



# THE BUZZ

BRANCH 3 NALC  
BUFFALO / WESTERN NEW YORK

*Strength in Unity - Working Together the Hive Survives*

DECEMBER 2024 Volume 78, Number 12



# Happy Holidays!

from all of your  
**BRANCH 3 NALC OFFICERS**



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## The Tentative Agreement

On October 18th, the NALC announced it had reached a Tentative Agreement with the USPS. President Renfroe released the following statement:

**“After almost 20 months of tireless negotiations, we are pleased to reach a fair agreement that rewards our members for their contributions to the Postal Service and their service to the American people.”**

He goes on to state:

**“The NALC Executive Council will meet tomorrow, Oct. 19, to discuss the tentative agreement. All details of the agreement and upcoming informational rap sessions for branch leaders will be made available at that time.”**

On October 19th, the NALC released the details of the Tentative Agreement and announced the scheduling of four (4) RAP sessions across the country to disseminate those details. Those details can be found in this seventeen-page (17) document at: [chrome extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.nalc.org/news/nalc-updates/body/Summary-of-2023-Tentative-Agreement.pdf](https://www.nalc.org/news/nalc-updates/body/Summary-of-2023-Tentative-Agreement.pdf).

President Renfroe for the 1st time in history as president failed to run the Tentative Agreement by the Executive Council attempting to garner input and support before releasing it to the membership. While there is no constitutional language requiring this, basic leadership tenants would implore this be done.

On October 29th, the NALC released a Wage Calculator to show if the agreement were implemented how much money a carrier would be making under the new pay rates and pay table modifications along with total wage increases over the life of the agreement.

On November 1st, the NALC released the November Postal Record online which contains a nine (9) page summary of the Tentative Agreement.

I encourage every active member to take a look at all these reference materials and ask yourself if this meets your current and future needs as a professional letter carrier?

The NALC took the position at the four (4) RAP sessions that these were for informational purposes, not sessions for questions and answers or “politicking.” Once again, the NALC has a collapse of leadership when presenting the Tentative Agreement. Many Branch presidents are following suit with the failure to give the membership that elected them their opinion on whether this Tentative Agreement is good for their members or not. Leadership is not telling your members that you are going to remain neutral as a leader. It is your job as a leader to examine this agreement and give your membership an honest assessment of it based on their circumstances. The NALC runs around stating it is the most Democratic union out there and the reality is that is a farce also.

At the scheduled RAP sessions National officers, National Business Agents, Local presidents and rank and file carriers were told they were being disrespectful by questioning and/or disagreeing what the Tentative Agreement contained. They were told they

were “politicking.” Having a different opinion and/or debating a subject is not “politicking.” The current leadership is so soft they had to stifle and/or cut off debate at every RAP session. The only person “politicking” is President Renfroe and his supporters. He flew in the entire Executive Council to attend every RAP session. This gives the optic that they are all in agreement. After the 1st RAP session when multiple National officers went to the mic to debate the Tentative Agreement, Renfroe then emailed instructions to the Executive Council that for the next three (3) RAP sessions the Executive Council was to NOT leave their seats and/or go to a microphone. Again, attempting to cut off any/all debate of the Tentative Agreement. The icing on the cake was the Washington, DC RAP session where Renfroe brought in NALC HQ staff to attend and clap for him while simultaneously again attempting to stifle and shut down alternate opinions or debate. The only person politicking is Brian Renfroe. For if the Tentative Agreement were historic or a significant upgrade like he stated, Renfroe and his supporters would not have to sell anything, that Tentative Agreement would sell itself. However, that is not the case, the vast majority of carriers I have spoken with in the branch and across the country agree, this tentative Agreement is woefully inadequate based on letter carriers hard work and dedication to the USPS and the country amongst many other factors.

This Tentative Agreement fails to offer a living wage to the vast majority of letter carriers. 70% of active carriers are Table 2 carriers and many are on the low end of Table 2. Last contract the NALC was offered 4.8%. The 1.3% a year offer this tentative agreement is not even compounded; it is calculated off the current wage rate for each of the years. This Tentative Agreement we are offered 3.9% and the economic conditions with inflation at 4-8% yearly, this Tentative Agreement not only fails to keep up with inflation but puts many letter carriers in a losing situation with their financial situation. Which then brings me to the “diet” COLA. Table 2 carriers DO NOT receive full COLAs like Table 1 carriers. Not only do they not receive full COLAs but the lower you are in steps in Table 2, the less the COLA is you receive. Those that need it the most, receive the least. Members of the APWU receive a full COLA no matter their PayScale or step. If letter carriers cannot afford to have a living wage, how are we going to afford the benefits in our contract? How do we purchase needed Health Benefit plans, life insurance or put in matching funds to the Thrift Savings plan? The answer is you cannot. That means these things are not benefits and the wage package does not allow most letter carriers to afford them.

