

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

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NOVEMBER 2021

NUMBER 11

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By JANETTE DOLABSON

In the Van Nuys Installation this past few years we have had an ongoing issue with the behavior of one of our Supervisor's unprofessional and disrespectful behavior toward the carrier's she has been in charge of in the zones she has been assigned. We as the Union Representatives had a Labor management regarding this behavior. This Supervisor refused to take any responsibility for her behavior and flat out denied she had any problem with her treatment of the carrier's she was overseeing. The union had filed grievances over the past several years about this issue. The last one had many statements from carriers telling of their awful treatment and bullying from this Supervisor. Out of this last grievance we finally had enough evidence, thanks to those willing to step up and speak out, to get a pre arbitration settlement regarding this Supervisor.

Here is a summary of that decision:

Agreement:

"Supervisor Rebecca Cruz will cease and desist in violating Handbook M-39, sections 115.3, 115.4 and will properly treat Letter Carriers with dignity and respect.

Supervisor Rebecca Cruz is also reminded that it is the front -line manager who controls management's attempt to maintain an atmosphere between employer and employee which assures mutual respect for each other's rights and responsibilities, and that she is obligated to treat all employees with dignity and respect at all times. Supervisor Rebecca Cruz is further reminded that she is not to do anything that creates a hostile work environment for Letter Carriers within the Van Nuys installation.

It is further agreed that supervisor Rebecca Cruz with complete Employee Engagement Training to include communication skills and ethical conduct training. The local union will be provided proof of the completion of this training no later than November 12th, 2021"

This proves that when we stick together and have each other's backs we have power to right wrongs. When we have the courage to speak out and be heard through the grievance procedure your voice will be heard. It may take a long time to get satisfaction, but it will come if we are all willing to say something and do something. Make a written statement for someone else when you hear or see something wrong. There is strength in numbers. The more we band together as a group the more our voices are heard and the stronger our cases are against these managers who have no idea how to treat their employee's.

This settlement is binding in all our Van Nuys Stations. So, if this Supervisor is moved to any of our other offices within Van Nuys, this settlement can be cited if this kind of behavior continues by this Supervisor.

I would like to Thank RAA Calvin Brookins for working diligently on your behalf to get this agreement with Labor Representative in CA 3 District.

Back pay checks:

Some of our Van Nuys offices are holding onto back pay checks for former employee's who have either retired or resigned or were terminated after April of last year 2020. Those former employee's may be due back pay from the contract negotiations and checks were mailed for them to their last place of employment. Management has not contacted those employees to let them know that there are checks waiting for them at their former offices. I have brought that to the attention of the Postmaster of Van Nuys who stated she would look into it. If you are one of these retiree's and are still a member of the union NALC branch 2462 and get this new letter, please contact your former office and ask that your check be mailed to you at your current address, or you can go and pick it up at that office. If you know of a former CCA or employee that may be due back pay please contact that person and let them know to contact their former office and check of there is a check due them, or let your union representative know their contact information so we can make sure they get their check.

"The MailCall" is published monthly by "Heart of the Valley Branch 2462, NALC, 6910 Hayvenhurst Ave., Suite 104, 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.

ATTENDANCE CHART BRANCH MEETINGS

MONTH	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
MAIN OFFICE	C	6	6	6	4	3	6	6	3	3		
ENCINO	A	3	5	2	3	3	4	4	3	4		
PANORAMA CITY	N	5	6	6	4	4	4	3	3	5		
SHERMAN OAKS	C	1	2	2	2	2	3	6	2	2		
SUN VALLEY	E	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
TARZANA	L	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
RETIREE'S	E	11	9	9	7	5	8	9	11	10		
TOTAL	D	26	28	25	20	17	25	28	22	24		

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

**NEXT MEETING
TUESDAY
NOVEMBER
2nd**



**It Will Be Held Online
Using Zoom at 6:30 pm**

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

Nov 7, 2021

**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.

INFORMATION YOU WILL NEED IT TO ATTEND BRANCH MEETING

Topic: Branch 2462 Meeting
Time: Nov 2, 2021 06:30 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81834665065?pwd=VUdVWUhhb1dyYjAzT0FQekJyYUcxZz09>

Meeting ID: 818 3466 5065

Passcode: 194392

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+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

Meeting ID: 818 3466 5065

Passcode: 194392

Find your local number:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81834665065>



**THIS YEAR -- GIVE THANKS -- DONATE TO
LETTER CARRIER POLITICAL FUND**



NALC HEALTH BENEFIT REPORT

BY

LARRY DOLABSON--HBR

Open Season for election of Health Benefit Plans for the following in year will be from November 8th, 2021-December 13th, 2021. I highly urge all employees looking to sign up for a plan or change their plan, look at electing the NALC Health Benefit Plan. It is the best plan for Letter Carriers since it is run by and specifically geared toward Letter Carriers.

