

THE MAIL CALL



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PRESIDENT'S REPORT **By Calvin Brookins**

Doing your job by the book

We must do our jobs by the book day in and day out. When I say by the book I am referring to the M-41 Handbook and National Agreement. If you do your job by the book you should never find yourself in trouble regarding your performance. You should do your job everyday as if you are being inspected, that way if you do get inspected you will be prepared.

Management is trying to capture under-time. The problem is, if management thinks that your route has under-time and you say you don't, in some cases you may still be required to deliver mail from another route. If you are forced to work overtime in this situation then a violation of Article 8 has occurred.

If you are a non-OTDL carrier and are required to work overtime on your own assignment, all OTDL carriers and PTF's must work 10 hours. If you are a non-OTDL or on the Work Assignment List (WAL) and are forced to work overtime on an assignment other than yours, all OTDL, PTF and casual carriers must work 12 hours.

See your shop steward or call the union office if you believe a violation has occurred.

NALC Legislative Activist

By the time you receive this issue of the MailCall we will be well on our way with stand-ups at every station in an effort to sign up as many letter carriers as possible to become an NALC Legislative Activist. Kim Sega has been assigned to Region number one by President William H. Young to assist National Business Agent Dale Hart in reaching as many letter carriers as possible. Kim and I had our first two stand-ups in Van Nuys Main Office and Sherman Oaks on November 7, 2003, we will be in Civic Center and Panorama City on November 17, and the other three offices will be scheduled for stand-ups as well.

It is very critical that every member of the NALC get involved in the Reform battle. The NALC is asking every letter carrier to sign up and become an NALC Legislative Activist. All you have to do is fill out a card and have your name added to the NALC Data-base. When the NALC calls, be prepared to contact your members of Congress by writing a letter, sending an E-mail or making a phone call. Remember it is your job, pay and benefits that you're trying to protect. To become a

Legislative Activist see your shop steward or call the union office.

As President William H. Young has said, "We cannot do this without you; we need each and every one of you".

"We need the help of all letter carriers to assist the union in continuing its historic mission of defending letter carrier wages, working conditions and job security because the battle to save the Postal Service has just begun."

(Continued on Page 2)

SPECIAL NOTICE **NO BRANCH MEETING** **IN DECEMBER**

INSTEAD !!!!



BRANCH 2462
HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE
FRIDAY EVENING
DECEMBER 12, 2003
AT
SHAKEY'S PIZZA
8210 SEPULVEDA BLVD
Panorama City
BEGINS 5:30 P.M.
DINNER AT 6:00 P.M.
FREE FOOD
FREE DRINK
DOOR PRIZES FOR MEMBERS
LOTS OF FUN FOR ALL

"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.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

(Continued from Page 1)

As President of Branch 2462 I urge all members of this branch to get involved and sign up as an NALC Legislative Activist.

ATTENDANCE CHART BRANCH MEETINGS

MONTH	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N
MAIN OFFICE	2	20	4	5	4	2	2	3	5	3	4
ENCINO	6	7	6	6	5	4	6	5	6	6	6
CIVIC CENTER	1	2	1	1	1	1	3	2	1	1	1
PANORAMA CITY	3	4	4	4	5	6	5	5	4	5	4
SHERMAN OAKS	8	6	4	5	5	6	4	6	6	6	4
SUN VALLEY	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	2
TARZANA	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2
RETIREE'S	3	5	5	4	6	5	4	6	5	6	5
TOTAL	27	47	28	29	30	27	27	31	31	31	28

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

**NEXT MEETING
6:30 PM**

**JANUARY
6th**

"2004"

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

December 4 , 2003

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

"RETIREE CORNER"

Our Breakfast Meeting will be held at Coco's (Located at 16835 Sherman Way, Corner of Sherman Way & Balboa). Please note that this is a new Date! It will begin at 09:00 AM. The date for the next 2 Breakfasts will be November 15, and December 20, 2003 (3rd Saturday) So, please mark your calendar.....We hope to see you there.

Thank You

Frank Brash

AUTOMATIC COLCPE

Voluntary withholding for COLCPE is now available using PostalEASE System. As I informed you in the October issue of the MailCall a letter from NALC President William H. Young has been mailed to all active members with information on how they can contribute to NALC's Committee on Letter Carriers Political Education (COLCPE) through payroll deductions. Easy to follow instructions appear on the reverse of the letter, advising NALC members to use PostalEASE to initiate voluntary withholding of COLCPE contributions. I suggest that any who have not signed up for COLCPE contributions using PostalEASE should consider doing so immediately.