This Tentative Agreement fails to address comparable compensation to our private sector competitors. Title 39 of the US Code states the USPS must maintain comparable wages and benefits to the private sector economy, regardless of the USPS’s economic condition. The NALC considers UPS and Teamster drivers as comparable competitors. UPS Teamster drivers start at what USPS top grade, top step letter carrier pay is and goes up from there to \$45 taking only four (4) years to reach the top of UPS Teamster pay

(Continued on page 4)

scales. Letter carriers are far behind UPS drivers to the tune of tens of thousands of dollars annually. Does that sound comparable to you?

This Tentative Agreement failed to secure an all-career workforce. We still have City Carrier Assistants (CCAs). There is no need for CCAs. While it is true in the past we have had supplemental employees, the reasons we had those types of employees no longer exist. Casuals were for college students returning over break to work the summer. Transitionals were for transitioning from all manual work methods to a partially mechanized work method. I no longer see college students looking for work at the USPS. The transition to mechanization is long gone, since the early 90's. City Carrier Assistants under the Tentative Agreement will receive approximately fifty (50) cents more an hour and a 2.3% yearly increase. They currently start at \$19.33. With the additional money in the Tentative Agreement, starting professional city letter carriers will make approximately \$20 an hour. In other words, fast food workers will make more money an hour than city letter carriers in many parts of the country. With an uncompetitive wage and benefit package it fails to attract and keep applicants, which then snowballs into staffing situations for the employer.

This Tentative Agreement fails to address multiple work rules adequately such as:

- ✓ Contract compliance    ✓ Mandatory overtime
- ✓ Heat safety    ✓ Street safety    ✓ Uniform allowances

The Branch had our general membership meeting on November 12th. In attendance was Region 11 National Business Agent Mark Camilli. I discussed the Tentative Agreement proposals as presented by NALC HQ at the meeting. I then opened up the floor for discussion about the Tentative Agreement inquiring what members liked or disliked about the Tentative Agreement. NBA Camilli spoke on the Tentative Agreement and took several notes about questions from members to ask National President Renfroe pertaining to the tentative Agreement.

The next morning, November 13th, at 7am the branch held a rally at the Westside Post Office to inform the public of letter carriers' struggles with the inadequate offer from the USPS with our tentative Agreement. I was contacted by Westside carrier Manny Greer asking for help to plan the event. Brother Greer was working with another Westside carrier, Jonathan Paxon, to brainstorm the event. That morning approximately fifty (50) carriers, retirees and family members showed up to rally and let the public know how the Tentative Agreement affected them. Branch 3 carriers told their stories of how this Tentative Agreement was a slap in the face for their dedication, devotion, and hard work they have put in for the employer and serving the American public. Every major news station in Buffalo covered the event including Spectrum News 1 Buffalo and WNY Labor Today which is a labor-only dedicated news publication.

As the interviews from the news networks ensued, stories about full-time letter carriers and their struggles were being told. This is not the job that many of you once had. The value of being a letter carrier has been stripped from most carriers in today's environment. Powerful stories of single parents that work full-time and qualify for government assistance. Full-time letter carriers have to choose

whether to pay their rent or purchase medication that allows them to perform their jobs. Full-time letter carriers that crash each night on a different couch because they cannot afford a living space. Stories of some Branches that have installed showers in their union halls because their members are homeless, so they can clean up before work. I would like to thank my young carriers, brother's Greer and Paxon, for stepping up and doing something about the situation they and their peers are experiencing. This is what unionism is, solidarity is, not running your mouth in the station or on social media.

When active carriers on the workroom floor do not take an active role in their union, they have no complaint about their future. If you are not going to vote on the tentative Agreement, what is your complaint? If you are not going to show up to a general membership meeting, what is your complaint? If you are not going to give a statement to your steward about a hostile manager, what is your complaint? Do not wait for the next person to do any of this, we have to do this together. Union business is conducted at general membership meetings, state, and national conventions. Not on social media. It's called participation. Make all the excuses you want, do all the word gymnastics necessary to make you feel better, it's not going to change the situation.

A lot of people are afraid to speak up in this "democratic" union. Afraid they will be black balled, their people will not get opportunities for training, they will not get an opportunity to advance in the NALC. There's nothing Democratic about a union that less than a handful of times National incumbents have been beaten. That is a rigged system. I have spent my entire career and the vast majority of my life advocating for letter carriers. I have had the establishment, the status quo come after me many times in an effort to destroy my character and reputation. It has not worked. I have advanced. I have the record and award cases as President to prove what this branch has accomplished. It only makes me stronger and more convinced I need to exact change. NALC HQ, the establishment, and the status quo are currently putting the squeeze on letter carriers attempting to scare them all over the country.

This is my promise to the membership of Branch 3 and every letter carrier in the Nation in general and more specifically pertaining to this Tentative Agreement. I would rather die on my feet than live on my knees whether that is pertaining to the USPS or NALC HQ. The USPS will continue to give you scraps if you accept scraps. NALC HQ I am curious, why don't you threaten me like you do others? The membership of Branch 3 elected me. The membership of Branch 3 pays my salary; therefore, I fight for what the membership of Branch 3 wants. In this case they have spoken clearly, they want this tentative Agreement voted down.

