

THE MAIL CALL



Published by
Branch 2462, NALC
Van Nuys, CA

VOLUME 42

APRIL

2005

NUMBER 3

PRESIDENT'S REPORT By Calvin Brookins

Requirements of Medical Documentation

What to do when you call in sick and your supervisor require you to submit medical documentation. First you should follow the instruction go to the doctor explain your illness to your doctor get medical documentation and upon your return to work request to see your shop steward. Your steward should at that point investigate to see if management violated your rights under Article 19 and the Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM).

If you call in sick and will only be out for three days or less, the supervisor should not require you to provide medical documentation unless you are on restricted sick leave. There are other types of situations that can cause your supervisor to require you to submit medical documentation. Such as if you had a dispute with your supervisor and that supervisor upset you which some have a tendency to do and you decide you now do not feel well and notify your supervisor that you are going home sick. In that type of situation your supervisor may and in most cases require you to provide medical documentation.

The Employee and Labor Relations Manual, Section 513.361 states as follows; 513.36 **Documentation Requirements** 513.361 **Three Days or Less**

For periods of absence of 3 days or less, supervisors may accept the employee's statement explaining the absence. **Medical documentation or other acceptable evidence of incapacity for work is required only when the employee is on restricted sick leave (see 513.37) or when the supervisor deems documentation desirable for the protection of the interests of the Postal Service.**

Basically what that language means is your supervisor should not require you to provide medical documentation if you are out for less than 3 days or you are on restricted sick leave. If management require medical documentation under the above stated circumstances follow the instruction and then request to see your shop steward immediately.

If management attempts to use the reason that they required the documentation to protect the interest of the postal service, the burden of proof is on them to show how the interest of the postal service was in jeopardy. If it is the very first day that you are calling in sick and your supervisor tells you to bring in medical documentation chances are they are in violation of the above cited language of the ELM. Again request to see your shop steward immediately.

(Continued on Page 3)

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 5, 2005 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. No one may be nominated for more than one (1) office. Candidates must accept nomination at the time made or, if absent, in writing to be received by the Branch Secretary no later than April 7, 2005. The terms of Office shall be for a three 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 shall be conducted by secret mailed ballot. All ballots will be mailed First Class to the home addresses of eligible members no later than May 9, 2005. 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. Ballots must be mailed back to the Election Committee, P. O. Box 57151 Sherman Oaks, California 91413 and must be received by 5:00 p.m. on June 1, 2005. The counting of the ballots will take place on Thursday, June 2, 2005 beginning at 6:30 p.m. at 6910 Hayvenhurst Ave., # 101 Van Nuys, California. All candidates and members may observe the counting.

IN MEMORY OF
MONTY MOORMAN
RETIREE
BRANCH 2462

"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 NIGHT OF 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.

FERS RETIREMENT-----THE 134.3% RETURN

By Tracy J. Mullinax, Trustee

Having been a unionized postal-carrier for nearly 20 years, I've seen many changes in the way our jobs are performed. In 1987, the FERS retirement plan was born. Seeing as we are now into 2005, nearly 75% of active postal-carriers are now covered under the FERS retirement program with the CSRS retirement program being completely phased out at some point in the future when the last CSRS postal-carrier is eligible to retire. For those of us under the FERS retirement system, the government has basically put the responsibility on our backs. In order to retire comfortably, we are in a system with a three part retirement:

- 1) Defined Benefit Plan (Pension) (Age 55-57)
- 2) Social Security (Supplement til Age 62-67)
- 3) Defined Contribution Plan (TSP Plan) (Age 59 1/2)