COLA

The projected accumulation for the third of eight regular cost-of-living adjustments under the 2001-2006 National Agreement stands at \$223.60. The \$223.60 annual increase equals 10.75 cents per hour or \$8.60 per pay period.
Penalty Overtime Exclusion

The December period during which penalty overtime regulations are not applicable will begin December 6, 2003 and end January 2, 2004. This does not mean that management does not have to follow the provisions of Article 8 of the National Agreement and the Letter Carrier Paragraph. This only means that if management works a carrier past 10 hours, those hours above 10 hours will only be paid at the regular overtime rate instead of penalty overtime rate. However if you are not on the Overtime Desired List or the Work Assignment List management should follow all of the provisions of Article 8 prior to mandating you to work overtime.

Retiree Luncheon

This past October we had another successful Retiree Luncheon, there was a Gold Card presented to Robert Kurzhals who has reached the 50-year plateau as a member of the NALC. Regional Administrative Assistant Joan Hurst presented the Gold Card to brother Kurzhals. Also at the Retirees Luncheon we announced this years recipient of the Ray Kreyer award, which was presented to Trustee Gloria Henry.

I would like to give a special THANK YOU to retiree Frank Brash for all of his effort in putting this event together. He did a wonderful job as usual so be sure to thank Frank when you see him.

In closing I would like to thank the membership for their support through out this year. I would also like to wish all of the members of Branch 2462 and their families a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Please be safe.

In Unionism

HEALTH PLAN REPORT

by
JANETTE DOLABSON
BRANCH 2462--H B R

Dear union brothers and sisters, From November 10th to December 8th is open season. This is the time of year when we have the chance to change health plans. I would like you to consider choosing the NALC Health Plan. I truly feel it is your best choice. I recently returned from a Health Benefit seminar in Las Vegas and would like to take a moment to tell you some things about this plan. It is very competitive. Our National Director of Health Benefit Plan Tom Young and his staff have work long and hard to keep this plan affordable and continue to carry an excellent rating with the Consumer Assessment of Health Plans Study. You will have a hard time finding a plan that rates higher. That says a lot about the members happiness with this plan. Any Federal employee may join this plan. All you have to be is a dues paying member of the NALC.. You will all be receiving, in the mail, information regarding this plan . Please read it.

The NALC Health Plan will have some changes for 2004 so I will mention a few. Firstly the new Bi-weekly out of pocket cost for active members will be \$29.76 for self and \$42.75 for family. For annuitants it will be \$111.98 for self and \$201.03 for family. New cards will be issued by June 2004 that will have new identification numbers on them that will not be your Social Security number. However your SS number will be the one used to access your information when you call. This change was necessary for security reasons.

Security is really being monitored in the health care industry with the implementation of the new Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act,(H.I.P.A.A.). This rule generally prohibits the health plan from discussing any of your personal information with anyone other than you or someone that you have designated as your personal representative. You must fill out an authorization form and have it on file with the health plan for all those you wish to have access to that information. That includes me as your Health Benefits Representative for this Branch. If you need me to help you with anything regarding your benefits I will have to one of those on file with the plan so I may call on your behalf. I can not call for you unless I am listed there. If you have any questions about this please give me a call at (661) 373-2224.

One of the best services that this NALC Health Plan offers is called the Care Patterns Program. Anyone who has a disease such as, Diabetes, Heart Disease Peptic ulcers, etc., can enroll in this program. Educational pieces will be mailed to you that will help you manage the disease and you will get calls from Caremark Care nurses, registered nurses and periodic assessments to track your progress. Call 1(866) 447-6393 if you are interested in any of these programs. This is just one of the numerous benefits that this exceptional plan offers. Please I urge all of you to consider joining this plan during this open season period. All you need to do is fill out a PS form 2809 and put in code #32 on the line asking for the Health Plan code you are selecting and then turn it into your personnel office. If you want me to send it to you I certainly will. I will even turn it into personnel if you wish. Thank you so much for the opportunity to serve you as your Health Benefit Representative.

