

THE MAIL CALL



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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Roger Askew

BUDGET

Elsewhere in this issue of the mail-call you will find the proposed budget for calendar year 2001. According to the by-laws of the branch, the Budget Committee meets in January each year to propose the budget for the upcoming year. The proposed budget is then printed in the Mail-Call and discussed at the February branch meeting. Take the time to review this document carefully. Our branch has a long history of being open and forthright concerning money matters. As I have said before, I am extremely proud of the way our local union has dealt with money issues. In addition each month, a statement is provided at the branch meeting to let you know exactly how the funds are spent.

SAFETY

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 duties. Each of us should be 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. Postmaster Dewitt is attempting to instill in each of us the importance of working safely. Installation wide meetings are taking place each month and carriers from each office are represented at these meetings. We truly do need to change our mind set and work in a safe manner. Injuries are painful. If you question this fact just ask any of those carriers who are on limited duty in your office. Each one would state that he or she would rather not have been injured in the performance of their duties. We are all aware of just how crazy it is when we are driving a postal vehicle. The general public does not seem to be aware of the postal vehicle and does some of the strangest stuff. Improper lane changes are common. There seems to be an attitude that your postal vehicle is in my way so please get out of my way. But the single biggest problem seems to be not allowing enough clearance and hitting a fixed object. Please allow yourself enough room to maneuver the vehicle. Each of us should make our number one goal for a work day, to perform our work in such a manner that we can return to our homes at night without the thought that we had been involved in an accident that day.

(Continued on Page 2)

NOTICE OF NOMINATIONS OF BRANCH OFFICERS & SHOP STEWARDS

This is official notice to members of Branch 2462 that nominations for the following offices will be held at the regular branch meeting April 3, 2001 at 6:30 p.m. at the Branch Union Hall 6910 Hayvenhurst Ave # 101, Van Nuys California. The Offices are President, Vice-President, Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, Sgt-at-Arms, Three (3) Trustee's, Health Benefits Representative, and Mutual Benefits Representative. Also the position of Editor. No one may be nominated for more than one (1) office, Except, Editor, who does not serve on the Executive Board. Candidates must accept nomination at the time made or, if absent, in writing to be received by the Branch Secretary no later than April 6, 2001. The terms of Office shall be for a two year period. Candidates elected shall be delegates to the National and State Conventions as stated in the Branch By-Laws.

Shop Steward nominations and election will be held at the individual Stations.

ELECTION

The election will be conducted by secret ballot at all Carrier stations on May 29, 30, 31 & June 1, 2001, and during the Regular Meeting held at the Union Office on June 5, 2001. The Election shall be conducted in accordance with the rules and regulations adopted and promulgated by the Executive Board of Branch 2462, NALC, which shall not be in violation of the rules and regulations adopted and promulgated by the Rules of the National Executive Council. Retiree's will receive their ballots by 1st class mail no later than May 11, 2001. Any member who, for any reason, will be unable to vote at the Stations, or has not received their ballot, may obtain an absentee ballot by writing to the Election Committee, Branch 2462, NALC, 6910 Hayvenhurst Ave., Suite #101, Van Nuys, California, 91406 or by calling (818) 786-8505. Requests for absentee ballots must be received by the Election Committee no later than May 11, 2001. Absentee ballots must be returned to the Election Committee no later than 5:00 PM on June 5, 2001. Write-in votes are not permitted. The counting of the ballots will take place on Tuesday, June 5, 2001 immediately after the adjournment of the Regular Branch Meeting. 6910 Hayvenhurst Ave., #101 Van Nuys, CA. All candidates and members may observe the counting.

"The MailCall" is published monthly by "Heart of the Valley Branch 2462, NALC, 6910 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	5									
ENCINO	5									
CIVIC CENTER	1									
PANORAMA CITY	2									
SHERMAN OAKS	5									
SUN VALLEY	0									
TARZANA	1									
RETIREE'S	4									
TOTAL	23									

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

**NEXT MEETING
6:30 PM**

**FEBRUARY
6th
"2001"**

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

February 6, 2001

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

"RETIREE CORNER"

Our Breakfast Meeting 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. The dates for the next 2 will be February 24, and March 24, 2001 (4th Saturday). Please mark your calendar.....We hope to see you there.

