

**Representing the Stations of
Encino – Panorama City – Sherman Oaks – Sun Valley – Tarzana – Van Nuys Main**

VOLUME 57

DECEMBER 2020

NUMBER 11

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By JANETTE DOLABSON

I would like to start off by thanking all of you for your hard work these past 9 months! It has been, to say the least, a very difficult and trying time for Letter Carriers. We have never seen anything like it and hopefully things will get back to some kind of normal soon! Hang in there. It is especially hard for our new employees to be thrown into a work environment that has been so demanding and difficult. To you, I urge you to keep working. Don't quit. Keep putting in your best effort. It will be worth it and there is hope and a future for those who do.

I want to also especially thank our team here at NALC Branch 2462! It has been a very challenging year for you folks and I am grateful for your hard work and determination through all the chaos.

We have had to cancel our events this year due to this continuing pandemic, including the annual Christmas party. To try and make things a little better for you all, the branch will be increasing the money for each office this year, so you can expand your office Christmas parties. It's not perfect but it's something we can do.

We will be holding a Branch Meeting on Tuesday December 1st, 2020 starting at 6:30 PM. We normally suspend the December meeting in lieu of the Christmas party but since that has been cancelled, we will be have a December meeting. I hope you will join us. Of course, masks and social distancing will be required. We will have some food and refreshments at this meeting.

Interest Arbitration and Collective Bargaining Update

The remaining interest arbitration hearing dates are scheduled this week and next week. Both parties believe we will only need one of those weeks to complete the hearings. In light of recent progress in separate, ongoing negotiations with the Postal Service for a new tentative collective bargaining agreement, the parties have agreed to continue those negotiations this week. If necessary, hearings will resume next week, beginning November 16th.

NALC Statement on Presidential Election

On behalf of the National Association of Letter Carriers, which represents 285,000 active and retired letter

carriers around the country, we congratulate President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris on their victory today.

This country, like our union, is comprised of diverse and passionate voters ranging from conservative to liberal and everyone in between. As such, it is important that we as a country and a union work to heal divisions and work in unity to ensure that letter carriers and the Postal Service are not only protected, but promoted.

This election and pandemic has shown the importance of the Postal Service network. For the last four years, we've had to play defense against attacks from the current administration. Now, it is time to go on the offense for letter carriers in providing Covid-relief to this agency, repealing the mandate to prefund retiree health care and utilizing the network to continue serving the nation.

NALC is excited to continue this important work and stands ready to work with the Biden-Harris administration in the coming months and years.

(Continued on Page 3)

IN MEMORY OF

LESLIE MICHELSEN

RETIREE BRANCH 2462

SHOP STEWARD SHERMAN OAKS

SHOP STEWARD PANORAMA CITY

**FOUNDER OF SHERMAN OAKS
FOOD DRIVE**

**ORIGINAL CHAIRMAN OF NALC
FOOD DRIVE—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 to the goals of the NALC, permission is granted to copy and/or use any material in this publication with our best wishes.

VICE PRESIDENT' REPORT

By
JOHN BURTON

Recently, the Postal Service notified NALC of an updated version of the Management Instruction. The most significant change is that, beginning with the 2019 leave year that starts on Jan. 5, 2019, eligible employees will now receive 104 hours of WWL each leave year; previously, they had received it for one 12-month eligibility period. Eligible hires will receive 104 hours of WWL upon hire, as required by law, to be used for the remainder of the current leave year.

Each January, all disabled veterans with a 30 percent or more combined disability rating will receive 104 hours of WWL to use during the leave year. At the end of each leave year, any remaining WWL will be forfeited but, assuming the employee still has a combined disability rating of 30 percent or more, he or she will receive a new 104 hours at the start of the new leave year. Any unused WWL is not rolled over to the next year, nor will it be paid out if the employee leaves.

The following reflects the rules regarding the eligibility and crediting of this leave: Eligibility Eligible Employees All employees who have a single or combined service-connected disability rating of 30 percent or more are eligible for Wounded Warriors Leave. Employees with Pending Disability Determinations Otherwise eligible employees with pending disability determinations who at any time during any Leave Year receive a 30 percent or more disability rating, will be eligible for leave retroactively to the first day of that current Leave Year.

Any leave without pay (LWOP) or leave used while the determination is pending will be reimbursed and replaced with Wounded Warriors Leave, as appropriate, up to the maximum number of hours allowed. Wounded Warriors Leave may be retroactively applied for only the most current Leave Year and for no more than 104 hours.

