
Letter Carrier's Review

An Official Publication of NALC Branch 210

Spring

Together we are Strong

2023

NALC and the Postal Service open negotiations for sixteenth collective bargaining agreement

Back on February 22nd negotiations began to obtain a new collective bargaining agreement between the NALC and the United States Postal Service. Our current contract expires on May 20, 2023. Some of the key elements of the NALC's position are the lack of proper staffing and the need for an all-career workforce. The union believes the time has come to end the CCA experiment and convert all our non-career employees to career status and hire directly to career going forward in all locations. We have already negotiated all-career hiring in 340 locations across the country, a good start, but time has come for the rest of us. We are one union and what is good for one should be good for us all.

Through the global pandemic, Letter Carriers reported for work, exposed themselves to the infected public and exposed their families to possible infection to provide "First Class" service to our customers and our company. In 2022 we were instrumental in getting Postal Reform legislation passed that saved the USPS billions of dollars and it is time for the Postal Service to recognize the efforts of the City Letter Carriers across this country with a substantial pay raise, an all-career workforce and improved labor relations and treat its workforce with dignity and respect.

Should the parties reach an agreement soon that agreement will go out to you, the membership, and you get to vote on accepting or rejecting the terms. If the membership rejects those terms, then the issue goes before a 3-panel group of arbitrators. The decision of the arbitration panel is final and binding on the parties.

If the parties do agree on a proposed agreement your local officers will review that proposal and make a recommendation on approval or rejection, however the ultimate choice is yours.



National Association of Letter Carriers Branch 210

The Branch Union Hall is located at
2491 Brighton Henrietta Townline Rd.
Rochester New York
14623

and can be reached at (585) 427-2450

or

www.NALC210.com

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



The Letter Carriers Review is a quarterly 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, 223 Winfield Rd. Rochester, NY 14622, or e-mail me at mjmnalc210@yahoo.com.

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FROM THE DESK OF THE
PRESIDENT
KENNETH A. MONTGOMERY



The officers attended the spring 2023 legislative trip to Washington D.C. in April and had the opportunity to meet with Senators Gillibrand and Schumer to discuss postal issues. Of particular interest to both our senators was crimes against carriers which seem to be happening all too often. Our national officers are attempting to negotiate into our next contract language concerning protecting carriers when they are on the street as well as getting improvements to police protection from not only municipal police but also postal inspectors and postal police. Senator Gillibrand indicated her office was going to investigate establishing legislation to do just that. We will follow up with her office on her progress and hopefully support her ideas and make the job of a letter carrier a safer one.

Not only did we meet with both Senators, we also met with Congresswoman Tenney and Congressman Morelle's office on several issues important to letter carriers. Top of the list is H.R. 82 the repeal of the WEP/GPO for our seasoned veterans under CSRS retirement system. This will not affect any employee hired after 1984 as those employees are covered by FERS. We also discussed the Federal Employee Retirement Fairness Act which would allow non-career employees to buy back their non-career time for credit towards retirement. While we are still awaiting this bill to be re-introduced in the House this year, we did get the reps to promise their support when the time comes.

On the home front, work-place injuries remain an issue and most of my time is spent assisting our members with worker compensation claims. There is a bill before Congress that will make claims easier to get approved: **H.R. 618: Improving Access to Workers' Compensation for Injured Federal Workers Act**. This legislation will allow the Department of Labor to accept a physician Assistant and Nurse Practitioner to sign medical paperwork. Currently only a DOCTOR can sign your workers compensation paperwork.

One of the other issues that happen far too often is the initial filing of workers compensation claims. All too often when you fill out a hardcopy of the CA-1 form for an accident, and give the form to your supervisor, they either lose it or don't know what to do with it. Let's make this simple and easier for you the member when you get hurt.....**don't rely on management to process your claim**. You have the ability and right to file your own workers compensation claim online should you be injured at work, and you don't need them to do it for you and you don't need their permission either.

If you have an accident and are injured and need to file a claim with OWCP, follow these steps.

