

# THE MAIL CALL



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## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

**By Roger Askew**

### **RAY KREYER AWARD**

As I wrote in last month's article, our branch has a tradition of presenting the annual Ray Kreyer Award. This year the annual award was presented at the annual Retiree's Night. This year Janette Dolabson, Dan Rathbone, Terry Hall and TeenaMarie Gallegos were nominated for this recognition. This year the award went to Janette Dolabson. Janette has served as the Shop Steward in the Tarzana Post Office since 1993. She has been an elected delegate to both the state and national conventions. She has helped with the annual food drive. She has even figured out a way to have the Postmaster at the Tarzana Post Office come in and help sort the food. All of the members that were nominated have a long tradition of serving the membership of Branch 2462 and they deserve our thanks and appreciation. The award is well deserved and congratulations to Janette.

### **NATIONAL ELECTIONS**

Over the last couple of months I have written about the importance of what is to take place on this election day November 7th. I urged you to vote for Congressman Howard Berman, Congressman Brad Sherman and candidate Adam Schiff in the 27th district. Recently a member from Main Office spoke to me about his displeasure that the branch voted to endorse three candidates that happen to be democrats. From my point of view the issue is not about Republicans vs Democrats... the issue is about the survival of the postal service. The issue is not about partisan politics. The issue is who will help us in the halls of Congress to save our jobs. Make one thing clear, the executive board would never have made a recommendation to endorse these candidates without knowing how they feel about the postal service. All of the candidates have informed us that they would never support a bill that would privatize the postal service. Congressman Howard Berman has a 100% voting record on our issues over the last two years and deserves our vote. Congressman Brad Sherman also has a 100% voting record on our issues. I have had one face to face meeting with Adam Schiff and he also assures me that he would never vote to privatize the postal service.

Each of us has our independent views on certain issues, whether it be gun control, abortion, Medicare, Social Security, the balancing of the budget or foreign policy. As a union the only concern we have is about the protection of the postal service and the wages and benefits that each of us enjoy. Whatever your decision is, please vote on Tuesday November 7th.

### **HEALTH BENEFIT PLAN**

Once a year the postal service has what is known as Open Season. This year the open season is from November 13th through December 11th. During this period of time you can change your health benefit insurance plan. I have personally held the NALC Health Benefit Plan since 1968. The plan has undergone some difficult times, but as of this moment I would give the plan an A+ in both benefits and convenience. I am always troubled by some of our membership who insist on purchasing union made products when using branch funds and then they themselves don't belong to the letter carriers own union health insurance plan. These same members stand up during the branch meeting and insist on boycotting certain establishments because they are union busting and they themselves will not belong to the health plan. Just doesn't seem right!!!

(Continued on Page 3)

## **IMPORTANT REMINDER**

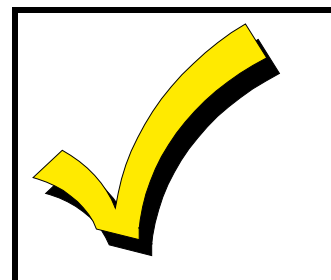
**THE REGULAR BRANCH MEETING IN  
THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER.**

**WILL BE HELD ON**

**\*\*\* WEDNESDAY \*\*\***

**NOVEMBER 8, 2000**

**THIS IS DUE TO THE NATIONAL  
ELECTIONS**



"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.

by  
**JASON D. COLELLO**

...That Van Nuys' new postmistress has not introduced herself to the craft employees of Van Nuys. We are continually being told that this is a team effort, and the team captain doesn't even want to talk to us.

...That it's ONLY the letter carriers that must "do-it-for-the-team," because everyone else is too busy telling carriers that we must "do-it-for-the-team!"

...That when you post a management favorable pieces-per-minute number, your supervisor tells you not to talk. "If you weren't talking, you could've had 28 PPM instead of 25 PPM!"

...That the USPS's new program, the Breakthrough Productivity Initiative, is being implemented the same time paper suspensions are to take effect. BPI and paper suspension, hand-in-hand saving the PO a billion dollars-since the removal rate of career carriers will increase 100-fold.

...That the USPS is now attempting to negotiate an alliance with FedEx, something to do with express mail-aren't they the enemy?

...That some of us are accused of bringing morale down at work. Jeeze, and I thought the lower state of morale was a direct result of both mismanagement and respect system that is based solely on discipline.

Silly me.