When enrolling by internet, intranet, or Employee Self-Service Kiosk, simply follow the instructions on the screen. If you prefer to enroll or make changes by phone, call PostalEASE toll-free at 877-4PS-EASE (877-477-3273) and choose option 1. TTY users can call 866-260-7507.

Have your PostalEASE worksheet completed before you call.

When prompted, select Federal Employees Health Benefits.

Follow the prompts to enter your Employee ID, USPS Personal Identification Number (PIN), and the information you entered on your worksheet. This information will be required:

Daytime telephone number.

Name of the health insurance plan you want to enroll.

Health plan code numbers.

321 - Self Only High Option Plan.

322 - Self and Family High Option Plan.

323 - Self Plus One High Option Plan.

324 - Self Only NALC Consumer Driven Health Plan.

325 - Self and Family NALC Consumer Driven Health Plan.

326 - Self Plus One Consumer Driven Health Plan.

KM1 - Self Only NALC Value Option Health Plan.

KM2 - Self and Family NALC Value Option Plan.

KM3 - Self Plus One Value Option Health Plan.

Names, addresses, dates of birth, and Social Security numbers for all eligible family members covered under your enrollment.

Name, policy number, and effective date on any other group health insurance in which you or eligible family members that are enrolled, including Medicare and Tricare.

If you are changing plans or canceling coverage, enter the code of your current health plan.

After completing your entries, it is always a good idea to write down and save the confirmation number you receive for PostalEASE, the date your enrollment will be processed, and the date your paycheck will reflect the enrollment. Keep this info for your records.

Annuitytants and Retirees can enroll by calling Employee Express at 800-332-9798, by going to OPM's Open Season website at retireefehb.opm.gov if you are a retiree or by submitting a Standard 2809 to your Retirement office. You can get additional information at

<http://www.opm.gov/healthcare-insurance/healthcare/plan-information/enroll/#annuitytants>.

If you submit your change by mail, the address is:

Office of Personnel Management

Open Season Processing Center

P.O. Box 5000

Lawrence, KS 66046-0500

Annuitytants or retirees eligible for benefits in the FEHB program should call the Retirement Information Center at 888-767-6738 (TTY: 800-878-5707) for instructions on enrolling. Annuitytants in the Washington, D.C. local calling area should call 202-606-0500 (TTY: 202-606-0551).

The NALC HBP Plan has a partnership with the TASC Credit card company. If you have used any of the services provided by the Health plan such as Flu shots, health assessments etc, You will be credit certain amounts of money into this card that you can use for your co-pays or prescription drugs. The amount on these cards is different for every member of the plan depending on what services you have used during the year. If you have any questions on using this card please contact TASC company on your balance and what this card can be used for paying for health care charges and services.

WHAT IS A UNION ?

By

STEVE SEYFRIED—BRANCH SECRETARY

Webster defines a union as “an act of joining two or more things together” and/or “an organization of workers formed to protect the rights and interests of its members.”

I often hear Letter Carriers saying “The Union doesn’t ever do anything for me.” We can easily dispel these notions by simply looking at our paychecks, or retirement checks, or the uniforms that Carriers wear. These are all provided by the hard work of the Union in negotiating contracts with the Postal Service. These things were not just given because the Postal Service is such a great benefactor, the Union WON them.

But today I want to emphasize another aspect of being a Union Member. That is what it means to BE a Union Member. In the above definition you see the words “Join Together.” Now this can mean many things, but in this case it means that each person must Participate to make this work. Many seem to think that by joining and paying their dues, there is some magical spell cast that now does everything for them. The Union is a Joining of all to collectively work for the benefit of each other. As can be seen by President Dolabson’s article great things can be accomplished, if everyone pitches in and supports and works towards a common goal. If you do not stand up for your fellow member, then how can you expect them to stand up for you. I know that many are afraid, they say I do not want to get involved because “Management will retaliate on me.” Well trust me, they will retaliate on you whether you speak up or not, it is just a matter of time.

