

THE MAIL CALL



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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Roger Askew

NATIONAL CONVENTION

From July 31st, 2000 through August 4th, 2000 over 7700 delegates attended the 62nd Bi-Annual convention of the National Association of Letter Carriers in Chicago, Illinois. Flanked by a sign at the podium that read "Facing the Challenges of a Digital Age", President Sombrotto opened the convention with a 30 minute speech. President Sombrotto told the convention about the success of the recent national arbitration decision that will give letter carriers a promotion to Level 6 pay starting on November 18th. He also spoke of the challenges that face the postal service and the union in the immediate future.

President Sombrotto then recapped the long history of the NALC and the constant struggle that continues to this day with management. Reeling off a long list of statistics, President Sombrotto talked of the past efforts of the NALC membership that laid the groundwork for today's letter carriers. He spoke of the struggles in the past when letter carriers were required to work 10-12 hour days (no overtime) and 365 days per year. In addition, letter carriers were given no paid vacation time. That struggle continues today with issues of automation and the constant attack we seem to be under in the private sector to take our jobs.

When the business of the convention started the delegates voted on 62 national agreement resolutions, 18 general resolutions, 7 legislative resolutions and 9 proposed amendments to the constitution of the National Association of Letter Carriers. There were also 5 retiree resolutions and 2 resolutions pertaining to the NALC Health Benefit Plan. You add this to a number of key speakers and you have a full agenda. Of the speakers that spoke to the convention the highlight was an address given by Vice-President and Presidential candidate Al Gore on Friday. He thanked us for the continued support he receives from our union and responded by calling letter carriers the heartbeat of American. In addition, we were able to hear from the Honorable Congressman Neil Ambercombe from Hawaii who supplied us with a report of some of the problems we face in the immediate future.

During the convention the delegates were called upon 2 times for teller votes (a process where each delegate present votes). One of the teller votes came on resolution #8. This resolution would ask that a locality pay inclusion raise be given to those of us in a high cost of living area. The

resolution lost by a count of 4198 votes against it and only 1661 delegates in support of it. The other teller vote came on resolution #33 concerning the Configuration of Vertical Flat Cases. This resolution was defeated by 1426 delegates voting for the resolution and 3134 delegates voting against it.

Each delegate from our branch was asked to attend at least one workshop during the week. At next months union meeting I will ask each delegate that was present to make a short remark of their impressions of the convention, and to give a brief report on the workshop they attended. As President of Branch 2462 I can only say you were well represented by those in attendance. It was great to finally have all seven of the offices we represent along with two of our retirees present during a national convention. A special recognition was also given to those delegates in attendance that were gold card members (fifty years of membership in the National Association of Letter Carriers). Frank Brash was able to stand and be recognized by those delegates in attendance.

When the final report of the credentials committee was made it showed that 7761 delegates registered for the week long convention. Nationwide, 660 branches were in attendance and all of the 50 states were represented.

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**BRANCH 2462
"RETIREE NITE"
SUNDAY AFTERNOON
OCTOBER 1, 2000
ENCINO GLEN
RESTAURANT
16821 Burbank Blvd. Encino, California**

**Doors Open 1:30 PM
Price is \$ 7.50
Retiree's and Active Carriers are Welcome
For Further Information Contact the Union Office**

"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	S	O	N
MAIN OFFICE	7	8	8	13	5	7	7			
ENCINO	8	8	8	5	8	6	8			
CIVIC CENTER	1	1	1	1	2	1	1			
PANORAMA CITY	1	2	2	2	2	2	2			
SHERMAN OAKS	7	6	5	4	5	5	6			
SUN VALLEY	2	2	1	2	0	2	1			
TARZANA	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			
RETIREE'S	5	7	5	7	7	7	6			
TOTAL	32	35	31	35	30	31	32			

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

**NEXT MEETING
6:00 PM**

**September
5th
"2000"**

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

Sept 12, 2000

BRANCH OFFICE.....818-786-8505

"RETIREE CORNER"

Our next Breakfast Meetings will be on September 23rd, (4th Sat) and October 21st (3rd Sat) It will be held at Cocos Restaurant , 15701 Roscoe Blvd. (Just west of the 405 Freeway, across from Anheuser-Busch). It will begin at 09:00 AM. Please mark your calendar.....We hope to see you there.