**Isn't it Peculiar...**

**ATTENDANCE CHART  
BRANCH MEETINGS**

MONTH	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	S	O	N
MAIN OFFICE	7	8	8	13	5	7	7	2	7	
ENCINO	8	8	8	5	8	6	8	6	7	
CIVIC CENTER	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	
PANORAMA CITY	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	
SHERMAN OAKS	7	6	5	4	5	5	6	5	5	
SUN VALLEY	2	2	1	2	0	2	1	1	2	
TARZANA	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
RETIREE'S	5	7	5	7	7	7	6	7	5	
TOTAL	32	35	31	35	30	31	32	26	30	

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

**NEXT MEETING  
6:00 PM**

**NOVEMBER  
8th  
"2000"**

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

**Nov 8, 2000**

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

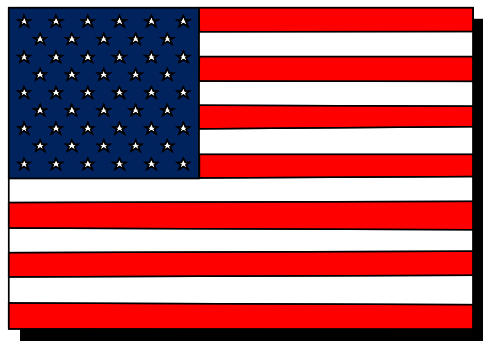
**"RETIREE CORNER"**

Our next Breakfast Meetings will be on November 18th (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 You  
**Frank Rimkus**

**(Or How I Learned The End Was Near)**

**DON'T FORGET TO  
VOTE  
ON TUESDAY  
NOVEMBER 7, 2000**



# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Roger Askew

(Continued from Page 1)

You can change the insurance plan you have by contacting the personnel office (simply request a form 2809). You will not have this opportunity again until late next year.

## RETIREE'S NIGHT

On Sunday October 1st, 2000 the annual retiree's night took place at the Encino Glen Restaurant. Approximately 80 members and their families gathered to honor those who preceded us. Among those attending were Manny Peralta who is the Regional Administrative in the San Francisco Region, Jackie White who is the Director of Education for the California State Association of Letter Carriers and McDowell Fraizer who holds the position of Director of Retirees for the California State Association of Letter Carriers. For as long as I can remember Frank and Katherine Brash and Frank and Jo Rimkus have organized this event. I would like to thank them for the countless hours they spend in making this a successful event.

## STUFF

Just can't wait until November 18th, 2000 when we will all start receiving level 6 pay for the work we do. Those of you who are T-6's will receive the same proportional increase. You place this increase with the regular salary increase and it should be around a seventy cents per hour increase.

Enough for now. Enjoy the holidays in November.

# O.W.C.P. Report

by  
ART BOCEK

## Deviating from Route Duties

OWCP's general rule regarding deviations means an employees on business trips as: "An identifiable deviation from a business trip for personal reasons takes the employee out of his employment until he returns to the route of the business trip, unless the deviation is so small as to be disregarded as insubstantial."

Generally, letter carriers are on "business trips" each day - the assigned route (and the travel between the route and the place of employment), therefore, making up the confines of the trip. If a deviation is deemed by OWCP to be other than "insubstantial," an identifiable deviation from the route for personal reasons will remove a letter carrier from the protection of the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA). Below are examples where benefits were denied by OWCP because of deviations.

1. A letter carrier was authorized to make a special trip to another town by management to do postal business and was authorized to take lunch along the way. He was not told which route to take, and he did not take the most direct route because he wanted to have lunch at his favorite familiar restaurant. Since the letter carrier deviated 2.5 miles for personal reasons, the Employees' Compensation Appeals Board (ECAB) concluded, "at the time of the accident he had not resumed his journey...and was not engaged in activity reasonably incidental to his employment mission."


2. A letter carrier was authorized a specific period for lunch and two breaks during the day at designated locations. OWCP determine that a letter carrier was injured 1.3 miles from his designated route on his way to a restaurant at the time outside his authorized lunch period and at a place away from his designated afternoon break location. ECAB affirmed OWCP finding that the letter carrier had left his assigned route, therefore, "his journey constituted a personal mission and his injury sustained under such circumstances is not compensable."

