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VOLUME 61 NOVEMBER 2024 NUMBER 10

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By
## JEMMAYEN MACARAEG

**Update on contract negotiations - 10/5/24**

From President Brian L. Renfroe:

"Over the past week, we have narrowed the remaining economic and work rule issues in negotiations with the Postal Service to reach a tentative agreement on a new collective bargaining agreement for city letter carriers. Negotiations will continue into next week. After a tentative agreement is reached with the Postal Service, the NALC Executive Council will meet promptly to discuss the terms of the deal and a tentative agreement will be finalized. The details will be made available to NALC members at that point, along with information on the upcoming ratification balloting process."

**Arbitrator Nolan renders decision on national-level LiteBlue hack grievance**

On July 12, 2023, President Renfroe initiated a national-level grievance related to the theft of letter carrier wages by cybercriminals who were able to access the USPS Human Resources website, LiteBlue. The issue in this case involved incidents that occurred in late 2022 and early 2023. Hundreds of postal employees, which included letter carriers, fell victim to hackers who were able to access their LiteBlue accounts using dubious tactics. Employee account information was obtained when employees entered their login information into fake LiteBlue websites created by criminals. As a result, these letter carriers had their paychecks misdirected into bank accounts owned by the criminals.

Earlier this year, on Jan. 23 and 24, this case was heard by National Arbitrator Dennis R. Nolan in Washington, DC. Since employees represented by the American Postal Workers Union (APWU) and the National Postal Mail Handlers Union (NPMHU) were victims of the theft as well, both unions intervened and presented their cases before Arbitrator Nolan. At the hearing, NALC's counsel outlined the numerous contractual violations the Postal Service had committed when it failed to ensure that letter carriers were paid for their time on the clock. Additionally, arguments were made outlining the Postal Service's failure to protect its systems from hackers when it did not institute the use of multifactor authentication (MFA) until after the attacks occurred.

Post-hearing briefs were submitted to Arbitrator Nolan by all parties in mid-April. Arbitrator Nolan denied NALC's grievance. In his award, he posed the questions, "What do the parties mean by the employer's obligation to "pay" employees? Is it enough to make a direct deposit in the bank account on record, or must the Postal Service take further steps to make sure the employees actually receive the direct deposit money? To put it differently, may the Postal Service simply act on the banking information it has or must it act as a guarantor for employees victimized by cyber criminals?"

Arbitrator Nolan opined, "The term "pay" is ambiguous. It could fairly be applied either way. To prevail, however, the Union has to prove that its interpretation is superior to that of the Postal Service — that the Postal Service actually violated some provision of the Agreement. The Union failed to do so. The grievance must therefore be denied." He ended his award with, "The Union failed to prove that the Postal Service violated any specific provision of the National Agreement by failing to pay employees after unauthorized access to LiteBlue resulted in changes to direct deposit information."

**News from Washington**

Congress moving toward discharging the Social Security Fairness Act On Sept. 19, the discharge petition for the Social Security Fairness Act (H.R. 82) reached 218 signers, an important step to bring the legislation to the House floor for a vote. The bill would repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO), which are parts of Social Security law that unfairly reduce or sometimes eliminate Social Security benefits of federal annuitants, including letter carriers.

The milestone came on the same day NALC participated in a press conference on Capitol Hill to raise awareness about the issue. NALC President Brian L. Renfroe spoke at the event that was cohosted by the leads of the bill, Reps. Abigail Spanberger (D-VA) and Garret Graves (R-LA). NALC President Renfroe encourages the House to vote on the Social Security Fairness Act. "You know, this has been going on now for 40 years and the letter carriers serve every community in this

**(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.

# ATTENDANCE CHART
# BRANCH MEETINGS

| MONTH | J | F | M | A | M | J | J | A | S | O | N |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| MAIN OFFICE | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 3 | - | | 6 | |
| ENCINO | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 4 | - | | 2 | |
| PANORAMA CITY | 2 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 3 | - | | 3 | |
| SHERMAN OAKS | 7 | 5 | 7 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 8 | - | | 8 | |
| SUN VALLEY | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | - | | 0 | |
| TARZANA | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | - | | 3 | |
| RETIREE'S | 7 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 5 | - | | 8 | |
| TOTAL | 21 | 18 | 21 | 22 | 26 | 24 | 23 | - | | 30 | |

# NEXT MEETING
# TUESDAY
# NOVEMBER
# 5th
# "2024"
## 6:30 p.m.
## BRANCH OFFICE

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

## Nov 10, 2024

**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: !!!!

We have had our final Breakfast of the year and wish to thank the Branch for sponsoring this event. We look forward to continuing this gathering in the future. Thanks to all the Retiree's who came out and supported each other.

