

THE MAIL CALL



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Van Nuys, CA

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Roger Askew

NATIONAL AGREEMENT

The three member panel began taking testimony from both sides on our future national agreement. The arbitration panel met from Tuesday July 6th through Friday July 9th, 1999. The arbitration panel recessed the hearings for a period of three weeks with the hearings due to begin again sometime around the first of August. Both sides seem to think it will take an additional 3-4 weeks to complete all the testimony. At that point in time the arbitrator has 30 days to render a decision on the matter. What this means to us is that a decision probably will not be given until sometime around late September. As more information is revealed I will be keeping you informed.

RAY KREYER AWARD

The selection for the 1999 Ray Kreyer Award will be done at the Executive Board meeting on Thursday September 2nd, 1999. Each year the branch selects a member that has contributed to the union above and beyond the call of duty. If you have someone that you would like to be considered please let us know as soon as possible. The executive board will vote on this and the award will be presented at the annual picnic on September 5, 1999.

SAFETY

The Van Nuys District is currently in the process of establishing a new safety program throughout the district. A task force has been established with both craft members and managers. They are attempting to reduce the number of vehicle accidents that have been occurring both in the Van Nuys Installation and the district. As President of this branch I am concerned about the safety record within the Van Nuys Installation. No person wants to get injured in the performance of their job. Each of us should very concerned about our personal safety. How easy is it to cut a corner here and a corner there and place your safety in danger. Each of us has the responsibility of performing our job in a safe manner. If this requires additional time in the office and additional time on the street, TAKE THE TIME. If what the task force is attempting to do is change the behavior pattern that leads to motor vehicle accidents then I am in favor of the new program. If all management is attempting to do to obtain additional information to discipline carriers then forget it!!!

PICNIC

In March a motion was passed that the annual branch picnic be held at Magic Mountain. Vice-President

Brookins has made arrangements with Magic Mountain and the picnic will be on Sunday September 5th, 1999. The editor

will be placing an announcement in the next couple of issue's of the Mail Call so that you will be aware of the ticket prices. We will be placing flyers for you to review in each office and an adjacent sign up sheet. We need to know the amount of tickets you will be purchasing so that we can make arrangements for the food. Please make sure you provide an accurate count of the number of tickets that you will be needing. This should be a great time and we will also be able to go into the park after the picnic and enjoy ourselves (at no additional expense).

END OF TERM REPORT

Article 6 of the Constitution for the Government of Subordinate and Federal Branches requires the Branch President to make a report at the end of his/her term. In next months issue of the Mail Call you will find that report. I would encourage you to review and make yourself aware of what's going on with the branch.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Each of us has at one time had one manager run the entire operation within our facility. In thinking back I find it quite ironic that during the period of time that one manager was in charge of the entire unit, that is a week that the office made the budget!!!!!! Something to think about eh.. Maybe instead of short sighted managers pushing the idea of route redesign we should look into management redesign.....

BRANCH 2462 PICNIC

WHERE: MAGIC MOUNTAIN

WHEN: September 5, 1999

TIME: 11 AM

FOOD SERVED FROM 11:30 -- 1:30

The sign up sheets for the Branch Picnic to be held at Magic Mountain on Sunday September 5, 1999, will be at the Stations soon !!! If you are planning to go you need to make plans now.. Remember that tickets are limited. If you have any questions speak with your Shop Steward or call the Union office. Retiree's should contact either FRANK RIMKUS or call the Union Office to make their reservations.

"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	D
MAIN OFFICE	11	0	7	12	5	8						
ENCINO	8	6	6	8	8	8						
CIVIC CENTER	2	1	2	1	1	1						
PANORAMA CITY	1	1	2	2	2	1						
SHERMAN OAKS	6	7	5	5	5	5						
SUN VALLEY	1	1	1	2	1	2						
TARZANA	1	1	1	1	1	1						
RETIREE'S	7	5	5	8	6	7						
TOTAL	37	22	29	40	29	32						

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

NEXT MEETING
6:00 PM

August
3rd
1999

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

August 17th

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

"RETIREE CORNER"

Our Monthly (fourth Saturday) breakfast 9AM meeting will be held at Cocos Restaurant(15701 Roscoe Blvd. just west of the 405 Freeway across from Anheuser-Busch) The date for the next breakfast is AUGUST 28, 1999. Be sure to mark your calendar and we hope to see you there.