Losing the Disability Rating

If an employee's service-connected disability rating is decreased to below 30 percent or discontinued during any Leave Year then the employee no longer has a qualifying service-connected disability. The employee must notify the HR Shared Service Center of the effective date of the change in the disability rating. The employee is no longer eligible for Wounded Warriors Leave as of the effective date of the rating change.



ATTENDANCE CHART BRANCH MEETINGS

MONTH	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N
MAIN OFFICE	1	6	7	C	C	C	C	C	4	2	2
ENCINO	4	8	5	A	A	A	A	A	4	4	4
PANORAMA CITY	3	4	3	N	N	N	N	N	3	4	3
SHERMAN OAKS	4	3	3	C	C	C	C	C	3	2	3
SUN VALLEY	1	0	0	E	E	E	E	E	0	0	0
TARZANA	1	1	0	L	L	L	L	L	2	1	0
RETIREE'S	4	5	5	E	E	E	E	E	3	3	2
TOTAL	18	27	23	D	D	D	D	D	19	16	14

MEETING PLACE OF BRANCH 2462, NALC
6910 HAYVENHURST AVE., SUITE 104
VAN NUYS, CALIFORNIA

NEXT MEETING
6:30 PM

DECEMBER
1st
"2020"

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

Dec 6, 2020

WEB PAGE.... WWW.NALCBRANCH2462.ORG
BRANCH OFFICE.....818-786-8505
O P C PERSONNEL OFFICE.....818-374-5600
E-Mail.....Branch2462nalc@gmail.com

"RETIREE CORNER" ATTENTION: !!!

All Breakfasts have been cancelled until further notice. To all our Retiree's and Regular Members we hope that you are staying safe in your homes during this crisis.

Bob Johnson

President's Report

(Continued from Page 1)

Why TSP is so Important

The TSP is an essential component of the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), the retirement program that covers most USPS employees. Like many of the 401(k) savings plans offered by private-sector employers, the TSP allows federal employees to save pre-tax dollars each month in a personal account; this gives letter carriers who have contributed the chance to save money quickly and easily. TSP participants also can choose how the money in their account is invested. City carrier assistants (CCAs) converted to career, or career letter carriers hired on or after Oct. 1, 2020, have been automatically enrolled in the TSP. Five percent of their base pay is deducted and deposited in a TSP account. The Postal Service matches the first 3 percent dollar for dollar and the next 2 percent 50 cents per dollar, as well as automatic agency contributions equal to 1 percent of basic pay. Career letter carriers hired between July 31, 2010, and Sept. 30, 2020, were automatically enrolled at 3 percent. Those hired before July 31, 2010, and covered by FERS were automatically enrolled in a TSP account with 1 percent contributions from the Postal Service and no automatic payroll deductions—the deductions must be set up by the employee. For CCAs who have not yet converted to career letter carriers, NALC's Mutual Benefit Association (MBA) offers a CCA Retirement Savings Plan, where traditional IRA funds can be rolled into the TSP once the CCA becomes a career letter carrier. Don't walk away from free money As explained above, all letter carriers covered by FERS who contribute their own money receive matching contributions up to 4 percent per pay period, and all carriers covered by FERS receive the 1 percent automatic contribution from USPS. Carriers can use LiteBlue to enroll in the TSP or make changes to their deductions or investments at any time—there is no specific open season for the program. The IRS annual limit for TSP contributions as of 2020 is \$19,500. Participants may be eligible to make additional “catch-up” contributions to boost their savings, beginning the year they turn 50. These contributions are not matched by USPS and are limited to \$6,500 for 2020. Carriers covered by the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) still may join TSP, but do not receive a matching contribution from USPS. Nevertheless, they can save on taxes and keep more of what they save because the TSP's administrative costs are lower than those of similar plans. In 2019, the TSP charged participants an average net administrative expense of 42 cents per \$1,000 invested. TSP accounts do not go away when letter carriers separate from federal service. Letter carriers can stay invested in the TSP and can change their investment mix while their account continues to accumulate earnings; they can even transfer IRAs and other retirement plans into the TSP. Since enactment of the TSP Modernization Act in September 2019, letter carriers now have more flexible withdrawal options when they leave federal service, such as multiple one-time withdrawals and the ability to change the frequency and the amount of installment payments at any time during the year. Explore these options and more in the booklet *Withdrawing from Your TSP Account for Separated and Beneficiary Participants*, available on tsp.gov. Visit tsp.gov or call TSP-YOU-FRST (877-968-3778) to check out planning tools and calculators designed to assist you with retirement decisions. PR

Info for NALC members planning to retire soon

While the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) makes all decisions regarding retirement entitlement, current employees are required to *apply* for retirement through the USPS Human Resources Shared Services (HRSSC). HRSSC can be reached by calling 877-477-3273, option 5. When calling HRSSC, be prepared to provide your Employee ID and PIN. Upon request, HRSSC will:

Mail an individualized annuity estimate based on a projected retirement date provided by the employee;

Schedule and provide telephonic individual pre-retirement counseling;

Mail a packet of information (usually called the ‘blue book’) of forms and guidance.

