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NEW YEAR BRINGS NEW CHALLENGES

By Frank Salazar, President

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all our membership and all our NALC friends around the country a safe, better, and more prosperous and healthy New Year. The year 2007 starts as a challenge for our National President Bill Young and the NALC. We were unable to negotiate an agreement with the Postal Service. Therefore, we are headed towards binding arbitration.

USPS Makes Insulting Offer

On December 4th, 2006, the Postal Service made its final proposals to the NALC, which were to say the least regressive and reprehensible in comparison to the profit and value that the carrier craft generates for the USPS. The final offer to the NALC was (1) No wage increases in the first year, lump sum only, which is not rolled into base pay. (2) Increases of 1% in the second and third years. (3) All COLA's to be lump-summed (not rolled into base pay. (4) COLA's to be eliminated at the end of the contract. (5) Letter Carriers who have family health insurance coverage pay an additional \$1,300 a year. (6) Current employees to pay to pay an additional 1% payroll deduction to "pre-fund" future retiree benefits. (7) USPS also proposed large cuts in annual



Newly appointed NBA Manny Peralta presents Benjamin Kelly from Simi Valley His Gold Card for 50 years of membership in the NALC.

leave, sick leave, night shift premium, Sunday premium, and overtime premiums. (8) Eliminate the "no lay-off" clause. (9) Eliminate local negotiations. (10) Increase the number of low-paid, no benefit workers. (11) Permit managers to perform bargaining unit work. However, the USPS did propose a 2.5% annual increase in uniform allowances. So, there you have it. For all the hard work and sacrifices we make for the

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT...

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good of the service, this is how our employer wants to reward us. Now, I hope that many of you will now realize why we need a strong NALC. A strong Union looks as far as it can into the future, and seeks long term stability, a good living wage and safe working conditions for all its members. What is at stake for the NALC is its future.

APWU Makes Tentative Deal

In Early December of last year, the APWU struck a tentative agreement with the USPS. The APWU agreement calls for a four-year agreement. During that 4-year agreement, employees represented by the APWU will have two general wage increases and will maintain the COLA twice a year. (2) All APWU covered employees will get a one level upgrade. The increases are as follows:

- 1.3% raise effective 11/25/06
- one level upgrade effective 2/16/08
- 1.2% raise effective 11/21/09

(3) PTF's will be eliminated in 200 man-year offices. PTF's in these offices will be converted to full-time by 12/1/07. (4) The USPS will pay 95% of healthcare premiums for APWU covered employees in the APWU Consumer Driven Health Plan. For those not in the plan, their health care premiums will increase 1% a year for four years beginning in 2008 through 2011. (5) The "no layoff" clause is retained. (6) Automatic 3 days of leave (your own i.e. A/L, LWOP) for death of a family member. These were the highlights of the deal. (Check the APWU web site for further details).

On the surface, many might think that this is a good deal. Reviewing the highlights, I like the idea of retaining an uncapped COLA, a full-time regular workforce in 200 man year offices, pay increases including a one level increase, and the ability to take a few days off for a death in the family. However, there are a few things I don't like. I don't like the fact that employees represented by the APWU are discriminated against for not having the APWU Consumer Driven Health Plan. By not belonging to the plan, an employee represented by the APWU loses 4% over the life of the contract due to the automatic 1% increase in healthcare premiums. Second, the APWU has opened Pandora's Box when it comes to the issue of healthcare premiums. Now, a major Postal Union is on record as accepting higher

healthcare premiums and dividing its own membership. Basically, an APWU represented employee is monetarily penalized for exercising their freedom to choose an alternative healthcare program that may work better for their individual needs. Down the road, this may come to affect all the other crafts in some way: I hope not. Third, who wants to go 21 months without a raise except for a COLA? The one level increase takes effect on 2/16/08, and the next raise after that is on 11/21/09.

