

BR. 14 NEWSLETTER



VOL 49, NO. 11

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF BRANCH 14, NALC
SERVING LOUISVILLE, FORT KNOX, BARDSTOWN, RADCLIFF, LAGRANGE,
LEBANON, EMINENCE, SHELBYVILLE, VINE GROVE, & SPRINGFIELD

November 2020





TONY WEDDLE
President

Due to an excessive amount of workplace harassment inquiries by members of Branch 14, President Weddle has requested, in-lieu of an article, the reprinting of the official "Postal Service Policy on Workplace Harassment". This document is reprinted on pages 8-9 of this newsletter.



BRANCH 14 NEWSLETTER

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Branch 14 National Association of Letter Carriers
4815 Poplar Level Road
Louisville, KY 40213

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All facts, opinions and statements appearing within this publication are those of the writers and editors themselves, and are in no way to be construed as statements, positions or endorsements by Branch 14 or it's officers.

**RON GAST*****Executive Vice-President***

Well this has been an interesting year so far, that's for sure. To start off, we have been dealing with Covid-19 since March, and not only have we had many letter carriers to test positive, we have also lost some of our brothers and sisters throughout the nation. We have been very fortunate not to have lost anyone here in Branch 14. We also have been dealing with an election which has called for some pretty amazing issues. At the time of this writing, we are past the election, have a presumptive President-Elect, but are still waiting the outcome of lawsuits and recounts to validate the election, as well as a couple of runoff elections to determine which party takes or retains power in the Senate. I think that many join in with me in agreement that 2020 cannot end too soon.

But as of now, we are still trying to finish out the year, and we still have Thanksgiving and Christmas (as well as other holidays) to experience. We know that with Covid-19, gatherings will not be like they have been in the past, but that doesn't mean that we cannot enjoy these times. Please ensure that you spend time with those who matter most to you and share these moments as much as you can. This will help to make the memories of 2020 not all bad.

Here in Branch 14 we are getting ready for our annual vacation selections. The rules governing these selections vary depending on where you work. Here in all 14 stations in Louisville, the rules are the same. However there are differences among our Associate Offices (AOs) which are located in Bardstown, Fort Knox, Lagrange, Lebanon, Radcliff, Shelbyville, Springfield and Vine Grove. We have placed the Local Leave Programs for all offices on the Branch 14 website at www.nalcbr14.com. However, since the large majority of our members are here in Louisville, I will mention some key points regarding the vacation selections in the city.

The total number of carriers that are allowed off each week are equal to 14% of the total number of full time bid assignments in each delivery unit as of December 1. This includes all regular carrier routes, swings, RLC positions and collection assignments. The fewest number of carriers allowed off in any station is two, with the most

being seven.

Vacation selections begin on December 1st and continue until all selections have been made, but no later than January 15th. It is always better to have all selections completed before Christmas so that you are able to plan your next year before the year begins.

Letter carriers can select up to eight weeks of vacation in as many as three rounds, depending on their seniority, as well as their vacation balance. CCAs are allowed to select one week of vacation in the first round. Those regular carriers who have "saved" vacation time from the previous year are allowed to make more selections.

Letter carriers are allowed to carry over up to 440 hours (11 weeks, or 55 days) of annual leave from one year to the next. Any balance in excess of that amount is forfeited. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, an agreement was reached between the Postal Service and the NALC allowing carriers to carry over up to 520 hours (13 weeks or 65 days) from 2020 to 2021. However, the carriers balance must be at or below 440 hours at the end of 2021 or that leave will be forfeited.

As stated before, there are many rules governing leave selection, usage, and forfeiture. Please educate yourself by visiting the Branch 14 website and reading up on the rules, before selections begin so that you know your rights. If you have any questions, please contact your steward or Branch 14.

Please continue to work safe, look out for each other and do your best to enjoy the remainder of 2020, as well as the holidays. Hope to see you at the final union meeting of 2020 on Tuesday, November 24 at 7 pm. We are scheduled to serve food, once we determine a safe and appropriate way to do so.

Knowledge is power. Solidarity forever!