The portion of our retirement that is the difference between retiring comfortably and possibly uncomfortably is the wild card, the TSP Plan. For those under FERS in the TSP Plan, I would hope that each of you every two weeks has a minimum of 5% deducted from your paychecks and directly deposited in the plan. The advantages of doing it this way are beyond belief. How? Well, by putting 5% of your pay every two weeks away in the TSP Plan for retirement; you are earning a 100% return on your money with the combination USPS matching and automatic contribution for you. Also by setting it aside now, you are deferring taxes on it until you retire rather than ponying it up now. Historically, the stock market on average has returned in the neighborhood of 10% a year over the last 100+ years. Some years more than 10%, some years less than 10%; there have also been years where you can have consecutive negative years, but on average over the long term, the stock market has in the past returned 10% a year. I must inform all of you that past performance in the stock market (TSP Plan) is not indicative of future performance nor a positive guaranteed return of any kind. Depending on your time frame and your tolerance for risk, consult with a professional advisor for detailed information on proper asset allocation and diversification for each individual circumstance.

For those under FERS, below is a comparison of a letter-carrier who contributes 5% to their TSP Plan religiously every two weeks and a letter-carrier under FERS who contributes nothing. The following is a illustration of a carrier who is a Grade 6, Step 0 top step regular carrier:

5% Contributor vs 0% Contributor
 —contributes 5% = \$89.34 —contributes 0% or nothing = 0
 —USPS matching+ —USPS matching + automatic
 automatic contribution = \$89.34 contribution of 1% = 8.93
 —Tax savings —Paid taxes of 34.3% = \$30.64
 Federal+State = \$30.64

---Contribution+Tax Savings = \$209.32 —No carrier contribution+ every two weeks no tax savings = -21.71

As you can see a 134.3% return is achievable every two weeks by contributing 5% to your TSP Plan on a regular basis. For those of you who for whatever reason cannot or will not contribute; In my opinion, not only is this a no-brainer and the best thing since sliced bread, but through compound growth, tax deferral and regular contributions, you should be more than ready to reach a comfortable retirement with quite possibly more take home pay each month than you ever dreamed of. PS: In my last article, I stated that a 144.3% return was possible. It would only be possible if you were in the highest tax bracket. For purposes of this article, I took an average postal family's income of being in the 25% Federal and 9.3% State bracket.

In Unionism

**ATTENDANCE CHART
BRANCH MEETINGS**

MONTH	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	S	O	N
MAIN OFFICE	1	2	1							
ENCINO	3	7	6							
CIVIC CENTER	4	5	3							
PANORAMA CITY	1	3	2							
SHERMAN OAKS	4	5	6							
SUN VALLEY	1	1	2							
TARZANA	1	2	1							
RETIREE'S	4	5	4							
TOTAL	19	30	25							

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

**NEXT MEETING
6:30 PM**

**APRIL
5th
"2005"**

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

April 5, 2005

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

"RETIREE CORNER"

Our Breakfast Meeting will be held at Hart's Restaurant , (Corner of Saticoy and Balboa). It will begin at 09:00 AM. The date for the next 2 will be April 23rd & May 28, 2005 (4th Saturday) So, please mark your calendar.....We hope to see you there.

Thank You

Frank Brash

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

(Continued from Page 1)

On the other hand if you call in sick for more than three days you as the employee are required to submit medical documentation.

The Employee and Labor Relations Manual, Section 513.362 states as follows;

513.362 Over Three Days

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

The way this should work from a reasonable supervisor is when you call in sick on that fourth consecutive day the supervisor will require you to submit medical documentation. This should not be done on the first, second, or third day. However with some of the type of supervisors we have they may require it, if they do, follow the instructions and then file a grievance.

This has become a recent concern in one of the offices represented by the branch. I am writing this article to make all active members of the branch aware of their rights in this area. If you believe your rights have been violated when you report by phone to your supervisor that you are unable to report to work because of illness, request to see your steward or contact the union office.

EAP (Employee Assistance Program)

Breaking the Cycle of Domestic Violence;

It's among the most difficult of all human behaviors to understand that someone could physically harm a love one. Yet between two million and six million women are victims of domestic violence each year in America, according to the National Coalition Against domestic Violence. Put another way, a woman is battered every 15 seconds each day. Stopping the abuse begins with knowing its three stages.

