THE MAIL CALL



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PRESIDENT'S REPORT By Calvin Brookins

AT THE CONVENTION:

MEW ROUTE ADJUSTMENT PROCESS

After a lengthy discussion of the many problems of the current postal service system of route adjustments and evaluations, delegates at the convention by voice vote overwhelmingly authorized the NALC Executive Council to develop a better system for the future.

President Young explained that a better system of route adjustments would be based on taking an average of a letter carrier's street time and office time over a specified period of weeks or months selected by the union.

This will work by averaging the letter carrier's office time, averaging his/her street time. That is their time, no deductions, no nothing, whatever time it took you to do your route during that specified period, that is what you get.

President Young went on to state, in that system there will be no holding back mail by management during designated weeks of inspection, but also no regulating of performance by carriers. "It is what it is," he said.

Another priority would be to protect local joint processes that are successful, but emphasized that a national process must be developed to protect letter carriers that are being abused by management. President Young reiterated that this is not an evaluated route process pointing to a 1994 convention action that placed the union on record against evaluated routes.

I am hopeful that we can get a better, fairer system; because I for one have always believed that our current route adjustment system totally sucks. President Young also commented on DOIS he said that the volume verification confirmed that DOIS was deeply flawed but stated that the postal service was committed to it. So we've got to make it right. In other words we need to help fix it. I just hope everyone at the national level the NALC and USPS understand that you have fix dois at the plant as well as the stations as far as mail volume is concern.

DELEGATES VOTE TO SEEK EARLY OUT

On a voice vote on the last day of the convention, delegates adopted a legislative resolution supported by the Executive Council calling for the NALC to seek approval from the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) for an early out for letter carriers under certain circumstances.



BRANCH 2462 RETIREE "NITE"

SUNDAY AFTERNOON

OCTOBER 17, 2004

ENCINO GLEN RESTAURANT

16821 Burbank Blvd. Encino, California

Doors Open 1:00 PM

Price is \$ 5.00

Retiree's and Active Carriers are Welcome For Further Information Contact the

> FRANK BRASH (818) 785-7336 Union Office

The resolution seeks early-outs for letter carriers with (1) 25 years of service regardless of age, and (2) 20 years service and 50 years of age. Right now the

union will seek the approval from OPM at that time more details will be revealed and as I find out more information about any kind of early out I will pass it on to the membership.

There were other resolutions adopted by the convention concerning the next National Agreement included those seeking contract language to:

(Continued on Page 2)

ppp

"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.

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ATTENDANCE CHART BRANCH MEETINGS

MONTH	J	F	М	Α	M	J	J	Α	S	0	Ν
MAIN OFFICE ENCINO CIVIC CENTER PANORAMA CITY SHERMAN OAKS SUN VALLEY TARZANA RETIREE'S	4 8 1 4 5 0 2 5	4 7 1 4 2 2 6	5 1 2 4	5 6 1 6 9 2 2 5	5 1 4 4 2 1	5 2 3 4 2	6 2 5 5	5 2 5 4 2			
TOTAL	29	28	23 :	36 2	26 2	25 2	29 2	9			

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

> NEXT MEETING 6:30 PM

SEPTEMBER 7th "2004"

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

September 7, 2004

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

"RETIREE CORNER"

Our Breakfast Meeting will be held at Cocos Restaurant, 16835 Sherman Way (Corner of Sherman Way and Balboa). It will begin at 09:00 AM. The date for the next 2 will be August 28th. and September 25,2004 (4th Saturday) So, please mark your calendar.....We hope to see you there.

Thank You

Frank Brash

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

(Continued from Page 1)

>Require an 88 percent full-time workforce in all 200 work-year (or more) installations, and reinstate language requiring the USPS to maximize full-time employment even where that ratio has been achieved.

>Require USPS to combine auxiliary routes to create full-time position.

>Develop jointly with USPS a simple, accurate overtime-tracking system.

