

National Association of Letter Carriers
Branch 245 Newsletter

John H. Swanson Merged Branch 245
Organized September 24th, 1891

VOLUME XIX— NUMBER 4 APRIL 2011

OUT tHeRe



PROUDLY SERVING THE LETTER CARRIERS OF
ROCKFORD ☺ LOVES PARK ☺ MACHESNEY PARK ☺ BELVIDERE
LANARK ☺ MT. MORRIS ☺ OREGON ☺ HARVARD ☺ EAST DUBUQUE
GALENA ☺ ROCHELLE ☺ SOUTH BELOIT

NALCBRANCH245.COM

ILNALC.ORG

NALC.ORG

Branch 245 Newsletter

Published by John H. Swanson Merged Branch 245
National Association of Letter Carriers
P.O. Box 6535
Rockford, IL 61125-6535

Branch 245 Newsletter

Published each month for the benefit of the membership.

Contributions of articles and photos relating to this branch or the NALC is encouraged. Articles and photos may be submitted to the Editor at EditorBranch245@yahoo.com

The editor reserves the right to edit for content or space and shall determine whether material submitted shall be printed.

Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the NALC, Branch 245, branch officers or the editor.

Permission is given to trade union and labor publications to copy or reproduce any article contained in this publication provided appropriate credit is given. Permission to others must be granted in writing by the editor or Branch President.



Branch 245 Calendar

April 1, 2011	\$ Payday \$
April 2, 2011	Moonlight Bowl for MDA Forest Hills Lanes
April 4, 2011	Exec. Board 6:30 p.m. Stewards 7:30 p.m. Verdi Club
April 12, 2011	Union Meeting 7:30 p.m. Verdi Club
April 15, 2011	\$ Payday \$
April 29, 2011	\$ Payday \$
May 2, 2011	Exec. Board 6:30 p.m. Stewards 7:30 p.m. Verdi Club
May 7, 2011	Food Drive
May 10, 2011	Union Meeting 7:30 p.m. Verdi Club

The Branch offers condolences to Joe & Cheryl Anderson on the loss of Joe's brother. The Branch offers "Get Well" wishes to Addie O'Neal.

MERGED BRANCH 245 UNION MEETINGS ARE THE SECOND TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH AT THE VERDI CLUB LOCATED AT 782 N. MADISON ST. ROCKFORD, IL

PRESIDENT'S REPORT PRESIDENT KELLY PRUKA



Did You Know.....

..... **that** one third of all the grievances filed in the branch in 2010 were for discipline issued to carriers. This included 7 removals, which were either expunged or reduced through the grievance process. One third of the grievances were for violations of Article 8 (overtime). Thousands of dollars were paid out in grievance settlements in 2010. The last third covered every other contract violation, such as, improper instructions, revoking limited duty through the National Reassessment Process, improper documentation requests, etc.

..... **that** management has a “new and improved” street supervision program. Because the street times have been so high, (duh, I wonder what winter conditions might have to do with that) of course management’s opinion is that we must all be out there “screwing around.” Management will be out on the street trying to “catch” all of us. Be where you are supposed to be. Be doing what you are supposed to be doing. Just smile and wave when they come out and “catch” you working. I’m going to go out on a limb here and predict that like every other year as the weather improves, our street times will too. I know. I’m a genius. I will also predict that when the street times improve (due to better weather), management will say it was due to their street supervision program. Any bets?

..... **that** if you would like to cancel part of your annual leave, that you should do so by filling out a new PS form 3971. Our local allows us to cancel all or part of a week of bid annual leave. However, it specifically states that this request for cancellation should be submitted on a PS form 3971. Yes, we have had issues with management not honoring the requests not submitted properly. Please take the time to submit the proper form to avoid having any issues with your leave. Also, if you ever plan on canceling a whole week, it must be done 3 weeks in advance to be reposted for bid. If you know ahead of time, please make sure to cancel in time so that someone else can bid on that week.