Where Do We Go From Here

Since there was no agreement with the Postal Service, the NALC is preparing to go to arbitration. In the meantime, we have no agreement and are working under the terms of the old contract. Like I wrote earlier, this year will be a challenging year for the NALC and our National President Bill Young. This will be President Young's first agreement that he will have to negotiate, and this will be a tough one, maybe the toughest yet. I am sure President Young could have gotten us the same deal the APWU is about to ink. However, our leadership is thinking about the future of the Postal Service and the NALC. And, for the NALC contracting out is out. What good is it to secure a good agreement today, if we have no job tomorrow? The NALC has to have some kind of assurances that we will have work in the future, and that it will not be contracted out to some unreliable, low wage, no benefit worker. So in essence, we are going to arbitration over job security and on that note we should back our National Leadership. These issues will be discussed at our National Rap Session in Los Angeles on Sunday, January 28th, 2007 from 8am-12 pm at the Wilshire Grand Hotel. Any member in good standing can attend. Check the bulletins and the upcoming Postal Record for additional details.

Postal Reform

On December 9th, 2006, the Senate joined the House of Representatives in passing Postal Reform legislation. It was a 13 year struggle that is now awaiting President Bush's signature. He is expected to sign the bill. The bill maintains our collective bargaining rights and universal six-day delivery. It also resolves the military pension and escrow account issues, and gives the USPS greater pricing flexibility. However, a provision that only affects Postal employees was unable to be removed from the bill: a 3-day waiting period for those injured on the job before collecting Continuation of Pay Benefits. This provision was the reason that President Young killed or put a hold on Postal Reform a few months ago. It is a provision we detest, but looking at the whole bill, it is something we have to accept for the betterment and well-being of the whole Postal community. President Young thanks all who helped at

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Will Management's Training On "Return to Duty" prove to be: Better Late than Never?

By: Ray Hill, Executive Vice-President



Happy New Year! I hope that all of you survived the Holiday Season and were able to have some fun with your family and friends. It's hard for me to fathom that it is now 2007 as the years keep steam rolling along.

On December 14, 2006 I attended another Union President's Meeting at the Sierra-Coastal

District Office located in Santa Clarita. Due to several pressing commitments and deadlines, President Frank Salazar was unable to attend the meeting, so I gladly represented Branch 2902 in his place.

In attendance at the meeting was USPS Occupational Health Nurse, Julia Williams, who answered a variety of questions from the Union Representatives that were present. The main topic discussed with Nurse Williams involved the problems that many Sierra-Coastal letter carriers are experiencing when they attempt to return to work after an extended absence due to illness or injury.

There are different rules and regulations for medical conditions **that are not job-related** than there are for medical conditions **that are job-related**.

During the meeting, we focused our questioning mainly on the problems that letter carriers are having in returning to duty after an extended absence due to medical conditions that **are not job-related**.

Section 865 of the "Employee and Labor Relations Manual", better known as the "ELM", contains the rules regarding USPS employees returning to duty after an absence for medical reasons. In 2005, the language contained in ELM Section 865 was changed substantially. Prior to 2005, any USPS employee returning to duty after an absence of 21 days or more **was required** to submit medical documentation to the USPS Medical Unit before that employee was allowed to return to work. In 2005, the USPS deleted the language

from ELM Section 865 that automatically required employees returning to duty after an absence of 21 days or more to be cleared by the USPS Medical Unit before they were allowed to return to work.

Section 865 of the ELM now reads as follows, in applicable part:

865 Return to Duty after Absence for Medical Reasons

865.1 Certification Required: All Bargaining Unit Employees and Those Nonbargaining Unit Employees Returning From Non-FMLA Absences

Return-to-work clearance **may** be required for absences due to an illness, injury, outpatient medical procedure (surgical), or hospitalization **when management has a reasonable belief, based upon reliable and objective information, that**

- a. The employee may not be able to perform the essential functions of his/her position, or
- b. The employee may pose a direct threat to the health or safety of him/herself or others due to that medical condition (emphasis added).

