

THE

MAIL CALL



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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Roger Askew

HEALTH BENEFITS PLAN

I have just returned from the annual Health Benefits Seminar that was held in Las Vegas, Nevada. Both the Health Benefits Representative Jim Tukesbrey and I have attended this seminar now for a number of years. I truly wish I could give you a glowing report on the information that was passed out at the session but I can't. As most of us are aware the National Association of Letter Carriers Health Benefit Plan has had to increase its premium rates for the calendar year 1998. The increase will be \$41.12 per pay period for those who have the self & family option. We were given a number of reasons for the increase and I will elaborate on two of those:

First, the plan experienced a decrease of 4,470 members during the past Open Season. A majority of those members were active carriers. Active carriers that left the plan totaled 5,577, while only 2,037 switched to the NALC for a net loss of 3,540. It is the last set of numbers that have led to the increase in premiums. That is because for many years the plan has been "out of balance" in terms of retired to active members. Logic tells us that as we get older our medical needs increase. The pressure of this increase usage without the balancing effect of a younger and healthier membership opens the door for increased premiums.

The second reason is our contract with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). When the NALC went to the bargaining table this year with the OPM, they ordered the plan to do something that we did not want to do - to aggressively rebuild our reserve account. The health benefits plan pays out approximately 3 million dollars per day in benefits. The OPM has ordered the plan to have a six month reserve in the account instead of the original 3 months reserve. This simple math has required the plan to increase the premiums.

In closing I will paraphrase a sentence from the Director Tom Young. "For 47 years the NALC Health Benefits Plan has been there for letter carriers. We would (and should) expect letter carriers to stay with the plan and be part of the rebuilding efforts for the future".

POSTAL MANAGEMENT

In 24 years of being an officer of this branch I have never seen anything like what is going on in Van Nuys now. Already in this year we have logged in over 675 grievances against postal management. Most of the violations are in the area of Article 8 and the improper changing of a letter carriers schedule. You place these two issues on the table with a certain station manager whose attitude is that he can change a carriers day off whenever he wants and matters get worse. Management seems to have an attitude of "go ahead and grieve the matter, it will take months to resolve". This type of management can only lead to a destruction of the postal service in the long run. Eventually all of these grievances are going to catch up with these supervisors and the pay out will cost dearly.

It is my personal opinion that the biggest problem in the Van Nuys Installation is the inexperienced line supervisors and the failure of these individuals to resolve money matters at the lowest possible level. I can only ask that you remain patient and let the system resolve the matter. Hopefully this will be done quickly. When all of these matters are finally resolved I would hope that upper management will take some form of discipline against those that are responsible (a true pipe dream!).

Enough for now.. Have a great month of November and enjoy the two holidays.

IN MEMORY OF

WARREN MANAHAN

RETIREE--BRANCH 2462

ROBERT BENT

RETIREE--BRANCH 2462

CLYDE WALTERS

VICE PRESIDENT BRANCH 2200

"The MailCall" is published monthly by "Heart of the Valley Branch 2462, NALC, 6910 Hayvenhurst Ave., Suite 101, Van Nuys, CA 91406 in the interest of and for the Letter Carriers of the Van Nuys Post Office and its Stations. ARTICLES FOR PUBLICATION MUST BE IN THE HANDS OF THE EDITOR ON THE 21ST DAY BEFORE THE REGULAR BRANCH MEETING. ALL ARTICLES MUST BE TYPED OR ON COMPUTER DISK WITH SINGLE LINE SPACING. The Editor reserves the right to delete any article he deems necessary, improper, or unfit. All opinions expressed are those of the writer and are not necessarily those of the Editor or Branch 2462, NALC. The views expressed in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official views of the U.S. Postal Service. In the hopes that any material contained herein may be of benefit to your Branch and the goals of the NALC, permission is granted to copy and/or use any material in this publication with our best wishes.

