EAP for?***

EAP services are available to letter carriers and their immediate family.

## ***How can EAP help me?***

Once you are matched with a provider, employees receive 6 free sessions. Your first session can even be on the clock. EAP is completely confidential. Nothing addressed in your sessions is shared with USPS.

If anyone has further questions on EAP, please feel free to reach out to me via email: [ampacher@gmail.com](mailto:ampacher@gmail.com). Have no doubt, any information or subject matter we discuss will be kept in strict confidence. If there are any employees in your units who you feel may be struggling, please don't hesitate to discreetly remind them, EAP is available to them. Be well, stay mentally healthy, and enjoy the Fall!



## NALC BRANCH 210 SUMMER PICNIC 2024 SEA BREEZE AMUSEMENT PARK



retired Branch 210 VP John Wilson: "no pictures, please."





## **RETIREMENT PARTY**

**YOU'RE INVITED TO CELEBRATE WITH US!**

### **KENNY'S RETIREMENT AS BRANCH 210 PRESIDENT**

**WHEN: Saturday, December 14, 2024**

**WHERE: R.I.T. INN & Conference Center  
5257 W. Henrietta Rd.  
Henrietta, NY 14467**

**\$65.00 per person**

**6pm – 7pm Reception (Cash Bar)**

**7pm Buffet Dinner**

**To attend please send money along with who is attending to:**

**Branch 210 Union Hall  
2491 Brighton Henrietta T.L RD.  
Rochester, NY 14623**

**CASH OR CHECK ONLY  
MAKE CHECK OUT TO MONIQUE MATE**





# NALC PRIORITY LEGISLATION

## PROTECT OUR LETTER CARRIERS ACT (H.R.7629/ S.4356)

To deter crimes and assaults against letter carriers by securing keys and collection boxes, directing U.S. attorney offices to prioritize cases involving assaults against letter carriers, and strengthening sentencing guidelines for those found guilty of these crimes

Introduced by Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), Rep. Greg Landsman (D-OH),  
Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Sen. Josh Hawley (R-MO)

## SOCIAL SECURITY FAIRNESS ACT (H.R.82/S.597)

To repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision and the Government Pension Offset, provisions that reduce Social Security benefits for individuals who receive other benefits, such as a pension from a state or local government

Introduced by Rep. Garrett Graves (R-LA), Rep. Abigail Spanberger (D-VA),  
Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Susan Collins (R-ME)

## FEDERAL RETIREMENT FAIRNESS ACT (H.R.5995)

Would allow certain federal employees to make catch-up retirement contributions for time spent as non-career employees after Dec. 31, 1988, making such time creditable service under the Federal Employees Retirement System. This includes letter carriers who served as casuals, transitional employees and city carrier assistants.

Introduced by Reps. Derek Kilmer (D-WA), Gerry Connolly (D-VA),  
David Valadao (R-CA) and Don Bacon (R-NE)

## IMPROVING ACCESS TO WORKERS' COMPENSATION FOR INJURED FEDERAL EMPLOYEES ACT (H.R.618/S.131)

Would expand the role of nurse practitioners and physician assistants to allow them to treat injured federal workers under the federal workers' compensation program

Introduced by Rep. Tim Walberg (R-MI), Rep. Joe Courtney (D-CT),  
Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME)

## USPS SHIPPING EQUITY ACT (H.R.3721)

Would allow the Postal Service to ship beer, wine, and other alcoholic beverages directly from licensed producers and retailers to legal customers

Introduced by Reps. Dan Newhouse (R-WA) and Jennifer Wexton (D-VA)

## DOOR DELIVERY RESOLUTION (H. RES.376)

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the United States Postal Service should take all appropriate measures to ensure the continuation of door delivery for all business and residential customers

Introduced by Reps. Dave Joyce (R-OH) and Sanford Bishop (D-GA)

**NALC** Fact  
Sheets



[nalc.org](http://nalc.org)



Looking for a good American built car made by hard working union workers?

See Jolene at Bob Johnson Buick.  
Jolene is the daughter of our past Vice-President Jerry Vitto



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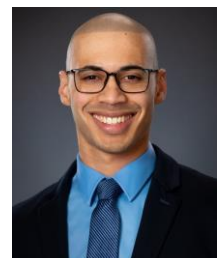
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Hello! I'm the son of retired letter carrier Scotty Wallace. If you are thinking about making a move, give me a call - Austin Wallace

I'd be happy to answer any questions and go over your options.



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**Coldwell Banker Custom Realty**

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**955 East Henrietta Rd,**  
**Rochester, NY, 14623**

[austin.wallace1@coldwellbanker.com](mailto:austin.wallace1@coldwellbanker.com)



What is NARFE? National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association is **Your voice** advocate on

Capitol Hill and **Your information resource** providing clear trusted guidance on complex federal benefit issues. Join **NARFE** and the **Rochester Chapter 124** and be active in securing your benefits now and in your retirement years ahead! The **Rochester Chapter 124** meets several times a year and is host to the Health Fair annually. Joining is as easy as sending us an email at [RochNarfe124@gmail.com](mailto:RochNarfe124@gmail.com) and we will guide you through the process.

**Branch 210**  
**National Association of Letter**  
**Carriers**  
**2491 Brighton Henrietta Townline Rd.**

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# *The Benefits of Membership*

*Designed exclusively For Branch 210 Members*

## **NALC INSURANCE**

Branch Insurance Director,

***Michael Masters***

(585) 278-7241

***NALC Health Benefit Plan***  
***Mutual Benefit Association***

## **Benefit Trust Fund**

***Trust Officer: Sam Hogan***

(585) 733-4873

For more information on any of these  
benefits contact the Branch 210 Office:  
(585) 427-2450

**Real Estate – Wills & Trusts**  
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For all your legal services call...

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Geneseo \* Geneva \* Hilton \* Holley \* Lyons \* Mt. Morris \* Newark \* North Chili \* Palmyra \* Penfield \* Penn Yan \* Perry  
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