RON OSBORNE
Vice-President

Are you crazy? I cannot understand how any Letter Carrier can even consider the possibility of discarding deliverable mail. Unfortunately, it happens. One of the most difficult situations for me, as Vice President, is providing a defense to Letter Carriers who throw away mail. The mail is the blood in our postal bodies, without it, we no longer exist. When someone discards deliverable mail, it is the same to me as attempted suicide. Nothing is so bad that we should contemplate suicide and likewise nothing in our jobs as Letter Carriers is so bad that we should throw away mail.

I do realize that sometimes we make a mistake and put mail that could have been delivered, or has an endorsement on it, in the UBBM. These things do happen. But to intentionally toss mail in a dumpster because you are trying to get done by a certain time or you are frustrated at the amount of mail you have to deliver, is just plain crazy. It makes all of us as letter carriers look bad because, people blame the post office as a whole and we are all part of the post office. Our job is to deliver the mail. When we are unable to deliver the mail for safety reasons or because we have received instructions by management, we bring it back to the post office, report it to management and fill out the appropriate forms providing a reason for curtailing the mail. It then gets delivered the next day or as soon as possible. All of us have had those days when we have been so covered up with more mail than we can handle in one day. The job is tough, but that's the job.

It is the duty of your Union to defend your rights when it comes to discipline and defend those rights we do. Even if you are guilty of the charges that are presented to you, it is our job as Union officials to ensure that management follows the proper procedures in issuing discipline. We defend your contractual rights, not necessarily your actions. Many of you have received some form of discipline in your careers as Letter Carriers that your Union has been successful in reducing or expunging, even discarding the mail. Having said that, we as your representatives do not and will not condone throwing away the mail.

By the time you receive this article, the election season will be over, hopefully. This election year

has been more unique to Letter Carriers than any other that I can remember. The post office is directly tied to the election with the increases in mail in ballots and all the news media coverage concerning financial support for the USPS during the COVID pandemic. We need our customers to support us and trust us, not worry if their mail has been discarded. What would you think if your house was on fire and the firefighters just shut off the hoses and left because their shift was over or they were tired of working so hard and your kids were still inside? Just saying, people depend on us the same way and we should take pride in that.

This month my article is a little shorter, and many of you may be happy for that, but I hope you understand the point I am trying to make. I would much rather receive discipline for not delivering fast enough and be defended by my Union for it, than to be defended for throwing away mail and risk the loss of my honor and integrity as well as my job. Honor and Integrity are things the Union can get back for you in a grievance settlement. Hope to see many of you soon. Stay safe, stay smart, and be proud of what you do.





ANNA MUDD
*Legislative/Political
Organizer*

This article is a reprint from former NALC Branch 14 Vice-President, Anna Mudd. This article was originally published in Branch 14 Newsletter Volume 45 No, 11 (November 2016)

“Aren’t we all in this together”?

When I started the post office over twenty-two years ago, I was young and very naïve about the ways of the world. I came in wanting to make the most of my career at the post office and to encourage those around me to make it a better place. For a few years I kept that mentality, but these past few years I have really seen the difference. The term service should be removed from our name and it makes me ashamed to say that. It seems to me that no matter who you talk to, whether it be your customers, your family, or your friends, they have had a bad experience with the postal office. And when you try to defend it, the excuses even sound terrible in your own ears.

Everything is driven by the almighty dollar now. Getting back on time means that someone made their budget and that looks good on paper. But where is it written on paper that in order to get back on time a carrier had to take shortcuts and put service on the back-burner. They do that, so they wouldn’t have to be questioned about being late. Those shortcuts lead to misdelivered mail, accidents and the customer perception that we are not the friendly, trusted government worker we used to be. We no longer have the time to answer their questions or go the extra mile for them.

I listen to management get up in a plan 5 and tell us that the plant is getting better and we will soon be coming in earlier to the mail ready for us and our DPS in good shape. However, the next week, there is a note on the timeclock moving our start times a half hour later. I understand the need to manage but it seems to me there are several areas that are lacking. It shouldn’t always fall on the carriers to save the postal service. I know I am

rambling, and you probably wonder what I am talking about. Let me fill you in. Are you ever on the workroom floor and you look over and a clerk is on the cell phone? I have. And management walks right by them and says nothing. When I walk outside to load my truck, our safety guy who works upstairs is leaning against a post on his cell phone. I see the truck driver come in and flirt with our clerks for who knows how long before leaving. I see two supervisors, two 204B’s and one station manager on the floor discussing how to supervise eighty something carriers. I don’t know if any of these people care, but they give the appearance they don’t. They obviously aren’t micro-managed like the carriers. I ask you. Where are their scanners? Where is the “eye in the sky” that watches over the carriers? When does management take them in the office and question them about time wasting practices? Why does it always fall on the carriers to fix the postal service. If there is anything that can be done to make us more efficient shouldn’t we all be striving for it? After all, **aren’t we all in this together?**