1. Go to the website **ecomp.dol.gov**
2. Register
3. Click the button that says file CA-1
 - a. You will need your supervisor or manager's email address.
 - b. You will need the name of our district (NY District 3)
 - c. You will need your pay grade and step found on your paycheck.
 - d. On the CA-1 question #15 make sure you choose COP or Continuation of Pay
4. Get the following forms from management to take to the doctor (CA-16, CA-17 and CA-20)
 - a. Management **MUST** provide these forms and if they refuse contact your steward)
5. Go see a doctor that accepts **federal workers compensation** (if you can't find one call us for a referral)
 - a. While you must see the doctor chosen by the Postal Service once, the actual law gives you the choice of doctors for treating your injury. If you don't want to use the Postal doctor then don't go back twice.
6. Follow the instructions of your doctor.... your supervisor is not a doctor.
7. You can either upload the completed CA-17 and CA-20 to your file or send to the union office for assistance,
 - a. DO NOT GIVE THEM TO YOUR SUPERVISORS..... they are not doctors.
 - b. The CA-16 authorizes you doctor to be paid and the doctors office will keep that for.

FROM THE DESK OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

~ MONIQUE MATE

Spring is here with summer just around the corner... finally sunshine and warm weather. Unfortunately, this time of year, the flavor of the season from the Postal Service is "undertime." The calls are already coming in with members complaining "management is making me do undertime." Our answer is clear to all our members, the carrier is the one who determines whether they have undertime. Management may tell you "DOIS" or the "PET TOOL" or whatever report they are using these days, says "your volume is light and therefore you have undertime" and on certain occasions this may be true, but again, at the end of the day the NALC does not determine this nor does management determine this. It is you, the carrier who determines whether "undertime" exists.



So, as a carrier how do you deal with management when you determine undertime does not exist. **First and foremost, do not argue with management, this will get you nowhere except unneeded frustration.** Instead stay cool and use the tool to protect yourself. That tool is a Form 3996, Carrier-Auxiliary Control. The carrier is required per handbook M-39 and the M-41, to first have a discussion with management and if the carrier believes they are going to be over 8 hours on that day, and management insists the carrier has "undertime", request a Form 3996, *Carrier-Auxiliary Control*.

Handbook M-39 **Section 122.33**

The employee, upon request, will be provided with Form 3996, *Carrier - Auxiliary Control*, after the supervisor has been verbally informed as to the reason for the request. The employee shall not be denied the form, and, upon request, a duplicate of the completed form will be provided to the employee.

Handbook M-41 **Section 131.4 Reporting Requirements**

131.41 It is your responsibility to verbally inform management when you are of the opinion that you will be unable to case all mail distributed to the route, perform other required duties, and leave on schedule or when you will be unable to complete delivery of all mail.

131.42 Inform management of this well in advance of the scheduled leaving time and not later than immediately following the final receipt of mail. Management will instruct you what to do.

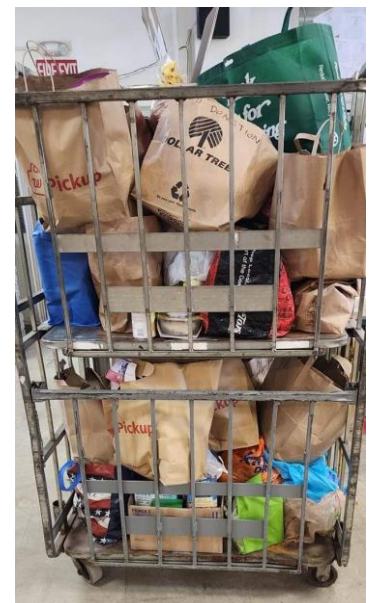
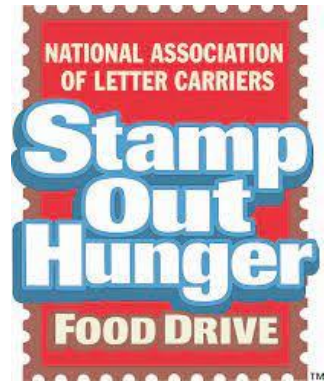
In this scenario, management is giving the carrier a pivot and expects the carrier to return within 8 hours. The carrier believes if they are given a pivot, they will not be able to return within 8 hours. At this point, it is the carrier's obligation to complete Form 3996. **Once completed and if management still insists on giving the carrier the pivot and instructs carrier to be back in 8 hours...ask this question,**

Do you want me to deliver my route and the pivot, or do you want me to be back in 8 hours... because I cannot do both?

Let management make the decision. If they refuse to answer, call management in the early afternoon and ask again whether to bring the mail back in order to be done in 8 hours or do you want me to deliver the pivot for overtime. If no one answers, follow the last instruction you were given.

