

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

**VOLUME 59**

**MAY 2022**

**NUMBER 5**

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

**By JANETTE DOLABSON**

Here are a couple dates to put on your calendars: October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022 Retirement Luncheon and December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022 Branch Christmas Party. More information will be given as these events come closer. We are looking forward to being able to gather again and honoring our retirees and to hold a celebration of the Christmas Holiday with our members and their families.

New Steward orientation and introduction will be held on Thursday May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 6:30 at the union office. Food will be provided for those in attendance. We will have Shop Stewards post sign-up sheets in their stations. Anyone who would like to become a Shop Steward is welcome to attend this orientation. We will be going over Stewards Rights and Responsibilities. It will give you a good idea of the qualifications and the duties of the position. Shop Stewards really do have the hardest and most important job in the union. A good Shop Steward is essential to the grievance process and disseminating information to carriers in their stations. We hope to get some folks willing to step up and become Shop Stewards or alternate Shop Stewards.

### **COVID-19**

All the Current MOU's for COVID-19 have been extended to May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022. At that time they will reassess whether they need to be continued.

### **Leave**

The Annual Leave Carryover MOU had been extended to include this year. Carriers may carryover from 2022 into 2023 520 hours of annual leave.

### **Food Drive**

We will be holding this year's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive. This year it falls on Saturday May 14<sup>th</sup>. The following people will be the Food Drive Coordinators in the Stations:

John Burton- Main Office (with Miguel Maldonado)

Tracy Mullinax- Encino ( with Will Powers)

Guillermo Mariscal- Sherman Oaks (with Rod Goddard)

Jemmayen Macaraeg- Panorama City (with Francisco Valenzuela)

Tia Wilson- Sun Valley

Sandy Anger- Tarzana

We will be providing station expenses to the offices for refreshments/food for Carriers and volunteers.

We will also be having a KTLA event the morning of the food drive. Details still in the works. Also, there will be a kick off at MEND food bank tentatively May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 10:30 am for those carriers who may like to attend that event. Edward James Olmos will be the Celebrity spokesperson (possibly others too).

It is too late to get T-shirts ordered this year with the turnaround time since we did not know for sure we would be holding a food drive until the end of February. If you have Food Drive t-shirts from years past, you may wear them the week of the food drive.

### **National Information**

There is a change in our customer signature capture procedures that were implemented during COVID-19 Pandemic. Effective now, all delivery personnel must capture customer's signatures for special services mail requiring a signature. Other residents and agents for businesses can sign unless delivery is restricted to the named recipient. Customers must sign and accept all customer signature capture function for the recipient. You should have already had this stand up in your stations.

Special Services includes Express Mail, Signature Confirmation, Certified Mail, COD mail, inbound international mail, Insured Mail, Return Receipt, and firm sheets containing these services.

The Postal Service is introducing 2 new clothing items for City Letter Carriers. First the Cyber Knit Popo shirt made of 100% polyester performance fabric and offers moisture management technology for greater comfort. This item should be available now. The second item is the Cargo Pocket Trouser designed with the convenience of pocket openings on the side of each pant leg where scanners or other mobile devices may be stored. The new pants will be offered in men's and women's designs, in both summer and winter weights. This item will be available for purchase in 2023.

**(Continued on Page 3)**

"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.

## Retirement Fun Facts & Tips

By  
**Tia Wilson**

### FOR FERS EMPLOYEES

#### Age Reduction

If you completed at least 10 years, but less than 30 years of creditable service before you left Federal service, your annuity will be reduced if it begins before age 62. The only exception to this is if you had at least 20 years of service and your annuity begins when you reach age 60.

Your annuity will be reduced by 5/12 of 1 percent for each month (5 percent per year) by which your benefit commencing date precedes your 62nd birthday. However, you can postpone (defer) the commencing date of your annuity to reduce or eliminate this age reduction.

#### Deferred Retirement

You are eligible for a deferred annuity if you meet one of the following age and service requirements:

You have completed at least 5 years of creditable civilian service, then you are eligible for a deferred annuity beginning the first day of the month after you reach age 62.

You have completed at least 10 years of creditable service, including 5 years of civilian service, then you are eligible for a deferred annuity beginning the first day of the month after you reach the Minimum Retirement Age (MRA)

#### Please note:

If you take a deferred annuity you will not be eligible to continue any health benefits or life insurance coverage you had while employed and you will not receive the annuity supplement.