BILL DAVIS
Assistant Secretary/Financial Secretary

Wow, Thanksgiving made it here very quick this year. I can't believe it is that time already. I hope everyone enjoyed their Veteran's Day holiday, and I hope you remembered to pay tribute to those who served. Thank You to my brothers and sisters that served in all branches of the US Military.

Now that we have set our clocks back an hour, we have the issue of carriers being out on the street after dark. There are many carriers that feel that darkness is enough of a reason to raise the flag and call it unsafe. This, however, is not true. There are several things that we can do to work around the safety issue that comes along with the limited visibility. If you know early in the day that your work assignment for the day will keep you out past dark then you can adjust your line of travel so that you may be performing duties on a mounted portion or maybe a well-lighted area or even indoor apartments once the darkness arrives. Management should never argue this point. Make sure you inform them if you intend to do this.

If you are given the time to carry, you must travel to the assigned area and attempt to make the deliveries. If, after that, you determine that it is not safe to carry this mail, then you contact a supervisor and notify them that it is unsafe to perform your duties.

Another step you can take is to make sure you do any unfamiliar territory prior to darkness. And of course, there are those of us who feel comfortable working with a head lamp on. Just remember, you are not required to do this and if you do decide to do it and end up having an accident, then you could be at fault. Talk to you supervisor about wear a headlamp prior to doing so.

Back to the fact of what makes darkness an acceptable reason for being unsafe. If you are given the time to carry, you must travel to the assigned area and attempt to make the deliveries. If, after that, you determine that it is not safe to carry this mail, then you contact a supervisor and notify them that it is unsafe to perform your duties. Remember to do this before you just pack

it in and return to the office. If the supervisor instructs you to stay out and continue to deliver in the dark, then it is time for you to make the decision, stand your ground. Take the time to do the job correctly! Take the time to do the job safely! Deliver the right mail to the right box.....every time!!! Remember, all employees deserve to work in a safe environment and if you chose to bring mail back to the office because you don't feel it is safe, be prepared to back up your decision with specific details about why it is not safe.

Be safe out there brothers and sisters and have a happy Thanksgiving



ATTENTION

Applications for **building manager** and **grass cutter** positions for the year 2021 will be accepted through December 8th, 2020. These positions are to be filled by active or retired members of Branch 14. Members applying for these positions must send a letter to Steve Terry at the Branch 14 union hall, 4815 Poplar Level Road, Louisville, Ky., 40213. Applicants that apply for these positions will be provided a list of duties for each position. The Branch 14 executive board will review applications and make a selection for each position at the December executive board meeting.

UNION MEETING

Date: October 27th, 2020

Br 14 Union Meeting Attendance by Zone

Annshire 40205	0
Annshire 40213	3
Annshire 40218	3
DTCU 40202	1
DTCU 40203	0
DTCU 40204	0
DTCU 40208	0
DTCU 40210	1
Fern Creek 40228	0
Fern Creek 40291	0
Hikes Point 40220	0
Iroquois 40209/14	1
Iroquois 40215	0
J-Town 40299	0
Lyndon 40222	2
Lyndon 40241/42	1
Middletown 40243	0
MLK 40211	1
MLK 40212	0
Okolona 40219	0
Okolona 40229	2
PRP 40258	0
PRP 40272	0
Shelby 40217	0
Shively 40216	1
St Mathews 40206	1
St Mathews 40207	5
Bardstown 40004	0
Eminence 40019	0
Ft Knox 40121	0
LaGrange 40031	0
Lebanon 40033	0
Radcliff 40160	1
Shelbyville 40065	2
Springfield 40069	1
Vine Grove 40175	1
Retired	6
Guests	0
Total	33

Officers & Stewards Excused

Officers and Stewards Absent: S. Terry, T. Davis, Frye, Richards, Weegens, & McCoy

