

# NALC

4317 NEWS

1770 E. LANCASTER AVE.

SUITE 9

PAOLI, PA 19301

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\* September - October 2011 \*  
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The next two meetings of Branch 4317 will be on Wednesdays, November 7 and December 5 at the Downingtown VFW at 4601 W. Lincoln Highway. There are directions on page three of this newsletter. The meetings will begin at 7:30 P.M.

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**BRANCH 4317 NEWSLETTER EDITORIAL POLICY** - This newsletter is published by Branch 4317 for the members of this branch. This newsletter is written by Letter Carriers and for Letter Carriers. Sadly, over the years, some sensitive managers have gotten copies of our newsletter and become upset over its contents. In order to protect those managers, we request that all Branch members carefully safeguard their copies. If any manager should get a copy, we would suggest that they not read it. In this way, they will have no cause to be offended by anything in it.

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## USPS sets in motion plan to cut post office hours

By SEAN REILLY  
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The U.S. Postal Service last week began notifying customers in nearly 500 communities of its plans to cut hours at their post offices.

The formal notifications set in motion plans for historic cutbacks throughout the USPS network of almost 32,000 post offices. Over the next two years, the financially beleaguered mail carrier intends to reduce customer service window hours to as little as two hours a day at some 13,000 post offices that do relatively little business.

After follow-up public meetings that start in October for the first batch of communities notified, the cuts could take effect soon after, a spokeswoman said.

The Postal Service, which last week reported losing almost \$1.9 billion in July, unveiled the Post Office Structure Plan (POST-Plan) in May after a bid to close up to 3,700 post offices ran into heated resistance from

affected communities and members of Congress. Opposition to the cuts in service hours has been far more muted.

In an Aug. 23 advisory opinion, the Postal Regulatory Commission said the plan "should help balance service and cost savings" if implemented properly. While the five-member oversight panel offered a number of recommendations — urging the Postal Service, for example, to conduct an internal review to ensure that the endeavor is meeting its goals — it viewed the plan as preferable to post office closures.

The opinion was welcomed by USPS officials, who expect the cuts to eventually save more than a half-billion dollars in annual labor costs. About 12,500 of 21,000 full-time postmaster positions will disappear, replaced in many cases by cheaper part-time jobs. Already, some 3,800 postmasters have left in response to a \$20,000 buyout and early retirement package offered as part of the plan. Several hundred more could follow by the end of this month.

Critics, however, question whether the Postal Service can quickly make up the loss of so many employees without hurting service. Standard hiring practices "will be wholly inadequate to replace the exodus of postmasters with *qualified* personnel," Emmett Costich, a PRC employee charged with representing consumers, wrote in a filing with the commission.

And even after cutting window hours at a particular post office, USPS officials could still later seek to close it, Costich said.

USPS spokeswoman Sue Brennan disputed both those points. The Postal Service has no plans to close those post offices, "unless the community overwhelmingly chooses that option" and has "absolutely no concerns" about filling the postmaster vacancies, Brennan said in an email.

James Campbell, a postal policy consultant, saw more aggressive reductions as inevitable. Although the Postal Service may have found a way "to make marginal im-

provements in a more politically acceptable way," Campbell said in a phone interview, "they're just nibbling at the edges."

The Postal Service last week also offered early retirement to more than 3,300 of about 55,000 managers on its Executive and Administrative Schedule. It is in the early stages of slashing its network of approximately 460 mail processing plants by about half. In this instance, as well, postal leaders retrenched after lawmakers objected. Not only did they delay the bulk of the closures and consolidations until after the November elections, they also stretched out the full implementation period from next year into at least 2014.

"As far as the politics of it, I think they are doing what they need to do," said Gene Del Politto, president of the Association for Postal Commerce, which represents commercial mail users.