3. A letter carrier walked several blocks from his route while on an approved break. The ECAB affirmed OWCP finding that it did not matter whether the deviation was 0.6 mile (as stated by OWCP) or 0.3 mile (as argued by the letter carriers representative) and concluded, "Appellants deviation from his route and his authorized lunch stop was substantial and constituted a personal mission."

All of the letter carriers above cases mentioned, were injured while deviating from the assigned route. In no case had the letter carrier ended the deviation and resumed travel back to the assigned route. If so OWCP's decision might have been different, but there is no assurance that it would be without the facts and circumstances being fully known.

## Remember

"as a letter carrier you should not engage in any deviations away from your assigned route without written authorization from management."

 **REMEMBER**  
**NOVEMBER MEETING HAS  
BEEN CHANGED TO  
WEDNESDAY THE 8 TH**



# Vice President Report:

By

**Calvin D. Brookins**

## Composite Bundle / One Bundle

Brother Paul Diebolt of NALC Branch 2184 in Michigan wrote to President Sombrotto asking for some data about Composite Casing test. President Sombrotto replied to his request and sent this brief summary of the test results.

Dear Brother Diebolt:

Per your request in your letter of April 11, 2000, these are some of the facts relating to the test on the vertical flat and composite bundle work methods study.

- 1 - Three data collection sites were agreed to by the NALC and USPS. The three sites were Charlotte, NC; Corpus Christi, TX; and Seattle, WA.
- 2 - The study used 24 data collectors, 12 were NALC letter carriers selected by the NALC and 12 were postal managers.
- 3 - The data collectors received three days training in Norman, OK. We did a test (of the test) in Columbus, OH. For one week before we started the study at the three sites.
- 4 - The study looked at 72 carrier park and loop/foot routes. Each route would be studied using both work methods (vertical flat casing [VFC/one bundle] work method and the Composite Bundle work method).
- 5 - The routes were randomly selected from a pool of qualified park and loop/foot routes in the selected cities.
- 6 - The study was to be conducted on days the routes did not have unaddressed flats.
- 7 - We gathered data on each route at the following (DPS) ranges. 30-39%, 50-59%, and 60% or higher. The study required two studies (collection of data) at each percent in both work-studies. For 72 routes that would be 1,152. After the study was complete and we reviewed all of the studies we ended up with 1,145 (good studies). (99.39%)
- 8 - When carriers was switched to the other work method, they were given 2 weeks for the conversion, followed by a 4-week period of familiarization.
- 9 - The average office and street time at all levels looking at all the routes was 8.17 for composite type and 8.03 for the VFC method. This is a saving of 14 hundreds of an hour per day per route.

For those of you not wanting to do the math, the average saving turns out to be a whopping 8 minutes per route. Emboldened by their new-found success in the arbitration, USPS management has already issued directives to the field on how to implement the route case changes.

First they will go through and prioritize routes that needs to be changed using a variety of factors, including the number of coverage's, mail volume, percentage of DPS mail, etc. Then management will go through and determine the amount of equipment needed and floor space required. According to the instructions, management will try to have no more than two full cases and one wing case per route, only in "exceptional circumstances" will a route have three full cases. A one-inch separation will be provided for each address. Management will attempt to make all this fit into five shelf cases.

Once this is done, management has been directed to try to capture savings because the expectation is the VFC method will prove to be more efficient. Capturing will be done by doing minor route adjustments, special route adjustments, or full unit inspections.

Back in the real world, think about how well unilateral decisions by management have worked in the past. Now consider the future? Management is making noise about DPS flats. Let's see DPS letter mail, DPS flats, composite bundle (letters and flats case together), circular bundle (coverage), wait a minute that four bundles! That Arbitration decision is still valid, so two of these streams will have to be consolidated.

In the meantime, I suggest we all just let management have their fun, because all of these genius ideas usually end up making us more money. Take the time and do the job like you are suppose to. In the words of Elvis Costello, "I used to be disgusted, now I'm just amused."

**(Courteous of NALC branch 2184)**

## PS Form 3996

The preparation and approval of PS form 3996 continues to be a frustrating daily experience for letter carriers. Requesting and receiving approval of a carrier's time needs can be a constant source of conflict with the supervisor, whose goal is to make budget.

The constant fluctuation in events affecting the time necessary to complete an assignment must be factored into the estimated time needed. Yes the carrier's request is an estimate and the supervisor's approval of any amount of time is an approval of an estimate. Again the variables of a letter carrier daily work, including unanticipated events, can cause daily fluctuations to times.