So remember the next time you see something, or hear something that is not right, by all means contact your Union Representative. But after that be ready to stand next to them in support, make a statement, help your fellow Carrier’s in their time of need. Because, next time, it could be you who needs help !

THE UNION IS ONLY AS STRONG AS YOU ARE

VICE-PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By JEMMAYEN MACARAEG

COVID-19 Related MOUs Extended Until Dec 31, 2021

By joint agreement (M-01966), several COVID related memorandums of understanding have been further extended through December 31, 2021. These memoranda include: temporary expanded sick leave for dependent care (M-01910); temporary additional paid leave for CCAs (M-01911); temporary use of the 7:01 rule, (M-01913); temporary workplace changes to promote social distancing (M-01915); temporary use of TCAs (M-01916).

NALC and the Postal Service also agreed to another temporary time limit extensions on Step B and arbitration appeals (M-01964), and an agreement giving local parties the ability to develop a sign-up process for full-time employees who previously did not, or could not, place their names on either the overtime desired list or work assignment list (M-01963). Both of these agreements will expire on December 31st as well.

Also extended through December 31st is a USPS memorandum (M-01914) which instructs managers and supervisors to allow liberal changes of schedule to accommodate employees who are dealing with childcare issues related to the pandemic. The memorandum also provides for liberal sick leave usage for employees who are sick and liberal annual and leave without pay (LWOP) to the extent operationally feasible, treats COVID-19 related leave as scheduled (as opposed to unscheduled) leave, and directs that leave taken for COVID-19 related reasons during this time is not to be cited in discipline for failing to maintain an assigned schedule.

Each of the MOUs and the USPS directive can be found in NALC's Materials Reference System on the NALC website.

Insurance benefits and OWCP

When an injured letter carrier is receiving wage-loss compensation for an on-the-job injury for an extended period of time, the responsibility for payment of health and life insurance premiums is transferred from the Postal Service to the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP). The deductions for a Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) plan and/or Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FGLI) will be taken from the compensation payments. An injured worker must be enrolled in a health plan on the date of injury to have premiums deducted.

Health benefit and life insurance deductions are not made from OWCP compensation for intermittent hours or days within a pay period. In those cases, the Postal Service will continue to deduct the premiums from wages earned.

City carrier assistants (CCAs) who are injured on the job normally will not have health benefit premiums deducted from their compensation payments. In those cases, the Postal Service should bill the injured worker on a quarterly basis.

OWCP normally will send the health benefit and life insurance transfer request to the Postal Service. The Postal Service is required to send a copy of two employee forms: SF 2809, Health Benefits Registration Form—Federal Employees Health Benefits Program, and SF 2810, Federal Employees Health Benefits Program—Notice of Change in Health Benefits to OWCP.

The Postal Service assumes the full cost of FEGLI basic life insurance for career employees, so there usually is no transfer of basic life insurance to OWCP necessary. This changes when an injured worker remains on compensation for one year. When a carrier is on Leave Without Pay (LWOP) and receiving OWCP compensation for 12 months, the carrier then becomes a "compensationner" under the law. Compensationners are treated similarly to annuitants (retirees) even if they have not been separated from the Postal Service. When an injured worker reaches compensationner status, the employee then becomes responsible for his or her basic life insurance premium. The premiums will be deducted directly from his or her compensation payments. The premiums for a compensationner are the same as an annuitant and depend on the employee's coverage.

The Postal Service is required to promptly issue forms SF 2821 and SF 2819 to injured workers when they become compensationners so they can make their election(s) in the same manner as a retiring carrier would.* However, most injured workers will receive an SF 2818, Continuation of Life Insurance Coverage as an Annuitant or Compensationner, along with the SF 2819, Notice of Conversion Privilege. The SF 2818 includes options for basic life insurance of 75 percent reduction, 50 percent reduction, or no reduction. The reduction is triggered at age 65 or at retirement, whichever is later.