Thank
Frank Rimkus

You

Vice President Report:

By

Calvin D. Brookins

When is Medical Documentation Required

Overzealous supervisors continue to cause problems by making unwarranted demands for medical documentation for sick leave use and by insisting that such documentation must contain an exact diagnosis and prognosis. The applicable provisions are found in Section 513 of the Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM).

513.361 Three Days or Less

For periods of absence of 3 days or less, supervisors may accept the employees' statement explaining the absence. Medical documentation or other acceptable evidence of incapacity for work is required only when the employee is on restricted sick leave or when the supervisor deems documentation desirable for the protection of the interest of the Postal Service. (Restricted Sick Leave provisions are covered under Section 513.37 of the ELM).

513.362 Over Three Days

For absences in excess of 3 days, employees are required to submit medical documentation or other acceptable evidence of incapacity for work.

513.363 Extended Periods

Employees who are on sick leave for extended periods are required to submit at appropriate intervals, but not more frequently than once every 30 days, satisfactory evidence of continued incapacity for work unless some responsible supervisor has knowledge of the employee's continuing incapacity for work.

513.364 Medical Documentation or Other Acceptable Evidence

When employees are required to submit medical documentation pursuant to these regulations, such documentation should be furnished by the employee's attending physician or other attending practitioner. The documentation should provide an explanation of the nature of the employee's illness or injury sufficient to indicate to management that the employee was or will be unable to perform his or her normal duties for the period of the absence. Normally medical statements such as "under my care" or "received treatment" are not acceptable evidence of incapacitation to perform duties. Supervisors may accept proof other than medical documentation if they believe it supports approval of the sick leave application.

In a memorandum dated June 22, 1995 (M-01379) the National Medical Director of the Postal Service explained the documentation requirements as follows:

Medical information which includes a diagnosis and a medical prognosis is not necessary to approve leave. A health care provider can provide an explanation of medical facts sufficient to indicate that an employee is, or will be, incapacitated for duty without giving a specific diagnosis or medical prognosis. If medical documentation that provides a diagnosis and a medical prognosis is received by an employee supervisor, it must be forwarded to the health unit or office of the contract medical provider and treated as a "restricted medical record" under Section 214.3 of handbook EL-806.

(Continued on Page 3)

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

(Continued from Page 1)

All in all I thought the convention was a great example of how our union works. I would have to say on a personal note that the events of Wednesday lead me to think we should look into how appeals are ruled on. To this day I'm not certain if the action the convention took was based on the facts of the matter or the emotions of the appellants and delegates. We still seem to be attempting to resolve those personal conflicts in Texas. President Sombrotto has indicated that he will put a stop to these and hopefully he will be successful. The issue continues to center around funds and medical information. I'm not sure that justice was given to either side in this matter. Could this happen in our branch? I think not. We have a long standing policy on the security of medical information and we have always been open and forthright with all financial records of our branch. Each month we publish a financial statement that includes all expenditures and receipts during the previous month. We must see that the safeguards that we have established are kept in place and that the Trustee's continue to audit the books on a bi-yearly bases

If you need more information on the events that took place just ask a delegate as to their impression of the convention. Elsewhere in the Mail-Call you will find additional information, so read about the events that effect your work, life, and the conditions that we enjoy.