I will always fight for what I have been taught and experience what is right. You cannot call yourself a leader unless you fight for those less fortunate than yourself. This local union is looking out for the economic situation of our members, is yours? Why is NALC HQ more concerned with the USPS's financial situation when their members cannot afford to live? Table 2 carriers are getting the short end of the stick. I must stand up to try to change that for all of your future's. You have my solemn promise, I will fight for you Table 2 and suffer any consequences in doing so with a smile on my face.

I am your warrior...

~ In Solidarity, David J. Grosskopf



## MOUNTED / CURBSIDE DELIVERY

How often do you hear a boss say, “if a box is blocked, skip delivery”? Which leads many carriers to believe there is a policy of skipping delivery to mailboxes when they are blocked by a car, a trash receptacle, or some other obstruction. Carriers often bring the mail back and mark it as “box blocked” or something similar. Then attempt delivery the following day. Sometimes, mail will go undelivered to a box for several days until the obstruction is removed. This practice is incorrect and should be ceased. Postal regulations require that carriers dismount to deliver to a mailbox that is temporarily blocked. Postal Operations Manual 632.14 states:

**The customer is responsible for keeping the approach to his or her mailbox clear to facilitate delivery. Where the approach to the mail receptacle located at the curb is temporarily blocked by a parked vehicle during normal delivery hours for the area, or snow or ice hampers the approach to the mailbox, the carrier normally dismounts to make delivery. If the carrier continually experiences a problem in serving curb line boxes and where the customer is able to control on-street parking in front of his or her mailbox but does not take prompt corrective action after being properly notified, the postmaster may, with the approval of the district manager, withdraw delivery service.**

The above regulation makes it clear that if a mailbox is temporarily blocked, the carrier must dismount to deliver the mail. The USPS Standard Training Program for City Letter Carriers (page 11-8) states:

**If the approach to the mailbox is blocked, delivery must be attempted by dismounting where it is safe to do so.**

The non-requirement to carry a satchel when making limited dismount deliveries.

### **M-00335 in relevant part:**

**The only exception whereby a motorized carrier may make deliveries without a satchel is a dismount to make a limited (one or two) number of deliveries from a single stop.**

This applies whether the mailbox is blocked by a vehicle, a trash receptacle or even snow or ice. We are the United States Postal...Service. It is our job to provide the best possible service to our customers. In most instances our customers cannot control the parking regulations or when their trash receptacle is left after the municipality has exacted trash removal. Unless there is a safety hazard present, dismount delivery should be provided to mounted or curb side delivery. Also relevant to safety and postal vehicle operation during curbside delivery the following is applicable:

### **M-00341:**

**Employees performing curbside delivery, from right-hand drive vehicles, shall follow the procedures listed below:**

- 1. Level streets or roads: Place the vehicle in neutral (N), place foot firmly on brake pedal while collecting mail or placing mail in mailbox.**
- 2. On hills: Place the vehicle in park (P), place foot firmly on brake pedal while collecting mail or placing mail in mailbox.**

When attempting delivery to a curbside/mounted box in your LLV the vehicle should be placed in neutral, brake applied while making delivery and/or collections of the mails. On hills the vehicle should be placed in park and the brake applied. The reason the vehicle is placed in neutral is a safety issue. For example, your foot could slip off the brake and with the vehicle in drive may lunge forward. With the vehicle in neutral, on level ground, and your foot slipping off the brake, the vehicle should remain in its current, stationary location.

Additionally, while performing mounted/curbside delivery, the driver may unfasten the shoulder belt. However, the lap belt must always remain fastened. Once the driver deviates and is not performing the mounted delivery in their line of travel, they must reattach the shoulder belt to the lap belt. Carriers should also not finger or hold mail in their hands while the vehicle is in motion.

### **M-41:**

**812.3 Seatbelts must be worn at all times the vehicle is in motion. Exception for Long Life Vehicles: In instances when the shoulder belt prevents the driver from reaching to provide delivery or collection from curbside mailboxes, only the shoulder belt may be unfastened. The lap belt must remain fastened at all times the vehicle is in motion.**

**812.31 When traveling to and from the route, when moving between park and relay points, and when entering or crossing intersecting roadways, all external vehicle doors must be closed. When operating a vehicle with sliding driver’s cab doors on delivery routes and traveling in intervals of 500 feet (1/10 mile) or less at speeds not exceeding 15 MPH between delivery stops, the right-hand sliding cab door may **\*\*NOT\*\*** be left open under normal operation.**

**\*\*added the words NOT and under normal operation per the 10/22/24 letter to President Renfro notifying him of the M-41, 812.31 change.**

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## THE EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT

(Continued from page 5)

**812.4 Do not finger mail while driving or hold mail in your hands while the vehicle is in motion. You must use a mirror to check for pedestrians ahead, in back, and on both sides before placing the vehicle in motion.**