>Permit all career postal employees to donate leave regardless of geographic area or postal district.

>Permit letter carriers to reverse identification badges when wearing them on the street to protect their full names from public view.

AFLCIO delegates elected, as follows Vincent R. Sombrotto Br 36 NY, Anita Guzik Br 24 LA, Denise Brooks Br 1433 Medford OR, Prissy Grace Br 283 Houston TX, Phillip Wilkes Br 11 Chicago, Andrew Petersen Br. 47 Denver, Ingrid Armada Br 15 Providence RI.

This convention was dedicated to the late Sam Hipa, the convention opened with a tribute to the late Hawaiian NALC leader who passed away January 29th. of this year. Sam Hipa was very instrumental in bringing this convention to Honolulu this year.

Delegates at the convention also voted to endorse the Kerry-Edward ticket for President and Vice President of the US.

COLA

The Projected accumulation for the fourth of eight regular cost-of-living adjustments under the 2001-2006 National Agreement increased to \$696.80 following the release of the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) for July. The \$696.80 annual accumulation equals 33 cents per hour or \$26.80 per pay-period.

LEE FENSTERMACHER

Lee is a long time member of the NALC branch 2462, he has been retired for 28 years now, at the convention Lee did something that was very moving to the whole delegation. He stood at the microphone and attempted to read a statement that he had prepared and to present a check to COLCPE in the amount of \$2800.00. What Lee was doing was donating \$100.00 for each year that he has been retired from the postal service. He received a standing ovation from the delegation and he was allowed to go on to the platform and present his check to President Young.

We can all hope that we will make it 30 plus years to retirement, but to be able to enjoy retirement for 28 years is something altogether different. On behalf of the Executive board and the entire membership of branch 2462 I would like to congratulate Lee Fenstermacher on not just his retirement but also the length of his retirement. I wish you well Lee and hope you have many more years of enjoyment.

I would also like to thank Recording Secretary Steve Seyfried for stepping up to the microphone and helping Brother Fenstermacher read his statement to the delegation as it was very emotional for Lee which is understandable. Steve did a wonderful job in helping a fellow union brother get through a very emotional period.

VICE PRESIDENTS REPORT ART BOCEK

Top Ten USPS Violations regarding OWCP

- 1. Failing to provide a CA-16 in the case of traumatic injuries
- 2. Providing a CA-2a instead of a CA-1 or CA-2
- 3. Failing to provide a "receipt" for submitted CA-1 or CA-2 to OWCP
- 4. Delaying forwarding of CA-1 or CA-2 to OWCP
- 5. Failing to provide completed copy of CA-1 or CA-2
- 6. Contacting a carrier's physician in person or by phone
- 7. Failing to provide copy of written contact with physician to carrier and OWCP
- 8. Failing to provide employee notice of conversion and challenge information
- 9. Failing to advise carrier of right to select a physician of his or her choice
- 10. Delaying forwarding of CA-7 to OWCP

We all know that the USPS is driven by "The Numbers" or "The Budget." Now after seeing how management deals in affording you with your rights after becoming injured, each and every time management "Fails" in providing you with your rights, you need to file both a grievance and an EEO Complaint under "Code of Federal Regulations" (CFR's) in order for management to not only see "the numbers" affecting the "the budget" but also "Feel the Harm."

USPS Contacta a Carriers Physician in Person/Phone

Both Postal and OWCP regulations allow the USPS to contact an injured worker's physician, in writing, regarding work limitations and possible job assignments. The same regulations specifically prohibit the employer from contacting the physician by phone or in person. They are as follows:

20 CFR 10.506 states:

To aid in returning an injured employee to suitable employment, the employer may also contact the employee's physician in writing concerning the work limitations imposed by the effects of the injury and possible job assignments. However, the employer shall not contact the physician by telephone or through personal visits.