The premiums for no reduction are 7.5 times more than the 75 percent reduction. Until the employee is age 65 and retired, all options provide the same benefit (salary rounded up to nearest thousand, plus \$2,000). In other words, an injured worker who chooses "no deduction" will be paying a large premium for the same coverage he or she would incur with a 75 percent reduction until the age of sixty-five!

Many compensably injured workers do not realize they are treated as compensationners after one year in LWOP status. If the Postal Service does not issue an injured worker the SF 2818 promptly when the carrier becomes a compensationner, major problems arise.

(Continued on Page 5)

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

(Continued)

NALC has recently seen cases where carriers select the “no reduction” option believing that that is the current coverage for active employees. This changes the premiums for current top-step carriers from approximately \$21 a month to \$162 a month.

Postal employees can decrease their FEGLI coverage at any time, so if an injured worker realizes his or her error, it can be corrected prospectively. However, if the Postal Service fails to send the SF 2818 until years after the effective date, the injured worker may unknowingly elect to increase his or her premium retroactively.

The retroactive adjustment gets transmitted to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and then to OWCP, which will determine an overpayment. Compensably injured workers can face thousands of dollars of owed premiums to OWCP.

Injured workers who receive a letter from the Postal Service regarding the continuation of life insurance coverage need to be mindful of the potential impact of their selection, including the possibility of a retroactive effective date.

A grievance investigation should be initiated if the Postal Service did not issue SF 2818 and SF 2819 as required by the Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM). Grievance officers should contact the national business agent's office for further assistance in handling cases involving the retroactive issuance of SF 2818's. *ELM 535.63, Notice of Termination and of Conversion Privilege

OWCP WARNING!!!!

If you got injured on the job, we could not stress enough to advise everyone that you do not answer any questions from USPS Injury Compensation personnel over the phone. Request to have all questions in writing. Before answering any questions, please seek advice from your shop steward. You do not want to give USPS Injury Compensation personnel the wrong answer as it will be used against you when filing an OWCP claim.

NOT WORKING DUE TO MEDICAL REASONS?

If you are not working due to medical reasons employee's responsibility to submit medical documentation to management. Medical documentation has a start date and end date, make sure to submit recent medical documentation to management. As per the Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM):

513.364 Medical Documentation or Other Acceptable Evidence.

When employees are required to submit medical documentation, such documentation should be furnished by the employee's attending physician or other attending practitioner who is performing within the scope of his or her practice. The documentation should provide an explanation of the nature of the employee's illness or injury sufficient to indicate to management that the employee was (or will be) unable to perform his or her normal duties for the period of absence. Normally, medical statements such as “under my care” or “received treatment” are not acceptable evidence of incapacitation to perform duties.

Supervisors may accept substantiation other than medical documentation if they believe it supports approval of the sick leave request.

513.365 Failure to Furnish Required Documentation

If acceptable substantiation of incapacitation is not furnished, the absence may be charged to annual leave, LWOP, or AWOL.

513.37 Return to Duty

An employee returning from an FMLA-covered absence because of his or her own incapacitation must provide documentation from his or her health care provider that he or she is able to perform the functions of the position with or without limitation. Limitations described are accommodated when practical. Bargaining unit employees must also comply with requirements in 865.

RETIREMENT FUN FACTS & TIPS

By
Tia Wilson

For those of you retiring soon, please remember that your annual leave is advanced to you. Generally you can use as much of it as you want, when you want, on the assumption that you will work until the end of the year and finish earning it. However, in the year you retire you can only use the amount of leave that you have earned up to the point that you leave service. If you use more than you have earned, you will have to pay it back. It is actually recommended that you save your annual leave and carry over the maximum amount, into the year you retire, in case there is a delay getting your annuity payment. You can use the annual leave pay out to live on until you get that first payment. Unused sick leave cannot be used to attain your minimum years of service to retire. It will be added to your credible time of service for the purpose of calculating the amount of your annuity only. For example: if you have 29 ½ years of service and 6 months of sick leave, you cannot combine the two to meet your 30 years of service. You have to actually work 30 years and then your sick leave would make it 30 ½ years of service to calculate your annuity.