Thank You
 Frank Rimkus

Vice President Report: By Calvin Brookins

The Arbitration proceedings began back on June 16th, the NALC has put on three weeks of testimony. Myself alone with eleven other letter carriers from various parts of the country met on July 6th at the NALC headquarters for final preparations to testify before the Arbitration panel. On July 7th myself and three other DPS coordinators (known as the DPS coordinators panel) started giving our testimony about our jobs as DPS coordinators. We put on several presentations about the training and told of different concerns that we have received from letter carriers in our respective districts. I did a brief presentation about the joint training that I do at carrier stations prior to those stations going on line with DPS. Each DPS coordinator had something different to add. Our testimonies were followed by six letter carriers from different parts of the country. Those carriers told about their personal experiences with DPS. But management is the same all across the country they all want blood from a rock so to speak.

I would be remiss if I did not give thanks and recognition to a group of people at the NALC headquarters who spent a lot of hours preparing all of us letter carriers for testimony. There are two women that work very hard for the union members, put in a lot of hours and deserve the recognition. So my thanks and gratitude go out to the (Dynamic Duel) Linda Giordano and Michele Ditchey for all the hard work that they put into the preparation for this Arbitration, keep up the good work ladies.

I would also like to thank Stephen Hult and Ralph Goldstein who is the other two people who worked very hard in preparing the rank and file letter carriers for their testimony. These four people are a valuable asset to the NALC and my thanks go out to all of them for the effort they give everyday for the NALC and its members. I would also like to thank our National leaders for giving me the opportunity to participate and experience this type of Arbitration hearing. It is a delight to know that our National leaders are so prepared for this, they do represent the members very well. So when ever you see your National Business Agent or someone from his staff or one of your National leaders be sure to thank them for a job well done.

The Picnic:

As you all know by now the picnic will be held at Magic Mountain again this year, I will be sending out sign up sheets to each station in order to get an idea of how many people will be going. Tickets will go on sale in August; the price will again be \$15.00 per ticket. The picnic will be on September 5th 1999 starting at 11:00am and you have access to the park until closing time. Come out and enjoy yourself and plan to have a great time. Shortly after this picnic I will be forming a picnic committee to plan for next years picnic I urge any member of the branch to join that committee and play a role in planning next years picnic.

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VICE PRESIDENT REPORT

Continued from Page 2

Safety:

Article 14 of the National Agreement, which covers safety and health issues, is a very important part of our contract. It is so important that any grievance filed under this article can bypass step one and be appealed directly to step two. It is management responsibility to provide safe working conditions and facilities. It is our responsibility to cooperate and assist in these efforts. We need to be more aggressive in enforcing our rights under article 14; we need to use our contractual rights to correct unsafe conditions. Identify unsafe practices, conditions, and buildings etc., by filing 1767's if management ignores your 1767 ask to see your steward or call the union office. Do not be afraid to file OSHA complaints if management does not comply with article 14 and take its safety responsibility serious.

Remember know your rights and stand up for your rights.

In Unionism



**DON'T LET TIME
RUN OUT !!!
THE JOB YOU SAVE
MAY BE YOUR OWN
SEND A CHECK TO
COLCPE TODAY**

**BRANCH 2462
RETIREE'S
ENJOY A GREAT BREAKFAST
WHY NOT JOIN THEM THIS MONTH ???
SEE PAGE 2
FOR DETAILS**

Revenue Protection: Use a Benefit, Get Disciplined

In the ongoing pursuit to retrieve lost revenue, the brilliant minds of upper management love to dump their financial burdens solely on the letter carrier craft. Postal wisdom dictates that in order for management to make their budget, they must crack down on such things as 'worker comp' claims and sick leave (an earned benefit) usage. Stand-ups are peppered with orations on how much 'worker comp' claims cost and that being regular in attendance is a condition of employment, that those deemed as abusive with sick leave can expect 'Restricted Sick Leave' (RSL) letters and or discipline. Unfortunately, there are a very few who are abusive in the above mentioned benefits, but the Postal Service prefers to harass "all" employees with their blanket accusations. With this course of "Nazi" persecution the Postal Service threatens to discipline you for using hard-earned benefits, all in the name of "revenue protection".

"A letter carrier was caught filing a false worker comp claim, and the Postal Service will save over \$900,000", intoned the supervisor at an informational stand-up. If this carrier did in fact file a false claim, then the system proved just in its actions. However, it seems "all" carriers who file a 'worker comp' claim are looked upon as obvious scofflaws looking for any angle to burn the system. Any of you unlucky enough to file a 'worker comp' claim understands the intense scrutiny you are placed under just to collect your rightful benefits.