Early Escalation: In this stage, the abuser tension and rage against the victim slowly begins to build. There may be some battering during this time, but the abuse usually centers on verbal, emotional, or economic abuse or threats.

Battering stage: At this stage, the abuse turns to violent rage that could cost the victim serious injury or her life.

Honeymoon stage: Following the abuse, the abuser feels shame, becomes loving and kind and promises that the abuse will stop. Unfortunately, the honeymoon stage is also the beginning of the early escalation stage, and the abuse cycle continues.

Obvious as this cycle may appear, some women overlook the consequences of remaining in such a relationship. There are women who overlook or forgive what's happening to them very readily. They minimize the consequences of their abuse to a point where they accept it, and that can be dangerous.

The leadership of both management and unions encourage anyone with a domestic violence problem to contact EAP. An EAP Counselor can help you explore your options. Those options may include the need for an attorney, police protection, and the services of a shelter or counseling. Whatever the need may be, the EAP can help find the resource.

**For information or assistance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, call EAP4OU Service Center at 1-800-EAP-4-YOU
Personal-Private-Professional**

COLCPE

Contributing to COLCPE is very important it allows the NALC to endorse political candidates who will vote on issues in a way that is favorable to letter carriers and the postal service as well as other working class people.

I would like to thank the following members for their automatic contribution or their occasional contribution to COLCPE during the year of 2004.

Janette Dolabson	Karen Aguilar
Glenford Haylock	Roger Askew
Jeffery Jackson	Arthur Bocek
Robert Johnson	Kathlene Crawford
Irwin Schnyder	Larry Dolabson
Stephen Seyfried	Kevin Donohue
Craig Wood	Lee Fenstermacher
Troy Young	Gloria Henry
Velma McClinton	James Tukesbrey
Greg Weeks	

If you see any of these members out and about please thank them for their contribution.

VICE PRESIDENTS REPORT

Art Bocek

Contacting Your Federal Employees' Compensation District Office

OWCP has a toll-free automated system that provides information regarding specific claims. By calling **866-OWCP-IVR (866-692-7487)**, either you the injured worker or representative may access information regarding case status and compensation payments. Injured workers should have their 9-digit case file or claim number and social security number when calling. The Federal Employees' Compensation (FEC) division of OWCP has consolidated its medical authorization and bill payment processes on September 2, 2003. All Medical Authorizations and Bill Processing are now being handled by a private contractor, ACS. Injured Workers, Medical Providers, and Employing Agencies can use our on-line tool at <http://owcp.dol.acs-inc.com> to Check Eligibility and learn if Authorization is required for a particular procedure, to Check Authorization and learn if authorization has been approved without calling or waiting for an authorization letter, and to Check Bill Payment Status and learn the status of submitted bills and reimbursement requests. Providers may also request, and for routine care receive, medical authorization on-line at <http://owcp.dol.acs-inc.com>. Automated claimant eligibility, bill status, and medical authorization status is also available 24 hours a day via our toll-free Interactive Voice Response (IVR) System at **866-335-8319**. Effective 1/3/05, to speak to a customer service representative regarding medical authorizations or bills, you will need to call **850-558-1818**, which will be a toll call.

Basically, OWCP requests, "**you**" to first contact "District Office" to resolve your issues related to case status and compensation payment, and "**ACS**" to resolve issues related to medical authorizations and bill payments.

After over 35 years,
What's needed more, "Psychiatrist or Fishing pole"?