MDA 50/50 Drawing..... \$65 to MDA
\$ 65 to.....Tony Weddle
Tony donated his winnings to MDA

\$25 Door Prize.....Ron Osborne

T-Shirts

Edison
Braxton
R. Gast

Shuttleworth
Bryant
Sims

A. Mudd
C. Gast
J. White

LAST PUNCH BUNCH



*Next Union Meeting
November 24th at 7:30pm*

*Steward Meeting 6:30 pm
United we bargain, Divided we beg*

MEGAN J. BRUNNAN
POSTMASTER GENERAL, CEO



March 3, 2016

Postal Service Policy on Workplace Harassment

The United States Postal Service® (Postal Service™) is committed to providing a work environment free of harassment based upon race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, and gender identity including transgender status), national origin, age (40 or over), mental or physical disability, genetic information, uniformed (military) service, or in reprisal for an employee's or applicant's complaint about or opposition to discrimination or participation in any process or proceeding designed to remedy discrimination. The Postal Service's workplace must be one in which all employees are treated with dignity and respect by supervisors, subordinates, and coworkers. Supervisors and managers will take prompt action to prevent, address, and remedy workplace conduct that is contrary to this policy.

Prohibited Activities

Harassment is unwelcome verbal or physical conduct, which is so severe or pervasive that it interferes with or changes the conditions of one's employment by creating a hostile, intimidating, or abusive working environment. Examples may include, but are not limited to, making offensive or derogatory comments or engaging in physically threatening, intimidating or humiliating behavior based upon race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, and gender identity including transgender status), national origin, age (40 or over), mental or physical disability, genetic information, past, present, or future uniformed (military) service, or in reprisal for an employee's or applicant's complaint about or opposition to discrimination or participation in any process or proceeding designed to remedy discrimination. These activities are prohibited by Postal Service policy and may amount to harassment in violation of federal anti-discrimination laws. Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. The Postal Service is committed to providing its employees a safe, productive, and inclusive workplace and will tolerate nothing less.

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature such as, but not limited to: making or threatening to make employment decisions based on an employee's submission to, or rejection of, sexual advances or requests for sexual favors; deliberate or repeated unsolicited remarks with a sexual connotation or physical contact of a sexual nature that is unwelcome to the recipient; or behavior that creates a sustained hostile or abusive work environment so severe or pervasive that it unreasonably interferes with or changes the conditions of one's employment.

Although not every instance of inappropriate behavior may fit the legal definition of harassment, such behavior in the workplace undermines morale and violates the Postal Service's standards of conduct. Disciplinary action may result even if the conduct does not constitute harassment under the law.

Management Responsibility

All managers and supervisors are responsible for preventing harassment and inappropriate behavior that could lead to illegal harassment, and must respond promptly when they learn of any such conduct. Any manager or supervisor who receives a complaint must see that a prompt and thorough investigation is conducted. Investigations of all forms of harassment must be done in accordance with the "Initial Management Inquiry Process (IMIP)." Materials are available in Publication 552, *Manager's Guide to Understanding, Investigating, and Preventing Harassment*. When harassment or inappropriate conduct is found, managers must take prompt and effective corrective action.

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Employees' Rights and Responsibilities

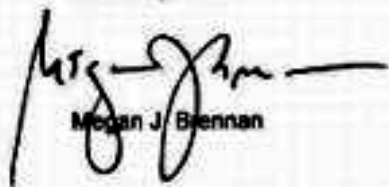
Postal Service employees who believe that they are the victims of harassment prohibited under this policy (i.e., harassment based on race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, and gender identity including transgender status), national origin, age (40 or over), mental or physical disability, genetic information, uniformed (military) service, or in reprisal for an employee or applicant's complaint about or opposition to discrimination or participation in any process or proceeding designed to remedy discrimination) or who have witnessed such harassment or inappropriate conduct, which could lead to illegal harassment, should bring the situation to the attention of a supervisor, a manager, or the manager of Human Resources to address most forms of harassment described above. Refer to Publication 553, *Employee's Guide to Understanding, Preventing, and Reporting Harassment* for further information. In accordance with this policy, supervisors, managers, managers of Human Resources, or the next higher level manager (HQ and HQ field units) are responsible for ensuring that direct and prompt action is taken to investigate and, where appropriate, remedy such misconduct when brought to their attention. The Postal Service will protect the confidentiality of harassment complainants to the extent possible.