HRSSC retirement services can alternately be accessed by employees close to retirement eligibility on-line using the LiteBlue eRetire application. Employees must know their Employee ID and USPS Pin numbers to access eRetire. The LiteBlue eRetire application allows the following:

View and print individualized annuity estimates;

Request and obtain a retirement application packet in one of two ways:

Download and print a retirement application packet;

Order a retirement application packet and receive it in the mail.

Schedule a retirement counseling session.

In addition to information available from the USPS HRSSC, retirement information is available from OPM; and retirement information and advice is available to NALC members from the NALC Retirement Department.

The NALC Retirement Department publishes a leaflet titled “Preparing for Retirement,” and Question & Answer booklets on retirement matters for CSRS and FERS. Retirement counseling

Letter carriers approaching retirement eligibility have a contractual right to individual pre-retirement counseling from the Postal Service, upon request. The purpose of the counseling is to promote fully informed retirement decisions by employees.



OWCP REPORT

BY

JEMMAYEN MACARAEG

Have you been injured on the job?

There are two types of injury, traumatic injury and occupational disease. I am writing this article to refresh our knowledge and to educate our newly hire carriers and members on what to do and how to file an OWCP (Office of Workers' Compensation Program) claim when they get injured on the job.

This month article I am going to touch base on traumatic injury. **Traumatic injury** is defined as "A wound or other condition of the body caused by external force, including stress or strain, which is identifiable as to the time and place of occurrence and member or function of the body affected. The injury must be caused by a specific event or incident or series of events or incidents within a *single work day or work shift*." To simply put, traumatic injury is when you can determine the when, where, what and how the injury occurred within a *single work day or work shift*.

Filing a OWCP claim can be very confusing, but no need to worry these 5 steps will guide you:

Step 1. NOTIFYING YOUR SUPERVISOR—Immediately notify your supervisor of your injury.

Step 2. The CA-1

Federal Employees Notice of Traumatic Injury and Claim for Continuation of Pay/ Compensation. (must be supplied immediately)

Request a CA-1 from your supervisor. The Postal Service is required to provide you the form upon request, which is available on your supervisor's computer. If you are refused a form, contact your shop steward immediately. You can also print your own CA-1 by going www.dol.gov or simply googling "form CA-1". Complete the employee portion of the CA-1, **DO NOT LET A SUPERVISOR FILL IT OUT FOR YOU**. Be thorough in describing the cause and nature of the injury. If you cannot describe the cause and nature in the space provided, write them down on separate piece of paper, placing your name, address, phone number and Employee ID number at the top of the page. Sign and date the extra page make a copy.

At the bottom of the CA-1, question number 15 allows you to choose between Continuation of Pay (COP), or Sick and /or Annual leave. To qualify for COP you must:

1. File your claim within 30 days of the date of injury
2. Begin losing time within 45 days of the date of injury and,

3. Provide medical evidence of your disability, signed by doctor, within 10 days.

If you elect COP you will be paid your regular pay for 45 calendar days. The first three calendar days of COP are waiting days and you must use either sick and/or annual. After the waiting days you will continue to get paid every two weeks as if you were working.

Once you have reviewed and signed your CA-1, physically hand the completed CA-1 to your supervisor. **Do not leave it on your supervisor's desk or inbox**. The supervisor's instructions for the CA-1 requires them to give you the signed receipt on (page 4) immediately. The CA-1 receipt establishes a record of your injury and the date you filed your claim. If the supervisor does not give you the receipt, ask for your shop steward.

Make a copy of the CA-1 page you filled out. You should also request a copy of the completed CA-1 once management has filled out their portion. The Postal Service is required to give the completed CA-1 to you. The Postal Service has **10 working days to submit the CA-1 to the Office of Worker's Compensation Programs (OWCP)**.

Step 3. SEEKING MEDICAL TREATMENT

You have the right to seek treatment from your own doctor. If the Postal Service insists that you go to their doctor, follow the instruction of your supervisor. You have to be seen by postal doctor, but **you do not have to be treated by them**. Injured workers should always choose the doctor that treats them. Medical reports must be signed by a doctor. If you are examined by a physician's assistant or nurse practitioner, ask them to have a doctor review and counter-sign the report.