Sure, some cases are approved with no hassles (well, almost no hassles): such as getting t-boned in your LLV by a red-light running vehicle or having your butt chewed off by a Chihuahua that broke through a plate-glass window, that is, of course, your not deemed responsible for the accident. But try to file a carpal-tunnel claim (or any other "work related condition" claim) and you will almost surely be denied because it was not proven that you sustained this injury while performing postal duties.

Hey, the Postal Service just does not want to be responsible for your DPS (or any other injury incurred while performing your postal duties) incurred malady. Remember that DPS is the "savior" of the Postal Service, and cannot be tarnished by such obviously overlooked side effects as human injury. It is your fault; you are the guilty one. Chalk-up saved revenue, hallelujah!

"Being regular in attendance is a condition of employment", chanted the same supervisor at the same stand-up. So all sick leave scofflaws will be scrutinized and most likely given discipline at management's earliest possible convenience was the message. Well, last time I checked, most employment required employees to be at work during their normal schedules. However, a good amount of employers (the Postal Service included) offer such benefits as sick leave or comp-time. These are benefits that are not only intended to lure employees, but also to allow an ill employee to get well so they can perform their duties at a maximum capacity let alone keeping the rest of the workforce healthy if the illness is transferable.

Well, if I'm ill and feeling badly, I'm darn well going to call in sick because that's what it's for!

I don't give a rat's behind about step-3 and-4 arbitrators viewing sick leave as a privilege, not a benefit. As postal employees, we all receive that statement of benefits every year that states how much your total pay package is worth in gross dollars. You know the statement that lists "sick leave" as a benefit, and attaches a monetary worth on your unused sick leave. The very same statement that says you earn more than

an EAS line supervisor does. Rest assured, during any and all contract negotiations and mediations and interest arbitration, our generous employers will cry foul, whine and moan, throw tantrums, get pissy-faced and claim financial bankruptcy (upper-management is already intellectually-bankrupt!) because we already make over \$60,000 a year in pay and "benefits", not including overtime. So do not tell me that sick leave is "not" a benefit, when the Postal Service calls it a benefit and uses it against me during contract negotiations. (Oops, I mean pre-arbitration. Contract negotiations no longer exist.)

Furthermore, how can management issue any carrier RSL and or discipline for using "approved" sick leave? Sick leave, like annual leave, is an earned benefit. When a carrier has approved annual leave (vacation, spot, emergency, etc.), your absence from work has been approved. Hmmm, let's take this one step further. When a carrier calls in sick, the supervisor will ask you the usual: what's wrong, can you case? Well, you've informed management of your inability to perform your duties, so all they can do now is either "approve your absence" right then and there or tell you to get medical documentation (just play along, I'm not getting into the "documentation" legalese) to support your claim of incapacity. Fine, when management either approves your sick leave on the spot or waits till you document yourself, your absence has been approved. Management has indicated that you were indeed unable to perform your duties, therefore approved your sick leave status. So if you have been approved to use sick leave, how can management come back to you with discipline for using a legitimate, and management approved, pay status. If the leave I use is approved, than I am regular in attendance. But that's not how it works.

Will management in the future issue discipline to carriers who use approved annual leave? Lets face it, you're supposed to be regular in attendance, so if you use approved annual leave (a benefit just like sick leave) you're not regular in attendance. You are discipline worthy!

Let us not forget the games management so desirously play with other earned benefits such as dependant care and the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA). They issue discipline for the usage of the above benefits, even though it is clearly stated that "approved" usage of these benefits cannot be held against, or used to discipline, a carrier. But management ignores the rules and will hold this benefit usage against you.

Well, I am not intimidated because if my wife is ill and she needs my assistance, I will not think twice about using dependent care or FMLA! That's what it's for. Take your best shot "revenue hit-squad"!

But hey, what are carrier benefits anyway? They are revenue sucking; bonus losing little annoyances that management will not put up with anymore. You scofflaw, how dare you use your benefits that the Postal Service says you have? Do not let management into fooling you that sick-calls screw up their scheduling, because such events improves a supervisors daily budget, less carriers to move the mail, it's a dream come true. No, their reasons are the same as in any other aspect of carriers and postal service: less expenditure on carriers means more revenue for management, higher

(Continued on Page 5)

Revenue: (Continued from Page 4)

bonuses and an improved stance on carrier removal through discipline. Or better yet, carrier apathy that leads to quitting, no having to shell-out unemployment benefits. It's the same old BS, as we are all targets of the "revenue protection hit squad", all in the name of revenue protection.