APPRECIATION

During the national convention I asked two of our members to come into the branch office to see that your telephone calls were responded to. A special thanks to Richard Bettess from the Sherman Oaks station and Linda Brookins from the Civic Center station. They both spent their own time seeing that things were taken care of during our absence and I would like to personally say thanks to both of them.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS

On July 11th, 2000, national president Vincent Sombrotto signed a memorandum to change Article 15 of the National Agreement. Article 15 has to do with the grievance procedure and the steps taken to process the grievance. The change is intended to reduce the back log of grievances that are still in the system and to also expedite resolutions in the future. The new process has been in a testing stage for some time now within certain districts in the country. A copy of the newly signed memorandum can be found in the August issue of the Postal Record. Each of us should take the time to review this important change in our national agreement. As of this writing I do not know when the process will take effect in the Van Nuys District. As more information is received I will be letting each shop steward know.

AUTOMATION

In the last 5 months (March through July), President Sombrotto has written articles in the Postal Record concerning the E-mail future. Hopefully each of you have taken the time to review these worthwhile articles. Each delegate to the national convention was provided a booklet that reprinted these articles. If you would like to review these articles, contact anyone of the delegates and I'm sure they will let you read theirs. With the continued growth of the internet and the rise in the computer revolution our jobs in the future will change. Projections indicate that mail volume will drop off by 10-12% (seeing is believing). As a union we need to be aware of these challenges and deal with them in a way that will benefit letter carriers and their future. No matter how great a contract we were able to get from the arbitrator, if the postal service does not survive we could all be in trouble. We also need to be aware of what is

happening in the halls of Congress. What we have been able to achieve through the collective bargaining agreements since 1970 can all be lost with a change in the postal laws. What Congress changed in 1970 can all be changed back if we fail to place representatives in place that will vote for our best interest. We should all be registered to vote for the upcoming election in November. We can not allow apathy to allow those self serving interests in the private sector to take away from us what we have worked so very hard to have.

Enough for now. Enjoy your labor day holiday and remember the sacrifices that were made to see that this holiday is a national holiday. You truly do deserve a holiday as a member of LABOR

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

(Continued from Page 2)

In another memorandum, dated November 22, 1995 (M-01378), Postal Service Headquarters Labor Relations elaborated as follows:

Postal Service regulations do not require employees to submit a diagnosis/prognosis when requesting sick leave for themselves or their dependents. However in cases where employees voluntarily provide this information, supervisors have a responsibility to protect the employees and their dependents privacy. Therefore all restricted information is to be submitted to the medical unit to be filed in the employee medical file, returned to the employee, or destroyed after necessary review.

In other words, the only requirement is that the medical documentation must provide "acceptable evidence of incapacity for work." Supervisors are not physicians. Not only are they prohibited from requiring a specific diagnosis or prognosis, they are not even allowed to retain such documentation if it is voluntarily or inadvertently provided.

Another recurring problem is cause by supervisors who seek to require medical certification by a USPS medical officer or contract physician before allowing an employee to return to work following sick leave use. Such certification is only required in the circumstances described in ELM 864.4.

864.41 Employees returning to duty after 21 days or more of absence due to illness or serious injury require medical certification. Employees must submit medical evidence of their ability to return to work, with or without limitations. A medical officer or contract physician evaluates the medical report and makes a medical assessment to assist management in employee placement to jobs where they can perform effectively and safely.

864.42 In cases of occupational illness or injury, the employee will be returned to work upon certification from the treating physician, and the medical report will be reviewed by a medical officer or contract physician as soon as possible there after.

In all other circumstances letter carriers must be allowed to return to work when their own treating physician indicates they are recovered. Of course the Postal Service has the right to send an employee for a fitness for duty examination but accept as provided in ELM Section 864.4, such an examination must be on the clock.

"THE MAIL CALL" BRANCH 2462, NALC

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

Address Correction Requested

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
VAN NUYS, CA
PERMIT No. 314

The Uncle Matty presentation made during the May Branch meeting should be released within the next week. A schedule for training sessions at the national convention will be given to each delegate during the meeting to follow. This is an excellent opportunity to receive some additional information to bring back to your respective station.

OLD BUSINESS--THE FOLLOWING BY LAW CHANGES

Branch Meeting

Minutes

July 11, 2000

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 6:00p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by ROBERT ENZ.

