

N.A.L.C. Branch 920
20 South School Lane
Souderton, PA 18964

Address Service Requested

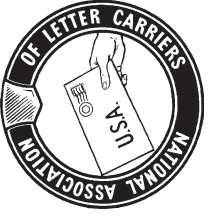


**DON'T FORGET
to VOTE**

Tuesday, November 4!

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US POSTAGE
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Levittown, PA
Permit No. 529

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS BRANCH 920



**Bux
Mont 920**

NEWS

Vol. 30 No. 3 • Fall 2008

President's Message

The latest COLA payment has increased our wages by 72 cents an hour. By year's end, the combined COLAs and scheduled increases will result in pay hikes of over 5% for the year. Do you know anyone who has seen their wages rise by that much in the last year? Better yet, do you think for a minute that this would have happened without our collective strength, our Union, the NALC? Fat chance!

Believe it or not, though, we have carriers in this Branch who gladly line up and accept all the benefits the NALC has won for them without paying their fair share for them. They are quite happy to let you do that for them! Now, I've heard all of the excuses for not joining the Union and, frankly, they're crap:

I don't agree with the Union's political positions. NO dues money goes to political activities; they are funded through COLCPE, a separate and voluntary contribution made by carriers.

Only bad carriers need the Union. I'm a good worker, so I don't need it. Think again. Countless good carriers have been issued discipline over the years without just cause. Through the *contractually negotiated* grievance procedure, the Union has contested and won untold numbers of disciplinary cases. Have the misfortune to get into a fender-bender on your route, and find out how quickly management no longer considers you a "good" carrier.

I filed a grievance once and didn't get the outcome I wanted. At every level, the Union does its best to advance the members' interests, through the grievance procedure, through labor-management meetings, through the local and national agreements. Considering the intransigence and downright thickheadedness of some of our counterparts, the Union's achievements are all the more remarkable.

The point is, it's just plain wrong for these non-members to enjoy a free ride while your dues make everything the Union does possible. Talk to them. Show them the error of their ways. Ask them to pay their fair share.

Fraternally,

Kevin A. Gardner
President
NALC Branch 920

Executive VP's Message

Workman's Compensation Problems

Lately there has been a series of problems in our Branch concerning claims filed for Workers Compensation. These problems almost always start with a phone call from a carrier who has been trying to file a claim without notifying the Branch. After local management has either given them the wrong forms (or worse, the wrong information), and their claim has been denied, then they call the Branch and say "what happened"?

Any Workman's Compensation claim should start with a call to us (215-721-2232), in order that we can ensure that the right forms are filled out properly, and that the correct information is given to the claimant. If the wrong forms are filled out initially, or if they are not filled out properly, your claim can be delayed significantly, or even denied by the Office of Workers Compensation (OWCP). This can result in your not being paid promptly (or in some cases, not at all).

Some local managers know the rules about OWCP, some do not, and some do not care if your claim is approved or not. Then we, unfortunately, have the small group of them that will actively try to sabotage your claim; perhaps they get points if your claim is denied (I've always wondered about that). This last type of manager can be dealt with by the Branch using avenues of approach not available to the claimant (such as dealing directly with the Department of Labor and/or the manager's superiors)

In any event, please call the Branch to ensure that your claim is processed correctly and promptly. One phone call is all it takes; that phone call can save you untold headaches and perhaps some financial problems as well. All calls are kept confidential and all medical information is safeguarded for your privacy. Please call!

Fraternally,
Tom Clarenbach
Exec. Vice President

What's In The News...

- COLCPE
- Christmas Party
- 2009 Meeting Dates
- Grievances
- See What's New at www.eap4you.com



**Make the Call! 1-800-Eap-4-YOU
(1-800-327-4968) TTY: 1-877-492-7341**

www.EAP4YOU.com

24 hours a day, seven days a week
Personal - Private - Professional



**SPEND AN EVENING WITH FRIENDS
ATTEND YOUR UNION MEETINGS!**

OFFICERS MEETING-6:30 P.M.
Fourth Tuesday of each month

STEWARDS MEETING-6:45 P.M.
Fourth Tuesday of each month

BRANCH MEETING-7:00
Fourth Tuesday of every month

Branch 920 Officers . . .