"THE MAIL CALL"

BRANCH 2462, NALC

Francisco Valenzuela, Editor
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Van Nuys, CA 91406

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Branch Meeting Minutes October 5, 2021

By
Steve Seyfried, Secretary

The Meeting was held Virtually on Zoom due to a renewed outbreak of Covid Variant D in some of the Van Nuys offices. It was called to order by PRESIDENT J. DOLABSON at 6:54 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by SGT-AT-ARMS POWERS
MOMENT OF SILENCE--In Memory of All the Letter Carriers and MEMBERS who have passed.

ROLL CALL OF OFFICERS

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

ABSENT—NONE

**MINUTES ACCEPTED AS PRINTED IN MAIL CALL
CORRESPONDENCE READ**

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

CHRISTIAN MOJICA, OMAR DAWKINS, PEDRO MORALES, SIMON WEISS, JASBIR SINGH, JESSICA MACHUCA, BRYAN CERVANTES, PASHA HAMASIAN
BILLS READ---NONE

COMMITTEE REPORTS

AUDIT & BUDGET—TRUSTEES No Report
SAFETY & HEALTH—DUENEZ Continue to work in a safe manner. Drive Safely, fasten Seat Belts, No Headphones, Doors Closed. Van Nuys accidents were down for the year. Keep Working for a Safer Year.

RETIREES 11 retiree's present tonight. Retiree Luncheon will be postponed until next March.

MDA FUND--POWERS Currently \$1120.00 in fund
HBR—L. DOLABSON Open Season Nov. 8—

Dec. 13th. October 17 & 18 is HB Seminar (Virtual) Watch for article in November MailCall

MDA—MACARAEG JAMBA JUICE CARDS were incredible success, 500 sold. We can get more if demand is still there. Let your Shop Steward know if you want to purchase more cards

MBA—DUENEZ No Report

EDITOR—VALENZUELA All is Well

POLITICAL—BURTON Postal Reform bill

HR3076)) now has 85 co-sponsors. The Prefunding relief bill (HR695) has 275 sponsors, Windfall Tax Elimination Bill (HR82) has 229 sponsors. Write to your representatives and urge them to support these important Letter Carrier Bills.

FINANCE REPORT—MULLINAX Christmas parties for offices has been cancelled due to on going concerns with COVID, so we will be waiting till the Post Office decides whether they will be allowed to send out funds. Calendars for all active members will be passed out in the offices next week.

Non-member list is down to 8 people, with commitments from 2, to join. Panorama City station is now at 100% membership!! Pay raise in Nov will be 1.3% for Active and 2.3% for CCA's
TREASURERS REPORT—WILSON Still waiting for some offices to turn in their Christmas receipts and/or return the checks that were issued and have not been used. The monies will be reissued when we are once again allowed to have gatherings.

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

VICE-PRESIDENT MACARAEG COVID Memorandum of Understanding has been renewed through December 31st. Look for my article in the November MailCall for specific information about this and other important items.

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

OLD BUSINESS—NONE

NEW BUSINESS

NOMINATIONS FOR CONVENTION DELEGATES

JANETTE DOLABSON * \$	JEMMAYEN MACARAEG * \$
STEVE SEYFRIED * \$	TIA WILSON * \$
TRACY MULLINAX * \$	WILLIAM POWERS * \$
LARRY DOLABSON * \$	RICHARD DUENEZ * \$
FRANCISCO VALENZUELA * \$	PAUL JEFFREY * \$
BOB JOHNSON *	JOHN BURTON * \$
ART BOCEK \$	CALVIN BROOKINS \$
RAUL DOZAL \$	BOB ENZ \$
ROD GODDARD \$	GUILLERMO MARISCAL \$
RAFAEL PEREZ \$	

*--indicates Automatic Delegate \$--indicates Paid Delegate

MOTION—Move that the Branch have the Health Benefits Rep attend the online H B Seminar from Oct 17-18, 2021. Cost not to exceed \$ 550.00 M/S/C

MOTION—Move that the Branch renew the Subscription to QuickBooks Desktop. Cost not to exceed \$ 725.00 M/S/C

MOTION—Move that the Branch have Eco Tech Office Solutions repair and 'refresh the Sharp Copy machine. Cost to the Branch \$ 866.90 M/S/C

UNDERLINED INDICATES UNANIMOUS VOTE

Meeting Adjourned 8:42 PM