In unionism

DISTRICT EAP ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a fringe benefit that some employees need, but hesitate to use. Why ? If it weren't confidential, would the union support it ?

At the national level, postal management, the NALC and the APWU have all bought into EAP. The Van Nuys EAP Advisory Committee meets periodically to oversee efforts to make employees aware of the available services.

John Sanchez, NALC Branch 4006 President and District EAP Advisory Committee Member says, "It's wholeheartedly supported by the NALC and the APWU as well as management. Services are provided by a private company, Magellan, benefiting all postal employees-and their families-with whatever their needs are. People tend to forget about that. EAP goes far beyond the scope of just drugs and alcohol. There's family counseling, financial planning, work related problems...And it's not related to management. It's a private contractor."

Yoggi Riley, District Mailing Requirements Clerk, and District EAP Advisory Committee member, agrees. "I wholeheartedly support and endorse the EAP program as it has become. Counseling sessions (with private contracted counselors) are completely private and beneficial to the employee using the service."

Although counseling is off the clock, EAP is free for postal employees and their families.

Help is just a phone call away.

BRANCH MINUTES (Continued from Page 6)

MOTION--Branch hold the Open House at Shakeys Pizza, in Panorama City on December 12, 2003 from 6pm to 9 pm M/S/C
MOTION--The Executive Board be empowered to conduct any and all business of the Branch from November 5, 2003 through January 5, 2004 M/S/C
UNDERLINE= UNANIMOUS

COLCPE DRAWING
\$ 4 JEFF JACKSON--PANORAMA CITY
\$ 5 JEFF JACKSON--PANORAMA CITY
\$ 5 TED DeMAIRE--RETIREE--DONATE
\$ 7 KAREN AGUILAR--PANORAMA CITY

The Branch was presented with a framed display case with all the Convention medals since 1958. Thanks to ROGER and TISA ASKEW for their time and work on this display. It will be hung in the Branch Office for all to see.

MEETING ADJOURNED 8:30 p.m.

2004 CARL J, SAXSENMEIER SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The California State Association of Letter Carriers (CSALC) is now accepting applications for Saxsenmeier Scholarship Program. All applications must be sent to the scholarship committee Chair by January 16, 2004. The committee will send the Scholarship Packets to all applications by the end of February, 2004. Completed packets must be returned to the Chair by April 9, 2004. The scholarships, available to the dependent children of members of NALC Branches within the State of California who have not served in a supervisory capacity in the previous two (2) years from the date of 2004 award announcement. Applicant's parent must be a member in good standing of the NALC for at least one year prior to making application. Applicant must be a high school senior when making application. ALL requested information must be received by the Scholarship Chair by April 9, 2004

Applications are to be mailed to:

Donald Carnerie--Saxsenmeier Scholarship Chair
2674 Luna Avenue--San Diego, CA 92117
858-273-2345
dccdon@aol.com

Saxsenmeier Scholarship Application (Please Print)

Applicant's Name _____

NALC Member Name _____

Home Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Home Telephone _____

Other Cell/Pager/Fax _____

Email Address _____

Applicant's Signature _____

NALC Member Signature _____ Relationship to Applicant _____

Local NALC Branch Officer Signature required for verification of member in good standing:

Branch Officer Signature _____ Title _____

Branch Number _____ Branch City _____ Date _____

@

@APPLICATION DEADLINE---JANUARY 16, 2004

VICE PRESIDENTS REPORT

ART BOCEK

Compensation for Death

If no child is eligible for benefits, the widow or widower's compensation is 50% of the employee's pay at the time of death, if death was due to the employment-related injury or disease. If a child or children are eligible for benefits, the widow or widower is entitled to 45% of the pay and each child is entitled to 15%. If children are the sole survivors, 40% is paid for the first child and 15% for each additional child, to be shared equally. Other persons such as dependent parents, brothers, sisters, grandparents, and grandchildren may also be entitled to benefits. The total compensation may not exceed 75% of the employee's pay or the pay of the highest step for GS-15 of the General Schedule, except when such excess is created by authorized cost-of-living increases.

Compensation to an employee's surviving spouse terminates upon his or her death or remarriage. Widow or widower's benefits continue however, if the remarriage takes place after the age of 55. Awards to children, brothers, sisters, and grandchildren terminate at the age of 18, unless the dependent is incapable of self-support, or continues to be a full-time student at an accredited institution, until he or she reaches the age of 23, or has completed four years of education beyond the high school level.