"THE MAIL CALL"
BRANCH 2462, NALC
Steve Seyfried, Editor
6910 Hayvenhurst Ave., # 101
Van Nuys, CA 91406

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

Address Service Requested

Branch Meeting Minutes

March 1, 2005

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 6:37 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by acting SGT-AT-ARMS BOB ENZ
 MOMENT OF SILENCE-MONTY MOORMAN Retiree 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, McCLINTON, JACKSON, MULLINAX,

ABSENT--JOHNSON--HENRY--ASKEW--DOLABSON--HALL
 MINUTES ACCEPTED AS PRINTED IN MAILCALL WITH CORRECTIONS--CLIFF KELLEY DONATED HIS \$ 7 COLCPE WINNINGS

CORRESPONDENCE READ

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP--IAN BETILA, IVAN CARDENAS, PETERBON CAMBEL, JEFF FERGUSON, RAZMIK YAGHOBIAN

BILLS READ--MOTION TO PAY M/S/C

COMMITTEE REPORTS

TRUSTEES All is fine
 SAFETY & HEALTH Continue to work and drive in a safe manner. Blitz's are back again.

RETIREES 4 present tonight. Date for Retiree Luncheon will be Oct 23rd. Watch for more information soon.

MBA--T. HALL No Report
 HBR--DOLABSON No Report
 COLCPE \$ 192.00 currently in the fund

DISTRICT 6--McCLINTON Over 3 million jobs lost overseas last year. Bush plan to alter Social Security is being discussed in Washington. You need to contact your representatives. Walmart now trying to come into Rosemead after being rejected in Los Angeles and Inglewood. The country now has the largest national debt and trade deficit in the history of the country.

FINANCIAL SECRETARY REPORT--McCLINTON

TREASURERS REPORT--McCLINTON

VICE-PRESIDENT BOCEK Picnic will be on June 12, 2005 at Rancho San Antonio Boys Town in Chatsworth. There will be a Picnic Meeting at the Branch Office on March 30th at 7 pm. If you have any ideas to share please plan to attend.

PRESIDENT BROOKIN's Route inspections will be held in some of the Van Nuys offices in April. NALC Food Drive will be on May 14, 2005 Postal Relief legislation has

been submitted again in the new Congress. HR 22 is an effort to bring finality to changes to the existing 34 year old Postal Reorganization Act. 25 new offices in the Van Nuys District have been added to Customer Connect. These include 3 from our city, Sun Valley, Main Office and Encino. The following members have been submitted to be Customer Connect Coordinators, TIA WILSON, RAY MOLA, SANDRA GALEANA, JOHNNY YBARRA, JANETTE DOLABSON, DEBBIE BURRELL

& HENRY STEPHENS.

OLD BUSINESS

BY-LAWS

MOTION--Adopt the change to Article VII, Sec 1 as printed in the Mailcall

M/S/C
 MOTION

CALL FOR DIVISION--YES--14, NO--9

FAILS

MOTION--Adopt the change to Article XII, Sec 8 as printed in the Mailcall

M/S/F

MOTION--Adopt the change to Article XII, Sec 7 as printed in the Mailcall

M/S/C

EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES READ

NEW BUSINESS

MOTION--Branch subscribe to the Postal Record for 2005. Cost to the Branch \$ 20.00

M/S/C

MOTION--Branch purchase 20 Retiree Pins. Cost to the Branch \$ 100.00

M/S/C

MOTION--Branch purchase Mend Raffle tickets. Cost to the Branch \$ 45.00

M/S/C

MOTION--Branch install high speed internet service in the office. Cost not to exceed \$ 500.00 per year.

M/S/C

UNDERLINED DENOTES UNANIMOUS VOTE

MEMBERSHIP DRAWING-- \$ 225

HERMAN GOLDSTEIN--RETIREE

Brother GOLDSTEIN was not present at the meeting therefore the money will be rolled over to the APRIL meeting. April's membership drawing will be for \$ 250.00. All members are eligible to win, but you must be present at the meeting to win.

COLCPE DRAWING

\$ 6 CALVIN BROOKINS--CIVIC CENTER--DONATED

\$ 6 CALVIN BROOKINS--CIVIC CENTER

\$ 6 JIM TUKESBREY--RETIREE--DONATED

MEETING ADJOURNED 9:39 P.M.

REMEMBER THERE WILL BE A PICNIC MEETING ON MARCH 30, 2005. IT WILL BE HELD IN THE BRANCH OFFICE AND WILL BEGIN AT 7 P.M.