Speaking of revenue protection, the aforementioned informational stand-up informed us that the 91316 zone of Encino station had the best CFS no-record scores in the Van Nuys district for whatever the time period was. Is this lofty position a product of carriers being encouraged to take all the time necessary to go through "hot cards", especially flexes and unassigned regulars who are greatly unfamiliar with any assignment? Could it be that when customers move, they all fill out the necessary forms and inform all mailers of their new address, and that said mailers have up-to-date mailing lists? Or is it perhaps due to DPS machines that have acquired the intelligence necessary to remove all FOEs and no-record mail from this automated stream of mail? Could it be a combination of all of the above? Wrong, **wrong, WRONG!** The low CFS scores are the result of classic management initiatives, massive revenue expenditure.

For reasons unknown, we at Encino station are experiencing a surge in limited and light duty workforce, and they must be kept busy for their tour of duty. So, management utilizes this opportunity to direct these individuals to go through outgoing CFS mail, matching up this already worked mail to the 'hot' cards. (Thus delaying forwardable mail, but that's ok.) In essence, we have both the carriers on routes dispensing CFS mail, and the limited (and light) duty carriers double-checking the same CFS mail, thus double handling the mail. Remember that management does not want you to case DPS mail, because it would be double handling the mail; forget the obvious benefits that casing the DPS would provide. This is ok, because it makes the CFS no-record scores look great and improves our leaders bonus standings. This is called "Economic-Value added", postal subsidized bonus enhancing revenue expenditure, their allowed to do it says any arbitrator; "management is allowed to mismanage".

On the job injuries are up, but CFS no-record scores are down. And with more carriers being injured and working in a non-carrier status, that means less carriers to deliver the mail, thus improving both the budget and bonus standings of all of those number-crunching computer jockeys. I am so motivated know, I can hardly contain myself! Whoops, I just flagellated.

This limited duty CFS expenditure reminds me of a recent stand-up when management informed us that every piece of returned no-record mail costs the Postal Service some 30-cents. (Give or take some pennies, I don't recall the actual amount.) I wonder how much money it costs now to have limited duty carriers re-examine every single piece of CFS mail, including all of the good forwards already worked by another carrier?

Since I'm on the allowed revenue expenditure kick, let's examine other USPS spending scams. Like the station manager who needs expensive furniture for their office, or the annually subsidized trip to Palm Springs to allocate bonus checks to our hard-working fearless leaders. How about those extravagant luncheons our leadership indulges in, when they give you some crappy-ass sandwich because their altered bonus enhancing numbers are favorable. And just how much revenue does management expend on promotion or retirement parties for their ilk? How many hundreds-of-thousands-of-dollars did the Postal Service justify for the retirement of former PMG Marvin Runyon? Just that, hundreds-of-thousands. When a letter carrier retires, their lucky to get a stand-up, let

alone that any party for the retiring carrier is solely subsidized by sisters and brothers hard earned dollars. Need I mention the exorbitant expenditures the Postal Service allows to maintain a strangle hold on your every move, creating new ways, and new non-carrying positions, to extract every last drop of blood from your postal-enhanced decaying body?

If the Postal Service lived in the real world, they would realize that the backbone of this very organization lay in the capable hands of the letter carriers. They would treat us with dignity and respect, and compensate us rightfully for the effort we expend on a daily basis. They would accept our input for improving the Postal Service, and honor the national contract at all times. In the real world, we carriers would feel that we are part of a team and not just the means to a larger bonus for our captors. And that carriers who rightfully use their benefits are not threatened with punitive discipline, but are encouraged to take care of themselves and their family. Alas, this is not the situation because the Postal service would rather partake in their costly and destructive campaign to eliminate the very source of their livelihood, the professional letter carrier. But hey, that's a revenue expenditure they're willing to take while protecting the revenue.

Van Nuys, California

All carriers experience two types of dogs: those who bark and those who bite. The carrier may be weary of a "barker" at first, but with time one realizes that the "barker" poses a minimal threat. However, the "biter" is the dog you worry about, and respect, the most. The "biter" waits for you to make a mistake, and when you do you pay the price. So you show this biting "beast" respect by not doing anything stupid, and thus a balance between you and the "biter" is forged.

Keep this context in mind as you read further.