But existing law limits the Postal Service's ability to stem its losses. Efforts to devise a legislative fix are stuck on Capitol Hill, prompting customers to consider alternatives to the mail, Del Politto said. □

## USPS again defaults on health care payment

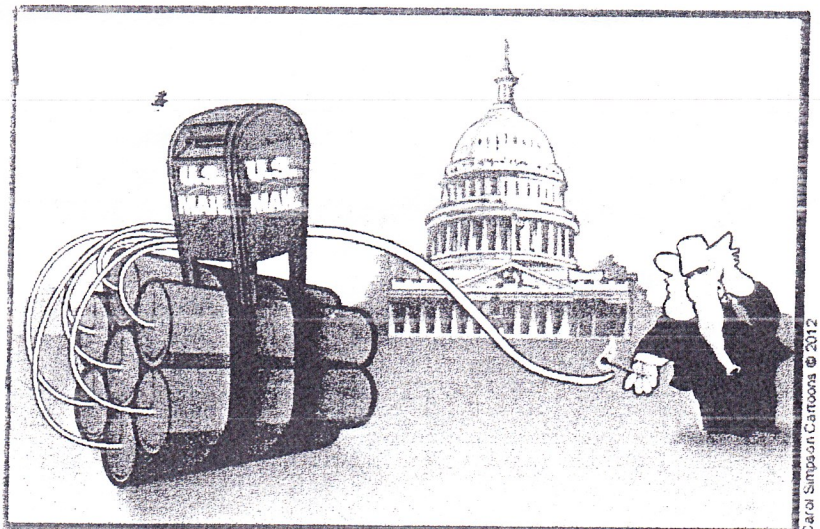
For the second time in two months, the U.S. Postal Service has defaulted on a legally required payment into a fund for future retiree health care benefits.

The \$5.6 billion payment was due Sept. 30. USPS executives, who had long acknowledged that they lacked the money to cover it, again stressed last week that normal operations would not be affected.

"We will continue to deliver the mail and pay our suppliers," spokesman Dave Partenheimer said in a statement, adding that benefits for current employees and retirees will also remain untouched.

The payment for fiscal 2012 is required under the 2006 Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act as part of a plan to ensure adequate funding for future retirees' health care; in August, the Postal Service failed to make the \$5.5 billion installment for fiscal 2011. That payment was originally due in September 2011, but Congress postponed it.

Lawmakers have declined to grant further delays, but remain deadlocked on how to address the Postal Service's fiscal problems.



Tampering with the U.S. Mail is a serious Federal offense... unless you're wrecking the Postal Service for political gain.

Message from the President.

I would like to invite every member to the next union meeting as we will be honoring all retirees. This has become an annual event and this year will be extra special as we honor a retiree with over 50 years as a NALC union member and present him with his Gold Card. This is the Fifth Annual meeting to honor retirees.

Also, there are only four weeks until a very important election. As you know the National Association of Letter Carriers endorse President Barack Obama for President of the United States in this election. This election will determine what is going to happen to the Postal Service in the future. The September issue of the Postal record has our endorsed candidates in every race on page 8/9. Also, on the NALC's website you can find the same information at Vote 2012.

How important is this election to you, not only to active workers but to retirees also. It is important that everyone votes. Let me tell you what happen to my mom this year. She retired from a health benefit provider years ago and part of her retirement benefits was health insurance at no cost. Guess what, she has lost her health insurance at no cost and she has been given just \$2000 to buy insurance and cover deductibles for the year. Look what your insurance costs and what the government pays. What would happen to you if congress passès a law and takes your benefit away? Remember we are just an act of congress from losing everything. Then you say we are pre-funding retiree's heath benefits. I say where is that money? That money has all ready been transferred to the federal budget and spent (See Postal Record article "Know the Score" on page 13), so what is to stop congress from passing a new law, just you. Vote on November 6, 2012.

The October Postal Record has lots of good information. Please read.

At one of our post offices we have a 204B that had to come back to craft due to his being in higher level for 120 days. So, when does he come back, of course his long weekend so he only has to work 4 days. But, that is not the best he also calls in sick during the week he is supposed to work. Give me a break if you want to be a supervisor give up your route so we can put a real Letter Carrier on that route.

I also would like to thank Dan Smith for his many years and his great job that he did as Shop Steward at the Malvern Post Office. Thank You.

Please drive safe. Use your seat belts and turn off your truck when you are out of it. Winter is coming soon please use caution in slippery conditions. I will see you at the next union meeting Wednesday, November 7, 2012. We will honor all retirees at this meeting. Until then in solitary your president.  
Bill Saar

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**NEW MEETING LOCATION:** Downingtown VFW  
4601 W. Lincoln Highway (Business Route 30)  
Downingtown, Pa. 19335

The Downingtown VFW is located on Business Route 30 (Lancaster Avenue) between Downingtown and Thorndale. It is adjacent to the Caln Roller Rink and Bob Wagners's Carpet Mart.