We are also hearing from the field that management is instructing carriers to use Promaster's for curbside delivery. This is not proper and is a safety issue. Please notify your Steward or immediately call the hall if management is instructing you to do this. We should not have to compromise safety or the rules because they do not have enough vehicles to provide carriers with the proper vehicle for the job. Keeping in mind the proper delivery methods and vehicle operation procedures will keep the customers happy and letter carriers will be providing safe, efficient, reliable service making the Postal Service the best option for the public. In closing, I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

*~ In Unity and Solidarity,  
Michael Levering, Executive Vice President*

## LAST PUNCH

*Good luck on your retirements!*



**ALAN DRYZGA**

*LaSALLE STATION -  
NIAGARA FALLS  
INSTALLATION*

**JOHN CIESKI**

*CHEEKTOWAGA  
STATION*



## WHERE IS YOUR VOICE?

### JESICA MCGINNIS, Editor

Over the course of the past 5 years my life has changed drastically multiple times. And for roughly 18 months I had so much hope that we had a "historic" contract on the horizon that would make many things easier for a single parent. Did you know that as a 10 year letter carrier, a T6, and with a family of 3 you can qualify for daycare assistance? For 5 days a week before and after school it costs \$1600 without assistance, and that's on the low end. \*insert vomit emoji\* How much has your health insurance increased for 2025? Even on the NALC High option for a family of 3, it costs just shy of \$600 a month! But we are only worth 1.3%? That doesn't even cover the insurance increase!

When we vote, and elect our leadership, those choices are supposed to reflect our own voices. In seeing the disappointment, the dissatisfaction, the outrage, all I can think is "where are our voices"? What has been labeled as "historic" feels like a slap in the face. Was HQ listening to our voices? Were we not talking loud enough? Should we have shouted sooner?

Too often, I feel, trust in leadership is placed out of complacency instead of earned. We should DEMAND transparency. We should ALWAYS be heard, not just when we are angry or they don't feel like listening to your point of view. The Union is YOU. The MEMBERSHIP controls the outcome. When your ballot comes in the mail to vote on this "historic" Tentative Agreement, make sure your voice is heard loud and clear.

As we swing into Peak Season, remember that your voice should be heard, and if you need someone to confide in or need resources to help you through this season, EAP is there to help. 1(800)EAP-4YOU.

Happy Holidays!

*~ Jessica L. McGinnis*

## DECEMBER MEMBERSHIP PINS

### 45 Years:

Susan R. Bellanti -- Carl Nowakowski  
George J. Reinard -- Charles T. Turner, Jr.

### 25 Years:

Paul M. Toms -- Sharon J. McCulloch  
Kenneth Kopra -- Nancy M. Paolucci



best wishes  
for a  
*Healthy Balance*  
this season

The holiday season for USPS brings a surge in mail volume and customer demands, making it crucial to find a balance. Here's a guide with practical tips designed to help you manage this busy time effectively and maintain your well-being:

**Stay organized by planning your days and preparing for peak times.** Keep track of personal and workplace responsibilities with a planner or digital calendar. Organize your daily tasks by priority. Before busy periods, plan and prepare your day or tasks to ensure you're as efficient as possible. Staying organized can help manage increased workloads and reduce stress.

**Set realistic and manageable goals.** Divide larger tasks into smaller, manageable steps. Set achievable goals for each day and focus on completing one task at a time to avoid feeling overwhelmed by the workload. Avoid overcommitment by being realistic about what you can accomplish during the holiday season. Prioritize essential tasks and adjust your goals to match the increased demands.

**Make time for friends and family.** Despite the busy schedule, set aside time to connect with family and friends. Whether it's a phone call, a meal together, or a brief visit, these interactions provide essential emotional support. Engage in holiday activities that fit your schedule. Even small traditions can bring joy and help you stay connected to the festive spirit.

**Embrace flexibility and adapt to change.** Be prepared to adjust your plans and priorities as needed. Flexibility is crucial in managing unexpected changes or challenges that arise during the busy season.

**By implementing these strategies, you can better manage the demands of the holiday season and maintain a healthy balance. For more on balancing personal and professional obligations, reach out to the EAP.**



CALL US TODAY: 800-327-4968  
800-EAP-4YOU | TTY: 877-492-7341  
WWW.EAP4YOU.COM

# NALC LETTER CARRIERS RALLY IN BUFFALO 'TO DESCRIBE TENTATIVE AGREEMENT LETTER CARRIERS 'CHARGE ECONOMIC OFFERS

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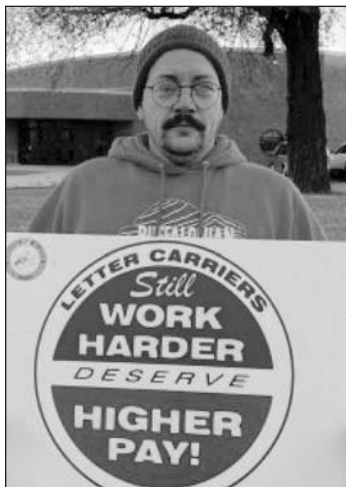
Editor-Publisher Tom Campbell

**(BUFFALO, NEW YORK)** – *Manny Greer has health problems and is dealing with food insecurity. Marisa Carrion is a young single Mother of three, while David Kozinski has been working for 26 years now but is worried about his younger Co-Workers who are having a tough time these days.*

*What brought these three National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) Branch 3 Members together on Wednesday (November 13th) - on a very cold and early morning, was a rally held outside a Post Office Branch on Buffalo's West Side.*

There about 50 local Letter Carriers waved signs that read: "Letter Carriers Still Work Harder - Deserve High Pay, "Say NO To The Tentative Agreement" and "VOTE NO" as passing vehicles honked their horns in support of the Union-represented Carriers who told WNYLaborToday.com a tentative agreement reached with the United States Postal Service (USPS) "is a slap in the face" to not only them, but nearly 600,000 of their fellow NALC Members across the country.