ATTENDANCE CHART BRANCH MEETINGS

MONTH	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N
MAIN OFFICE	8	7	6	8	6	5	4	4	6	6	
ENCINO	6	6	4	7	5	6	5	7	6	5	
CIVIC CENTER	2	2	3	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	
PANORAMA CITY	2	1	3	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	
SHERMAN OAKS	9	8	9	10	6	9	9	8	7	9	
SUN VALLEY	0	2	2	3	3	3	1	1	0	2	
TARZANA	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	
RETIREE'S	6	7	7	6	8	7	6	4	5	5	
TOTAL	34	35	35	37	31	35	27	27	28	31	

MEETING PLACE OF BRANCH 2462, NALC
6910 HAYVENHURST AVE., SUITE 101
VAN NUYS, CALIFORNIA

NEXT MEETING
6:00 PM

November 4th
1997

DEADLINE DATE FOR THE NEXT
ISSUE OF "THE MAIL CALL" IS

November 11 th

BRANCH OFFICE.....818-786-8505
SICK CALL
FRANK RIMKUS..... 818-892-7118

"RETIREE CORNER"

Our monthly Saturday Breakfast Meeting will be held at Carrow's Restaurant (Roscoe & Tobias) at 09:00 am in Panorama City. The date will be **NOVEMBER 22, 1997 (Fourth Saturday)**

Please mark your calendar's and we hope to see you there. Regular Carriers are also welcome, if it is your day off.

Thanks
Frank Rimkus

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Calvin Brookins

LETTER OF DEMAND

What is a letter of demand?

A letter of demand is a notice that the Postal Service sends out to employees when they have a reason to believe that an employee has been overpaid, or the employee owes the Postal Service money for whatever reason.

If you receive a letter of demand for overpayment you should immediately grieve the claim of overpayment. It is very important to file a grievance as soon as the demand is received, because new language incorporated in Article 28 of the 1994 National Agreement requires the Postal Service to cease and desist from any attempts to collect money from a carrier until all grievances concerning the matter are resolved. Do not forget, it is not your responsibility to show that you do not owe the money. Rather it is the Postal Service's responsibility to show that you do. You should demand that the Postal Service prove the alleged overpayment by providing you with a complete accounting and all the relevant records.

Of course, it may turn out that you were overpaid. For a variety of reasons, the overpayment may be more difficult to figure out. However the whole collection process of the Postal Service must stop until the issue has been resolved.

If the Postal Service is successful in showing that you were overpaid, there is another option available. Section 437 of the Employee and Labor Relation Manual (ELM) gives carriers the right to file for waiver of claims for erroneous payment of pay. This section outlines the steps that carriers must take to request a waiver.

Upon receipt of the Postal Service letter of demand for recovery of pay which was erroneously paid, the carrier should file form 3074, Request for a waiver of claim for erroneous payment pay. Remember this is just the short course, so if you or any carrier you know receive a letter of demand. You or that carrier should immediately contact your shop steward or call the union office.



1998

CARL J. SAXSENMEIER SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

THE CALIFORNIA STATE ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS (CSALC) IS NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR THE 1998 CARL J. SAXSENMEIER SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM. ALL APPLICATIONS MUST BE SENT TO THE SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON BY SATURDAY FEBRUARY 14, 1998. THE COMMITTEE WILL SEND THE SCHOLARSHIP PACKETS TO ALL APPLICANTS BY FRIDAY FEBRUARY 27, 1998. THE SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE ARE.

TWO - \$2,000.00
TWO - \$1,000.00
FOUR - \$1,000.00

APPLICATIONS CAN BE REQUESTED FROM:

VELMA J. MCCLINTON
6753 SUNNYSLOPE AVENUE
VAN NUYS, CA. 91401-1216
(818) 994-1764

O.W.C.P. Report by Art Bocek

OWCP's Purpose

The Federal Employee's Compensation (FECA) program provides Federal employees who sustain work-related injury or illness with benefits such as medical care, wage loss replacement and help in returning to work. The Federal Employees' Compensation Act or FECA, (5 U.S.C. 8101 et seq.) is administered by Office of Worker's Compensation (OWCP.)

Types of Injuries

Injuries are either traumatic or occupational. A "**traumatic injury**" is defined as a wound or other condition of the body caused by external force, including stress or strain. The injury must be identifiable as to time and place of occurrence and member or function of the body affected, and caused by a specific event or series of events within a single day or work shift. An "**occupational disease or illness**" is produced by systemic infections; continued or repeated stress or strain; exposure to toxins, poisons, fumes, etc.; or other continued and repeated exposure to conditions of work environment over a longer period of time. A longer period of time means anything beyond a single day or work shift.