Burial expenses not to exceed \$800 are payable. Transportation of the body to the employee's former residence in the United States is provided where death occurs away from the employee's home station. In addition to any burial expenses or transportation costs, a \$200 allowance is paid for the administrative costs of terminating an employee's status with the Federal Government.

TERRY HALL Shop Steward VNMO

WATCH WHAT YOU SAY

Once again we find management duping carriers into revealing facts without any kind of due process. You should be aware that anytime management asks you for your story or "what happened" you are being subjected to an investigative interview and you should remain silent until your REQUESTED steward is present. All too often stewards walk in to an investigative interview where they find that management has already done an investigation as described above and they tailor the "new" questions to fit the already known elements that they choose to pursue. The steward's ability to represent you has been flushed since you revealed information inappropriately under management's guise of just being interested and / or concerned. We all know by now that management is not concerned about anything except exercising their autocratic position and protecting their budget (AKA. bonus program). Whenever you are asked to explain or describe anything your first question should be: "could this lead in any way to any negative action for you or anyone else?". If management states yes or even seems to be telling you inaccurately that it will not, immediately request a steward and stick to your guns until that steward is present--don't say anything. If management demands you speak, do so saying, "I'll answer as soon as you provide my steward". If management claims they are only giving you a discussion, remain silent for them to inform you; but, as soon as they ask a question the discussion has risen to the level of an investigative interview and your next statement should be

"I'm requesting a steward before I can answer". When you find yourself in the office with your steward or anywhere else for that matter, your steward shall represent you proficiently which includes clarifications, advice, and defense if necessary. You may say "defense?". Yes, since we have all been in the typical fact finding interview where management "sets" the facts accusing you and then asks you to explain; your steward should immediately intervene and request management to ask questions to get to facts rather than forcing the employee to attempt to defend themselves from management's preconceived accusation that leaves no latitude to actually investigate and obtain factual information.

MEDICAL INFORMATION

Frequently management tries to gain access to your private medical information under the false claim that "they need to know". One thing you should always remember, if management is asking for a release there is only one reason for that request---they want to use your medical records to act against you and possibly fire you. NEVER give management any type of medical release. If management needs information concerning your on the job injury, then they can petition the Department of Labor (DOL) for the alleged necessary information. As your insurance provider the DOL is bound by the new HIPPA regulations that require specific information only to be shared and only as a matter of processing a claim. If the DOL believes there is a bonifide "need" for the information they (the DOL) will contact you to get a proper and specific release that complies with HIPPA regulation and ask you to sign---EVEN then you don't have to give the release. HIPPA also forbids the Postal Medical Unit or any Supervisor from discussing anything with your M.D. unless you have previously given a written HIPPA compliant medical release to your M.D. Beware of those generic forms used by management as they commonly have an imbedded and undefined medical release. Some forms have statements like: "This allows the PMO to talk to your M.D. about the leave", or "The medical provider has requested us to get this release" (bunk!). I repeat myself, NEVER give management any kind of release.

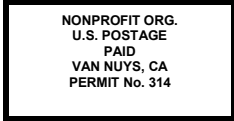
HOW HONEST IS VAN NUYS

I'll let you decide. For a couple of months now I've noticed that frequently UBBM, kills, and CFS have been recycled back through the dps mail some pieces as many as ten times. let's analyze this. If you increase the numbers of pieces in the DPS artificially like this the results are: a better DPS ratio ((%); productivity looks better as there seems to be higher volume; you save man hours at your office and at CFS; CFS's productivity looks much greater; and the big one--if you sum all this up the budget and bonus looks great.

Another common anomaly is that even though you are scrutinized daily about your driving and safety, we see daily the supervisors, managers and even the Postmaster violate the same cited rules with no accountability for their improper and unsafe actions. Further if you exercise your right to report these violations via a 1767, management either ignores the form, denies the infraction(s), or takes reprisals against the reporter. Always report without anonymity as then you can defend the fact they knew you reported it and acted in malice against you in reprisal. Ponder This.