- President Kevin Gardner
- Executive Vice President..... Tom Clarenbach
- Vice President Russ Naylor
- Secretary Jim Morrison
- Treasurer Ed Klais
- Sergeant-At-Arms George Fornash
- Trustees Ed Morehouse
- Bill Hefferon
- Ken Traynor
- Jim Gleason
- M.B.A..... Sam Rutherford
- Health Benefits Rep Dan Owarzani

**BUX-MONT BRANCH 920
2009 MEETING DATES**

- January 27th Souderton
- February 24th Warminster
- March 24th Souderton
- April 28th Warminster
- May Meeting Souderton
(June 2nd Due to Holiday)
- June 23rd Warminster
- July 28th Union Office
- August 25th Union Office
- September 22nd Souderton
- October 27th Warminster
- November 24th Souderton

December-Christmas party-date and location to be announced

Executive Board meetings start at 6:30 PM.
Steward meetings start at 6:45 PM.
Branch meetings start at 7:00 PM.

Souderton meetings are at the Branch office,
20 S. School Lane, Souderton

Warminster meetings are at Mike's Bar and Grill
2nd Floor
544 York Road Warminster Pa. 18974
(Corner of York and Street Roads)

Vice-President's Message

The last several years we have had the Christmas party at the Warrington country club. This venue has always been very nice. We had a nice buffet, DJ, and from what I have heard everyone had a great time.

Last year we did something different, and had everyone wishing to attend, mail in a deposit of \$25.00 per person. This deposit was refunded when you arrived at the party. This system worked very well, but we still did not have enough people attend. The minimum was 100 people. We only had 85 people, so we had to pay for the other 15, which is just throwing money away. This was still better than the year before when we had 50 no shows that we had to pay for. We asked for suggestions at the monthly meeting, and got some suggestions that we did consider.

This year the Christmas party will be downsized somewhat, but I am sure it will be just as good. The party was to be at the American Legion in Souderton, the same place we had meetings in the past. Unfortunately there was a fire at the American Legion, and this venue is no longer an option. A new place will be found, hopefully soon. We will have it catered and also have a DJ. Hopefully it will be well attended. Once again spouses will be invited. More information will be forthcoming.

Lately, in a lot of offices, starting times have been changed. For the most part, this is due to declining mail volumes. Many carriers have been standing around waiting for the clerks to sort the mail. When management sees this and the numbers go down they have no other choice but to change start times. From all we hear we don't expect the volumes to come back. In the last quarter alone, the postal service had over a one billion dollar deficit. I'm sure most of this is from the gas prices climbing the way they did, and also with the decline in mail volume. Many offices have been instructed to take out routes. When this happens, management can't just take routes out. They must meet with the union and go over the evaluation with us. Usually we can work out a deal that is good for all parties, but when we can't then a route inspection must be done. For now we must wait and see.

See you at the Christmas party.

Russ Naylor
Vice president

Contribute to COLCPE
NALC's Political Action Fund
helps elect friends
of letter carriers.



Active letter carriers:
Contribute to **COLCPE**
using PostalEASE

by phone.....

Letter carriers can contribute directly to COLCPE (NALC's Committee on Letter Carrier Political Education) from their paychecks every pay period using the Postal Service's PostalEASE. Through PostalEASE you can designate COLCPE as one of your two* payroll "allotments."

- 1** Be sure you know your 8-digit Employee ID Number (on your paystub) and 4-digit USPS Personal Identification Number (PIN). If you cannot remember your PIN, call PostalEASE at 1-877-4PS-EASE (1-877-477-3273), select "1", enter your 8-digit employee ID number, and select "2" to have your PIN mailed to you.
- 2** Create your own *Account Number* by inserting in the spaces at right the first seven digits of the ID number that appears above your name on the back cover of your *Postal Record*.