Please note that the language of ELM 865 deals with employees returning from "**Non-FMLA**" Absences.

Section 513.37 of the ELM contains the provisions dealing with employees returning to duty after an **FMLA absence** and reads as follows:

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.

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The case of the \$6800 Doctors Visit... or Dr. Yuson on Patrol

By: Paul Drapkin, Vice-President



I don't know about you but I thought that all you needed to work for the Postal Service, in the way of education, with the possibility of someday becoming a Postmaster, was a high school diploma and some common sense. Apparently I was very, very wrong. It seems that you now need to be a doctor. At least that is what Postmaster Yuson

would like us to believe. You see Dr. Yuson has now seen his way clear to take it upon himself to diagnose medical conditions and determine when a carrier needs medical certification in order to return to work after an extended medical absence. Let me explain.

Several months ago a carrier at our station was injured off the job. This carrier missed several weeks of work but was under the care of a physician. When this carrier was ready to return to work after being absent for 20 days of work, this carrier spoke with Dr. Yuson. He declared that this carrier must be cleared through the medical unit in order to return to work (see Executive Vice President, Ray Hill's article in this issue for a further explanation).

You see in previous editions of the ELM, it stated that if you were absent for a period of 21 days or more for some off the job medical condition it was a *requirement* that you must be cleared through the medical unit in order to be returned to work. It did not matter to Dr. Yuson that he could not count and that the carrier had only been away from work for only 20 days. However the latest edition of the ELM *no longer contains this language*. Of course this latest edition of the ELM is about 2 years old so you would think that management would be up to date on the new regulations...yea right!

The new edition of the ELM requires that an employee be cleared through the medical unit when management has a reasonable belief, **based upon reliable and objective information**, that

a. The employee may not be able to perform the essential functions of his/her position, or

b. The employee may pose a direct threat to the health or safety of him/herself or others due to that medical condition.

In making this determination, management must consider the essential functions of the employee's job, the nature of the medical condition or procedure involved, **guidance from the occupational health nurse administrator, occupational health nurse, and/or the Postal Service's physician** regarding the condition or procedure involved, and any other **reliable and objective** information to make an individualized assessment whether there is a reason to require the return-to-work documentation.

The part of the ELM that Dr. Yuson clearly has not been brought up to speed on is the highlighted part of the text above. Certainly had he been aware of these changes to the ELM he would never have taken the hard line stance that he chose to take. Even after the union informed the Dr. that he was inappropriate in his actions, Dr. Yuson could not dig his heels out of the sand long enough to make an objective decision. Maybe reconsider his stance. Get some guidance, nope not Dr. Yuson.

You see Dr. Yuson has no ability to be objective in his assessments nor would he ever consider any other outside guidance such as the opinion of the occupational health nurse and certainly not the Postal Services physician. After all Dr. Yuson has all the answers, even if they are the wrong answers.

Unfortunately because of Dr. Yuson's **unreliable and unobjective** decision in this matter the carrier was forced to stay home, out of work for many, many weeks.

Naturally the union filed a grievance for the carrier. Well once again the higher ups in the grievance procedure were able to apply the terms of the national agreement properly and decided that Dr. Yuson was wrong...again! Yep, once again Postmaster Yuson (he has now been demoted back to Postmaster status) took a stance that was not based on reliable information or common sense but based on his own unedu-

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Newbury News

By: Susan Degenhardt, Newbury Park Shop Steward



Well, we are off and running for another year. It is hard to believe that 2006 has come and gone. Here in Newbury Park we have stayed pretty busy with all the route changes, management changes and policy changes. Some good changes and some bad changes. It is all in your perspective.