You need to request a form CA-16 (Authorization for Examination and/or Treatment). The Postal Service is required by law to provide the CA-16 within four hours of your request. If for any reason your supervisor refuses to give you a CA-16, contact your shop steward and call the OSHA Whistleblowers hotline 1-800-321-6742 to report it.

You can use the CA-16 to see the doctor of your choice. If your doctor refers you to a specialist, the CA-16 will also cover those expenses. Review the CA-16 to make sure your supervisor properly fills out sections 8-11 including a signature. Section 12 of the CA-16 should contain OWCP's address:

U.S. Department of Labor
DFEC Central Mailroom
P.O. Box 8300
London, KY 40747-8300

You also **need to request form CA-17**(Duty

(Continued on Page 5)

OWCP

(Continued from Page 4)

Status Report) form your supervisor. The Postal Service is responsible for filling out the job requirements on the left (side A) of the CA-17. Side B)

Your medical records are protected by the Privacy Act. With the exception of the CA-17, the Postal Service is not entitled to your personal medical records.

Step 4. ONCE YOUR CLAIM HAS BEEN FILED

OWCP's goal is to return each disabled employee to work as soon as he or she is medically able. Thoroughly explain your work duties to your doctor. Delivering mail is physically demanding work, and returning to work before you have properly healed can lead to debilitating, life-long injuries. Take a CA-17 to every medical appointment and provide a copy to the completed form to your supervisor. The Postal Service has an obligation to offer you work within your restrictions and the completed CA-17 must be provided to the Postal Service to determine if there is work available within your restrictions.

NEVER REFUSED A JOB OFFER !!!

Refusing a job offer can lead to termination of your benefits. If the Postal Service offers you work and compels you to either accept or refuse a job offer, always accept the job offer. If you are uncertain if you can perform all of the duties of the job, write "under protest" next to your duties. You have the right to take the job offer to your doctor. If your doctor believes the job offer exceeds your limitations, he or she must write a medical narrative listing the specific duties you cannot perform.

Your doctor should send medical reports directly to OWCP. You can also upload medical reports into your claim file via ECOMP. Your medical reports are protected by the Privacy Act and should be sent directly to OWCP, not the Postal Service. The Postal Service is prohibited from calling your doctor. Any contact with your doctor must be in writing, and the Postal Service is required to send you a copy of the letter, and your doctor's response.

Step 5: ONCE YOU HAVE FILED YOUR CLAIM, OWCP HAS THREE OPTIONS

1. Request more information

OWCP will notify you if your case lacks enough information to make decision in your case. They will send you a development letter requesting more information listing a series of questions for both you and your doctor to answer. These letters always give you exactly 30 days from the date on the letter to respond.

It is important that you act quickly to get the questions answered within 30 day time limit. Make an

appointment with your doctor as soon as possible. Bring the OWCP letter to your appointment and ask your doctor as soon as possible. OWCP must receive the information within 30 days, a postmark is insufficient. Make sure your doctor understands the urgency. Use ECOMP to upload to your documents directly to your file. Never submit documents without first making copies for your own records. You need to organize your records to be ready to respond to OWCP. If you have problems with your claim, contact a branch officer or your National Business Agent's office for help.

2. Accept the claim

OWCP will send you a letter accepting your claim, listing the accepted conditions and a "Now That Your Claim Has Been Accepted" attachment that includes tools for managing your claim. Read the attachment carefully and keep it handy as it has important information you can reference regarding your claim.

If you are on COP and it appears you will not return to work 45 days, The Postal Service is required to provide you with form CA-7 to request wage loss compensation after 30 days. The CA-7 comes with instructions on how to properly fill it out and submit it.

If you do not receive a CA-7 from the Postal Service, request one from your supervisor or print one by going to www.dol.gov or just by googling "CA-7". Submit the completed CA-7 every two weeks to your supervisors or district Health Resource Management, HRM office. Send a written request for a copy of the completed CA-7, including management's portion every time you submit it to HRM. The Postal Service has five working days to complete their portion of the CA-7 and send it to OWCP. Keep a copy of every CA-7 for your file.

3. Deny the Claim

If OWCP denies your claim, they will normally list the basis for the decision. Along with the denial, OWCP will give you a list of your appeal rights. Each venue has specific time limits that are absolute. In order to successfully appeal a denial, you must address OWCP's reason for denial. It often involves further medical documentation and new medical opinions from your doctor or a specialist.