Remember, a Form 3996 is a carrier form and protects the carrier. How??? If management tries to discipline the carrier for failure to follow their instruction, Form 3996 is proof along with a carrier statement, management was aware the carrier did not have undertime. Also, if the carrier was not on the overtime list and auxiliary assistance was available, a Form 3996 is proof management was aware the carrier was in need of assistance and failed to provide, which in turn becomes an article 8 violation. Bottomline, if a violation occurs or you are given discipline for failure to follow instructions, see your steward, so they can promptly file a grievance.

NALC FOOD DRIVE MAY 13, 2023



INSURANCE REPORT

NALC Health Benefit Plan/MBA Insurances

Director of Insurance, Michael Masters



Since Postal Reform passed, I have fielded many questions concerning the new PEHB network, Medicare integration and the *NALC Aetna Medicare Advantage Plan*. I'm going to sum up a few facts quickly about the new PEHB network and I've also attached some information on the new NALC Medicare Advantage Plan. **Fact #1:** all health benefit plans in the new PEHB network will mirror any plans now available in the old FEHB network. So, whether you had NALC, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, GEHA, APWU, etc., a virtually identical plan by the same company will be available in the new PEHB network. **Fact #2:** All postal employees retiring after January 2025 must enroll in Medicare part B upon reaching the age of 65. Remember Medicare part B covers services you pay for; Medicare part A (which is free) covers hospitalization. **Fact #3:** for those who have retired and did not enroll in Medicare B, there will be an inclusionary period around April of 2024 to have the opportunity to enroll with no penalty. Normally, if you reach the age of 65 and do not enroll in Medicare B you will pay a 10% penalty for every year that passes if you choose to enroll in the future. The Postal Reform Act voids that penalty from you the retiree, if you choose to enroll during the inclusionary period next Spring. Once enrolled your Medicare B benefits take affect the following January 2025.

One may ask, why should I pay for Medicare B coverage along with my PEHB health plan coverage? While covered by certain PEHB plans (NALC specifically) along with Medicare B, you will reap the benefits of having Medicare B as your primary payor and the NALC Medicare Advantage Plan as your secondary payor. This means aside from prescriptions, there are zero-dollar co-pays, deductibles, and co-insurance payments. You will simply pay your two monthly premiums and any doctor visits, hospital stays, outpatient procedures, lab test will be 100% covered. Everyone's financial and personal health situations differ, and ultimately you must make the best choice for yourself and your family. The NALC Medicare Advantage

	Existing	New
Medical coverage	NALC Health Benefit Plan High Option plus separate enrollment in Medicare (assumes in-network providers are used)	NALC High Option Plan — Aetna Medicare Advantage
	Your responsibility	Your responsibility
Outpatient hospital	\$0	\$0
Emergency care	\$0	\$0
Urgent care	\$0	\$0
Covered services outside of the United States	Submit itemized bill for reimbursement; benefits subject to the non-PPO plan allowance and deductible	Submit itemized bill for reimbursement; benefits covered the same as within the United States
Prescription coverage		
Retail pharmacy (30-day supply of a covered drug)	Generic: 10% of cost (hypertension, diabetes, and asthma: 5%) Preferred brand: 20% Non-preferred brand: 40% Specialty: \$200	Preferred generic: • \$0 at preferred* pharmacies • \$2 at standard* pharmacies Generic: 5% Preferred brand: 20% Non-preferred brand: 40% Specialty: 25% (\$200 max.)
Mail-order pharmacy or retail (90-day supply of a covered drug)	NALCSelect and NALCPreferred Generic: \$4 Generic: \$10 Preferred brand: \$75 Non-preferred brand: \$110 Specialty: \$400 Hypertension, diabetes, and asthma: Generic: \$4 Preferred brand: \$40 Non-preferred brand: \$60	Preferred generic: • \$0 through preferred* retail or mail • \$4 through standard* retail or mail Generic: \$10 Preferred brand: \$75 Non-preferred brand: \$110 Specialty: 25% (\$400 max.)

*Visit NALCHBP.org/Annuitant to view preferred and standard pharmacies as well as the prescription drug formulary to determine the cost share for your medication.

Plan through Aetna also provides a \$75/month (\$900/year) reimbursement to offset your Medicare B premium. The Plan also provides some dental and vision coverage. For some basic information on the plan see the picture above and on the following page. I also encourage all retired members to visit www.nalchbpretiree.org, or call myself or the Branch 210 office.