3 Now you are ready to call PostalEASE toll-free at 1-877-4PS-EASE (1-877-477-3273)

- When prompted, select "1" for PostalEASE and then enter your 8-digit Employee ID Number and your USPS PIN
- Select "2" for payroll options
- Select "1" for allotments
- *Disregard* instruction to complete Allotment Worksheet and select "2" to continue
- Select "3" to ADD a new allotment
- Enter the 9-digit Financial Institution Routing Number:
0 6 4 0 0 0 1 1
- Select "1" to continue processing allotment
- Select "1" to "enter the allotment now"
- Enter your 17-digit Account Number from above
- Enter "1" for Checking
- Enter amount of allotment: \$ _____ .00 *per pay period*.
If amount is correct, select "1"

*** If you already have two allotments, you must cancel one to contribute to COLCPE through PostalEASE. To do so, follow the instructions at left but instead of selecting "3" to add a new allotment, select "2" to cancel an allotment.**

After completing your entry, do not end the call until you hear the following:

- Confirmation Number: _____
- Your allotment will become effective on: _____
- Your allotment will be reflected in paycheck dated: _____
- Keep this information for your records and future reference.*

YOUR 17-DIGIT ACCOUNT NUMBER:

0 0 3 4 9 5 2 5 3 5
(First 7 digits of ID number on Postal Record/Stub)

*****AUYTO** 5-DIGIT 54321
XXXXXXXX9 LC 9876 W13 08
JOHN CARRIER
1234 MAIN STREET
ANYWHERE, US 54321-9999

By making a COLCPE allotment through PostalEASE, you are doing so voluntarily with the understanding that your contribution is not a condition of membership in the National Association of Letter Carriers or employment by the Postal Service nor a part of union dues and that COLCPE will use the money it receives to contribute to candidates for federal office as permitted by law. You are also making this allotment with the understanding that COLCPE contributions are not tax deductible and that your selections shall remain in full force and effect until canceled through the PostalEASE system.

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM THE AFL-CIO

MORE THAN 50 MILLION PEOPLE RELY ON SOCIAL SECURITY.



Something that John McCain called an
“absolute disgrace.”

McCain called the system that has allowed millions of seniors to retire with dignity an “absolute disgrace.” Yet he received \$23,157 last year in Social Security checks. (McCain at a Denver town hall meeting, 7/7/08; Associated Press, 7/17/08)

McCain wants to privatize Social Security. He says he is “totally in favor” of personal savings account schemes and will consider raising the retirement age. (*Wall Street Journal*, 3/3/08)

**Barack Obama
 Will protect our
 retirement.**



He strongly opposes risky privatization schemes, will eliminate income taxes for seniors making less than \$50,000 a year and will work to strengthen Medicare. (Obama campaign website, accessed 8/4/08; *Quad-City Times*, 9/21/07)

www.WorkingFamiliesVote08.org

Paid for by the AFL-CIO (RA)

STEWARDS

- BENSALEM**
Ed Klaiiss
Dan Higgins
- BLUE BELL**
No Steward
- BOYERTOWN**
No Steward
- BRISTOL**
Jim Gleason
- CHALFONT**
Roger Lawver
- DOYLESTOWN**
Dave Brogan
- HATBORO**
Ed Morehouse
- HATFIELD**
Tom Hoag
- LANSDALE**
Dave Rios
- NEW HOPE**
No Steward
- NEWTOWN**
Bill Bergen
- POTTSTOWN**
Joanne Bauer
- PERKASIE**
No Steward
- PHOENIXVILLE**
No Steward
- ROYERSFORD**
Tim Demchik
- SELLERSVILLE**
No Steward
- SOUTHAMPTON**
Ken Traynor
- SPRING CITY**
Mike Bell
- TELFORD/
SOUDERTON**
Jeff Greaser
- WARMINSTER**
Wayne Murphy
- WARRINGTON**
Ken Kogan

This is from the AFL-CIO Website

**We all know it:
 The economy is not working for
 working families.**

Fact: Workers in America

Are the most productive in the world.
 Work longer hours than in any other developed country.
 Live in a country with more than \$13 trillion a year in income.