..... **that** the branch provides many benefits to our members. For example, when a member retires, has a death in their immediate family (parent, step parent, spouse, spouse’s parent, child or step child), is hospitalized or becomes a parent they are entitled to a benefit from the branch. However, the benefits committee cannot provide these benefits if they are unaware that any of these above mentioned events have occurred. Please contact Maureen, Brian, Belinda or myself if you have information in regards to benefits (all of our numbers are listed in the back of this newsletter).

..... **that** the moonlight bowl for MDA is April 2nd. You don’t have to like to bowl to participate. Come down and hang out with us. We will have 50/50’s and prize drawings. It is a fun night out and we are raising money for an awesome cause. I really hope to see you there!

MINUTES OF MONTHLY BRANCH MEETING **MAUREEN JOHNSON, SECRETARY**

March 8, 2011

The meeting was called to order at 7:30pm at the Verdi Club. The following officers were absent from the Executive Board meeting: Tom Hougan, Ross Parlapiano, Phil Rowley, Jack Breitbart, Steve Brown and Sandy Gleim. The following officer was absent from the regular meeting: Tom Hougan.

There were no additions/corrections to last month's minutes.

The Membership and Treasurer's reports were read. Motion to pay the bills was made by Billy Daugherty, seconded by Doug Arnold. Motion carried.

Kelly introduced our very special guest, Louis Rivas. Louis is the Branch President of Branch 2076 – Des Plaines. He also works for the Illinois State Association with Legislation communication.

Communications were read. There is still a great need for volunteers for the MDA Bowling night on April 2nd and the Food Drive – please see your steward if you are interested. President Kelly Pruka announced that the annual DC political trip was cancelled due to massive Congressional rescheduling. The PO is starting a new street supervision program – a supervisor will be out on the street all day monitoring all routes. Be safe and be professional. Kelly reported on grievances. Pending at Formal A are 3 joint statements. The following are pending at the DRT: cross crafts (mgmt), a 14 day for failure to secure property, a removal for leaving the scene and not reporting accident and an 8 hour guarantee. The following are pending arbitration: 7 day suspension for attendance, 14 day for improper conduct, 2 NRP and 3 LOW from earlier removals.

KILBURN

Vice President Belinda Anderson received the following decisions back from the DRT team:

- Satchels – mgmt refuses to order equipment needed to perform job. The DRT decided that mgmt didn't violate the Contract. They have to supply satchels but it doesn't say which kind. You can use kangaroo satchels but you have to buy them yourself.
- Article 8 – sent carrier home after 45 minutes. Mgmt didn't violate contract. The carrier never filled out a 3971 saying that A/L was cancelled, verbal agreements with mgmt don't hold up at the DRT.
- Article 8 – letting carrier work one day then decided they needed documentation so would not let them work the following day. The carrier was paid 8 hours.
- Article 16 – attendance, failure to maintain regular schedule. This is at impasse, the Union and mgmt could not come to a remedy.
- Article 7 – conversion of PTF to Regular. This grievance is on hold because we are under withholding. The top PTF will be converted when withholding is lifted.
- Article 16 – failure to follow instructions was reduced to job discussion.
- Elm 513 – asking carrier for documentation for going home sick. DRT warned mgmt about excessive documentation requests. The carrier would've been paid back the co-pay but didn't keep the receipt.

Rick Moore is working on the following:

- LOW on accident.
- Class Action grievance on job discussions. Mgmt is using blanket discipline for anyone that misses work.
- Article 8 LOW.
- Was appointed acting steward at Harvard Post Office.
- Went to Madison to march – remember Solidarity!!!

Steve Brown is working on a past grievance. The carrier that was robbed was supposed to be repaid for lost uniforms under previous decision. Carrier was paid but it was applied to his check so they taxed him \$75

worth – will get that money back.

Ross Parlapanio reported that the NALC Health Benefits Plan is up 5K new members. If you have any questions please call him.

NTS

Sandy Gleim is working on an Article 16 and 9. Grievance on Article 10, admin leave for storm, was sent up.

Robin Maurer is working on open Comp cases.

Steve Isbell is looking forward to the April 2nd MDA Bowling event.