How to File Claims

Report every injury to your supervisor immediately. Submit written notice of injury on Form CA-1, "Notice of Traumatic Injury and Claim for Compensation of Pay/ Compensation," if you sustained a traumatic injury. Submit written notice of injury on Form CA-2, "Notice of Occupational Disease and Claim for Compensation," if injury was an occupational disease or illness. Obtain claim form from management. Complete the front page of the claim form and submit the form to management. The employing agency will complete the back page and forward the claim to OWCP. Don't forget to make a photocopy prior to giving the original copy of the front page of the completed claim form to management. Management is required to give you the bottom portion of the claim form signed as a receipt of filing. Photocopying is necessary in order to protect oneself from either misplaced, or lost forms by management.

Evidence Needed for your Claim

Traumatic Injury. Form CA-1 should describe clearly how the injury occurred using a supplement statement, if necessary. A medical report that includes a history of how the injury occurred, findings, diagnosis, and an explanation of how your condition is related to the injury must be submitted with the claim.

Occupational Disease or Illness. Occupational disease or illness are usually much more complex than traumatic injuries and require more extensive evidence. A narrative statement should be submitted by the injured worker along with a comprehensive narrative medical report. This is particularly important for emotional conditions. Your statement should describe specific work factors that you believe caused your medical condition. Specific details must be provided and the general terms should be avoided. For example, if you do a lot of lifting, describe the types of material lifted, weights, how often lifting is required, and the type of lifting. For emotional conditions, you must describe specific events, dates, those involved, and how the event(s) caused your condition. Vague and general statements are not acceptable. Medical reports for occupational disease or illness must include a history, findings, a diagnosis and an explanation of how specific work factors are related to the condition. For emotional conditions, the medical report should be from a psychiatrist or licensed psy-

chologist (note: an MFCC is not considered a licensed psychologist under FECA). The report should be in narrative form and include a history, findings, a diagnosis, and explain how your condition is related to **specific factors of your employment**. It is insufficient for the treating physician to merely state that your condition is work related. The physician should provide a rationalized opinion on how your condition is related to specific factors of employment.

EEO COMPLAINT FILING

In order to have a complaint accepted for investigation, the aggrieved person must believe that he or she has been discriminated against on the basis of the factors protected by the status that the EEOC enforces-race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age (over 40), disability or retaliation for having participated in activity protected by various civil rights.

Under EEOC regulations, aggrieved individuals must seek EEO counseling within 45 days of the date of the matter alleged to be discriminatory, or in the case of personnel action, within 45 days of the effective date of the personnel action.

After requesting for an EEO counseling, an EEO counselor must conduct a final counseling with the aggrieved person within 30 days of the initial counseling contact. The time period can be extended if the aggrieved individual and the agency agree in writing to do so. Any extension, however, may not exceed sixty (60) days. Where the agency, or the unit of the agency where the counseling occurs, has an established alternative resolution procedure, and the aggrieved individual agrees to participate in the procedure, the pre-complaint processing period shall not exceed ninety (90) days. The EEO counselor must inform the aggrieved person that he or she has the right to file a formal complaint after 30 days, unless the time is extended.

Deadlines to remember:

1. 45 days to file for EEO Counseling
2. 30 days to complete counseling
3. 15 days to file formal complaint
4. Extensions may not exceed 60 days

PICNIC COMMITTEE MEETING

In the past I have talked to several carriers about the picnic. Some of those carriers have expressed a displeasure with the place the picnic has been held over the past several years. I would like to start looking into some other options. Therefore we will be having a picnic meeting on October 30, 1997 at the Union office. For all those who would like to try to find a new place for next years picnic please plan on attending. The meeting will begin promptly at 6 pm.