Thank You

Frank Rimkus

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Roger Askew

(Continued from Page 1)

AGENDA

The new year has now arrived and the agenda is full. We face many challenges. We will be scheduling a meeting with the district leadership and the Postmaster of Sun Valley to review the routes in that unit. The initial meetings have taken place and we are just waiting for approval. When carriers in Sun Valley went through route inspections, the routes were adjusted using the impact formula. We are all aware that this formula was not successful. We continue to resolve as many grievances as possible at the local level and I believe that management is starting to see the light. Either Calvin or myself attend the district labor management meetings and the district leadership seems to be receptive to resolving matters before they are appealed to arbitration. We will be conducting two training sessions for the shop stewards this year. The annual food drive is scheduled for May 12th and hopefully we will again participate in this worthwhile event. You add these to the usual agenda and you can see that times will be busy. As we begin 2001 together we should look forward to the many challenges that are before us.

GRIEVANCE ACTIVITY

I have been asked a number of times why I don't use the Mail-Call as a way to management bash concerning grievances. My personal opinion is that when we receive monetary awards from Step 1, Step 2 or Step 3 representatives or a decision from an arbitrator is made these are personal matters. I can tell you this though. Each member of the contract administrative unit is aware of these issues and each shop steward is provided a copy of the decision. Over the years I have questioned why management is not held accountable for these matters. If these amounts would be taken from the managers salaries or god forbid the stations budgets, then the issues that are pending in the grievance procedure would be reduced noticeably! I can't wait till the end of this year when management cry's some more about how overpaid we are!!!

FOOD FOR THOUGHT!!

If automation is the savior of the postal service and it is such a great stride into the future why is it that we have to work together to make it work??? Seems to me that it should just work by itself and not need any interference from outside sources (i.e. management). It still seems to me that we would be better served by carriers casing the D.P.S. mail instead of the present system. Another thing that puzzles me is starting times? We continue to hear the same sorry excuse, that the plant is unable to get the mail to us any earlier! It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that if we start later we will be getting to our patrons later. Don't they think that business customers would like their mail before they go home at night? All during the district Labor Management meetings we are told that we must deal with the needs of our customers and meet their needs or else they will seek other avenues to receive the product. We continue to try but local management has been blocking us. How long will it take upper management to realize what we have been telling them for 10 years???

Be safe and enjoy.....

Vice President Report:

By
Calvin D. Brookins

Something that letter carriers do not hear enough of, is how well you do your job. Since 1990 the letter carrier job has changed tremendously, Vertical Flat Cases, Delivery Point Sequencing, Delivery Confirmations, and Scanners. Now we are scanning certified mail, register mail, express mail delivery confirmation, numbered insured, and COD's, and soon to come managed service points (MSP) several other things to scan. Not to forget all routes being converted to the one bundle work method (VFC).

While all of these things are intended to be good for the U.S. Postal Service, some of these things could have been implemented differently. Instead your job has gotten harder and more demanding not to mention that some of the changes have taken away the letter carrier ability to provide the kind of customer service we as letter carriers are used to providing. But no matter how many changes the U.S. Postal Service makes, letter carriers seem to be able to effectively and efficiently get their jobs done, and continue to give the American public great service. Even though it seems as if management wants to make customer service secondary to their budget.

I once asked a former postmaster of Van Nuys which was more important, his budget or customer service. Well he stated that his budget was more important. I reminded him that without those customers there would not be any need for his budget.

In light of all of the changes that you have gone through over the past few years, and all of the difficult managers and supervisors that you have had to deal with on a daily basis you have shown your resiliency over this period of time.

Well I want to say, to all of the letter carriers represented by NALC Branch 2462, you are doing a very good job out there in your capacity as a letter carrier serving the customers on your routes or the route you may be doing on any given day. So keep up the good work and follow all of those safety rules while performing your job as a letter carrier.

Things to always remember:

Supervisors shall not require, nor permit, employees to work off the clock.

Article 41.3.K of the National Agreement.

Letter carriers may cross lawns while making deliveries if customers do not object and there are no particular hazards to the carrier.

Article 41.3.N of the National Agreement.

Do not inspect or load your vehicle while the engine is running.