"Plain and simple, we have to be out here - we have to do this," said Greer, who reached out to Branch 3 President David Grosskopf, Jr. and asked a public rally be scheduled outside the Post Office where he's worked for three years now. "I have an autoimmune illness 'and I feel great when I can afford medication.' 'But I have to work overtime to afford it.'"



"There's 'nothing in it (the tentative contract agreement) for the average' Mail Carrier," said Greer (Pictured above/WNYLaborToday.com Photos), who also admitted he is dealing with food insecurity. "It 'only addresses management's issues.' 'You can't call them (the wage increases in the deal) raises.' 'I hope it gets voted down.'"

Carrion (Pictured below/WNYLaborToday.com Photos) is a nine-year Letter Carrier with children aged nine, six and 10 months.

Like Greer she hopes NALC Members vote the tentative deal down because "there's not enough money in it."

"That leaves me robbing Peter to pay Paul," she told WNYLaborToday.com. "'We need to have a bigger raise because we (Letter Carriers) are the backbone of the Postal Service.'"



Meanwhile, Kozinski (Pictured above/WNYLaborToday.com Photos), a 26-year Letter Carrier, is at the top of the wage scale.

His wife works and his kids are grown, but he told WNYLaborToday.com he has a problem with his Co-Workers receiving a lot less in wages than they should be compared to what others are making.

"(The USPS) 'is not addressing the impact of inflation,'" Kozinski said. "And 'it's incredible this agreement does not address retention.' 'We are churning through people because the mental and physical toll is so high.' 'With what they're offering you could go work a fast food job and make the same wage without the mental and physical impact.'"

"Look, Letter Carriers 'have done it all,'" he continued. "'We've worked through everything' - including the (Coronavirus) Pandemic. 'Some of us get robbed out there.' 'Others have been killed.' A (1.3%) wage increase 'is a slap in our faces.' 'We are the face' of the Postal Service. 'I certainly hope it does get voted down.'"

# DEMAND A FAIR NATIONAL USPS CONTRACT, AS "A SLAP IN THEIR FACES" - DO NOT KEEP PACE WITH CURRENT CONDITIONS'

NALC announced the tentative agreement with the USPS in mid-October (A Summary of the agreement can be accessed at: Summary-of-2023-Tentative-Agreement.pdf).

Letter Carriers will be voting on the agreement in the month of December.

*If it's turned down, it will be back to the negotiating table for both sides.*

*However, NALC Letter Carriers across the U.S. are currently organizing and rallying to get the message across to the public that the tentative agreement fails to address current economic conditions and work rules sufficiently to reward America's hard working Letter Carriers.*

*NALC says the wage increases offered by the USPS do not offset the increase in inflation and are nowhere close to what is needed to sustain a livable wage in today's economic conditions.*

*For example, under the new agreement, new hires can expect a starting hourly wage of \$20, wages similar to the Fast Food Industry.*

*And without significant raises, the USPS will be unable to attract new Employees to stay with the service for the long term.*

*"(The USPS) has offered an economic package of (3.9%) over (42) months, 'which is not keeping up with inflation,'" Branch 3 President David Grosskopf, Jr. told WNYLaborToday.com at the rally.*

*"We're going in reverse here.' (NALC Members) 'would not be able to put money into their (401k's) or life insurance.' 'This is absolutely not a benefit,'" he said.*

*The "general word" from NALC Members across the U.S., Grosskopf added, is that Letter Carriers are saying: "No way."*