Sincerely
CALVIN BROOKINS
PICNIC CHAIRMAN

"THE MAIL CALL"

BRANCH 2462, NALC

Steve Seyfried, Editor

6910 Hayvenhurst Ave., # 101

Van Nuys, CA 91406

Address Correction Requested

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Branch Meeting

Minutes

October 7, 1997

By

Steve Seyfried, Secretary

The Meeting was held at the Branch 2462 Union Hall 6910 Hayvenhurst Ave, Van Nuys California. It was called to order by VICE PRESIDENT CALVIN BROOKINS at 6:05 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by TEENAMARIE GALLEGOS. The invocation was led by FRANK RIMKUS
MOMENT OF SILENCE IN MEMORY OF-----
RONALD ADOLPHSON, BOB BENT, WARREN MANAHAN & CLYDE WALTERS OF BRANCH 2086
ROLL CALL OF OFFICERS

PRESENT---BROOKINS, T. HALL, SEYFRIED, McCLINTON, GALLEGOS, JOHNSON
ABSENT--ASKEW, TUKESBREY, SCARBOUROUGH, RATHBONE

MINUTES ACCEPTED AS PRINTED IN MAILCALL
CORRESPONDENCE READ
APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

MARK BIELANSKI---PAUL ACOSTA

BILLS READ--MOTION TO PAY M/S/C

COMMITTEE REPORTS

COLCPE--GALLEGOS \$ 381 in the fund

RETIREEES--RIMKUS There were 5 retirees present at tonight's meeting. On the Sick List we have DEWAYNE DYER, BEN AMDER, RICHARD TRACY & HAROLD VOGLER. We wish them a speedy recovery.

DISTRICT 6--McCLINTON 1998 Saxemeyer scholarship fund is accepting applications. Contact Office for information. Be aware of what you are signing when presented with a petition. Opponents are out getting signatures for an initiative that would not allow organized labor to participate in the 1998 election.

VICE-PRESIDENT--BROOKINS Watch MailCall for date of first Picnic Committee meeting. Regarding DPS the parties are still trying to come to an agreement on the 4th bundle issue. National will step in if criteria cannot be agreed to on the local level.

MBA--T. HALL No Report

HBR--TUKESBREY No Report

SAFETY & HEALTH--HENRY Read a brief article on repetitive motion injuries and the implications for Postal employees. Watch for further information.

EDITOR SEYFRIED Deadline for the November MailCall will be October 14, 1997.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES READ

NOMINATIONS FOR CONVENTION DELEGATE

1.	ROGER ASKEW	16	BOB ENZ
2.	CALVIN BROOKINS	17	J AUSLANDER
3.	STEVE SEYFRIED	18	M HALL
4.	VELMA McCLINTON	19	I SCHNYDER
5.	ROBERT JOHNSON	20	F McKINNIS
6.	FRANK BRASH	21	ART BOCEK
7.	DAN RATHBONE	22	L DOLABSON
8.	ANN SCARBOROUGH	23	J DOLABSON
9.	T GALLEGOS	24	ED CARLIN
10.	JAMES TUKESBREY	25	RICK REIMER
11.	TERRY HALL	26	JEFF JACKSON
12.	HARRY BRENNEMAN	27	JASON COELLO
13.	LEE FENSTERMACHER	28	DANNY SADA
14.	GLORIA HENRY	29	L MICHELSEN
15.	TRACY MULLINAX	30	J PASSILAS
		31	TROY YOUNG

32 TIA WILSON---WITHDREW NOMINATION

33 FRANK RIMKUS--WITHDREW NOMINATION

NEW BUSINESS

MOTION-- Branch cancel the December Branch meeting and hold an open house on a date to be announced. Board be empowered to conduct any and all business until the January, 1998 Regular Branch meeting M/S/C

MOTION--Branch purchase 2 Federal Employees almanacs. Cost to the Branch \$ 22 .50 M/S/C

MOTION--Branch purchase 500 business cards for the Vice President. Cost not to exceed \$ 40 M/S/C

MOTION--Branch donate \$ 100 to the Knights of Columbus council for the Mentally Retarded M/S/C

MOTION--Branch renew the membership in the L A County Federation of Labor Cost \$ 448.44 M/S/C

MOTION--Branch donate \$ 100 to the Muscular Dystrophy Assoc. in the name of CLYDE WALTERS M/S/C

COLCPE DRAWING

\$ 3 HYMAN ROLL--RETIREE

\$ 3 ROBERT JOHNSON--MAIN OFFICE

\$ 3 ROBERT ENZ--ENCINO

\$ 3 VELMA McCLINTON--MAIN OFFICE

FINANCIAL SECRETARY REPORT--JOHNSON

TREASURERS REPORT--McCLINTON

MEETING ADJOURNED---8:26 PM