New Retiree

Newbury just had one of our own retire. Scott Petrick has now joined the ranks of those who can say "who cares what time it is?" Scotty was my first T-6 in Newbury Park 26 years ago and has remained the standard by which I judge T-6's to this day. I have to confess that I even got a little weepy on the last day that we worked together. I'm not sure if I was sad because he was leaving or because I wasn't. It was always a pleasure to see Scotty as he always had a smile and something funny to say to make you laugh. We are planning a big shindig at the Alamo to send him off in style in January. I wish only the best to him and his wife Breck, who now has to put up with him full time, poor girl. May you live a long and healthy life my friend, and collect lots of retirement money.

Perspective: Bad for us, good for Scott.

Route Adjustments

In October we finally got the routes adjusted closer to 8 hours. We had routes that were averaging 9-10 hours. We got route 2009 back and an auxiliary route. It really did help to make those adjustments before elections. They are not perfect and there still needs to be some tweaking done here and there, but overall it is an improvement. I wish to thank President Frank Salazar, President Emeritus Bev Mattes and NBA Manny Peralta for their help in getting those adjustments done. Without their hours of hard work we would still be delivering those oversized behemoth routes.

Perspective: Good for us, good for management (even if they won't admit it).

Management changes

It has become the office with a revolving door. Four different station managers in one year. Phil Schoef-

fling, Kelsey Vela, Hector Calderon and now Tom Cloonan. Who's next? Hard to say. I just know that the carriers are doing their jobs despite the changes.

My own personal perspective on this one: too many changes in management makes for inconsistencies. Bad for carriers, bad for management.

Start times

What can I say about this? 99% of us want to start early and be done early. I am relieved that our new district manager took the bull by the horns, and put a plan in place to get the carriers back from the street by a decent hour and is managing to get the truck runs to us earlier. I hope this trend continues as the customers appreciate earlier mail delivery.

Perspective: Good for carriers, good for customers, good for the Service.

New hires

The district has hired PTF's and that should help with the staffing problems. Several new employees have started here in Newbury. We welcome them with open arms, and hope they don't get frustrated and quit. Note to PTF's: Opt on anything you can. That is the only sanity you will find. You are entitled to the hours and schedule of the route that you opt on. Management can schedule you to work on the non-scheduled day for that assignment, but it will be at the overtime rate. Take your breaks and lunch, you deserve them and you need them. Management will not believe you if you come back in the office early and tell them you skipped your lunch. Take the time to deliver the mail correctly-please. This will make the regulars take more kindly to you. Regulars do not like to have customers yelling at them for something the PTF incorrectly delivered. If there are 10 letters for Smith and 1 for Jones, please be sure the letter for Jones has the same address as the 10 for Smith. Note for regulars: Hey, be nice to the PTF's. We have all been through that crummy period in our careers. In fact, it would be nice if we all tried a little mentoring of these employees.

Perspective: Good for the regulars, good for the Service, bad for the PTF's (only because it is hard to be a PTF, but hang in there...you'll make it).

Good luck to Jesus Campos who just transferred to

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Misinterpretation of Communication

By: Robbie Elsaleh, Moorpark Alternate Shop Steward



As a former carrier of the Agoura Hills office, I am pleased to be writing this article on behalf of all the carriers at that station. Believe it or not, January the 8th 2007 is the 2-year mark since my transfer out of Agoura to Moorpark. Your Chief Steward Greg Gaddis has allowed me this opportunity to express my thoughts and views on your recent arbitration victory over your **Joyous**

ex-postmaster concerning your overburdened routes and the annual route and unit reviews.

Doesn't this sound familiar? You communicate to management about your overburdened route, and they call you a whiner. You communicate to them about the need for your daily router, and they call you a whiner. You communicate to them that you're burning out and getting off of the overtime list, so they call you selfish *and* a whiner. You suck-it-up, and push-it every day because after all, unlike management, we have to do our job. We have to deliver the mail, and we have to do it efficiently or face the negative consequences.