Dave Rungren had a carrier accidentally left bucket of mail in truck, immediately brought to Supervisor's attention. So for doing the right thing, telling the truth and going to his Supervisor to help fix problem, was issued a LOW. It was just dropped to a job discussion.

Russ Galub welcomed our new members: Mark Shultz, Matt Malone and Kelli Ramos.

LOVES PARK

Mike Tyler had carrier with late Express. Settled 2 yr LOW to 6 months with like discipline.

MPO

Denise Leber filing grievance for carrier on the ODL. Made medical appointment on their N/S day. Mgmt now charging carrier 8 hours towards the list. Jack Breitbach got a new haircut.

BELVIDERE

Matt Seng had a LOW for attendance settled for 6 mos. Currently fighting LOW for failure to follow instructions and a class action for improper instructions.

OLD BUSINESS

– None.

NEW BUSINESS –

Doug Arnold made a motion to pay Will Bogusiewicz back \$14.95. This is how much for a years worth of our domain name for www.NALCBranch245.com. Robin Maurer seconded the motion, it passed. Special thanks to Will for keeping this site up.

Chops made a motion to have pizza at the next meeting, Dick Patterson seconded (he perked right up at the mention of pizza), passed. We are budgeted for having pizza 4 times a year.

Louis Rivas spoke to the Membership. He went to Madison to march on President's Day. There were many youngsters there, children of carriers and other Union members. These young people had no idea about the relationship between Labor and politics. It is very important that the new generation understands this, as well as all carriers. Unless you have been living under a rock most have heard about the situation in Madison with Gov. Walker. If he had his way all the changes he wants to make in WI will spread through out the country. This is the only time he had seen Bear fans and Packer fans on the same side, walking next to each other in order to protect collective bargaining. They are trying to take away power from the Unions and destroy Labor. Let's not let this happen – support COLCPE and IPALC, march, contact your Congressman and Senators. They are also trying to pass the following bills SB 1349 and SB 2155. These deal with Compensation laws for the State level, specifically eliminating the injured worker's right to choose his/her own doctor. If these do pass just a matter of time before they go to the National/Federal level. Contact your Senators and voice your opinion. Thank you to the Branch and Kelly for having him at our meeting and letting him speak to the Membership.

Thirty seconds of silence was observed with special prayers for Joe Anderson on the loss of his Brother, Addie O'Neal for surgery and all of our troops, here and abroad.

RAFFLES –

MDA – Jerry Pyfer DOOR PRIZE – Mark Ayers IPALC – Sandy Gleim – donated back to IPALC COLCPE - Chops ATTENDANCE – Steve Hinde – who was not in attendance – next month it will be \$40. Bruce from Brookfield Uniforms donated \$25 gift certificate for MDA

Dick Patterson won this and donated back to MDA. Will be used for the raffles at the MDA Bowling. Motion to adjourn was made by Shigley, seconded by Chops – passed.

STEWARDS CORNER

MIKE TYLER, LPB STEWARD

Where has our help gone during this downsizing of the USPS? As many of you know we at one time had a personnel office here in Rockford where we could go and get our questions answered. That has disappeared. District then provided representation here in Rockford on a limited basis and that too has disappeared. So where does that leave us now? Well we have SHARED SERVICES, OPM and the NALC to fall back on. Your BEST bet is the NALC!

Though all your retirement options have to be coordinated with Shared Services and OPM, the NALC WEBSITE provides a wealth of information for YOU to use. NOTICE I SAID YOU!! Your stewards and officers are there to direct you but YOU have to take the action. The NALC website NALC.ORG is our Union's website and has an abundance of information for active and retired personnel and their family. Once on the website go under Departments, click on Retirement and everything from pamphlets and telephone numbers are there for you.

With all the discipline issues that have evolved now the stewards are quite busy and have a full load to deal with. Most will answer your questions and lead you down the right path but have limited knowledge on areas that might be of concern to you. This is why I am writing this article for the membership as I have helped 2 of my coworkers in their retirement process, Loren Olsen and Joanne Gustin. Joan Pfeiffer helped finalized both of these workers retirements. Being a member of NARFE and having previous experience and vast knowledge she is an asset to those of us that know her. I personally would like to thank her for all she has done for us in Rockford.