YET we face:

Stagnant wages and family incomes.
 Increasing income insecurity.
 Eroding health care benefits.
 Disappearing pensions.

BUT we don't have to sit and wait for it to change.

**WE ARE THE CHANGE OUR
 ECONOMY NEEDS.**

Get the facts and find out how you can DISMANTLE the corporate agenda and BUILD a working family agenda.
 Here's our working family agenda:

Anyone who wants to work should have a job with a living wage.

Workers are proud of their work and should have the chance to do it right.

All workers and our families should be able to live in dignity with health care and retirement security.

Every worker should enjoy the freedom to form a union and bargain collectively.

Workers want to contribute to, and share in, building a world-class economy.

Retirement: A New Beginning

As you retire, the door closes on one stage of your life and a new door opens up to a sea of opportunities for you to consider. Design the retirement that you desire by taking time to think about the things in life that are of most value to you. Plan your new beginning around those things. Doing so will take time and energy, but will be well worth it as you begin to enjoy the stage of life known as retirement.

Part of any retirement plan is a solid understanding of your financial situation. Consult with a financial planner, banker, or accountant for assistance in formulating a plan that will carry you through your retirement years. Experts say you should have 70 to 80 percent of your income to maintain the standard of living you had as a working individual. Adjustments need to be made for inflation and for possible increased medical costs.

No matter how you decide to spend your retirement years, maintaining good health as you age should be a priority. Make exercise and good nutrition a part of your retirement plan and take care not to abuse alcohol and/or drugs.

Your retirement plan will be as individual as you are. Make sure that your plan complements that of your spouse or partner so you are not at odds in your retirement expectations. Think about your life and answer the following questions:

- What have you always wanted to do but haven't had time for?
- When has your life felt the most complete?
- What activities have given you the most satisfaction?
- What talents would you like to investigate or develop further?
- Do you have life goals that you haven't achieved? Are they still important to you?
- Is community service or volunteerism something that is of interest to you?
- How will you include family and friends in your plan?
- Where do you want to live in retirement?
- Are there hobbies that you would like to pursue?
- Do you want to go back to school?

Be honest with yourself as you find your personal answers to these questions. Once you define what you want from your retirement, you can make a plan to get there. It has been said that the retirement years are the best years of your life. Planning carefully for them will help make that a reality for you.

Additional Resources

Additional information, self-help tools and other resources are available online at www.EAP4YOU.com. Or call the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for more information, help, and support. Counselors are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to provide confidential assistance at no cost to you at 1-800-EAP-4YOU or 1-800-327-4968 (TTY 877-492-7341).

Grievance Resolutions Received

Dispute Resolution Process

Prepared by Russ Naylor, Vice President

BENSALEM

#2-08 Art. 16 Seven day suspension code of conduct
Pre Arb: Reduced to official discussion .

#7-08 Art. 15 Joint statement on violence PM acted
inappropriate
Step B: *Impasse*

#22-08 Art. 16 LOW Express mail failure
Step A: *Reduced to official discussion*

#23-08 Art.7 Non carrier craft delivered mail
Step B: *Eight hours of start time to be paid to
the carrier craft*

#50-08 Art. 16 LOW Deviation from route
Step B: *LOW to be rescinded and expunged
January 23, 2009*

#RKN-1-08 Art. 8 ODL not equitable
Step A: *One opportunity to be made up in
quarter 3*

#RKN-2-08 Art. 16 LOW Failure to scan express mail
Step A: *Reduced to official discussion*

#RKN-3-08 Art. 16 LOW Failure to follow instructions
Step A: *Reduced to official discussion*