As we all know, the past Agoura Postmaster did not do her job. Her management team was definitely unskilled and incapable of comprehending simple communication from the people who actually do the work, and inept in performing their duties as set forth in their own management manuals. Fortunately for us carriers, we have the NALC and the grievance procedure. The arbitrator in Agoura's case had no problem seeing things through the carriers' eyes. He seemed astonished that certain individuals are even allowed to manage others. You can examine the arbitrator's comments for yourself and see what you think. The following are excerpts from his decision:

"Management at Agoura Hills failed miserably". "Local management's conduct in this case was not only defiant, but was also tantamount to being willful." 26 of 32 routes are "found to be so excessively overburdened." "Routes at Agoura Hills were in fact excessively out of adjustment". "In plain and simple English this means that 26 routes had been required to do the work of 31 routes". "The responsibility was on management to see that none of the routes were overburdened". "Local levels (management) are cognizant of these rules". "Working an overburdened route has negative aspects"and "certainly

has a detrimental effect upon the carrier's domestic life style."

Need I quote more? It would seem that we carriers were just trying to communicate our concerns to management and not whining at all. But of course, management doesn't want to listen and do their job. After all, DOIS says this, and DOIS knows all. Will they now finally understand what the arbitrator's communication to them is, or will they think the arbitrator is just whining as well? It took years, but at last someone put management at Agoura in their place. We carriers aren't whiners; we just want a fair and reasonable size route that our bodies can endure year after year. Maybe this will drastically cut down on the rising on-the-job injuries? Hmmm...

Hope the upcoming territorial adjustments work out for you guys. Congratulations Agoura!

Now to Moorpark. Understandably, everyone's stressed out from the understaffing combined with the holiday mail and we are getting upset at one another. Recently, tempers have been flaring and some carriers have been turning on each other. This is a road that can only lead to destruction and it gives management the upper hand to do us harm. It's not our fault that we are in this present predicament. Management had 2 months prior notice of the 2 recent retirees. Employees in the private sector give their employers only 2 weeks notice when they decide to quit.

I know that every carrier in Moorpark is doing his or her best to cope in this difficult time, but we need to stick together or we will all suffer. We are all under great strain of being mandated, working in the dark, and it creates a stressful situation where mistakes are bound to happen. If someone upsets you or makes a boo-boo, talk to them and work it out. Don't run to management about every little thing. Don't turn your back on a fellow carrier in need. Do firefighters, policemen, and soldiers attack each other when the going gets tough? Of course not. They battle on side by side. If a firefighter makes a mistake and falls through a roof, the rest of the team jumps in after him to pull him out. They don't run to the chief and say, that idiot stepped where he shouldn't and deserves to be written up.

I know that all the carriers in Moorpark have good hearts because I've seen it. But we need to mellow out on the

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Wishes for a Prosperous New Year Ahead

By: Chris Alessi, MBA/NSBA Rep.



Wishing all the brothers and sisters and their families of the NALC a very happy "2007" New Year ahead filled with prosperity, peace, and love.

A good way to have a prosperous year ahead is to have good financial planning for protection. Planning now for the future protection of your family's financial stability is

vital in today's economy to secure a brighter tomorrow.

The Maturity Income Plan it is a deferred annuity plan that can help secure you and your family's future with as little as \$15.00 a pay period. This great plan is now accruing 5.5% interest locked in on your contributions until 9-30-07. You can contribute up to \$4500 if you are under 50 years old and \$5000 if you are 50 years and older. This plan can also be set up as a Roth or Traditional IRA. An easy way to pay your premiums is by payroll deductions or if you prefer you can make monthly or annual payments. The convenience of payroll deductions assures the policies will always be paid

on time while maintaining your financial security.

Another way to secure a prosperous peace of mind New Year is to have enough life insurance to cover your family's needs if the breadwinner's income is gone. The MBA offers six different types of life insurance plans from whole life, universal life, term life, single payment and limited payment plans along with a hospital confinement plan. All these plans are very affordable and have cash build up that can be used in time of need, except the term insurance plan.