#### Early out

The early retirement benefit is available in certain involuntary separation cases and in cases of voluntary separations during a major reorganization or reduction in force. To be eligible, you must meet the following requirements: Age 50 = 20 years or Any Age = 25 years

For CSRS this option will reduce your benefit if you are under age 55.

**For more information visit [opm.gov](http://opm.gov)**



## ATTENDANCE CHART BRANCH MEETINGS

MONTH	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
MAIN OFFICE	3	4	7									
ENCINO	3	4	4									
PANORAMA CITY	4	4	4									
SHERMAN OAKS	2	4	3									
SUN VALLEY	0	0	0									
TARZANA	0	0	0									
RETIREE'S	9	7	7									
TOTAL	21	23	25									

## NEXT MEETING

**TUESDAY**

**MAY**

**3rd**

**2022**

**6:30 p.m.**

**It Will Be Held At the**

**UNION OFFICE**

**6910 Hayvenhurst Ave**

**#104**

**Between Van Owen & Sherman Way**

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

**April 10, 2022**

**WEB PAGE.... [WWW.NALCBRANCH2462.ORG](http://WWW.NALCBRANCH2462.ORG)**

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

**O P C PERSONNEL OFFICE.....818-374-5600**

**[E-Mail.....Branch2462nalc@gmail.com](mailto:Branch2462nalc@gmail.com)**

# **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

**(Continued from Page 1)**

## **Local Branch**

D'Angelo Johnson has left Van Nuys Installation to become Postmaster of the Pacoima office. We wish him well in his new position. With his departure, Daniel Seratto will be acting Station Manager in Encino and Raul Merino will be Acting Station Manager in Panorama City. Supervisor Rebecca Cruz has moved to Sherman Oaks office and Viral Dalal is now in Main Office.

## **Safety**

The Safety Ambassador Program has been discontinued. All procedures materials for this program should be removed from posts and circulation in all offices. Let me know if your office is not in compliance with this.

There has been a lot of carriers found to be doing serious unsafe acts while doing their jobs. For instance, driving without seatbelts with doors open, Turing U-turns with doors open, leaving mail unattended in unlocked vehicle, outside vehicle delivering mail with truck still running and unlocked. These are very serious safety infractions and had a supervisor or Manager been out there witnessing these you would have been sent home on an emergency suspension and received possible removals. Its not worth losing your job, hurting yourself or others or having mail stolen from your vehicles. There is not a lot the union can do to argue against these actions on your behalf. Its not just one office, its several offices that have had these things going on. Please take the time to be safe. No one will lose their jobs for taking more time, but you may if you continue to do these safety infractions.

## **Attendance**

Attendance is a big issue in offices right now. Just so you are aware, 3 or more unexcused absences in a 3 month period is considered irregular attendance. This includes being late to work over 3 clicks. You should be getting a quarterly attendance review. I have seen several notices of discipline for attendance, especially tardiness. Get to work on time. Leave earlier. Do whatever it takes to arrive to work before your start time.

## **Scanning**

The scanning numbers in some offices have gone in the wrong direction. It may be for several reasons. You may have not had that piece that day, you may be hurrying to make your time back, your scanner may not have functioned properly. Slow down, make sure your scanner is working properly and the scan you just did was recorded correctly. Check your scanner records and reviews. Check your parcels for your route that day scheduled for delivery. There may be some that are listed that are not in your tub or even in your office. If you find that to be true, let your manager know that piece is not in your tub or in your truck so they can check and see where it is. Often its not even in our State. Management may try to log in scannable SPRs that you have in your tubs to see if they get scanned. If they are missed, you may be told they can show you had the piece in your tub in the morning and you failed to scan it delivered. There is a problem with this since how would they prove that piece was put back in the tub after it was logged? It may be a weak argument. My suggestion to you is, take the time necessary to scan all your

parcels and all your SPRs. The SPR's seem to be the ones that are missing the stop the clock scan. Scanning is important to the customers and to the Postal Service and it is important to you. Being fast is not as important as doing the job as it should be done. Yes, sometimes things are missed, sometimes the scan is incorrect and unscannable. Let your supervisor know if a parcel or SPR can not be scanned so you don't take the fall on missing it.