#RKN-4-08 Art. 16 LOW Failure to follow instructions
Step A: *Reduced to official discussion*

#RKN-5-08 Art. 10 PTF on hold down denied court leave
for jury duty
Step A: *Pay grievant 8 hours at the OT rate*

BRISTOL

#31308 Art. 8 Non ODL carrier worked ODL carrier was
available
Step A: *Pay grievant 2 hours at penalty rate*

#5108 Art. 10 Carrier charged 24 hours AL
Step A: *Change to SL*

DOYLESTOWN

#9-08 Art. 16 14 Day suspension for AWOL
Step B: *Carrier resigned grievance withdrawn*

#10-08 Art. 8 Non ODL worked ODL available
Step A: *Pay ODL 4.30 hours at OT rate*

#12-08 Art. 7 Clerk doing carrier work
Step A: *Pay grievant 50 units at the OT rate*

LANSDALE

#4-08 Art. 8 OT not equitable at end of quarter
Step A: *Pay three grievants total of 9 hours at
OT rate*

#5-08 Art. 8 Non ODL carrier worked ODL carrier was
available
Step A: *Pay ODL carrier .44 at OT rate*

#6-08 Art. 8 Non ODL carrier worked ODL carrier was
available
Step A: *Pay ODL carrier .44 at OT rate*

#7-08 Art. 8 Non ODL carrier worked ODL carrier was
available
Step A: *Pay ODL carrier .39 at OT rate*

#20-08 Art. 30 Local contract sent to impasse proper
procedure not followed
Step B: *Impasse declared*

PHOENIXVILLE

#1-08 Art. 19 Carrier instructed to place tub of flats
on stool
Step B: *Carrier to case flats from the ledge not
the stool*

#2-08 Art. 16 Seven day suspension for time wasting
practice
Step B: *Suspension rescinded and expunged*

POTTSTOWN

#6-08 Art. 15 Formal step A decision not implemented
Step B: *Pay adjustments made with no addi-
tional money*

#7-08 Art. 15 Joint statement on violence carrier
harassed
Step B: *No clear violation proven cease and
desists and conduct special inspection*

Continued on page 6



Branch Christmas Party



Sunday, December 14th 2008 - 2 P.M. to 6 P.M.

Doylestown Maennerchor

40 East Oakland Avenue

Open Bar for: Beer, Wine and Soda.

Hard Liquor (*Cash Bar*)

Buffet will include the following:

Cheese Tray with Crackers and Spread *Rice*

Tossed Salad *Mixed Vegetables*

Chicken Cacciatore *Potato Salad*

Sausage and Peppers *Cole Slaw*

Shrimp Scampi *Tomato and Mozzarella Salad*

BBQ Brisket

Includes: Rolls, Coffee, Tea or Brewed Decaf, Tax and Gratuity

Dessert

Carrot Cake and Chocolate Cake

Spouses Welcome

Please R.S.V.P. No Later Than December 1st, 2008

A \$25.00 Refundable deposit is required

Please make checks payable to the following address:

Bux Mont 920 Christmas Party

20 South School Lane

Souderton, PA 18964

Checks will be returned to you at the party.

Jimmy Mo's Notes

A Note from the Secretary.

What is wrong with Carriers today? Lately we have been getting reports from different offices about Carriers working off the clock. You would think that these carriers are new to the job and in some cases that is true; a lot of the time it's the most senior carriers doing this. If you go over to your case to put your coffee down before you punch in DON'T TOUCH ANYTHING. As soon as you move a piece of mail or doing any of the other things we do as carriers you are working.

This means don't move mail around; clear your ledge, look at your change of address's or look at your holds. With mail volume dropping and supervisors asking if you have "Down Time", what are you thinking about?

SAFETY: as I pass by Carriers on the street going home I see some with doors open when they shouldn't be or looking at mail while driving and a multitude of other things. It takes time to do the job properly and don't let anyone push you to go any faster then what you can do in a safe manner.