When you retire from the post office, life insurance is very costly to continue at the same coverage you have now, some could cost over \$2.00 per every one thousand dollars of coverage. This is why it is very crucial to secure your family and your own financial future now while you are able and costs are more affordable. In closing I wanted to make a correction from my last article in regards to my friend and letter carrier "Kevin Trono who transferred up north, he got his transfer to Washington State not Oregon, sorry all.

Take care and God bless you,
In solidarity, Chris

MISINTERPRETATION...

Continued from page 6

gossip. Words are intentionally being twisted and taken out of context by our management team and used to turn carriers against each other and their union. When something is said near route 1, by the time it reaches route 14, it's completely different. If you're offended by what you heard from so and so, that so and so said this, and so and so said that, before you jump to any bad conclusions, give that person the benefit of the doubt. Approach him or her and find out the real story. Chances are, it's not what you think at all.

Moorpark is too small to have friction between carriers. I urge everyone to start communicating better and cut down on the gossip. Question management's motives before believing what they tell you. And to Supervisor Melvin, there's more to being a leader than doing fact-finders and issuing discipline. You have to know how to count the mail first...

P.S. We want you back Wayne...

"There are two kinds of statistics, the kind you look up and the kind you make up."

*Rex Stout,
American Author (1886-1975)*

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT...

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every level for getting this legislation passed.

We're on the Web

The Branch has finally moved into the 21st century! We have a branch website. Check out www.nalcbranch2902.org. The website was put together by Brother Larry Orcutt. Larry is a Letter Carrier out of Northridge and he is also an alternate Shop Steward for the branch. Larry approached me one day with the idea, and the Executive Board and I gave him the green light. The website is better than I expected. It has many useful links and resources, a calendar of events, maps, directions, Steward's resources, and the Mail Bag News on line. So, check it out and give us some feedback. Thanks Larry for your ideas and good work.

Malignant Managers

Just when we thought that most of the uneducated, abusive, and non-employee friendly supervisors were quitting or retiring, a new cadre has been hatched from the ASP. Although the acronym fits (it's a name of a venomous snake), the Associate Supervisor Program is graduating many new Supervisors, who I think are unfit to supervise. It's the old story beginning again. The Postal Service has made supervising so unattractive and unappealing that the job is attracting many who should not be given the authority to supervise others. There are more than a few who don't know the jobs of those they supervise, were not good at carrying mail themselves, are of questionable character, have a poor work ethic, have anger management issues, and generally don't work well supervising adults. In short, we are going to have problems on the workroom floors.

Now look, there are more than a few 204bs and Supervisors who don't know how to converse with employees. They will look at you in ways you don't agree with or talk to you in tones you will dislike. Don't get overly sensitive, however, don't let them disrespect you. Number one, follow an order given to you unless it is illegal or violates your health and safety. Follow the order and grieve later. Two, don't argue with someone who isn't going to listen anyway. Most arguments start over overtime or auxiliary assistance. Managers are always trying to undercut your estimate or trying to cajole you into doing more work in less time. It's in their nature. You know the route better than they do. You carry it everyday, so you shouldn't care what DOIS says. Fill out your 3996, call from the street, and ask them what they want you to do. Bring it back or continue. If they ask you to continue, it's authorized. If a Supervisor yells at you, calls you names, swears at

you, insults you or threatens you, by all means file a grievance. What helps in these types of situations is a well detailed statement of the facts and statements from any witnesses present. Abusive Supervisors like to hide their tracks by lying, twisting your words, losing documentation, having selective memories and intimidating others around you. We cannot tolerate this kind of conduct. If we don't squash it early, it becomes a malignant behavior that spreads to other supervisors. They either have to change or go. We have to look out for each other and stay united. We may have our differences with Management, but we should be treated with dignity and respect.