ELM 545.52 states:

To aid in returning an injured employee to suitable employment, the control office or control point may also contact the employee's physician in writing concerning the work limitations imposed by the effects of the injury and possible job assignments. However, Federal Employees Compensation Act (FECA) prohibits contacting the physician by phone or through personal visit except for administrative purposes such as determining whether a fax has been received or ascertaining the date of a medical appointment.

Failure to Copies of Written Contacts with Physician

When an employer does contact a physician in writing, it must send a copy of the correspondence to the injured employee and to OWCP. In addition, if the physician responds the employer must send copies of the response to the injured employee and OWCP.

USPS all to often does not provide the required copies to OWCP and the injured employee. This causes many disputes regarding limited duty, work restriction and are often more difficult to resolve because the injured employee is not aware about the communications. Also the employee needs to know immediately if the UPS directs inappropriate questions to a physician. Employers are limited to questions about work limitations and possible job assignments. It would be inappro-

priate for the USPS to write to a physician demanding medical; justification for recommended surgery. Again, the injured employee who learns promptly about such errors will be in a better position to correct them.

20 CFR 10.506 states:

When [written] contact is made, the employer <u>shall</u> send a copy of any such correspondence to <u>OWCP and the employee</u>, <u>as well as a copy of the physician's response when received.</u>

ELM 544.12 states:

The control office <u>must provide the employee a copy</u> of ... all correspondence between the Postal Service and treating physician.

ELM 545.52 states:

A copy of all written correspondence to the employee's physician and any response received <u>must</u> be sent to OWCP and the employee.

EL 505 Section 6.3 states:

Send copies of such correspondence to the employee and to OWCP District Office, and forward copies of the physician's response to both, once it has been received.

"The more you sweat in learning your rights, the less you will bleed in the battle against management."

NALC NATIONAL PRESIDENT BILL YOUNG (L)
ACCEPTS A CHECK IN THE AMOUNT OF
\$ 2800.00 FOR COLCPE
FROM BRANCH 2462 GOLD CARD MEMBER
LEE FENSTERMACHER
AT THE 2004 NATIONAL CONVENTION IN HONOLULU,
HAWAII

NALC Health Plan Update by Janette Dolabson HBR

Dear Union Brothers and Sisters. As I entered the Health Benefit Breakfast/Workshop at the 2004 convention I wanted to hear from National how I could get more members interested in this outstanding health plan. Tom Young, Director of Health Benefit Plan, wondered how many members of our Branch Executive Boards were members of this plan themselves. So did I. I came back and asked them. I also asked those who were not, why they were not enrolled in this plan. It seemed that opened a big can of worms. Some had concerns about the deductibles that they have to pay every year that they don't have to with their HMO's. Or some said that it was too expensive a by-weekly deduction for them. Some had health care through their spouses work. What ever the reason given I wondered to myself, 'these are the people in the branch who most care about union issues, who boycott non union businesses, who only stay at union hotels when traveling. Yet, when it comes to supporting the union Health Plan there was only two of them that chose to, other then myself, to be a member of this plan. So this is my challenge. How do I get new enrollees in this plan if I can't even get the Executive Board behind it? The answer is through information and Education. I am going to over the next couple months, before Open Season, give you information and educate you about the NALC Health Plan.

The NALC Health Benefit Plan is a Managed Care Program. The term "managed care" usually makes you think of an HMO. HMO's are known to place profits in front of the welfare of their patients. However, managed care is not always a bad thing. It can provide balance that is important in providing strength to any Health Plan. The NALC Plan is a PPO, (Preferred Provider Organization Network). The network offers its enrollees a wide and comprehensive variety of Primary care doctors, specialists, labs, and hospitals. However, you do not have to use the network. You may choose a doctor outside of the network but you would then pay for the regular benefits rather then the lower negotiated benefits of the network doctors. You do not have to have referrals to go see a specialist like you do with an HMO. You can call them and go see them whenever you want without going to your primary doctor first.