Federal law requires the Postal Service to prevent discrimination against employees and applicants for employment based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, and gender identity including transgender status), age (40 or over), physical or mental disability, and genetic identification. Employment discrimination or reprisal for engaging in an EEO-protected activity is prohibited. Employees pursuing an EEO complaint should contact the Postal Service's EEO centralized intake center within 45 days of the conduct giving rise to the claim in order to preserve their rights under federal law. Employees making a complaint can call toll-free 1-888-EEO-USPS (1-888-336-8777). Deaf and Hard of Hearing employees can call 1-888-325-2914 (Federal Relay Service). In addition, bargaining unit employees may seek relief through the grievance-arbitration procedures, and if applicable, non-bargaining unit employees may use the grievance procedures described in Section 652.4, *Employee and Labor Relations Manual*.

Allegations involving any possible criminal misconduct should be reported to the appropriate law enforcement authorities as follows: any physical misconduct relating to workplace harassment (i.e., any physical assault, threat of a physical assault, or stalking) should be reported to the Postal Inspection Service; use of any electronic device, computer, or Internet to transmit threatening or harassing communications, obscene or indecent images and materials, should be reported to the Office of Inspector General (OIG).

Reprisal against employees who raise a claim of harassment, report inappropriate conduct, or provide evidence in any investigation is illegal and can result in disciplinary action, and should be referred to the Inspection Service or OIG as appropriate.

The Postal Service will not tolerate any type of harassment, inappropriate conduct, or reprisal in the workplace.



Megan J. Brennan



TOM WEBB
Health Benefits/Retirement

2021 Open Season

The Open Season for the Federal Employees Health Benefits begins Monday Nov. 9 and runs thru Monday Dec. 14, 2020. During this time, take the time to review the 2021 rates and benefits and decide whether you need to make changes to your health care coverage.

The Plan is owned and operated by the NALC for and by letter Carriers. The Director of the Plan is an elected officer of the NALC and the Plan employee union members represented by a local AFL-CIO union. The Plan is a non-profit plan, any excess income is put back into the Plan to control rates or improve benefits. Compare the NALC Plan with all the other plans available to you and you will find that we offer the most coverage at the most inexpensive rates.

Every member of the NALC will be mailed information about the 2021 Plan. Additional information about is available at nalchbp.org. or at 1-888-636-625. Active employees can access the Plan at Postal Ease 877-477-3273 and enter Option 1. Retirees can enroll by calling Employees Express at 800-332-9798 or by going to OPM's Open Season website at retireefehb.opm.

The Covid19 that is currently creating havoc throughout the country is preventing many of us from meeting and that is the reason that there will be no Health Fairs for 2020. If you need any additional information about the NALC Plan contact me at the Br. 14 Union Office.

I hope to see you at the next Branch 14 union meeting, all CDC safety recommendations are observed.



NALC
Health Benefit Plan



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Any picture that you would like to see in the Branch 14 Newsletter should be emailed to the editor (billrock2k@yahoo.com) You can also text photos (with a short explanation) to the editor at 502-345-3732. Thank you, Bill Davis.

Visit the Branch Website at:
nalcbr14.com
 or **Like** us on Facebook

LCPF Disclaimer

By making a contribution to the Letter Carrier Political Fund, 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 of employment by the Postal Service, nor is it part of union dues. You have a right to refuse to contribute without any reprisal. The Letter Carrier Political Fund will use the money it receives to contribute to candidates for federal office and undertake other political spending as permitted by law. Your selection shall remain in full force and effect until cancelled. Contributions to the Letter Carrier Political Fund are not deductible for federal income tax purposes. Federal law prohibits the Letter Carrier Political Fund from soliciting contributions from individuals who are not NALC members, executive and administrative staff or their families. Any contribution received from such an individual will be refunded to that contributor. Federal law requires us to use our best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, occupation and name of employer of individuals whose contributions exceed \$200 in a calendar year. Any guideline amount is merely a suggestion, and an individual is free to contribute more or less than the guideline suggest and the Union will not favor or disadvantage anyone by reason of the amount of their contribution or their decision not to contribute

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