Directions from the east are as follows:

1. Take business 30 west. You can pick up the the westbound route 30 bypass in Frazer.
2. Exit at Route 322 east. Turn left off of the exit.
3. This will put you on rt 322 or Horseshoe Pike. Go .2 miles and turn right at the light onto Lloyd avenue.
4. Go .9 miles on Lloyd avenue until you come back to business route 30. Turn right onto business Route 30. (Or West Lancaster Ave.)
5. Go .2 miles and the VFW will be on your right.

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**STEWARDS CORNER**

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**EXTON** - In Exton we are almost free of the last vestiges of the caser/deliverer pilot program. Two cases were recently sent to the DRT. One involved the FSS adjustments that a Memorandum of Understanding between the NALC and the Postal Service states that we are entitled to 60 days after the FSS adjustments take effect. Oddly, local management and the Union agreed that we were entitled to these adjustments. When Postmaster Joseph Williams called the District to ask for help completing the 3999 walks, which are necessary to compile accurate data on the newly adjusted routes, he was told by Curt Weinberger, aka high school haircut guy, aka the "weasel", that we were not entitled to those adjustments, since the routes were all walked during the pilot program. Since the adjustments for the pilot program and the ones for FSS were completely different, his argument made no sense. The DRT agreed, and the routes that the Union and Management feel are out of adjustment will be walked.

The other case that is at the DRT involves the out-of-schedule premium that we were entitled to by the National Agreement and that was awarded by the DRT in a previous decision. The Union also contends that all Exton Carriers are entitled to a punitive award since the Postal Service took so long to pay us the money that we were due per the February DRT decision. All the Exton Letter Carriers received their past due out-of-schedule premium last month, but we are asking for an additional \$10.00 a day, per Carrier, for each day after February 29, 2012, that the premium owed was not paid. These kind of cases can go either way, so don't spend that money yet.

Tom Wallace

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**DOWNINGTOWN** - Hello Downingtown. I hope everyone had a good summer even though we've been working a lot of overtime. I thought once the excess clerks were on our side, we would get some relief, but I guess I was wrong. Speaking of the new Carriers I would like to welcome them and I am trying to help in any way to make their transition as smooth as possible. Remember there is strength in numbers as long as we stick together.

The way I see it, from being excessed and having no job to then delivering mail is a blessing, so be thankful. One note on the overtime when you are going to work over your 8 hour assignment please fill out a 3996 form in the morning and turn it in to the supervisor even if he or she denies you it is your right and it protects you, don't be lazy. It may save some of you in the end.

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(Continued from page 3)

As far as management adding, 3 more MSP labels to your route, just go ahead and do your best to remember to scan them. It just kills me that no matter how much they stare into the computer screen you guys are out there doing the real work and that is making sure the mail is delivered in a timely, safe and professional manner. That's what the Service should be concentrating on improving. But despite all of the obstacles, you guys know who the backbone of the Post Office is. That's why I mentioned about sticking together because without all the data obtained on your daily job, management wouldn't have anything to do! Fall is fast approaching. Beware of wet leaves and be safe out there. Until Next time - H. Worthington III

### Hatch Act

Before 1993, active letter carriers were barred from taking any significant volunteer role for any campaigns. The primary purpose was to protect Federal employees from being strong-armed into helping their bosses run for reelection. But as times changed, many believed that Federal employees were being wrongfully left out of the political process. So in 1993 Congress amended the Hatch Act to allow Federal employees to take an active part in political campaigns for Federal offices. While there are still some restrictions on what active carriers can do, there is indeed greater latitude given to your participation. Thanks to changes in the Hatch Act, active Letter Carriers have been able to participate in campaigns for President, United States Senate, and House of Representatives.

**Remember:** Retirees, spouses, and family members are not bound by the Hatch Act!

### Active Carriers MAY:

- Be a candidate for public office in nonpartisan elections
- Register and vote as you choose
- Assist in Voter Registration Drives
- Express opinions about candidates and issues
- Attend fundraisers and contribute money to political organizations and campaigns
- Volunteer on a campaign
- Recruit volunteers for a political campaign
- Participate in activities such as phone banking and precinct walking
- Display bumper stickers, lawn signs, and other campaign paraphernalia
- Raise money for COLCPE from other Letter Carriers
- Run for nonpartisan offices (that is, parties are not listed on the ballot)
- Volunteer, run for, and hold an office in a local or state political party

### Active Carriers MAY NOT:

- Raise money for a partisan political campaign
- Run for political office (even if you report "No Party Affiliation")
- Allow your name to be used in any fundraising appeal on behalf of a partisan political campaign
- Participate in a phone bank that is engaged in fundraising for a partisan campaign
- Raise money for COLCPE from non-Letter Carriers
- **Bottom Line:** Be off the clock, out of the uniform (and government vehicles), and away from the work place



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**SCHOLARSHIP AWARD** - Branch 4317 has an annual scholarship of \$3000 that is paid to the children of active branch members who attend college. Listed below are the 2012-2013 scholarship awardees. Once again, we thank Brother Alec Hayes for managing the Scholarship program.