Contact a branch officer or National Business Agents's office for help in choosing the proper venue for appeal.

"THE MAIL CALL" BRANCH 2462, NALC

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

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
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PERMIT No. 314

Branch Meeting Minutes

November 3, 2020

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 J. DOLABSON at 7:03 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by SGT-AT-ARMS POWERS

MOMENT OF SILENCE--In Memory of LESLIE MICHELSEN ROLL CALL OF OFFICERS

PRESENT--J. DOLABSON, MULLINAX, WILSON, POWERS, JEFFREY, MACARAEG, L. DOLABSON, DUENEZ, VALENZUELA

ABSENT—BURTON, SEYFRIED, JOHNSON

MINUTES ACCEPTED AS PRINTED IN MAIL CALL

CORRESPONDENCE READ

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

GERALDO MARQUEZ, MEAGAN GREGG, DAVID OWENS, ALBERT GAID, ARTURO SOLIMAN, LEAH MYERS, ALEXANDRA COBOS, MARC GALINDO, CHRISTINE MAROSTICS, DARON VINSON

BILLS READ—NONE

COMMITTEE REPORTS

AUDIT & BUDGET—TRUSTEES The audit will be soon, before the end on November

RETIREES 2 retiree's present tonight.

FRANK BRASH RETIREE LUNCHEON has been cancelled.

MDA FUND--POWERS Currently \$871.00 in fund

HBR—L. DOLABSON 11/09 thru 12/14 Open

Season. New rates have been announced for NALC Plan. Active carrier High Option for single is \$91.47 p/pp, Plus One \$219 p/pp, and Family is \$190.88 p/pp. Retiree Self \$205.47, Retiree+1 \$491.06, Retiree+family \$ 430.49

MDA—MACARAEG See Article

MBA—DUENEZ Waiting for new info

FINANCE REPORT—MULLINAX Audit 11/19 at 6:30.

TREASURERS REPORT—WILSON Total assets \$ 99,597.28

Motion—Accept financial report as read M/S/C

VICE-PRESIDENT BURTON See article in MailCall

PRESIDENT J. DOLABSON Gave her report which will be published in the MailCall

OLD BUSINESS—NONE

NEW BUSINESS

MOTION—Branch double the budget for each Station to be used for Christmas parties M/S/C

MOTION—Branch pay Shop Stewards who attended the Shop Steward Training Class on Sunday 10/18 from 10 am till 2 pm, \$ 50.00 for all expenses, and also pay 1 member to come in and set up for class

Total cost to the Branch \$ 600.00
M/S/C

MOTION—Branch donate \$ 50.00 to the Toys for Tots Christmas fund

M/S/C

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

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

MOTION—Branch donate \$ 50.00 to the American Cancer Society in the name of ROGER ASKEW

M/S/C

MOTION—Branch donate \$ 100.00 to the Wounded Warrior Project

M/S/C

UNDERLINED INDICATES UNANIMOUS VOTE

GOOD OF ASSOCIATION

Thanks to Brother JEFFREY for taking minutes in the absence of the Branch Secretary. SPECIAL THANKS to JESSICA LEE for buying Pizza

MDA DRAWING

\$ 6 RAUL DOZAL—MAIN OFFICE--DONATED

Meeting Adjourned 8:27 PM

MDA

Muscular Dystrophy Association

In this difficult time of the pandemic raising funds for the MDA was challenging but COVID-19 did not stop us. We sold 100 "buy one get one free for 6 times Jamba Juice card" raising \$500.00. On October 10 and 11 of 2020 we had a MDA Yard Sale fundraising event and some of the items that were not sold was sold online raising \$563.00. The Heart of the Valley MDA team of our branch also registered to help raised funds for the MDA telethon that was hosted by Kevin Hart on October 24, 2020. The team raised \$1,281.00. The total amount we raised is \$2,344.00.

Thank you very much to everyone that contributed and supported the branch's fundraising events. Thank you for helping us deliver the cure. We deeply appreciate the love and kindness of your heart. Please continue to show your support on helping our branch's fundraising events. Helps us help the kids that suffers from Muscular Disease to fulfill their dreams.

Due to the pandemic MDA funds on finding the cure is needing help. You don't need to wait for the next fundraising event to show your support. You can send your donation to 2462 Branch office, 6910 Hayvenhurst Ave # 104, Van Nuys, CA 91406, or you can donate thru VENMO @Jemmayen-

Macaraeg. When making donations thru mail please put "MDA" on the envelope and if your will be donating thru VENMO on the comment please put MDA fundraising.