On June 9th, the NALC sponsored a nationwide informational picket, which in my opinion had the effectiveness of a dog that barks a lot but does not bite. Yes, I understand the intentions of the "picket" were to show management that letter carriers *do* support their national NALC leaders, and it was not intended to either inform or generate public support. However, this was not the case. Picket signs and buttons wielded by carriers only reflected our plight, not the actual support issue. Also, the picket was very public, with both the picket and publication of our plight in national newspaper ads. In other words, we barked a lot but had no bite.

A "picket" of this nature during the original contract negotiations would have allowed carriers to vent steam and bite the Postal Service, while giving our national leadership both the rabid support they required and the teeth necessary to "bite" management.

On June 9th, I walked the line with my union brethren to support the NALC, and we barked a lot. I will do it again in a heartbeat, even if it seems the timing is off-but I really wish we could have bit the Postal Service.

Jason D. Colello, Branch 2462

"THE MAIL CALL"

BRANCH 2462, NALC

Steve Seyfried, Editor
6910 Hayvenhurst Ave., # 101
Van Nuys, CA 91406

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Branch Meeting Minutes July 6, 1999

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 PRESIDENT ROGER ASKEW at 6:02 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by TEENAMARIE GALLEGOS. The invocation was led by ROGER ASKEW

ROLL CALL OF OFFICERS

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

MINUTES ACCEPTED AS PRINTED IN MAILCALL
CORRESPONDENCE READ

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

VIRAL DALAL, ERNESTO PADILLA, VA PHUONG

NO BILLS PRESENTED **MOTION TO PAY** M/S/C

COMMITTEE REPORTS

COLCPE--GALLEGOS \$ 275 in the fund Special thanks to retiree RICHARD LUKIN, of BONN, GERMANY, for his \$ 100 donation to COLCPE

RETIREEES--RIMKUS There were 8 retirees present at tonight's meeting. The Retiree Dinner will be held on October 22, 1999. Watch for further information. On the Sick List we have JOHN SHANLEY & JOE KALMAN. We wish them a speedy recovery.

AUDIT--TRUSTEES The audit of the branch books will be held on July 14th., at 5:00 pm, at the office.

DISTRICT 6--McCLINTON Saxemeyer scholarships have been awarded, no one at Branch 2462 received any.

FINANCIAL SECRETARY REPORT--JOHNSON

TREASURERS REPORT--McCLINTON

VICE-PRESIDENT--BROOKINS No Report

MBA--T. HALL If you go out on disability, you must fill out the new form. Make sure that you have the new one. If not contact Terry at Main Office or at the Branch

HBR--TUKESBREY No Report

PRESIDENT ASKEW Open season for the

FEGLI (life insurance) has been extended to July 31, 1999.

Contract negotiations have gone to arbitration. Testimony will resume the first week in August. Informational Picket was great success. We estimate that between 125 to 140 letter carriers were out in a great show of solidarity to demand that we get a decent contract and substantial raise in pay. Training sessions for shop stewards will be held in Anaheim

on November 19 & 20th. Shop stewards should make plans now to attend these classes. The current organized percentage for our branch is 90.8 %. This is a slight improvement, lets keep up the good work and try and sign up those remaining non-members.

OLD BUSINESS--The election committee chairman gave a brief report, election expenses will come in under budget. The results as published in the July Mailcall were certified as being official. Many thanks to all who helped in the conducting of the election.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES READ

NEW BUSINESS

BY-LAW CHANGES

MOTION--Accept the change to by-law Article VI, Section 6 as published in the July mailcall

M/S/C
MOTION

DIVISION CALLED---YES--15, NO--9

FAILS

(Required ¾ not met)

MOTION--Accept the change to by-law Article IV, Section 6 as published in the July mailcall

M/S/F

MOTION--Branch send the PRESIDENT of his designee, to the Committee of Presidents meeting in St. Louis, Sept 24-28, 1999

Cost not to exceed \$ 1000.00

M/S

AMEND---Provided an arbitrator has reached a decision on the contract

ORIGINAL

M/S/F
MOTION

PASSES

MOTION--All shop stewards & alternates be provided with a copy of the Labor charge voted by the branch at the April meeting, against the Postal service for denial of information & time. Copy to be given at next shop stewards meeting

M/S/C

COLCPE DRAWING

\$ 3 TEENAMARIE GALLEGOS--MAIN OFFICE

\$ 3 JANETTE DOLABSON--TARZANA--DONATED

\$ 3 KEITH MOWER--RETIREE

MEETING ADJOURNED----7:30 PM