Kelsey Mitchell  
Rashan Philip  
Loretta Freda  
Anthony Bisignaro  
Hannah Pinelli  
Steven Barrett  
Richard Havyer  
Richard Cywinski

Drexel University.  
Penn State University - Abington Campus.  
West Chester University  
Delaware County Community College  
Delaware Valley College.  
West Virginia - Wesleyan College.  
Penn State University - Berks Campus.  
Cabrini College.

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**ODDS and Ends**

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Dan Smith has resigned as our steward in Malvern. Branch 4317 would like to thank Dan for his years of service to the Carriers in Malvern.

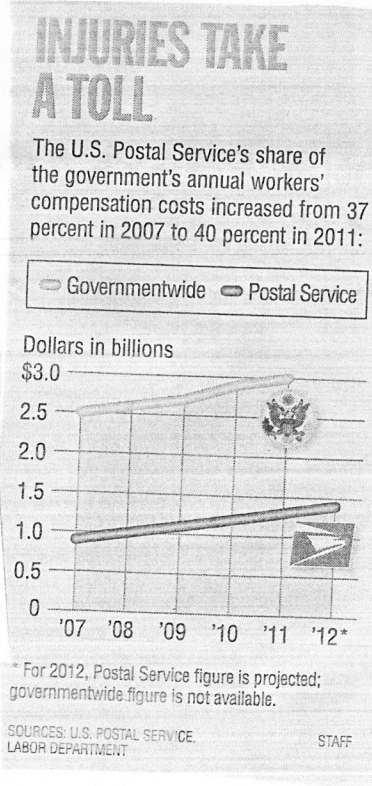
We passed a resolution at the October meeting regarding T.E.s. In the future Transitional Employees will receive their refund checks at Unions meetings after their break in service.

The Branch scholarship was adjusted to \$2500 per year in the future.

The NALC has announced that the MDA Bowl-a-thon will be on January 13, 2013.

The APWU (Clerks Union) has been notified that Clerks are being offered an early Letter Carriers have not been included in any early offer.

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# GOP platform would cut fed workforce 10 percent

By **STEPHEN LOSEY**  
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and **SEAN REILLY**  
sreilly@federaltimes.com

The Republican Party last week approved a party platform that calls for cutting the federal workforce by at least 10 percent, overhauling federal pay and benefits, and privatizing airport screening and possibly some U.S. Postal Service operations.

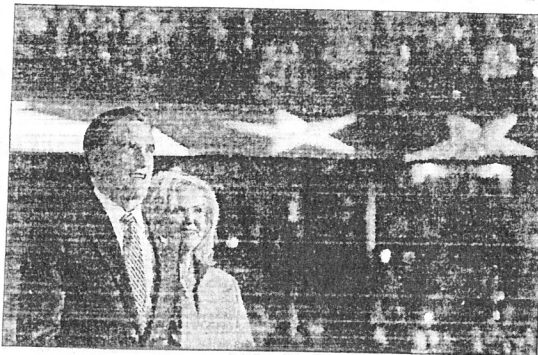
Although the document, approved Aug. 29 at the Republicans' Tampa, Fla., convention, acknowledges the dedication of federal employees, it said the civil service has grown by at least 140,000 employees under the Obama administration, while the number making \$150,000 or more has doubled.

"At a time when the national debt has increased to over \$15.9 trillion under the current administration, this is grossly irresponsible," the platform says.

John Palguta, vice president for policy at the Partnership for Public Service, said he is unaware of any other presidential platform that has addressed federal employee issues so specifically.

But Palguta suspects that even if Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney wins, it's unlikely the GOP will fully enact the federal employee aspects of its platform.

Romney would find it difficult to cut Defense, Veterans Affairs and



JEWEL SAMAD/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney and his wife, Ann, smile after her speech Aug. 28 during Republican National Convention in Tampa, Fla.