Loren was CSRS and together we worked on getting his retirement set up. Being a veteran he never thought about buying back his military time till the end. This added time to his retirement and a small Social Security Benefit but was much more expensive being he waited. Interest is added to the amount that he paid which he could have avoided had he paid it sooner. If this is your situation check into this NOW!

Joanne was FERS so this provides a different approach. In FERS we have our FERS annuity, social security and TSP. Every year 2 months prior to your birth month you receive a social security printout. Save this for future reference each year or visit their web at www.ssa.gov. Your TSP account is accessible through www.tsp.gov. Here you can find a benefit calculator to plan for your retirement. Your FERS Basic Monthly Annuity Estimates are published yearly in the Postal Record or are available on the website at www.NALC.org. SOUND FAMILIAR?

There is one thing that I have been asked by our editor to include in this article is a little known thing called FERS ANNUITY SUPPLEMENTAL BENEFIT. FERS annuitants who retire prior to age 62 (MRA+30 years or age 60 with 20 years) are eligible to receive this benefit till they reach age 62. The supplement approximates that portion of their future retirement benefit from Social Security derived from FERS employment. No COLAs are payable to FERS annuitants until they reach 62 years of age. Employees who retire voluntarily under FERS on an immediate annuity which is not reduced for their age (MRA) and those eligible once they meet their minimum retirement age (MRA) if they retired voluntarily or involuntarily because of a major reorganization or reduction in force are eligible. Those retiring on disability, deferred retirement or an immediate MRA+10 benefit are not eligible for the supplement. REMEMBER too that if you elect a survivor annuity, health insurance and FEGLI all this will decrease your payment.

-Continued on Page 9-

MY TRAIN OF THOUGHT

JERRY PYFER, ASSISTANT STEWARD

“Political Hurricane Coming!!!”

I will tell you right off, this will be a political article. Now, before I lose your attention, PLEASE read all the way through before turning the page.

The February newsletter featured my article “*Are you necessary?*” asking you to consider signing up for Committee on Letter Carrier Political Education (COLCPE). I closed that article challenging you to discuss whether your contributions are important in November 2012, if there was still time. 2012 may well be too late.

I had no longer than sent off the article to Doug, when the *January Postal Record* arrived in the mailbox. As if to exemplify my very thoughts of the necessity of COLCPE, Page 9 carried a photograph of Senator Tom Coburn, R-Oklahoma. Sen. Coburn proposed contracting out all of the rural carrier positions if they don’t agree to a new contract with the Postal Service. Coburn didn’t say if they had to come to a mutual agreement, just accept what they are offered.

NALC President Fred Rolando is constantly setting the record straight to Congress, the news media and anybody who will listen to get the facts right about postal issues.

Newly elected Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker (R) , has made it clear that he will not negotiate with unions. In fact, he is working to abolish collective bargaining for all state employees! DMV employees, state highway workers, school teachers, everybody. What makes this intention so troublesome? The Wisconsin state legislature is Republican controlled. And he is pushing for a quick passage of his proposal. (Editors note: As of the time this article was submitted for print the Wisconsin governor had signed into law stripping the public employee unions of most of their collective bargaining rights.)

Yes, government bodies are between a rock and a hard place with their budgets, but does this call for ending all state government workers’ rights? No, this is only another scheme to end unions and the union’s ability to defend members and help the working people have a voice in the workplace.

So, you may ask, what does the state of Wisconsin have to do with me? I am a federal worker. Ohio, another Republican controlled state, is fast on the way to stripping its state employees of their collective bargaining rights. These are not the only two states striving to end union rights. As the states begin to weaken the union structure and collective bargaining is destroyed, where will that leave you? Once the cancer of union busting goes viral, there will be no stopping it at the federal level, because who will defend you in Congress when your friends have been eliminated?

Sorry if this article bothers the conservatives among you, but the Democrats aren’t the ones at your doorstep looking to reek havoc on your employment, benefits and retirement options. Ask any of our “veteran” transitional employees about their employment and retirement futures. I say veteran because some of them are already into a three year hitch.