**"It is a slap in our faces."**

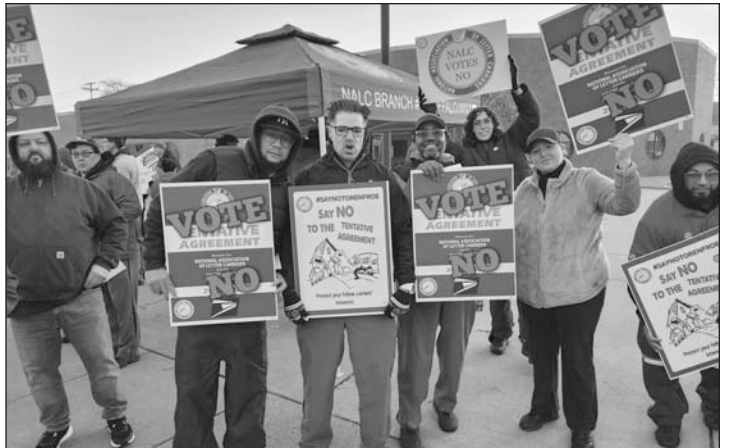
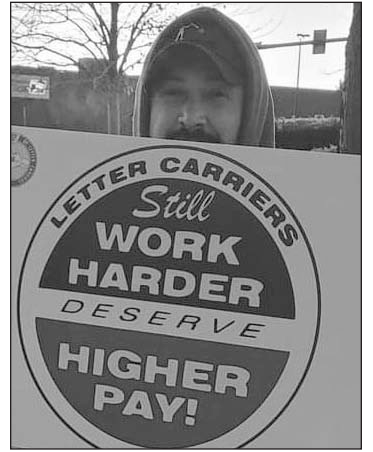
*David Grosskopf, Jr. said*

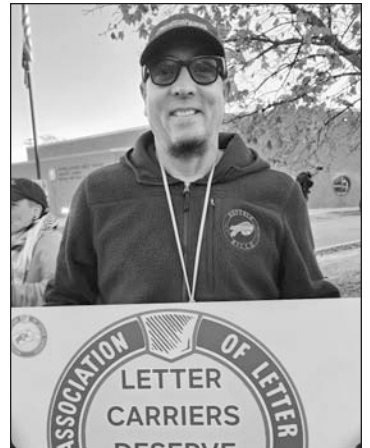
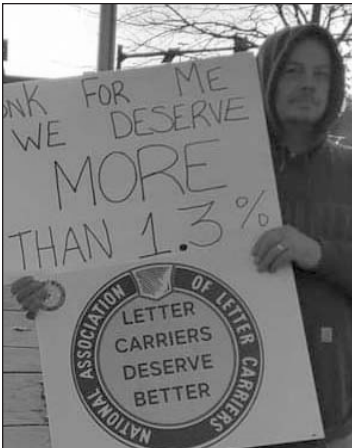
**WNYLaborToday.com Editor's Note: For More, Read: US Postal Workers Are Fighting Massive Service Cuts**





# WEST SIDE RALLY







*can request a termination from the Social Security Administration until December 31, 2024. It is best to cancel as soon as possible to avoid an inadvertent payment of Medicare Part B premiums.*

## THE END ... FOR NOW

Postal Service Health Benefits Open Season 2024 ends Monday December 9, 2024, at 11:59pm EST. The NALC Health Benefit Plan will be issuing new insurance cards for members who are enrolled in the plan. The new card is the only card you should be using after the first of the year.

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) serves as the chief human resource agency and personnel office manager of the Federal Government. Often members say they have the Postal Service health insurance when in fact it is OPM that develops and administers quality, cost-effective employee benefits programs, including the federal retiree pension program and health benefits for the federal sector.

With that in mind, OPM and the Postal Service may request documentation of eligibility at any time. Documentation is required when you make a change to your PSHB enrollment outside of Open Season. Verification that covered family members are eligible is a requirement from the Service's HR Shared Service Center or your PSHB carrier. It is your responsibility when a qualifying life event occurs.

In most instances, ineligible family members will not be removed automatically. This is especially true of children who turn twenty-six (26) or have a former spouse. You must notify the Post Office's HR Shared Service Center (HRSSC) at 1-877-477-3273, option 5 within 60 days of a qualifying life event such as ineligible family member, birth/placement of a child or marriage.

Retirees/annuitants should contact OPM retirement services by phone at 1 (888) 767-6738. The phone lines are open Monday through Friday 7:40 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. eastern time. If you have difficulty getting through, try to call early in the morning or late in the evening when the lines are less busy.

Personnel Management (OPM) serves as the chief human resources agency.

### RETIREE/ANNUITANT

The following is directly from the USPS Retiree E-Newsletter Nov 2024:

***Reminder regarding the Medicare Part B Special Enrollment Period:***

***If you were an eligible annuitant who chose to enroll in Medicare Part B during the recent Special Enrollment Period, please note the following:***

- 1. Open Season is an opportunity to select a health benefits plan that works in conjunction with your Medicare coverage.***
- 2. Review plan options carefully, to include premium reimbursement rebate incentives.***
- 3. Your Medicare Part B coverage will be effective on January 1, 2025.***
- 4. If, after reviewing the PSHB plan information, you want to rescind your Medicare Part B enrollment, you***

***If your request to cancel Medicare Part B enrollment is made after January 1, 2025, you will no longer be eligible for the PSHB Program unless a Medicare Part B exception applies. You will also be responsible for any Part B and PSHB premiums due through the month of termination. If you have questions regarding termination of Part B or if you would like to terminate your Part B enrollment, call the Social Security Administration at 1-800-772-1213. TTY users call 1-800-325-0778.***

Before opting out of Medicare Part B weigh your health care costs and needs first. There is an old saying, "think before you ink."