Yes, yes, yes, there is a deductible. Sorry, that is how it works. However, you do not prepay your deductible up front every year as some were under the impression. It's like car insurance. If you have a claim, you pay the deductible except with this you only pay until the deductible is met and then vou don't after that. For example, you go to the doctor for an illness and the doctor charges 200 dollars. You pay your \$20.00 copay and the doctor then bills the insurance company. The insurance sends you a bill for what you need to pay. Usually the bill will tell you total charges minus your co-pay minus the negotiated rate which was probably 20% and then give you your balance towards your deductible. So lets say the negotiated amount that First Health has gotten with this doctor is 20%. That would mean that the health plan would only be paying a total of \$160.00 dollars instead of \$200.00. So it would say \$200.00 minus \$40.00 minus co-pay \$20.00 total amount towards deductible owed is \$140.00. Once your deductible is met then you would pay 20% of the total charges of PPO members and 30% of charges of non PPO members.

What other health plan offered by the Postal Service has it's own branch representative? That would be none. This plan has me. I am here for you. If you need help. I am here. If you have a question I am here. If you can't find out something, I can. If I don't know something, I will find out. All you need to do is call me. (661)373-2224. As the Executive meeting wound

down one of the members leaned into me and said. "You know the real reason why I joined this health plan?" I said no. He said to me "because it is our union Health Plan." I liked that. What better reason to support it? Thanks for your time. I will continue to give you information through the next few Mail Calls.

In unionism

Planning on Retiring Soon? Gloria Henry

These are things you must know and do before retirement. This information is courtesy of NALC Headquarters.

As one starts preparing for retirement, the first question that usually comes to mind is when and where to begin the process. Since there is a lot of information to absorb, many forms to be concerned with and quite a few decisions to make, all of this has been put into a framework of steps to follow in preparing for retirement.

Here's a checklist for letter carriers during their final year at work:

At least one year before retirement:

Ascertain when you will be eligible to retire and when you wish to retire. Check with your personnel office regarding any period of service that is necessary to give you title to an annuity at a certain age, but which you are not sure is creditable for retirement purposes.

Gather information about any other pensions or benefits for which you might be eligible (e.g. benefits from Social Security, Veterans Administration, pensions from private industry).

Set up an appointment with the personnel office. They will provide you with individual retirement counseling with the district retirement counselor early enough to allow that person time to answer any questions you may have or to resolve any problems you may be experiencing. Advance planning will enable you to review your Official Personnel Folder (OPF) ensuring that your records are complete showing service and all benefit entitlements. This should include information about your health benefits and life insurance coverage's. If you are combining your military service the personnel office needs to verify creditable service time.

Apply to make any deposits for civilian and post-1956 military service if applicable or find out how such service would be credited if deposit were not made.

Make a decision on when and how you wish to receive Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) funds. If applicable, arrange to pay off any TSP loans before retirement to avoid any delay in receipt of TSP distributions.

(Continued on Page 5)

RETIREMENT

(Continued from page 4)

Request an annuity estimate, which will help in personal financial planning. This computation will also aid in making decisions about survivor benefits, waiving military retired pay, and paying deposits or re-deposits.

To further aid your financial planning, estimate monthly deductions (health benefits, life insurance, taxes, survivor annuity, etc.).

Keep in mind that the annuity amount provided by the personnel office is an estimate only- but hopefully it will be fairly close to the final annuity figure from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

Six months before retirement:

If applicable, decide whether to waive military retired pay.

Clear up any debts owed the Postal Service (e.g. overpaid salary or advance leave).

Two to four months before retirement:

Notify your supervisor, who will have to make plans to adjust for your absence.

Obtain appropriate retirement application form:

- 1. SF 2801, Application for Immediate Retirement under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS); or
- 2. SF 3107, Application for Immediate Retirement under the Federal Employees' Retirement System (FERS)

Decide on the financial institution and type of account you want to receive the direct deposit of your annuity payments.

Six weeks before retirement:

Complete and submit the retirement application and related forms. As you will note, the application form contains several pages of information and instructions-read carefully before filling out the forms.