THANKS

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition*

*is hereby presented to:*

*Norik Golnazarian*

*As the Representative of the 29th Congressional District, I am honored to recognize you, Norik Golnazarian, for your 36 years of exemplary service to the San Fernando Valley.*

*Your invaluable contributions to the United States Postal Service and the local community over the past three decades have made a significant impact. I wish you continued health, happiness, and success in all your future endeavors.*

*October 2nd, 2024*

*Tony Cárdenas*
TONY CARDENAS
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

## Congratulation Norik Golnazarian!

On behalf of NALC Branch 2462, we would like to recognize Norik Golnazarian for receiving a well-deserved Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition from Congressman Tony Cardenas.

"As the Representative of the 29th Congressional District, I am honored to recognize you, Norik Golnazarian, for your 36 years of exemplary service to the San Fernando Valley.

Your invaluable contributions to the United States Postal Service and the local community over the past three decades have made a significant impact. I wish you continued health, happiness, and success in all your future endeavors."

-Congressman Tony Cardenas

Norik Golnazarian has been a letter carrier for 36 years and union member for 32 years. He has gone above and beyond for customers, no matter who's route he's in. He is always willing to help his fellow letter carriers and is very dependable in any situation. Golnazarian always has a positive attitude and takes pride in being a USPS employee.

Congratulations Norik Golnazarian and thank you for all your hard work.

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

**(Continued from Page 1)**

country every single day. We do way more than deliver the mail; we look out for people and save lives on a daily basis," President Renfroe said at the rally. "What is most unfair is that the people who are victimized by this grossly unfair provision in the law are those, like my members and others that you have heard from and will hear from this morning, who are dedicated civil servants and public servants who look out for and serve their communities. They're the very last people who should be impacted by something like this." While the discharge petition is closed after reaching 218 signatures, members can still co-sponsor the bill. H.R. 82 is now one of the most co-sponsored bills in Congress, with 327 co-sponsors. Now, the petition will sit on the House calendar for seven legislative days. After that period, Spanberger and Graves, the filers of the discharge petition, can request a full House vote. According to House rules, after that request, a vote will be scheduled within two legislative days. Sept. 20 counted as the first legislative day. With the current schedule of legislative days, the soonest action could be taken on the bill is mid-November. With much in flux, including the House's schedule and efforts to pass a continuing resolution to fund the government, it is unclear when the two Hattiesburg, MS Branch 938 President Sam Hill (c) attends the White House Summit on Extreme Heat, lawmakers will choose to call for a vote after the allotted time.
NALC will continue closely monitoring this legislation and will inform members when it is called for a vote.

### Letter carrier tells White House about working in heat

On Sept. 14, Hattiesburg, MS Branch 938 President Sam Hill was a panelist at the White House Summit on Extreme Heat. He joined White House senior staff other workers exposed to extreme heat, health care professionals, emergency responders, and researchers and innovators to talk about what it's like to work through the dangers of extreme heat. The summit comes as the Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration is proposing a rule to protect workers in the first-ever U.S. safety standard on heat. The proposed rule includes requirements for identifying heat hazards, emergency response plans, training for supervisors, and work standards, including breaks, access to shade and water, and heat acclimatization for new employees.

### City & Rural Carriers rally for Protect Our Letter Carriers Act

Chanting "Enough is enough," city letter carriers and rural letter carriers held rallies in August and September to raise awareness about crimes against letter carriers and the need to pass the Protect Our Letter Carriers Act (POLCA), H.R. 7629 and S. 4356. On Aug. 26, NALC President Brian L. Renfroe joined National Rural Letter Carriers' Association (NRLCA) President Don Maston and other delegates to the NRLCA national convention who rallied in Reno, NV. President Renfroe called on members of the community to report any suspicious activity they see involving letter carriers. "You know, your letter carrier is there to serve you every day," he told a reporter from the local NBC affiliate. "If you see anything out of the ordinary, the safe thing to do is contact law enforcement. You never know, that could be the difference in one of these crimes happening or not." On Sept. 5, Southern Delaware Branch 906 members were joined by rural carriers as they rallied in Georgetown to support H.R. 7629. "What that would do is, basically, any crime committed against a postal employee would be just like a crime committed against law enforcement," Branch 906 President Shawn Colleran said. It would result in stiffer penalties, he said, and require that every district have an attorney put in charge of postal crimes. "So, you would have the accountability and the presence, which currently just isn't there." NALC Director of Retired Members Dan Toth called on residents of Southern Delaware to "look out for us, the way we have always looked out for you." Like the Reno event, the Delaware rally drew widespread media coverage, from network TV affiliates and radio to newspapers. "Targeted robberies, assaults, and even murder have become part of our jobs," NALC President Renfroe said on the day the House bill was announced. "Think about that. Today we are here to send a very clear message: Enough is enough is enough.