*~ Stay Safe/Stay Healthy, Judy Kersten*

## Fair day's work, for a fair day's pay.

Where is the fair day's pay? Letter Carriers are qualifying for various forms of public assistance. People have been having to either borrow from their tsp or complete hardship withdrawals. Credit cards are being maxed to pay for groceries for their families. People are choosing either going to the doctor and buying medicine or paying rent. Christmas is next month and thank God Affirm is an option for me, because that's the only way I'm able to get gifts for my kids this year. The cost of living is through the roof. Barely being able to afford a roof. We have brothers and sisters that live in New York City that literally are homeless. Their Union hall installed showers so that carrier's actually had a place to take a shower either before or after work.

"Neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds." The mail must go, we delivered everyday during the COVID pandemic. No hazard pay. Letter carriers are robbed at gunpoint for their arrow keys. No reward. Brothers and sisters have died from not only violence, but from heat stroke. We still deliver in negative degrees through over 100 degrees, to not even make a fair wage. People sitting in climate controlled offices all day making above a fair day's wage. A fair day's work for a fair day's pay, I ask again, where is the fair pay for Letter Carriers?

This is why it's important for every active carrier who's eligible to vote, does vote. This contract is not a fair day's pay.

*~ In solidarity, Colleen Kreuzer*

## DIRECTOR OF RETIRED MEMBERS

## KENT HANKIN

By the time you get this, the Health Benefit Open Season will be over, and hopefully you got the plan that works for you and your family. We have had members changing insurance or trying to change only to have the computer not verify them. Members have gone into Medicare Advantage plans but the worst thing that happened was that OPM assigned everybody who was in the Independent Health plan into Blue Cross and Blue Shield FOCUS. If you didn't change you are stuck with that plan which is a high deductible low payment plan.

This has been a very trying year for us retirees. First, we had to decide whether we wanted to take Part B of Medicare for \$185.00 per month that we never had to pay before. So many people are suspending their coverage in the PSHP to try to save some money. If people want to know how the Postal Service is saving money it is through members leaving the health Plan. On average the government is paying about \$1400 per month for every retiree's health benefits. So, for every person who goes into an Advantage program the Postal Service is saving \$16,800 per year. Now you take 1,000 members leaving and you just saved \$16,800,000 per year. That is with only 1,000 leaving and since there are 1.3 million members the number leaving will be more than 1,000.



I just want to wish each and every person a MERRY CHRISTMAS, HAPPY HANUKKAH, and HAPPY KWANZAA. God Bless everyone with good health and I hope to see some of you at the Branch Holiday Party. The quote for the month is from Mae West. *"Too much of a good thing can be wonderful."*

~ Kent Hankin, Director of Retired Members

### NEW MEMBERS

Noah Adamczyk	Nobab Shimul	Mitchell Dushay	Scott Marciniak
Heather Kilian	Devan Wiech	Frankie Giordano	Shabbir Hussain
Md Rahman	Jonathan Dray	Mohammed Miah	Mohammed Ismail
Alexandria Peden	Aneir Khan	Jordan Rivera	Sean Lasky
Bianca Lafont	Daniel Mayville	Harron Jones	James Dunne

### BURNS/CONNORS RETIREMENT ASSOC.

This is a short objective of what the Burns-Connors Retirement Association does. The object of this association is to protect in all ways the ways the interest of retired letter carriers, renew old friendships, talk over old times, to promote good will and fellowship by means of planned get-togethers and in general try to advance the welfare of all our members mentally, morally and spiritually. We call and write our Congressmen and Senators when legislation is going to effect the Postal Service, the Union or active and retired carriers. We attend rallies as a show of support and we vote.

**We are looking for more retirees to join the Association. The dues are only \$20.00 per year.**

Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of every month, with the exception of July and August. Meetings are held at the Magruder's Restaurant, 4995 Broadway, Depew. We have a small meeting at 1:00 and the luncheon right after the meeting for a small fee.

Any retirees interested in joining the Burns-Connors Association can come to any of the meetings which are held on the third Wednesday of the month. If interested call Kent Hankin - 685-4648.

### DEATHS

John Noworyta (*Life Member*)