It is important that all carriers complete a PS form 3996 when they can not complete their assignment within 8 hours. It is important to complete PS form 3996 not only for the date of the request, but for an accurate record of route time needs over a period of time.

(Continued on Page 5)

# Vice President Report:

By

**Calvin D. Brookins**

(Continued from Page 4)

Discussions of a carrier's estimated time needed are to be expected, but must be done in a professional manner and no letter carrier should be harassed, intimidated or bullied to make the numbers for the postal service.

Listed below are some of the possible line J entries on your PS form 3996. As you can see there are many variables to be considered in your estimations. Remember that is all you are doing - giving your best estimate of how long it will take you to complete your assignment on a particular day. Remember during the Christmas period, the instruction on the PS form 3996 does not require that the reason be documented.

1. Route is out of adjustment (as documented by count and inspection).
2. Unfamiliar with route.
3. Case full of mail previously cased.
4. No relay cards.
5. Excessive mark-ups/mystery mail/carrier endorse mail after returning from SDO/AL.
6. Route out of adjustment because of increased mail volume or growth.
7. Excessive mail volume.
8. Excessive parcels (record amount)
9. Excessive accountables (record amount) remember it takes more time because of scanning regardless of what your supervisor may say.
10. Stand-up/safety talk, Change of address cards, Training
11. Coverages, marriage mail, samples, odd shape mail.
12. Delivery confirmations, Hot case mail.
13. Inclement weather (extreme hot/cold, rain, windy, etc.
14. Feeling ill - under medication, Medical restrictions.
15. Waiting for mail / late distribution/dispatch (be careful).
16. New case labels.
17. Carrying mail cased by others.
18. Sloppy mail (ADVO) inserts, etc.
19. Traffic/construction delays.
20. Medical appointments
21. DPS mail problems - too numerous to list all.

## Paper Suspensions

The NALC and the Postal Service has reached an agreement on a Memorandum of Understanding regarding article 16 of the National Agreement to replace loss time suspensions of 14 days or less with paper suspensions effective October 15, 2000 and lasting through the remainder of the 1998-2000 National Agreement. The Memo reads as follows.

The parties agree that the following modifies the provisions of Article 16.4 for the term of the 1998 National Agreement.

Employees issued discipline involving suspensions of fourteen days or less will remain on duty during the term of the suspension with no loss in pay. These discipline actions shall, however, be considered to be of the same degree of seriousness and satisfy the same corrective steps in the pattern of

progressive discipline as the time off suspensions. Such suspension are equivalent to time off suspensions and may be cited as elements of past discipline in subsequent discipline in accordance with article 16.10.

Seven and fourteen day suspensions issued pursuant to this memorandum shall contain the following language:

While this suspension does not result in a loss of time or pay, it is equivalent to and is of the same degree of seriousness as a time off suspension. It satisfies the same requirement for progressive discipline as a time off suspension, and may be cited as an element of past discipline in subsequent discipline pursuant to article 16.10. You have the right to appeal this action under the grievance-arbitration procedure set fourth in article 15 section 2 of the National Agreement within fourteen days of your receipt of this notice.

Nothing in this Memorandum of Understanding shall be construed to preclude the employer from placing an employee in a non-pay, non-duty status in accordance with article 16.6 or 16.7 or to effect the procedures for allegations or misconduct that are considered appropriate for immediate removal. In addition, the parties understand that this Memorandum of Understanding does not preclude time-off suspensions, where modification of a discharge is agreed to by the parties as a settlement or a third party (e.g., arbitrator, administrator law judge) determines to reduce the penalty of discharge to a time off suspension.

This Memorandum of Understanding is effective with corrective action with an issue date of October 15, 2000 or after, and will expire at midnight on November 20, 2001.

Signed on August 31, 2000 by:

Anthony J. Vegliante Vice President Labor Relations, USPS

Vincent R. Sombrotto President-National Association of Letter Carriers, AFL-CIO.

I am reprinting this Memo in the Mail Call because I want every member of branch 2462 to be aware of it and fully understand it, please read it carefully.

If you have any questions contact your shop steward or call the union office.