Of course, for some individuals there will be steps in addition to those in this letter.

There are a lot of things to do before retirement, but it is quite manageable if approached in an organized way.

On behalf of Branch 2462 we would like to wish more happy days to those future retirees.

IN UNIONISM AND SOLIDARITY

SPECIAL THANKS

I would like to Thank all those who came out to the Union Picnic and participated in the Softball Game. Hopefully next year we can get people from all the stations to come and play. Eventually I would like to see each station have their own team and then we could have a tournament with prizes. However this year I am sorry to say that we lost to Canoga Park by a score of 10 to 9.

Thanks again

Julius Ribas Shop Steward, Encino

CONVENTION REPORT

Velma McClinton

It seems to be some misconception at least out of the Encino office regarding our NALC Convention I will address that later in this article. Workshops were held each morning 4:30 a.m. to 6:30 a.m. (Los Angeles time) and in the afternoon of convention week. The following report will detail one of the four days I attended a class. Workshop: The "New" USPS -How Reform May Change the Service. First Class Mail has continued to decline in the past five quarters. 2003 1st Quarter -2.1%, 2nd Quarter -2.7%, 3rd Quarter -2.5%, 4th Quarter -3.3% and the 1st half –1.7%. Advertising Mail (Bulk Business) is expected to surpass First Class by 2005. Facts regarding Postal Employment in 1997 we had over 800,000 employees, today slightly over 700,000 are employed by the USPS. City Carrier jobs are down by 18,000. Benefit Long Term Labor cost to the USPS which it has no capacity to control trends annual increases has gone up 3.2% in salaries, 11.0% Health. 3.3% Fers, 10.9% FECA and 15.6% Retiree Health. Rising Network Costs of volume of mail staying horizontal or declining in 1999 total volume was 3.1% in 2003 –0.3%, but our delivery Network continue to expand daily in 1999 Del Points was 134.1 million in 2003 141.4 million. These two trends together spell trouble. In recent years the USPS has lost to accelerated electronic diversion. In 2003 alone 13 Billion pieces of mail, 20 days of work & \$4.3 Billion in revenue this includes

- · · · Check Clearing for the 21st Century Act: PDF checks
- Free e-billing with checking account is emerging standard
- · Direct debiting; utilities, American Express Card, spa, etc....
- · Web site bill paying

Regardless of what you have heard about USPS earnings, mail revenue continues to fall, and at the present time Bio-detection costs of \$770 million is not funded. Postal Reform is needed more than ever due to annual revenue per Delivery Point has continued to drop since 2000. City Carriers are the key to Universal Service (six day delivery, guaranteed delivery to 140 million households and business, delivery-costs=43% of total USPS costs) and future viability. There are two Postal Reform Bills; both were introduced in May 2004. H.R. 4341-Davis-Waxman Bill and the S. 2468-The Collins-Carper Bill. The impact on the USPS will be the 1st time the USPS will be alloyed to make a profit. Will the USPS be granted enough commercial freedom to survive?

- · LEARN ABOUT THE ISSUES (<u>www.nalc.org</u>)
- · JOIN eACTIVIST network
- · Give to COLCPE by payroll deduction

The NALC Convention is divided into two parts. The "General Session" which was scheduled 10 a.m—3:00 p.m. Then in addition, Workshop Breakfast's and Classes are held before & after each session. Our President did suggest that if you held an office he recommended a Workshop. IT IS NOT MANDATORY to attend any meeting held before or after the General Session. Funds are not used from our Education and Training account (26) it comes strictly out the Convention funds. Note; during General Session you are in your seat and participating other than a food and bathroom break each day. One other point I would like to make, during the week of convention I attended **NO** tourist attractions, I have been to Hawaii in the past and did that before.

"THE MAIL CALL" **BRANCH 2462, NALC**

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

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been submitted, total cost to the Branch was \$ 9004.44.