	Existing	New
Medical coverage	NALC Health Benefit Plan High Option plus separate enrollment in Medicare (assumes in-network providers are used)	NALC High Option Plan — Aetna Medicare Advantage
Medicare Part B Premium Reduction	Not provided	Each eligible annuitant receives a \$900 per year (\$75 per month) Medicare Part B premium reduction
	Your responsibility	Your responsibility
Annual deductible	\$0	\$0
Annual out-of-pocket maximum	\$0 per person (medical) \$3,100 per person or \$4,000 per family (prescriptions only)	\$0 per person (medical) \$3,100 per person (prescriptions only)
Coinsurance	\$0, except prescription drugs	\$0, except prescription drugs
Primary care and specialty physician visits	\$0	\$0
Adult annual preventive physical exam	\$0	\$0
Lab, X-ray and other diagnostic tests	\$0	\$0
Inpatient hospital	\$0	\$0
Home health services	\$0, limited to 2 hours/day and up to 50 visits/year unless more visits are covered by Medicare	\$0, limited to 8 hours per day/35 hours per week
Chiropractic services	\$0, Medicare approved — unlimited; Enhanced Chiropractic Services — limit 24 visits per year	\$0, Medicare approved — unlimited; Enhanced Chiropractic Services — limit 25 visits per year
Physical, occupational and speech therapy	\$0, limited to 75 visits unless more visits are covered by Medicare	\$0, no visit limit
Routine vision exam	Not covered	\$0
Hearing aids	\$1,000 per ear every 36 months	\$2,000 total for both ears every 36 months

For more information and resources visit:
www.nalchbpretiree.org

Prescription coverage		
Prescription coverage	Existing NALC Health Benefit Plan High Option plus separate enrollment in Medicare (assumes in-network providers are used)*	New NALC High Option Plan — Aetna Medicare Advantage
Retail pharmacy (30-day supply of a covered drug)	Generic: 10% of cost (hypertension, diabetes, and asthma: 5%) Preferred brand: 20% Non-preferred brand: 40% Specialty: \$200	Preferred generic: • \$0 at preferred** pharmacies • \$2 at standard** Generic: 5% Preferred brand: 20% Non-preferred brand: 40% Specialty: 25% (\$200 max.)
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New York State Congressional Trip 2023

The Branch 210 officers attended the annual NY State Congressional Trip this past April. They met with Congresswoman Claudia Tenney (R) NY-24, and Congressman Joe Morrelle (D) NY-25, from the House of Representatives. The officers also met with both NY State Senators Schumer and Gillibrand. All are very supportive of letter carriers and receptive to the legislation our union is supporting. The officers also attended an informative meeting with Executive Vice President Paul Barner. EVP Barner discussed not only legislative agenda, but also touched on contract negotiations, TIAREAP route adjustment process, and the new Sorting and Delivery Centers (S&DC's) which have been appearing across the country. For more details on the specific legislation the officers discussed, please see President Montgomery's article on page 3.





**11th Annual
N.A.L.C – MDA
Aaron Wallace
Memorial**

Aaron Wallace

Aaron Wallace is the son of Letter Carrier Scott Wallace from Panorama and his wife Amy Wallace.

Aaron lost his battle with Muscular Dystrophy January 10, 2014 at the age of 27.

Help us celebrate the life of Aaron through this fund raiser to increase awareness of Muscular Dystrophy

Golf Tournament

When: Sunday June 4, 2023
Shotgun start at 10:00am

Where: Victor Hills Country Club
1450 Brace Road.
Victor New York 14564

Format: 4-man Scramble
\$100 Per person
\$400 Per team
\$100 Sponsor a hole. Personal or Corporate Sponsorship available



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\$100 per golfer includes
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Sunday July 16, 2023

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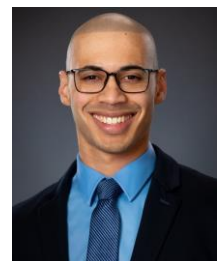
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What is NARFE? National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association is Your voice advocate on

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 and we will guide you through the process.

Branch 210
National Association of Letter Carriers
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Branch Insurance Director,

Michael Masters

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**Mutual Benefits*

Association

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Benefit Trust Fund

Trust Officer: Sam Hogan

733-4873

For More Information on any of these
Benefits contact the Union Office at
(585) 427-2450

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