Again, I had signed up through the telephone via the 1-877-477-3273 number some years ago when “Gimme 5” was introduced. You will need your Postal Identification number and PIN number to gain access to Postalease. It will take a few minutes to complete, but worth your time and efforts. You can also do it via the internet if you feel comfortable using that format.

CABOOSE



Active and retired members who have enrolled in automatic deductions

Belinda Anderson	John Martelin	Arlen Lehrke	Leslee Bounds
Doug Arnold	Robin Maurer	Mike Tyler	Carol Goral
Kelly Pruka	Mary Culver	Dan Goral	Collette Fry
Terry Leber	Jerry Pyfer	Rick Moore	Joan Sherman
Dean Lindeman	Robert Swenson	Jack Breitbach	John Abate
Jeanie Virtue	Steve Isbell	Sandy Gleim	Dave Rungren
Frank Kottmeier	Terry "Tank" Johnson	Scott Fuhler	Mike Rose
David Gunsallus	Holly Seng	Dan Hunter	Matt Seng
Buddy Gutierrez	Lori Lund	Steve Denniston	

COLCPE is the Committee On Letter Carrier Political Education. The NALC encourages active letter carriers to make COLCPE contributions through automatic payroll allotment. COLCPE supports political candidates that support letter carriers. This method of donation allows for a more reliable source of funding for candidates and allows the NALC to budget for upcoming elections. Retirees may also donate via automatic deductions. Please consult [The Postal Record](#) or the NALC website at www.nalc.org for further information. If you have recently signed up or you have been donating please let the editor know so that your name may be added. Questions or assistance can be directed to Doug Arnold at (815) 621-8526 or email EditorBranch245@yahoo.com.

COLCPE
100 Indiana Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20001-2144

IPALC
P.O. Box 561
Orland Park, IL 60462-0561

COLCPE Honor Roll

The following members have donated to COLCPE or IPALC through individual donations in 2011

Paul Vogt
Earl Martin
Frank D'Antone
Lou Ricotta
Charles Meverden
Dan Whalen
Dick Patterson

Senator Richard Durbin
332 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
Phone: 202-224-2152
Fax: 202-228-0400
Email: dick@durbin.senate.gov

U.S. Representative Bobby Schilling
Republican 17th District
507 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: 202-225-5905
Fax: 202-225-5396

Senator Mark Kirk
387 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
Phone: 202-224-2854
Fax: 202-228-4611

U.S. Representative Don Manzullo
Republican 16th District
2228 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: 202-225-5676
Fax: 202-225-5284

-Continued from Page 6-

All this information is available to you on the NALC website. If you don't have a computer you can call the NALC's Retirement Department @ 1-800-424-5186 Monday, Wednesday and Thursday 10-noon and 2-4 p.m. EST and they will assist you in obtaining retirement benefits. Their office is also open daily Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. EST at 202-393-4695. If writing them send to

NALC HEADQUARTERS
100 Indiana Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20001-2144

I hope that this will answer some of the questions that are out there!!

Brookfield® Uniforms

EXPERIENCE THE BEST IN POSTAL UNIFORM QUALITY AND SERVICE

- Union Preferred Supplier of Union Made or Made in the USA product.
- Largest Selection of Styles and Sizes Available with no up-charge on listed larger sizes.
- Tall Sizes available for men and women in Letter Carrier long and short sleeve shirts.
- **Free Hem – Free Waist Alterations – Free Shipping**
- Convenient web site 24/7 shopping & order status – visit www.brookfielduniforms.com

Celebrating Over 50 Years of World Class Service

Bruce Linsenmann

Elmhurst, IL

(630) 261-5176

Brookfield Customer Service at 1-800-527-0606

Monday-Friday 7:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Moonlight Bowl for MDA
 April 2, 2011
 9:00 p.m. Registration
 9:30 p.m. Bowling
 Forest Hills Lanes
 Loves Park, IL
 Contact Steve Isbell