## In Unionism:

**DON'T LET TIME  
RUN OUT !!!  
SEND A CHECK TO  
COLCPE**

# "THE MAIL CALL" BRANCH 2462, NALC

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

**Address Correction Requested**



find out. Congratulations to JANETTE DOLABSON for being

## Branch Meeting Minutes October 3, 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 6:05 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Sgt.-at-Arms TEENAMARIE GALLEGOS

ROLL CALL OF OFFICERS

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

**ABSENT**--SEYFRIED

MINUTES ACCEPTED AS PRINTED IN MAILCALL

CORRESPONDENCE READ

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

MARK BENSON, STEVE SOTO, DICK CHOI, PAULINO AVELAR, CATALINA ANGUIANO

BILLS READ MOTION TO PAY M/S/C

COMMITTEE REPORTS

AUDIT--TRUSTEES All is well

COLCPE--GALLEGOS \$ 703.00

RETIREEES There were 5 retirees

present at tonight's meeting. On the Sick List we have CARMEN SANCHEZ, SAMUEL PASCUAL & PATSY PFANKUCHEN. We wish them a speedy recovery.

DISTRICT 6--McCLINTON 4 target areas for this election. MIKE POBLANO is our new District 6 officer.

MBA--T. HALL No Report

HBR--TUKESBREY No Report

SAFETY & HEALTH No Report

FINANCIAL SECRETARY REPORT---JOHNSON

TREASURERS REPORT--JOHNSON

VICE-PRESIDENT BROOKINS Percentage of DPS mail coming from Santa Clarita plant is worst in Van Nuys district. Relay cards for Sherman Oaks are back in the system, but Plant messed up in running them. Goal is 70 % of mail to be DPS. Carriers have the right to augment their 3996's after viewing the DPS mail, this is a Step 4 decision. Certified Mail should be pulled out.

PRESIDENT ASKEW's REPORT Local negotiations will be from October 2nd through the next 30 days. Those members who are on the negotiation team are CALVIN BROOKING, STEVE SEYFRIED, ROBERT JOHNSON, ROBERT ENZ, ART BOCEK & TERRY HALL. We have received no notice of when the transition will take place to the one bundle system. We will notify all offices as soon as we

selected as this years RAY KREYER AWARD winner. Other nominees for the annual award were DAN RATHBONE, TERRY HALL & TEENAMARIE GALLEGOS. Please remember to vote on November 7, 2000. Meeting has been moved to Wednesday the 8th, so as not to conflict with the election.

Every vote counts and it is very important to elect a President and Congress who will support working men and women. Congratulations to CONNIE CHANG for being selected a winner of the CARL SAXSENMEIER Scholarship for 2000. Connie is the daughter of YOUNG CHANG from the Encino Station. We have started the attendance chart for the 2002 Conventions, please note the chart on the side wall.

SPECIAL GUEST--HAROLD KELSO (Vice-President of the State Association) talked about the targeted areas of Congressional seats. Postmaster Henderson has testified in Washington, DC, saying he can see the day when the Postal Service will be privatized. 27th District candidate ADAM SCHIFF is labor friendly and needs volunteers to man the phone banks. We are also helping in the 36th district with JANE HARMON's campaign.

OLD BUSINESS--NONE

EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES READ

NEW BUSINESS

MOTION--Branch hold an Open House in December

in place of the Regular Branch meeting. Open

House to take place on Friday, December 8, 2000

Cost not to exceed \$ 1300.00

M/S/C

MOTION--Branch purchase two 8 foot tables

for the Union office. Cost not to exceed \$ 200.00

M/S/C

MOTION--Branch hold a Shop Steward training

session in either the month of October or November

in the Branch office. The President, Vice-President

any Shop Steward or Alternate Steward who

attends shall receive a per diem of \$ 50.00

M/S/C

MOTION--Branch extend the sign-in period for

tonight's meeting only, from 30 to 60 minutes

M/S/C

MOTION--Branch make TERRY HALL the new

Branch Scribe, as a result of JASON COLLELO's

resignation

M/S

MOTION IS RULED OUT OF ORDER BY

PRESIDENT

Underlined means unanimous vote

COLCPE DRAWING

\$ 5 JAMES TEWKSBURY--RETIRED--DONATED

\$ 5 IRWIN SCHNEIDER--SHERMAN OAKS

\$ 5 ED CARLIN--SHERMAN OAKS

\$ 5 JEFF JACKSON--PANORAMA CITY

\$ 5 RICK REIMER--SHERMAN OAKS

MEETING ADJOURNED 7:43 PM

SPECIAL THANKS to JANETTE DOLABSON for taking minutes at the meeting in the Secretary's absence.