Branch Meeting Minutes August 3, 2004

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 ASKEW

MOMENT OF SILENCE--In memory of all members who have passed away this year and all the Military men and women who have sacrificed their lives in the Service of our Country. **ROLL CALL OF OFFICERS**

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

ABSENT--HENRY

MINUTES ACCEPTED AS PRINTED IN MAILCALL

WITH FOLLOWING CORRECTION SGT-AT-ARMS ASKEW

WAS PRESENT AT THE JULY MEETING

CORRESPONDENCE READ

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

JESSE YOUNG. MANUEL MENA

BILLS READ MOTION TO PAY M/S/C

COMMITTEE REPORTS

AUDIT--TRUSTEES Audit was on July 27, 2004 at 6:15 pm, 2 checks were found to be reversed. Problem was taken care of and all else was in good order.

SAFETY & HEALTH Continue to work and drive in a safe manner. Van Nuys is now "blitzing" stations looking for safety and vehicle violations. Sherman Oaks and Encino

will be done sometime within the next week.

RETIREES 5 present tonight. Retiree Dinner will be on October 17, 2004. See Mailcall for details.

MBA--T. HALL No Report HBR--DOLABSON No Report

FOOD DRIVE--DOLABSON Planning has already begun on next years drive. Contacting corporations to raise money for advertisements. We will be using "Food Bags" this time and expect to triple our donations.

EDITOR--SEYFRIED Apologies to Brother Ribas for not including his article in the MailCall. Will appear in the September issue.

L A FED has endorsed

COLCPE \$ 405 currently in the fund

DISTRICT--McCLINTON John Kerry for President

FINANCIAL SECRETARY REPORT---JOHNSON

TREASURERS REPORT--McCLINTON

Final Picnic re-VICE-PRESIDENT BOCEK

port has

Thanks to all who attended and also to those who helped. PRESIDENT BROOKIN's Spoke on the convention discussions regarding a proposal for revamping the route inspection process. Announced the National AFL-CIO delegates. Still pushing to get members to sign up for payroll deductions for COLCPE. RAY KREYER AWARD nominations are being accepted. Anyone who would like to nominate a member for this award can do so by writing to the Executive Board before the end of August. We are in need of a sign language interpreter. If you, or a member of your family, is proficient in signing we are willing to pay you to do translations for the Branch. Contact the office. Projected fourth COLA now stands at \$ 696.80.

OLD BUSINESS--NONE

SPECIAL BUSINESS

Branch honored Retiree LEE FENSTERMACHER with applause and the Letter Carrier cheer for his generous donation to COLCPE at the National Convention. Brother

FENSTERMACHER donated \$ 2800.00, which was \$ 100.00 for each year he has been retired from the Postal System. The Branch also sang "HAPPY BIRTHDAY" in honor

Congrat's to LEE and we hope that you have many more.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES READ

NEW BUSINESS

MOTION--Branch send the President of his designee to the Committee of Presidents meeting in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Meeting is on Oct 24-25,

2004 (Sun-Mon). Cost not to exceed \$ 1500.00 M/S/C MOTION--Branch pay premiums to State Farm

Insurance for the Liability policy. Cost to the

864.00 Branch M/S/C

MOTION--Branch purchase 475 BASS Calendars

to be given to each member. Cost not to

1500.00 exceed

M/S/C

UNDERLINED DENOTES UNANIMOUS VOTE

MEMBERSHIP DRAWING-- \$ 50

BONNIE RODRIGUEZ--ENCINO

Sister RODRIGUEZ was not present at the meeting therefore the money will be rolled over to the September meeting. September's membership drawing will be for \$ 100.00. All members are eligible to win, but you must be present at the meeting to win.

COLCPE DRAWING

- \$ 5 JACK WINKLE--PANORAMA CITY
- 5 RICHARD REIMER--SHERMAN OAKS
- JEFF JACKSON--PANORAMA CITY
- **BOB JOHNSON--MAIN OFFICE**

MEETING ADJOURNED 8:40 P.M.