Silvestri Law Office

2208 Charles Street
Rockford, Illinois 61104

ph. 815.227.0700
fax 815.227.0730

amy@silvestri-law.com

Estate Planning-Real Estate-General Law

D. Richard Haime ATTORNEY AT LAW

Law Offices of D. Richard Haime
and Associates, P.C.,
7315 N. Alpine Rd., Suite G
Loves Park, IL 61111
haimelaw@yahoo.com

p 815.986.1569
f 815.877.4733

Family owned for 3 generations
Purse and bag repair
Laces, waterproofing, insoles

CHARLES STREET SHOE REPAIR



Vibron Authorized Dealer

*We fix your heels and
save your soles*



226-0052

2320 Charles Street
Rockford, IL 61104

320

STORE

(815) 965-2313

Fax (815) 965-2203

Fine Produce
Bakery
Deli

Fruit Baskets for
every occasion

320 North Court St.
Rockford, IL 61103

Arthur R. Swanson

2425 Charles St.

Rockford, IL 61108

(815) 708-8828

Counselor at Law

PEPPER CREEK

*7295 Harrison Ave
Rockford, IL 61112*

Phone: 815-332-2103

*Order Flowers 24/7 at
www.peppercreek.com*

Your Local Florist,
Gift Store and
Year Round Greenhouse
Garden Plant Specialist



NUNZIO'S

RESTAURANT & LOUNGE

Call NUNZIO or JO

Banquet Coordinators 5800 N. Second St.
633-5000 Loves Park, IL. 61111

ROCKFORD POSTAL EMPLOYEE'S CREDIT UNION

See Us For All These Member Services

Share Drafts (checking)
Christmas Club Accounts
Low Cost Auto Loans
Loan Protection Insurance
License Plate Stickers

Share Savings
Family Memberships
Debt Consolidation Loans
Single Credit Disability
Gift Cheques

Debit/ATM Cards
Life Savings Insurance
Shared Security Loans
Direct Deposits
Loans By Phone

Office Hours

Monday through Friday 9:00 to 4:30 – Closed Holidays

5608 N. 2nd St. Ste. #1

Loves Park, IL 61111-4653

(815) 282-8711

Fax (815) 282-4745

Audio Response (815) 282-8741 or 8742

[HTTP://WWW.RPECU.ORG](http://www.rpecu.org)

Branch 245 Newsletter
John H. Swanson Merged Branch 245
PO Box 6535
Rockford, IL 61125-6535

NON PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
ROCKFORD, IL
PERMIT NO. 4573

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

BRANCH 245 OFFICERS

President & AO's	Kelly Pruکا	New Towne	494-5923
Vice President	Belinda Anderson	Kilburn	494-3945
Secretary	Maureen Johnson	MPO	243-4239
Treasurer	Brian Todd	New Towne	516-5685
Sergeant-At-Arms	Terry Johnson	Park Branch	968-5091
Trustee	Doug Arnold	New Towne	312-2490
Trustee	Tom Hougan	Park Branch	779-348-1362
Trustee	Debbie Swanson	New Towne	262-0528
OWCP/FMLA Stew. At Large	Robin Maurer	New Towne	262-2018
Belvidere Steward	Matt Seng	Belvidere	985-0520
Steward	Sandy Gleim	New Towne	988-5231
Steward	Mike Tyler	Park Branch	742-1647
Steward	Denise Leber	MPO	874-3519
Steward	Steve Brown	Kilburn	914-1243
Steward	Dave Rungren	New Towne	961-9418
Steward	Rick Moore	Kilburn	847-322-2625
Asst. Steward	Jerry Pyfer	Park Branch	654-2087
Asst. Steward	Jack Breitbach	MPO	871-1692
Asst. Steward	Russ Galub	New Towne	779-348-2537
Asst. Steward	<i>VACANT</i>	Kilburn	<i>VACANT</i>
Asst. Steward	Phil Rowley	Belvidere	964-7626
Political Liaison	Kelly Pruکا	Park Branch	494-5923
NALC Health Benefit Plan	Ross Parlapiano	Kilburn	239-1019
MBA & Historian	Steve Isbell	New Towne	985-1573
MDA Coordinator	Steve Isbell	New Towne	985-1573
Editor & Photographer	Doug Arnold	New Towne	312-2490