## **Political**

President Biden has signed The Postal Reform Act into law. This has been 12 years of hard work by many folks including our Representative in Washington DC, State, Cities and Branches across the country. The NALC at every level have worked tirelessly to get this Bill passed into law. Thank you all for all your work. This could not have happened without you. This law protects 6-day Delivery, repeals the pre-funding mandate from 2006 requiring the Postal service to fund future retiree health benefits (the number 1 reason the Postal Service has operated in the red many years). It also will maximize integration of future Postal annuitants into Medicare, saving millions of dollars a year in health care costs. Well done!!!

NALC Branch 2462 has endorsed Christy Smith as candidate for the 27<sup>th</sup> District unanimously. The 27<sup>th</sup> District covers areas such as Granada Hills, Santa Clarita cities and Palmdale and Lancaster to name a few. Many of our members live in these areas and we are looking forward to supporting her campaign and help do some precinct walks and phone banking in support of her run for Congress.

## **MAY WE NEVER FORGET THEIR ULTIMATE SACRIFICE**



## **WE LIVE FREE TODAY BECAUSE OF THEM**

# Vice President's Report

By

**Jemmayen Macaraeg**

## **Should you work off the clock? Is it worth it?**

The answer is big NO, it is illegal to work off the clock. It's a violation of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Under no circumstances should you work off the clock. Even if your management did not ask you to, but they are aware of your off-the-clock work and allow it, you should not perform the unpaid duties. It doesn't matter if you're doing that work voluntarily; you can't waive your right to overtime.

FLSA prohibits employees working off-the-clock without due cause. Employer direct request is considered due cause. Some employers maintain employees who work after hours thinking they are "helping" the company by not recording the time. Despite such good intentions, employees cannot choose to decline the protections of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), and employers cannot refuse to pay.

The United States Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), is legislation designed to protect workers in most states. The FLSA articulates that employees be paid overtime for more than 40 hours a week. Due to integration of the FLSA in most state labor law, U.S. employee rights are protected insofar that they must be paid the minimum wage, as well as overtime, and the same compensatory or insurance benefits as other workers in the same role.

The FLSA states that work that is "off-the-clock" is the same as overtime not compensated by an employer at a standard hourly wage. Federal law defines employment to include permit to work, or "suffer" as result of the activity. Where an employer requires or allows workers to work overtime, under U.S. law that overtime is usually due compensation.

The FLSA regulations literally state that management cannot sit back and accept the benefits of an employee's labor without paying for the time. Time recording is the most important element of accountability. Time tracking software can help if coordinated with actual work processes on the job. Time records can also be kept on timesheets, security logs or software app. The main objective is that employers implement an accurate procedure to track employee hours, and a reporting instrument to retain as record.

The FLSA requires that employees be paid for all work, even if the work was not specifically requested. Paying for unauthorized overtime might be painful, but overtime pay cannot be denied.

It gives your employer bad information about what it takes to get your job done. Your manager needs to know what can reasonably be accomplished in your position in 40 hours, in order to make accurate decisions about budgeting, staffing levels and work priorities. If you're secretly working off the clock and your manager plans your team's workload around that level of productivity, what's going to happen if you suddenly decide you don't want to or can't put in those extra hours anymore? Furthermore, by working off the clock, you're potentially making it harder for your manager to increase the staffing on your team, because if all the work is getting done, the agency has less incentive to spend money on a new hire.

It's bad for your coworkers. If the rest of your coworkers are following the law and company policy and not working unauthorized overtime while you're secretly making an exception for yourself, you're going to throw off the expectations for everyone. Your manager is likely to wonder why your co-workers aren't producing at the same levels that you are, and that can ramp up the pressure and stress on them. Plus, it's going to be really bad for the person who replaces you when you move on at some point. That person will be burdened with an unrealistic workload because you set unrealistic expectations about how much could be done with the time available.

You deserve to be paid. Worker protections have been hard won. People fought – and in some cases even died – for your right to be paid fairly for the time you work. And you have agreed to provide a particular amount of work in exchange for money, not to sign over all your free time to your employer.

If you can't realistically finish all your work in 40 hours, the solution isn't to work off the clock and not tell your boss. Instead, in most cases you should talk with your manager about what you can and can't get done and how you should be prioritizing things. And yes, in reality there are indeed some managers who will tell you to just find a way to get it all done, but good, reasonable managers will want you to raise the issue.