"THE MAIL CALL" BRANCH 2462, NALC

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



Address Service Requested

PRESIDENT BROOKIN's Recipient of the 2004 RAY KREYER AWARD is GLORIA HENRY. We will be having 15 minute standups at all the stations regarding the Legis-

Branch Meeting Minutes November 5, 2003

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 CALVIN BROOKINS at 6:30 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by SGT-AT-ARMS ROGER ASKEW
MOMENT OF SILENCE--In memory of all military personnel who have lost their lives since our last meeting.

ROLL CALL OF OFFICERS

PRESENT--BROOKINS, BOCEK, SEYFRIED, McCLINTON, JOHNSON, HENRY, JACKSON, MULLINAX, ASKEW, DOLABSON, HALL

ABSENT--NONE

MINUTES ACCEPTED AS PRINTED IN MAILCALL

CORRESPONDENCE READ

MOTION TO PAY BILLS M/S/C

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP
FRENDA URIBE

COMMITTEE REPORTS

TRUSTEES All is well
SAFETY & HEALTH Still doing street observations so remember to work and drive in a safe manner at all times.

RETIREES 5 present tonight. Retiree luncheon was held on Sunday, October 19th. at Encino Glen beginning and a good time was had by all. About 91 attended and the affair came in \$ 150.00 under budget. Congratulations to all the Retirees who were honored. Last months Breakfast saw 16 retirees attend. On the Sick list we have MONTY MOORMAN.

COLCPE \$ 426.25 in the fund
DISTRICT 6--McCLINTON Legislative Training class at Branch 24 had to be canceled because of the fires. We will wait to see when they will be rescheduled. Today was election day, mostly for school boards and Community College Trustees. Food strike still continues, Picket lines have been removed from Ralph's market but we are still supporting the Clerks on Strike.

HBR DOLABSON Health Seminar was very interesting. There will be an article in the December MailCall. If you have any questions call the Branch office and I will contact you.

FINANCIAL SECRETARY REPORT---JOHNSON

TREASURERS REPORT--McCLINTON

VICE-PRESIDENT BOCEK Waiting for Rancho San Antonio to open up their 2004 calendar.

lative Activist program. A representative from the national NALC will be giving these. Calendars have been sent to all stations, see your shop steward if you have not received one. Retirees may request a calendar by calling the Branch office. Spring Presidents meeting will be held in St. Louis. We have a new landlord for the Branch office, rent and lease will remain in effect. We had very good communications with management during the fires. If you were unable to get to work because of the fires contact your shop steward immediately to get your paper work filled out correctly for wages lost. We will be having a shop steward election in SUN VALLEY, it will be conducted by the Election Committee at a date to be announced. An agreement has been worked out with the Postmaster to allow those Carriers in CFS to have their own annual leave board. 3rd COLA is projected at \$ 223.60. Holiday overtime exclusion on penalty overtime will begin on December 6, 2003 and end January 2, 2004.

OLD BUSINESS--NOMINATIONS FOR DELEGATES

The following members were nominated to be Delegates to the State and National Conventions.

CALVIN BROOKINS	ART BOCEK
STEVE SEYFRIED	VELMA McCLINTON
ROBERT JOHNSON	GLORIA HENRY
JEFF JACKSON	TRACY MULLINAX
ROGER ASKEW	JANETTE DOLABSON
TERRY HALL	BOB ENZ
CLIFF KELLY	LEE FENSTERMACHER
KEVIN DONOHUE	JAMES TUKESBREY
LARRY DOLABSON	TEENAMARIE
GALLEGOS	
JEFF AUSLANDER	RICK REIMER
DAN RATHBONE	IRWIN SCHNYDER
FRANK BRASH	KAREN AGUILAR
ED CARLIN	TIA WILSON
HARRY BRENNEMAN	JULIUS RIBAS

EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES READ

MOTION--Branch secure the assured shredding company to shred the Branch files. Cost not to exceed \$ 150.00

M/S/C
MOTION--Branch donate \$ 100.00 to the Turkeys and Toys program

M/S/C
MOTION--Branch donate \$ 100.00 to the United Methodist church of Sepulveda Thanksgiving Fund M/S/C

MOTION--Branch donate \$ 100.00 to the Van Nuys Salvation Army for Christmas M/S/C

MOTION--Branch donate \$ 200.00 to the American Red Cross for Fire Relief Fund M/S/C

(Continued on Page 5)