"The next step is critical," Renfroe added, "and that next step is federal legislation that will deter these attacks from happening, prosecute every criminal who attacks one of our members, and protect letter carriers while doing their jobs." This bipartisan House legislation and its Senate counterpart would provide $7 billion in funding for the Postal Service to secure its infrastructure, including the installation of high-security collection boxes and the replacement of Arrow Keys with more secure electronic versions. The funding would be appropriated over five years, $1.4 billion annually in fiscal years 2025 to 2029. When key infrastructure is improved, letter carriers will be safer on their routes. Additionally, the legislation would increase prosecution rates for these crimes by requiring the attorney general to designate an assistant U.S. attorney in each judicial district to prioritize cases involving an assault or crime against a letter carrier. Their principal responsibility in the district would be to coordinate and supervise the investigation and prosecution of these crimes. The bill also would strengthen sentencing guidelines for these crimes, ensuring that they are treated in the same manner as assaults on federal law enforcement officers.

"I urge Congress to pass this bill that would protect the nation's letter carriers who dutifully deliver medications, checks, ballots, packages, and other essential mail that all Americans depend on," President Renfroe said. Since 2020, there have been more than 2,000 crimes committed against letter carriers on the job, reflecting a mass targeting of letter carriers that previously did not exist. Many of these attacks involve a gun or another weapon. Last year alone, the numbers of carriers injured in robberies doubled from the prior year, according to the United States Postal Inspection Service. Renfroe called on NALC members to urge their members of Congress to become co-sponsors of H.R. 7629 and S. 4356. As of Sept. 19, there were 125 co-sponsors in the House and two cosponsors in the Senate. President Renfroe said that passing POLCA is NALC's legislative priority. He encouraged letter carriers to contact their members of Congress, and to ask supporters within their communities to do the same. Go to nalc.org/action to learn more.

### Biden to nominate Gordon Hartogensis to USPS BOG

On Sept. 9, President Biden announced his intent to nominate Gordon Hartogensis to serve on the United States Postal Service Board of Governors (BOG). If confirmed by the Senate, Hartogensis, a Republican nominee, would serve a term that expires on Dec. 8, 2029.

**(Continued on Page 4)**

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

**(Continued from Page 3)**

He started his career on Wall Street. In 1993, he built a supply chain and logistics startup, Petrolsoft Corporation, that was later acquired by Aspen Technology, where Hartogensis served in a leadership role until 2002. He then founded a customer relationship management software company, Auric Technology, which was sold in 2011. Hartogensis then served as an investor and advisor to startups in cybersecurity, immunotherapy, streaming video, fintech and artificial intelligence. Most recently, he served as the director of Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation from 2019 until 2024. Three other Biden BOG nominees have yet to be considered by the Senate: former House of Representatives member Val Demings, former BOG member William Zollars and former U.S. Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh.

### Senate introduces bill to allow USPS to ship alcohol

On Sept. 17, Sens. Je„ Merkley (D-OR) and Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) introduced the USPS Shipping Equity Act (S. 5069). The bill, which is identical to legislation introduced in the House in May 2023, would allow the Postal Service to ship beer, wine, and other alcoholic President Renfroe and other city carriers join the NRLCA rally in Reno, NV. Gordon Hartogensis beverages directly from licensed producers and retailers to legal customers. Current law prohibits the Postal Service from shipping alcoholic goods, making private shippers such as FedEx and UPS the only option for wineries, breweries and other producers to have goods delivered directly to customers. This bill would allow USPS to ship these beverages and would generate an estimated $190 million annually in new revenue for the Postal Service. If passed into law, USPS would have two years to develop regulations ensuring that the Postal Service is prepared to safely deliver alcoholic beverages to adult consumers with appropriate identification checks. The bill also would expand access for direct-to consumer alcoholic shipments. Unlike private shippers, USPS delivers to every address in the nation. The current ban on the Postal Service from shipping alcohol limits access to these products for many Americans, especially in rural areas. “NALC applauds Sen. Merkley and Sen. Gillibrand for introducing the USPS Shipping Equity Act,” NALC President Brian L. Renfroe said. “The bill is an important step toward meeting the growing needs of our customers while generating revenue for the Postal Service, expanding the agency’s service opportunities, and supporting small businesses nationwide.” The House version of the bill (H.R. 3721), introduced by Reps. Dan Newhouse (R-WA) and Jennifer Wexton (D-VA), currently has 22 co-sponsors. Visit nalc.org/action to ask your members of Congress to co-sponsor the legislation.