Try to avoid backing your vehicle in all instances.

Report all accidents immediately.

Make sure all mail is removed from your vehicle before you end your tour.

In Unionism:

PROPOSED BY-LAW CHANGE

ARTICLE V

News & Views

by
Velma J. McClinton

OPEN HOUSE

The contributions from members and their families continue to grow.

THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU
Roger Askew, Calvin Brookins, Jeff Auslander, Frank Brash. Robert Johnson and his wife Barbara. Mickey Martin and his children. An addition to a traditional Christmas dinner (turkey, ham, and all the fixens) that was served, were 18 gift certificates which was either Borders or the Gap. These came from points off the American Express over the years that are used by Roger and Steve for branch business. This use enabled for the rewards to be extended to other members that do not attend conventions. Congratulations to all.

Uniform Bank

The uniform exchange continue to be useful. Casuals, part-time flexs, and regulars can give and receive garments that are in clean and good condition. Please give articles to your shop stewards, e-board members, or drop items off at the union hall. Always use up all of your uniform allotment by your anniversary date each year, because if not you will lose it. For any reason that you do not have your uniform purchasing card contact 1-800-287-5003.

Membership

Do you have any ideas on how to encourage nonunion people to become members? Place your ideas on a note and drop it in the mail or phone the union office at (818) 786-8505

NOMINATION AND ELECTION DELEGATES TO NATIONAL AND STATE CONVENTIONS

Section 6.

It shall be the duty of each member to sign an attendance book at all Regular Meetings, as proof of their attendance. The Sergeant-at-Arms shall close the sign-in book no later than thirty (30) minutes after the Meeting starts. In the event that there should not be a Regular Business Meeting in the month of December any given year, all members attending the previous November Regular Business Meeting shall receive credit toward their attendance for both the November and December Meetings.

Proposed change to delete the following

The Sergeant-at-Arms shall close the sign-in book no later than thirty (30) minutes after the Meeting starts.

Sign by	Calvin Brookins
	Roger Askew
	Lee Fenstermacher

THE STATE OF THE UNION (local)

Here we start the new year 2001; looks like we survived the millennium disaster year. If you look closely survival is not what we want--we want to prosper and be treated with the consideration and respect we deserve.

The Union exists allegedly to promote the good of the individual worker by binding together all those individual workers into one large and powerful unit that yields results. In our local it seems the good only pertains to those select few that hold total authority unto themselves at the expense of the rank and file. Just recently I was informed by the Union Local President that our office, Van Nuys Main, has only 11 grievances pending at step 2. Isn't this wonderful it appears we are all finally being treated with some dignity and respect--NOT. The fact that grievance numbers are down by some mysterious means of counting doesn't indicate anything of any substance. Where are the 65 route inspection grievances filed in late 1998--I've seen no responses or appeals? Where are the concurrent 65 grievances that accompanied those route inspection grievances that addressed the refusal of Union information and time to do those route inspection grievances--I've also not seen any response or appeal? What about the 8 special inspection requests that never got completed and were grieved in late 1999--no response or appeal of these either? All these and others that entered the twilight step 2 zone and disappeared.

Other unsavory phenomenon have been occurring at step 2 also. Two grievances filed for forced drug tests by management of full-time regular carriers who wrote definitive statements that defined being forced--responses accepted at step 2: 1) The employee volunteered for the test, 2) the Postmaster apologized. Funny neither addressed the actual issue of the violation of the contract or the violation of Civil Rights clearly defined in the grievance text. Grievances filed at step 1 and appealed to step 2 by the step 1 designee are all of a sudden withdrawn at step 1 or not appealed to step 2 by the step 2 designee involved; at step 2, the step 2 designee has the defined authority: to withdraw the grievance at the step 2 meeting, settle the grievance at the step 2 meeting, or appeal the grievance to the step 3 level. In all these cases there is required documentation of what took place, what was agreed upon, and specific reasons for what was agreed upon for each issue involved in the grievance specifically the contract issues supporting that decision. The step 2 designee does NOT have the authority to revisit step 1 after the fact to effect a modification of a grievance, withdrawal of the grievance, or negate the filing of that step 1; the only access to step 1 that the step 2 designee has is to remand a grievance back to the step 1 designee for further development/ action. Another step 2 anomaly seems to be that the provision at step 2 for returning a grievance decision to the management designee for additions and corrections is virtually never used even though most grievance responses rarely address the step 1 issues for which the grievance was filed; constantly grievances are being withdrawn at step 2 based allegedly on the information supplied with the grievance being deficient--rightfully so in some rare cases but NOT when the grievance clearly and definitively indicates that lack of information and analysis was a direct result of management withholding: information; time to investigate, write and meet on the grievance; and access to employees for interviews, statements, etc. (This is exactly what happened on the route inspection grievances).