Homeland Security employees, as well as other vital staff such as air traffic controllers, Palguta said. And if those employees were exempted from a 10 percent cut, it would be nearly impossible to slice roughly 210,000 employees from other agencies without gutting them.

The platform also calls for adjusting "pay scales and benefits to reflect those of the private sector."

"The federal pay system should be sufficiently flexible to acknowledge and reward those who dare to innovate, reduce overhead, optimize processes and expedite paperwork," it says.

Palguta said if Republicans are serious about bringing federal pay in line with the private sector, that could actually benefit some highly skilled fed-

eral employees — such as engineers — who are often paid below market rates.

"That [plank in the platform] was written by someone who believes federal pay is above market value," Palguta said. "But we think we have examples of jobs that are below market value, so it could work for the betterment of some employees."

Convention speakers did not address federal issues directly. But several, including vice presidential nominee Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Wis., spoke about the need to rein in government spending and the deficit.

"The choice is whether to put hard limits on economic growth, or hard limits on the size of government, and we choose to limit government," Ryan said in his acceptance speech Aug. 29. □

## Democrats reinforce support for unions in platform

By **STEPHEN LOSEY**  
slosey@federaltimes.com

The Democratic Party reaffirms its support for collective-bargaining rights for public-sector workers in its 2012 platform, which it released last week.

"Democrats believe that the right to organize and collectively bargain is a fundamental value," the platform said. "Unions helped build the greatest middle class the world has ever known. We will fight for collective bargaining rights for police officers, nurses, firefighters, emergency medical technicians, teachers and other public sector workers — jobs that are a proven path to the middle class for millions of Americans."

The platform also calls for Congress to grant President Obama the power to reorganize and consolidate government agencies, an authority past presidents have had. And it touts Obama's efforts to get agencies to review and



GETTY IMAGES

**President Obama speaks on stage as he accepts the nomination for president Sept. 6 during the Democratic National Convention in Charlotte, N.C. The Democratic platform says collective-bargaining rights are a "fundamental value."**

streamline outdated regulations.

"For too long, overlapping responsibilities among agencies have made it harder, rather than easier, for our small businesses to interact with their government," the platform said.

Obama reinforced that message in his acceptance speech to the Democratic National Convention on Sept. 6.

"Those of us who believe government can be a force for good should work harder than anyone to reform it so that it's leaner and more efficient and more responsive to the American people," Obama said.

Obama also said he wants to strike a deal with Republicans to reduce the deficit "based on the principles of my bipartisan debt commission," headed by former Sen. Alan Simpson and former White House chief of staff Erskine Bowles. But Obama did not specifically endorse the Simpson-Bowles deficit plan.

"No party has a monopoly on wisdom," Obama said. "No democracy works without compromise. ... We don't think the government can solve all our problems. But we don't think that the government is the source of all our problems, any more than are welfare recipients, or corporations, or unions, or immigrants, or gays or any other group we're told to blame for our troubles."

The platform lauds Democrats' efforts to enact the STOCK Act, which requires top government officials to report stock purchases and other securities transactions worth more than \$1,000. And it says Democrats are committed to open-government programs such as Data.gov.

The Republican Party's platform calls for cutting the federal workforce by at least 10 percent, overhauling federal pay and benefits, and privatizing airport screening and possibly some U.S. Postal Service operations. The Democratic platform does not address those issues. □

Meeting Minutes  
September 5, 2012

The regular meeting of Branch 4317 was called to order by President Bill Saar at 7:30 P.M. at the Downingtown VFW.

The reading of the minutes from the June meeting was waived.

TOPICS DISCUSSED:

1. Stewards Newsletter Articles due at next Union meeting.
2. Branch scholarships will be awarded at the next meeting. All information must be to the Union Office and Al Hayes by September 10.
3. Stewards on duty:       October 17 - Rick Benner  
  December 19 - Sam Miller
4. 2012 elections - Remember to register and to vote. Reviewed Hatch Act.  
  Final day to register in Pennsylvania is October 6.
5. Republicans official stance on Postal Service from the Republican Platform adopted at the 2012 National Convention.
6. Full Satchel for MDA on Sunday September 9.
7. MDA Bowlathon set for second Sunday in January - Sam Miller organizer.
8. Bills in the House of Representatives.  
                  HR3591       49 co-sponsors  
                  HR1351       230 co-sponsors  
                  HR137       222 co-sponsors
9. Annual Retiree celebration at the November 7 meeting.
10. Contract negotiations - Not a lot of information yet. The independent arbitrator is Shayam Das.
11. There are rumors that Malvern and Paoli Carriers are being moved to Southeastern sometime in 2013. Also, Carriers from Wayne, Villanova and, possibly, King of Prussia.
12. Union Shop - A guide to what is union made in America can be found on the NALC website at NALC.org. Look at the bottom left side. You can also sign up to be an E-Activist and to give to COLCPE.
13. Clerks are being moved to the Carrier craft. The NALC is filing a national level grievance, because some of them weren't guaranteed 40 hours under the clerk contract.
14. NALC Convention report.
15. Discussed possible Branch website.
16. Office report.  
      Exton - Grievances on pilot program are still being sent to DRT.  
      Downingtown - New Carriers from clerk craft craft. Settling several grievances - article 8 overtime violations. Letter Carrier John McCann passed away. Trying to get Route 17 posted.  
      Paoli - 2 open positions filled - Route 30 and collection job/intercity run. There have been no safety team meetings.  
      Malvern - Bill Saar is handling grievances.

TREASURERS REPORT

June, July August receipts	\$11797.75	
" " " expenditures	\$9259.84	
September 1 checking balance	\$7076.66	Submitted by Sam
September 1 Fed. Credit Union Bal.	\$8157.06	Miller

50/50 won by Kevin Corcoran

Attendance award \$150 to Bob Batista (not in attendance - \$175 next month)

Motion to adjourn - Donna Moore Second by Mike Huffman.

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**Meeting Minutes**  
Oct. 8, 2012

The regular meeting of Branch 4317 was called to order by President Bill Saar at 7:30 P.M. at the VFW in Downingtown.

The reading of the minutes from the September meeting was waived.

**TOPICS DISCUSSED:**

1. Stewards on Duty- Rick Benner 10/16/12, Sam Miller 12/19/12.
2. Newsletter articles due next week.
3. Retiree party at November 7<sup>th</sup> meeting. Attendance award will be given out.
4. Election November 6<sup>th</sup> we will know who wins the night before the meeting. VOTE.
5. Scholarship Awards- Kelsey Mitchell, Roshan Philips, Anna Burns, Loretta Freda, Anthony Bisignaro, Hannah Pinelli, Steven Barrett, Richard Havyer, Richard Cywinski.
6. Early outs- All Mail handlers (2952), Postmasters over 4100 about 20% have accepted early out or buy outs.
7. COLCPE information update- out of 161 members only 15 members Automatic GIMME 5. That's 9.32% only 1 out of every 10 members. Contribute Automatically.
8. NALC and Ex V.P. Tim O'Malley will be holding a walk and knocking on doors Monday Oct. 8<sup>th</sup> @ 10am. @ Keystone Br.157 9607 James St. Philadelphia PA # 215-824-4800.
9. Motion made for scholarship to be move from \$3,000 to \$2,500. (Passed)
10. Motion made TE's have to addend the Union meeting to receive yearly check.(Passed)
11. Motion made to make a Union Branch 4317 website. (Passed)
12. Bowl for MDA Sunday January 13<sup>th</sup> 2014.
13. Malvern- Working Drop days, Shorthanded, have (2 Niftys)
14. Paoli- Working Drop days, new manager Robert, RT 30 Dave Benner, Postmaster said we are moving to Southeastern in March of next year.
15. Exton-Walk thru 4 routes to way out adjustments, no discipline.
16. Downingtown- one grievance settled, letter of warning, working OT, RT#17 Genn Moyer.
17. COLCPE & E- ACTIVIST VERY IMPORTANT.
18. E-Activist. Stay informed and get the very latest alerts from the NALC via the e-Activist Network. Go to nalc.org today to sign up or to update your e-mail address.
19. Attendance \$175 drawing Mike Torrance. Mike was not at the meeting. Next drawing \$200.

**Treasurer's Report**

Sept. receipts...\$3,132.34  
Sept. expenditures...\$9,232.47  
Oct. 1<sup>st</sup> checking acct. balance...\$1,350.34  
Oct. 1<sup>st</sup> Federal Credit Union balance...\$8,157.05

50/50 won by            Dan Convery  
Motion to adjourn    Neil Manning  
Second by             Dan Convery

Adjourned 8:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Peter Luzi