### Open Season coming for new Postal Service Health Benefits Program

Open Season for health benefits is almost here again. It will run from Nov. 11 through Dec. 9. But it’ll look a little different than in previous years, because this is the first Open Season under the new Postal Service Health Benefits (PSHB) Program that was created as part of the Postal Service Reform Act (PSRA) of 2022.

PSHB is a new, separate program within the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program. Coverage under the PSHB Program will be effective Jan. 1, 2025, for 1.9 million postal employees, annuitants, and their eligible family members. Enacted by Congress in 2022, PSRA ended the requirement to pre-fund retiree health benefits decades in advance, which cost USPS an average of $5.2 billion annually; codified six-day mail delivery into law; and created PSHB to reduce health care costs for USPS and its employees and annuitants by fully integrating their federal health coverage with Medicare. The new law also allowed Medicare-eligible annuitants and their family members who were not enrolled in Medicare Part B previously to enroll in Part B without paying the normal late enrollment penalty during a special enrollment period that ended on Sept. 30.

Most major insurance plans now offered by FEHB in 2024 (NALC HBP, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Kaiser, etc.) have opted to o er those same plans under PSHB in 2025. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) will be automatically enrolling all Postal Service members into a PSHB plan that corresponds to their current FEHB enrollment. So, postal employees and annuitants who do not wish to change plans do not have to take any action as long as their current FEHB plan is creating a plan in PSHB. The table included lists the plan options into which individuals/families will be automatically enrolled.

However, Postal Service enrollees, annuitants, and their family members who are currently enrolled in any FEHB plan that has chosen not to participate in the PSHB in 2025 will need to select a new health insurance plan in the PSHB Program during the 2024 Open Season period. Otherwise, such participants will be automatically enrolled by OPM in the PSHB nationwide plan option with the lowest self-only premium that is not a high-deductible health plan and does not charge a membership fee. Postal participants needing to select a new plan—either because their current plan is no longer available or because they do not like their current insurer— will be able to review all their options and learn about each option’s coverage details before making a new selection during this year’s Open Season. All NALC members should check the table included to make sure their current plan is still available and to make sure they will be placed in the plan they want. If you’re happy with the plan you’re placed in, you don’t have to do anything. But if you’re not, make sure you enroll in the plan of your choice.

We strongly encourage everyone that isn’t currently enrolled in the NALC Health Benefit Plan to take a close look at it during this Open Season—regardless of in which plan you are currently enrolled in. The NALC Health Benefit Plan is owned by letter carriers and built for letter carriers. We believe you will find that it will offer the best fits at the most affordable cost.

Instructions on how to enroll or make changes will be mailed to every participant. Participants without computer access will be able to make enrollment selections by mail. “I encourage all members—active and annuitants—to check and select the plan they’re being enrolled into to make sure it best fits their needs,” NALC President Brian L. Renfroe said. “I think it is the NALC’s Health Benefit Plan. But no matter what you choose, make sure you check and select.”

All NALC members will be receiving mailings and other communications from NALC, USPS and OPM. In the coming weeks, be on the lookout to make sure you understand the process and get enrolled in the plan of your choice.

| Plan Name | Plan Options | Plan Code | Service Area Description | Self +1 Biweekly | Self & Family Biweekly |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| NALC Health Benefit Plan | High | 77 | Nationwide | $282.53 | $273.37 |
| Rural Carrier Plan | High | 79 | Nationwide | $282.53 | $273.37 |
| Aetna Health Fund | Value | JD | All of Hawaii, Indiana, Oklahoma, Ohio, South Carolina, Texas and Wisconsin. Most of Alaska and California. | $763.51 | $722.75 |
| Aetna Health Fund - CDHP & Aetna Plan | CDHP | JD | All of Hawaii, Indiana, Oklahoma, Ohio, South Carolina, Texas and Wisconsin. Most of Alaska and California. | $1,091.24 | $1,053.79 |
| Aetna Health Fund - HDHP | HDHP | G3 | In all 50 states and the District of Columbia | $377.42 | $342.76 |
| Kaiser Permanente - Northern California | High | TB | Northern California | $519.91 | $465.36 |
| Kaiser Permanente - | Standard | TB | Northern California | $281.10 | $226.55 |
| Kaiser Permanente - Southern California | High | Y3 | Southern California | $268.83 | $221.81 |