Another area of concern is the widespread practice of management making a grievance settlement, usually money, and then never effecting that settlement--what does the regime say about that?; grieve it (what and wait years to most

likely not get what you already have been promised). The holiday grievance is a prime example. We grieved it, were justified by arbitration decision, were given a settlement (less than what was requested and defined up front in the JCAM) at step3--50% more for those brought in improperly (4 hours pay each day), the Postmaster refused to pay the settlement even though it was approximately 1/3 of what should have been accepted as defined in the JCAM and accepted unilaterally at national as the defined settlement in such cases, the Union local filed a grievance for the denial by the Postal Service to effect the settlement, the grievance for the penalty reduced the original settlement (step 3) to 20 dollars per violation including penalty. Analysis: if the JCAM were followed each violation would have yielded 12 to 16 hours of pay per violation; if the step 3 decision were followed 4 hours of pay would have been paid per violation; the revisit of the original grievance which I might add is not allowed under article 15 (dealing in good faith) yielded 20 dollars per violation approximately 1 hour pay (including the penalty of ?). If the Union Local can be railroaded into violating article 15 just because the Postmaster doesn't want to pay for the Postal Service's willful violations of the contract then the grievance procedure is "moot"/ powerless. Speaking of "moot", no grievance is moot if it has merit regardless of the status of the grievant at the current time--if the grievant was employed at the time of the violation; many grievance issues have been dropped under this misconception at step 2.

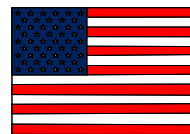
The next mystery is where is the Labor Charge filed allegedly (never any response from the Labor Board ever offered) by the Union Local President on April 29, 1999 for failure to provide Union time, information, and access to employees. We've received several conflicting responses concerning this filing: "it's been deferred" (never verified by any documentation), "I don't know", "why don't you call the Labor Board" (The Labor Board will Not discuss current charges).

The last issue I wish to cover is the cause and effect of a complaint about step 2 processes yielding the effect of stacked discipline against the complainant issued by the Postal Service; what's the connection between step 2 of the Union Local and allegedly separate management action in the form of discipline? I wonder if my third round of this (stacked discipline) is going to come out of this article?

If you want to know what's going on with your grievances address your inquiry to the Union Local President and if dissatisfied with that response speak to the Business Agent's Office.

Still swinging and kicking, even with my hands and feet tied,

Shop Steward Terry Hall



TO: MEMBERS BRANCH 2462

THE FOLLOWING IS A REPORT OF THE BUDGET COMMITTEE.

THE COMMITTEE MEETING WAS HELD ON MONDAY JANUARY 8, 2001, TO

PURPOSE THE BUDGET FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR 2001. THOSE COMMITTEE

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE WERE:

ROBERT JOHNSON	FINANCIAL SECRETARY
VELMA McCLINTON	TREASURER
FRANK BRASH	TRUSTEE

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE WERE:

ROGER ASKEW	PRESIDENT
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BUDGET ESTIMATE JANUARY 2001 THRU DECEMBER 2001

ESTIMATED INCOME:

Regular Members	440 at \$ 442.52	\$ 194708.80
Retiree's	115 at \$ 18.00	\$ 2070.00
NALC. Health Benefit Reimbursement		\$ 150.00
Interest		\$ 3000.00
Other Income (i.e. - MBA.)		\$ 100.00
TOTAL INCOME		\$ 200028.80

JANUARY 2001 THRU DECEMBER 2001

ESTIMATE EXPENDITURES: BUDGET 00 SPENT 00 BUDGET 2001

NALC. Per Capita Tax:
lar Members

Regu-

440 at \$ 147.94	\$ 61432.81	\$	\$ 65093.60
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Retiree's:			
115 at \$ 7.00	\$ 805.00	\$	\$ 805.00