Now is a good time to think about giving to COLCPE. What with that huge COLA we just received. Five dollars a pay period won't break any of you.

Fraternally,

James J Morrison
Secretary 920

More Grievances Dispute Resolution Process

Continued from page 4

- #8-08 Art. 15 Formal step A decision not implemented
Step B: *Pay adjustments made with no additional money*
- #15-07 Art. 19 Special inspection canceled
Pre Arb: *Pay grievant lump sum payment of \$200.00*
- #13-08 **WARMINSTER**
Art. 16 Carrier placed on emergency placement , misconduct while on duty
Step B: *Impasse*
- #KG070808 Art. 16 Carrier issued removal for unacceptable conduct/inappropriate behavior
StepB: *impasse declared*

UNION OFFICE PHONE NUMBERS
215-721-2232 • Fax: 215-721-2252
20 South School Lane, Souderton, PA

New feature on the USPS - EAP web-site: www.eap4you.com

I would like to share with you a new section which has been added to the EAP website. It is titled "Military and Veterans Resources."

You can locate this section on the website's Welcome page on the right hand side.

Announcements

Money Management Today

Resources to help you manage your finances in a difficult economy.

Suicide: Help is Available

Suicide is preventable. Learn how you can help yourself and others to help prevent suicide. [Learn More](#)

Military and Veterans Resources

Resources for military, veterans and family members from pre-deployment to returning home.

On the site you will find information pertaining to predeployment, deployment, postdeployment, children, finances and links to various helpful organizations.

If you have friends, family or coworkers who would benefit from any one of these resources do not hesitate to share this web-site with them. Simply go to www.eap4you.com

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM THE AFL-CIO



Barack Obama Supports America's Veterans

"Honoring these ideals must mean honoring the men and women who defend them in the uniform of the United States....It requires giving them the care and benefits they have earned. And it requires standing shoulder to shoulder with our veterans and their families after the guns fall silent and the cameras are turned off."

— Barack Obama, Fargo, N.D., 7/3/08

Obama: Allow Excluded Vets Back into VA. Obama, a member of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, says one of his first acts as president would be reversing the 2003 ban on enrolling modest-income veterans for VA care. The ban, he says, has denied care to a million veterans. (Obama website, accessed 6/25/08)

Obama Supported 21st Century GI Bill. Obama voted for the 21st Century G.I. Bill to "provide every returning veteran with a real chance to afford a college education" without harming retention. (Barack Obama speech in West Virginia, 5/12/08)

Obama Co-Sponsored Bill to Help Veterans Register to Vote. Many veterans living at VA facilities, especially those with disabilities, are unable to get to voter registration sites. Obama is among the co-sponsors of a bill requiring the VA to provide voter registration services to vets in its care. (Press release, 7/22/08)

Obama Sponsored Dignity for Wounded Warriors Act to Improve the Quality of Care at Military Hospitals. Obama, who sponsored legislation improving the care of veterans at military

hospitals, said, "Caring for our returning heroes is one of the things we can still get right about this war, and that's why the deterioration of the conditions at Walter Reed is both appalling and unacceptable." (Reuters, 2/20/07; *The Hill*, 2/21/07; S. 713, 2/28/07)

Obama Introduced the Veterans

Homelessness Prevention Act. Obama introduced the Veterans Homelessness Prevention Act, "which would launch an innovative pilot program to pair housing for at-risk veterans and veteran families with supportive services in an effort to prevent veterans from falling into homelessness." (Obama Senate Press Release, 11/9/07)

Obama Co-Sponsored Bill Providing Additional \$1.5 Billion for Veterans' Care. Obama co-sponsored a bill that led to a \$1.5 billion increase in veterans' medical care. (*Time*, 2/20/06)

Obama Wants to Improve Mental Health Care for Vets. Obama says he would recruit more mental health professionals, improve screening, make PTSD benefits fairer and establish standards of care for traumatic brain injury. (Obama website, accessed 6/25/08)

www.MeetObama08.org

Paid for by the AFL-CIO