"THE MAIL CALL"
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# Branch Meeting Minutes
# October 1, 2024
By
## Steve Seyfried, Secretary

The Meeting was held at the Branch 2462 Union Hall 6910 Hayvenhurst Ave, #104 Van Nuys California. It was called to order by PRESIDENT MACARAEG at 6:50 p.m.
The Pledge of Allegiance was led by SGT-AT-ARMS GODDARD
**MOMENT OF SILENCE--In Memory of all LETTER CARRIERS & RETIREES that have passed in 2024.**

**ROLL CALL OF OFFICERS**

**PRESENT**--MACARAEG, J. DOLABSON, SEYFRIED, WILSON, GODDARD, JOHNSON, L. DOLABSON, VALENZUELA, BURTON, MORALES, JACOBS

**ABSENT**—MULLINAX

**MINUTES ACCEPTED AS PRINTED IN MAIL**

**APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP**
**Will appear in next MailCall.**

**COMMUNICATIONS READ**

**BILLS READ--NONE**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

AUDIT & BUDGET—TRUSTEES Audit and Budget committee will meet in January 2025. Exact date to be determined.

SAFTEY & HEALTH—JACOBS Gave report on accidents, comparing 2024 with 2023. Also spoke on the dangers of SLIPS-TRIPS-FALLS, and how to prevent such occurrences.

RETIREES 8 Retiree's present tonight.

MDA FUND--GODDARD $ 3,176.00 in the fund

HBR—BURTON Gave report on the new fees for the NALC HEALTH PLAN. For Active Carriers—SELF-$ 109.98 P/P, SELF +1-$266.58 P/M, FAMILY-$238.42 P/M. For Retiree's—SELF-$238.29 P/M, SELF +1-$576.50 P/M, FAMILY $516.58 P/M.

MDA—BURTON Still have Jamba Juice cards available, and we are looking forward to having another Bowl-a-Thon sometime in the coming New Year.

MBA—MORALES I will be attending a MBA Training Class this month. New Disability Plan is in the works, watch for further information in future MailCall article.

POLITICAL—BURTON Windfall Elimination Bill has been cleared to proceed to a House vote. We are hoping that since we had enough Co-signers in both the House and Senate, that this will be passed soon. Political Lobby Trip will be held sometime in February 2025.

EDITOR—JACOBS MailCall was mailed out early last week. There are currently sufficient funds in the account.

FINANCE REPORT—MULLINAX No Report

TREASURERS REPORT—WILSON Financial Reports were read.
Motion to accept Financial Reports as read M/S/C

VICE-PRESIDENT DOLABSON No Report.

PRESIDENT MACARAEG CCA night was successful with a large turnout. Thanks to TRACY MULLINAX, LUCY JACOBS, and PEDRO MORALES who taught the class. We are lucky to have such dedicated and capable members. Happy to announce that we have the following CCA's that were promoted to Regular Carrier. DESTINY GONZALEZ, JACOB NEHORAYAN, KEITH ASHLEY, VILMA FLORES & CRISTIAN LIPPS. Have been working to stop the non-use of CCA's in violation of the contract. There will be no penalty OT from Nov 30 –Dec 27th due to the Christmas holiday and per the contract. All Carriers should be watching their paychecks to make sure that the proper deductions are being made.

**OLD BUSINESS--NONE**

**NEW BUSINESS**

MOTION—Move that the Branch send PEDRO MORALES to the MBA Training class on October 27.2024.
Class is online and is 2 hours long.
Cost to the Branch $ 50.00 M/S/C

MOTION—Move that the Branch send 4 members, to be chosen by the President, to Washington, DC to attend the NALC Legislative Lobby Trip.
Dates are February 24—26 2025.
Cost not to exceed $ 11,000.00 M/S/C

**UNDERLINED INDICATES UNANAMOUS VOTE**

**MDA DRAWING**

$ 5 SANDY ANGER--TARZANA—DONATED
$ 6 MICHAEL VU—SHERMAN OAKS--DONATED
$ 6 SANDY ANGER--TARZANA--DONATED

**Meeting Adjourned 8:29 PM**