State Per Capita Tax:

Regular Members			
440 at \$ 6.00	\$ 2640.00	\$	\$ 2640.00

Retiree's:			
115 at \$.50	\$ 57.50	\$	\$ 57.50

ESTIMATE EXPENDITURES:	BUDGET 00		SPENT 00		BUDGET 2001
1) Contingency Fund (440 @ 2.00 x 26 pay periods)	\$	22880.00	\$	27038.50	\$ 22880.00
2) Contingency Fund Retiree's (115 @ .50 x 26 pay periods)	\$	1495.00	\$	1443.50	\$ 1495.00
3) Branch Officer's Salary	\$	24000.00	\$	24000.00	\$ 24000.00
4) The Mail-Call	\$	4500.00	\$	3722.60	\$ 4500.00
5) Mail-Permit (includes postage)	\$	1500.00	\$	1608.19	\$ 1800.00
6) Postage Expense	\$	1000.00	\$	788.59	\$ 1000.00
12) Retired Men's Night	\$	2000.00	\$	1182.74	\$ 2000.00
13) Installation Dinner	\$	xx	\$	xx	\$ 2000.00
14) Branch Telephones	\$	1300.00	\$	1259.77	\$ 1500.00
15) Bond for Officer's	\$	150.00	\$	145.00	\$ 150.00
16) Office Supplies	\$	1500.00	\$	921.49	\$ 1300.00
17) Labor-Management Meetings	\$	600.00	\$	xx	\$ 600.00
18) Refreshments	\$	500.00	\$	401.61	\$ 500.00
19) Donations	\$	600.00	\$	400.00	\$ 600.00
20) Equipment Repairs	\$	1000.00	\$	1358.15	\$ 1500.00
21) Equipment Purchase	\$	1000.00	\$	443.26	\$ 1500.00
22) Election Expense	\$	xx	\$	xx	\$ 1500.00
23) Miscellaneous Expense	\$	100.00	\$	99.24	\$ 100.00
24) Public Relations	\$	500.00	\$	183.09	\$ 300.00
25) Station Expense	\$	1600.00	\$	1500.00	\$ 1800.00
26) Educational & Training	\$	7000.00	\$	3624.29	\$ 6000.00
27) Publications	\$	150.00	\$	42.65	\$ 100.00
28) Local Negotiations	\$	1500.00	\$	1141.83	\$ xx
29) Members Appreciation Fund	\$	12000.00	\$	15500.00	\$ 12000.00
30) Lost Time Account	\$	11000.00	\$	16150.00	\$ 15000.00
31) Insurance Cost	\$	700.00	\$	680.00	\$ 800.00
32) Office Rental	\$	18360.00	\$	18534.00	\$ 20000.00
33) Gas Utility	\$	300.00	\$	277.91	\$ 500.00
34) Food Drive	\$	850.00	\$	607.33	\$ 700.00
35) Ray Kreyer Award	\$	550.00	\$	635.15	\$ 550.00
36) C.O.A. (mail-call)	\$	25.00	\$	9.47	\$ 25.00
37) Death Benefit	\$	xx	\$	235.00	\$ xx
38) Mileage (.32 PER MILE)	\$	250.00	\$	144.00	\$ 300.00
39) MBA	\$	425.00	\$	418.08	\$ 450.00
40) Electric Utility	\$	1300.00	\$	980.09	\$ 1300.00
41) Dues & Membership Expense	\$	650.00	\$	608.44	\$ 650.00
42) Janitorial	\$	900.00	\$	900.00	\$ 900.00
43) Photo's & Xeroxing	\$	150.00	\$	195.35	\$ 150.00
44) Membership Drawing	\$	100.00	\$	xx	\$ 100.00
45) Bass Calendars - 1998	\$	1400.00	\$	1320.00	\$ 1500.00
46) Christmas Open House	\$	1300.00	\$	830.83	\$ 1300.00
47) Independent Medical Exam	\$	xx	\$		\$ xx
48) Organizing	\$	250.00	\$		\$ 300.00