## **Reducing CCA injuries**

Every now and then, problems pertaining to Postal Service employees get examined by an outside entity. Earlier this year, multiple congressional committees asked the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to review service issues caused by the Postal Service's increased use of non-career employees, including city carrier assistants (CCAs). In August 2021, the GAO released a report on the rising number of workplace injuries suffered by non-career postal employees. The report is titled "Further Analysis Could Help Identify Opportunities to Reduce Injuries among Non-Career Employees." The report examined the rates of non-career employee turnover and injuries, as well as the Postal Service's efforts to manage these issues. The GAO analyzed Postal Service data from Fiscal Years 2016 through 2020 to determine turnover and injury rates, and conducted analyses to determine what factors could be attributed to the two issues. The GAO also calculated the costs associated with turnover and injuries, including workers' compensation costs, using Department of Labor data.

As part of the process, the GAO interviewed officials representing the Postal Service, postal unions, postal management associations and the Postal Service Office of Inspector General. Postal Service officials asserted that injury rates had nothing to do with career status. The GAO disputed the Postal Service's assertion and found that non-career employees had higher injury rates in the study period and that the Postal Service failed to analyze injury data by career status. The GAO noted that one cause of the increase in noncareer injuries was managerial pressure, in the form of unrealistic expectations to either intentionally accelerate work speed or because the manager did not account for an employee's relative lack of experience. Little surprise there, eh?

**(Continued on Page 5)**

## Vice President's Report

(Continued from Page 4)

The GAO noted that CCAs may be particularly susceptible to such pressure because they want to keep their jobs in a vulnerable situation. The GAO was provided several examples of risks that CCAs may take under management pressure: failure to curb wheels, failure to put on seat belts, running instead of walking and jumping fences. The GAO also found that CCAs are more likely to be moved around to different installations, forcing them to carry unfamiliar routes and exposing them to hazards they may not know about. At the end of the report, the GAO recommended that the postmaster general ensure that executive leaders analyze employee injuries by career status to identify opportunities for reducing employee injuries, particularly among non-career employees.

### **Injured workers deserve more than further analysis to solve an obvious problem.**

While NALC is working with the Postal Service to address many of the issues in the GAO report, there are things we can do to help our newest employees avoid injuries so they can move toward career employment. The Postal Service would never get the mail delivered without our CCAs. If we want to return to reasonable staffing, reducing turnover and injuries for our newest employees is essential.

We all have experienced the stress of being on probation and learning how to carry mail. While we cannot change management's attitude toward CCAs, we can change ours. We need to make sure that our CCAs get the time to work safely and learn how to do the job right. There is no substitute for solidarity on the workroom floor.

Letter carriers continue to have the highest injury rate of any federal employee. Our new CCAs need to know that every letter carrier, regardless of their seniority, is protected for workplace injuries, and that reporting and being compensated for a workplace injury is a fundamental right, regardless of their probationary status.

### **Postal reorganization**

NALC is concerned that the recent postal reorganization may cause delays in claim processing by the new USPS Occupational Health Office (formerly Health Resource Management). As the districts have been downsized, so has the staff dedicated to handling Postal Service obligations under federal workers' compensation laws and regulations. While the staff may have gotten smaller, the number of claims has not.

The Postal Service has strict time limits for processing the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP) claim forms. Both the law and the contract require management to complete and transmit Forms CA-1 and CA-2 to OWCP within 10 working days after receipt from the employee. Form CA-7 must be transmitted to OWCP within five working days after receipt from the employee. Delays in processing forms should not be tolerated. Postal Service obligations in processing OWCP claim files are incorporated into our national contract, and delays in processing claim forms are grievable.

Injured letter carriers who are registered in OWCP's ECOMP system can track the processing of claim forms by checking their ECOMP dashboard daily. Letter carriers with older claims who have not registered in ECOMP are strongly encouraged to do so, as the system now allows users to review complete claim file documents in real time.

May you all have a safe and healthy spring day. Thank you for the great work you do every day.