### NEW MEMBERS

Sean Lasky and Noah Adamczyk



# • HEALTH BENEFITS SEMINAR •



# • HEALTH BENEFITS SEMINAR •



## NOVEMBER MEETING & TOY DRIVE for our GOLD STAR MOTHER



# SOUTHERN TIER MEETING



# GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING - NOVEMBER 12, 2024

- President Grosskopf called the meeting to order at 7:45pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.
- This was followed by Branch 3's annual Veteran's Ceremony with the Honor Guard and led by Senior Master Sgt. Air Force, Retired, Andrew Raymond.
- President Grosskopf then acknowledged Gold Star Mother Ann Davis who thanked the Branch for our generous donation of toys for military families.
- The Executive Board made a motion to send up to 6 officers including President Grosskopf and EVP Levering to the annual Region 11 National Business Agents holiday party and President's meeting on December 2nd and 3rd. This expenditure will include hotel, meals, and paid/lost time. Motion passed.
- The Executive Board made a motion to donate \$2,000 to WNY Labor Today. This is for our annual ad renewal. Motion passed.
- The Executive Board made a motion to send two officers to the National Officer training in Minneapolis, MN being held January 27 to 30, 2025. Expenditure will cover paid/lost time for five days, travel, hotel and meals. Trustee Joe Torres will attend with President Grosskopf. Motion passed.
- The Executive Board made a motion to purchase a new updated server for our branch computer system which will replace our existing outdated equipment. Purchase not to exceed \$14,000. Motion passed.
- The Executive Board made a motion to donate \$2,000 to Matthew Glab Post #1477. This donation is in recognition of the Post allowing us to use their hall at no cost. Motion passed.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- *Information and Education Committee:* Chairman Robson informed the membership that the Save Around Buffalo books are available for \$25. Half of the cost will go to the NALC Disaster Relief Fund. Brother Robson also informed the membership of the parking situation at the West Side Post Office on November 13th, 2024, for our informational picket.
- *Legislation Committee:* Chairman Smith informed the membership that NYS President George Mangold let him know within the hour that HR82 passed.
- *Fellowship Committee:* Chairman Hynes asked the membership if anyone would be interested in playing cards after the December Christmas Party meeting.
- *By Laws and Constitution Committee:* Chairperson Sister Kersten reviewed the Article 12, Section 18 By Law changes. Motion to accept the new By Laws passed.
- *Muscular Dystrophy Committee:* Chairperson Sister Deluca informed the membership that the tentative date for Branch 3's annual MDA golf tournament will be June 1st, 2025, at Chestnut Hill. The cost for a foursome will be \$440.
- *Insurance Report:* Sister Kersten reminded the membership that open season will run from November 11th through December 9th, 2024. All members will receive a letter from the Postal Service Health Benefit Plan. This letter will state which plan you are being placed into. Sister Kersten also spoke on flexible spending accounts. Members need to exhaust all funds in these accounts or money will be lost. Regulations on the flexible spending accounts have not changed but the Postal Service has elected a new provider. Any questions on the new PSHB plans please call the hall.

## OLD BUSINESS:

- President Grosskopf announced Article 8 payouts since last month totaled \$22,378.

## NEW BUSINESS:

- President Grosskopf informed the membership that the new tentative agreement specifics from the November Postal Record will be handed out to the membership. President Grosskopf then turned the meeting over to Region 11 National Business Agent Mark Camilli. NBA Camilli congratulated and acknowledged that Branch 3 is one of the strongest in the region if not the entire NALC. NBA Camilli also expressed his appreciation for arbitration advocates Mike Miskell and Andrew Harrison. NBA Camilli then stated that the tentative date for ballot mailings on the current tentative agreement would be December 1st, 2024.
- President Grosskopf informed the membership that there would be a tentative agreement rally on November 13th, at the West Side Station, 465 Grant Street at 7am. Notices have been sent out to News Channels 2,4,7, and WNY Labor Today.

## FROM THE FLOOR:

- Brother Hankin informed the membership that he had blood pressure monitors in the back of the hall for anyone who fit the criteria for these monitors.
- Niagara Falls Carrier Kim Taylor thanks the Branch for all that they do to support all Branch 3 carriers.
- The Branch raffled off 50 gift cards to Tops for Branch 3's annual turkey giveaway.
- Sgt.- at-Arms Robson announced the "If you are here drawing" Sister Patricia Kwiatkowski "Retired Carrier" would have won \$40 if she had been in attendance.

*The next General Membership meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 10, 2024,  
at the Matthew Glab Post #1477 at 7:30 pm.*

# UNION MEETING NOTICE

## DECEMBER 10th

6:00 pm Officers Meeting  
6:30 pm Stewards Meeting  
7:30 pm General Membership Meeting


1965 Abbott Road  
Lackawanna, N.Y. 14218

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## DECEMBER 2024 Monthly Calendar of Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
8	9	10 11:45 am Tonawanda Retirees at TC Wheelers, 341 Wheeler St., Tonawanda, NY 6:00 pm Officers Meeting 6:30 pm Stewards Mtg. 7:30 pm General Membership Meeting	11 10:00 am Hiler Sta. Retirees at Greek on the Street 3189 Delaware Ave.	12	13 BUZZ ENTRIES DUE	14	
15	16	17	18 1:00 pm Burns-Connors Retirement Assoc. meets @ Magruder's	19 9:30 am Williamsville Retiree's Dennis (French & Transit)	20	21	
22	23	24	25 	26	27	28	
29	30	31	JANUARY		1 9:00 am Kenmore Retiree's Breakfast at Olympic, 1601 Military Rd. 9:30 am Williamsville Retiree's Brunch at Family Tree Rest., 4346 Bailey, Amherst	2 9:00 am Southtowns Retiree Brkft at Alton's - Transit & Seneca	3 4
5	6 9:00 am Chktg Breakfast Alton's Restaurant 7:30 pm AFL-CIO Mtg.	7 6:00 pm Officers Meeting	8	9	10	11	

**The Deadline for submissions to the Buzz is the Friday after the general meeting.**