ROLL CALL OF OFFICERS

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

ABSENT--NONE

ACCEPT MINUTES AS PRINTED IN MAILCALL

CORRESPONDENCE READ

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP--NONE

BILLS READ & MOTION TO PAY M/S/C

COMMITTEE REPORTS

COLCPE NO REPORT

RETIREEES--RIMKUS NO REPORT

TRUSTEES Books will be audited on

July 19th. At 6:00 pm.

EDITOR SEYFRIED Apologies to JANETTE DOLABSON for my failure to publish her article on the Food Drive in the July issue of the Mailcall.

SAFETY & HEALTH None

MBA--T. HALL None

HBR--TUKESBREY Working on two cases.

FINANCIAL SECRETARY REPORT--JOHNSON

TREASURERS REPORT--McCLINTON

VICE-PRESIDENT--BROOKINS Picnic was a great success, have received mostly good feedback on the site and other aspects. Total turnout was 415 people, of those 110 were members. Total cost was \$ 16,250. DPS one bundle system is coming. Management will be in charge and will implement within the year.

PRESIDENT ASKEW Some possible changes in Article 15 may be coming, we will be monitoring this in the future. Local negotiations will take place from October 2, 2000 through the next 30 days. We are restricted to the items listed in Article 30 of the National Agreement. I have received nothing but favorable comments about the picnic from the membership. Congratulations to Vice President BROOKINS on once again organizing a successful picnic. The national has reached agreement on three memorandums. We will receive some clarification on these at the national convention

WERE ACTED UPON BY THE BRANCH.

Motion--Amend Art III, Sec 1 as printed in Mailcall M/S/C

Motion--Amend Art IV, Sec 1 as printed in Mailcall M/S/C

Motion--Amend Art IV, Sec 12(A) as printed in Mailcall M/S/C

DIVISION---YES--19, NO---5 MOTION

PASSES

Motion--Amend Art V, Sec 4 as printed in Mailcall M/S/F

Motion--Amend Art V, Sec 6 as printed in Mailcall M/S/F

Motion--Amend Art VI, Sec 6(B) as printed in Mailcall M/S/F

DIVISION---YES--10, NO--15 MOTION

FAILS

Motion--Amend Art VIII, Sec 4 as printed in Mailcall M/S/C

Motion--Amend Art XII, Sec 4 & 10 as printed in Mailcall M/S/C

DIVISION---YES--19, NO--8 MOTION

PASSES

Motion--Amend Art XII, Sec 6(A) as printed in Mailcall M/S/C

DIVISION---YES--20, NO--6 MOTION

PASSES

Motion--Amend Art XII, Sec 6(B) as printed in Mailcall M/S/C

DIVISION---YES--19, NO--4 MOTION

PASSES

EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES READ

NEW BUSINESS

MOTION--BYLAW changes on Article XII, Sec 6a and 6b, be retro active to 2/1/2000

M/S/C

DIVISION CALLED YES--17 NO--9 MOTION

PASSES

Motion--Branch purchase a Fax machine.

Cost not to exceed \$ 400

M/S/C

MOTION--Branch empower the Executive Board to

handle any and all business until the September

General Branch meeting.

M/S/C

MOTION--Delegates who left the State convention

early, pay the Branch the money they did not spend

for the time they did not stay

M/S/F

UNDERLINED DENOTES UNANIMOUS VOTE

COLCPE DRAWING

\$ 3 ED CARLIN--SHERMAN OAKS

\$ 3 FRANK BRASH--RETIREE

\$ 3 JAMES TUKESBREY--RETIREE--DONATED

\$ 3 HYMAN ROLL--RETIREE

MEETING ADJOURNED---8:30 PM

REFRESHMENTS WERE SERVED FOR A SHORT PERIOD AND THEN THE DELEGATES TO THE NATIONAL CONVENTION HELD A BRIEF MEETING.