## JAMBA JUICE BOGO FREE X 6



**NALC**

**MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY FUNDRAISING!!!**

**IT'S SPRING AND THE WEATHER HAS  
ALREADY WARMED UP. WOULD'T YOU  
LOVE A GREAT TASTING—COOL DRINK  
FOR YOURSELF OR A FRIEND !!!  
CALL : (818)786-8505 OR (818)  
205-6749 TO ORDER!!!**



**REMEMBER !!!**

**ALL PROCEEDS FROM THE SALE OF THESE  
GOES TO MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY**

**DON'T BE LEFT OUT--GET YOURS TODAY**

**"THE MAIL CALL"**  
**BRANCH 2462, NALC**  
**Francisco Valenzuela, Editor**  
**6910 Hayvenhurst Ave., # 104**  
**Van Nuys, CA 91406**

**Address Service Requested**

**Branch Meeting Minutes**

**April 5, 2022**

**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 6:57 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by SGT-AT-ARMS POWERS

**MOMENT OF SILENCE--All the Letter Carriers and MEMBERS who have passed over the past year.**

**ROLL CALL OF OFFICERS**

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

**ABSENT--**JOHNSON, DUENEZ

**MINUTES ACCEPTED AS PRINTED IN THE MAILCALL CORRESPONDENCE READ**

**BILLS READ---- NONE**

**APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP--CESAR ALONZO, CHRIS ALVAREZ, MARTA ANAYA, ANDRES GARCIA, MIGUEL JIMENEZ, WILLIAM LOPEZ, NATALLY FLORES, GEVORGIAN HARUT, CARLOS VARGAS, CRISTIN DECLOEDT, GEGHAM AKOPIAN, RENE HERNANDEZ, RICHARD DIAZ, CHRISTIAN FERNANDEZ**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

AUDIT & BUDGET--TRUSTEES NONE

SAFETY & HEALTH--DUENEZ Carriers are still being followed on the street daily. Continue to work in a safe manner. Be vigilant at all times when working. Make sure you are using seat belts, closing doors, and obeying all regulations. Never try to make up time by cutting safety rules. Also you must wear the proper shoes while working, Black, with leather uppers and approved nonslip soles. If you have a physician's note for special shoes they still must be made of leather.

RETIREES 9 retiree's present tonight. Retiree Luncheon will be held on October 30<sup>th</sup> at The Monterey at Encino Golf Course. Watch for any updates regarding this event, but we hope to have a large crowd as we have many awards and honors to hand out.

MDA FUND--POWERS Currently \$1657.00 in fund  
HBR--L. DOLABSON Finally received update from National. We gained 7 new Health Plan members for this year, which means that we have 107 from our Branch currently enrolled. Paperwork has been submitted so that we can receive our payback.

MDA--MACARAEG Offer on Jamba Juice cards is still available. ALL MONEY RAISED GOES TO MDA !!! Looking to have a Bowl-a-Thon later in the year.

MBA--DUENEZ NONE

EDITOR--VALENZUELA All is Well, and special Thanks to TIA WILSON for her assistance in getting Aprils MailCall out.

POLITICAL--BURTON Postal Reform Act, has been passed and President Biden will sign it in the coming week. HR 82 (Windfall Relief) currently has 268 Co-sponsors, so we will have to see what happens with that. Also HR 4268 is currently in the House, but no significant support as of now. This bill would allow CCA's to buy back their time and apply it towards their Retirement time.

FINANCE REPORT--MULLINAX Thanks to the 2 Stations that turned in their Christmas party receipts. Still one more to go. All Gold Cards and pins are organized and ready for the Retiree Luncheon. GEORGE SANTOS is the Branches newest Retired Member. Welcome to the ranks of the Retired !!

TREASURERS REPORT--WILSON Read Financial Reports Motion--Accept Financial Report's as read M/S/C

VICE-PRESIDENT MACARAEG Watch for my report in the next issue of the MailCall. Also Safety Ambassador program has been scraped, we will continue to use the Safety Captains until a agreement is reached by the Union and USPS. Take note that the OWCP Department is planning to go On-Line and will no longer be using "paper forms." Any questions contact me at the Branch Office

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

**OLD BUSINESS--NONE**  
**NEW BUSINESS**

MOTION--Branch endorse CHRISTY SMITH for the District 27 House of Representatives seat. M/S/C

MOTION--Branch pay the unsecured Property Tax bill. Cost to the Branch \$ 182.74 M/S/C

MOTION--Branch pay the Liability Insurance bill with State Farm Insurance. Cost to the Branch \$ 1067.00 M/S/C

**UNDERLINED INDICATES UNANIMOUS VOTE**

**GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION**

M D A DRAWING

\$ 2--CALVIN BROOKINS--RETIREE--DONATED  
\$ 3--MIGUEL MALDONADO--MAIN--DONATED  
\$ 5--ROB GODDARD--SHERMAN OAKS--DONATED

Meeting Adjourned 8:32 PM