Strong Representation Continues

In reviewing the grievance activity of this past year, it is highly evident that your Branch Officers and Stewards have done an outstanding job of representing the craft. Year to date, we have had 92 Letters of Warning rescinded, 84 reduced to review periods, 14 Suspensions rescinded, 27 reduced to review periods, 50 reduced in length, 13 Removals rescinded or settled, 5 reduced to suspensions, 1 denied, 1253 contract cases settled, and 25 denied or withdrawn.

This is kind of embarrassing to write. I'm not embarrassed for the Branch, but for District Management. Year to Date (mid December), the Branch has collected over \$195,185.40 in lump sum payments to affected carriers. Using the following figures at a conservative average of a Grade 1 Step H Letter Carrier we've recovered or collected: \$121,581.17 in overtime hours, \$41,253.95 in straight-time hours, \$14,288.29 in penalty overtime hours, \$5,664.96 in re-credited sick leave, \$2,573.28 in re-credited annual leave, and \$15,308.88 in administrative leave. This results in a conservative total recovery of \$395,855.93 ytd. Most of the moneys collected seemed to have come from two offices: Oxnard and San Fernando. These two installations have been understaffed for years resulting in daily Article 8 overtime violations such as working carriers not on the overtime list unwanted overtime, forcing carriers not on the OTDL to work overtime on their days off or working work assignment carriers and non-otdl carriers on other assignments. We also have a plethora of holiday scheduling violations and of working regular carriers and T-6s off their assignments during the day. In addition to all this, they do not track overtime in the San Fernando Installation, which results in quarterly overtime inequities where thousands of dollars are paid out at the end of the quarter. Something needs to be done about complement soon or this will repeat itself again in the coming year. I hope not, our carriers are tired. Hopefully, this year will be different, if not; our level of representation will continue to get stronger. Enough for now back in two.

“RETURN TO DUTY”...

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Limitations described are accommodated when practical.

Bargaining unit employees must also comply with requirements in 865.

What the hell does all this mean, you ask? In a nutshell, it means that USPS Management may only require clearance of an employee by the USPS Medical Unit when the requirements of ELM Section's 513.37 and 865 are met. **USPS Management may no longer require clearance of an employee automatically after an absence from work of 21 days or more.**

During the President's Meeting in Santa Clarita, we told Nurse Julia Williams that many letter carriers are being improperly required to provide return to work medical documentation for clearance by the USPS Medical Unit. Nurse Williams stated that there are still many members of Management that are confused about this issue. Nurse Williams also said that they were in the process of providing training to all of their promoted Management Personnel and she stated that this training included the subject of the return to work ELM Provisions that I have discussed above. I was told that a large group of Supervisors, Managers and Postmasters received this training in Van Nuys on December 15, 2006. This training is supposed to be provided to all Sierra Coastal District Management Personnel by January 4, 2007.

I find it interesting that ELM Section 865 was changed in early 2005 and that Management is just now getting around to providing training regarding the revisions. In the meantime, carriers are being delayed in their attempts to return to duty and many grievances have been filed on this issue.

When carriers are unjustly delayed in their attempts to return to duty after an absence from work, it causes problems that tend to have a domino effect. The carrier that is not allowed to work is forced to use sick or annual leave in order to get paid. If the carrier is out of sick and annual leave, they will be in "Leave Without Pay" (LWOP) status and will not get paid. The delivery unit that the carrier works in must replace this carrier with another carrier who is much needed elsewhere in the unit. The other carriers in the unit suffer because the replacement carrier is not available to provide them with auxiliary assistance. Service to our patrons suffers as well.

The USPS suffers because after the Union successfully

grieves the delay in return to work, the USPS will have to re-credit the leave used by the carrier or, if the carrier was in LWOP status, pay them. This means that the USPS is forced to waste more of their precious dollars by paying someone that wanted to work for sitting at home and not working. Crazy, dumb-ass stuff, ain't it?

If you are a carrier that has been on extended leave and Management requires you to receive return to work clearance from the USPS Medical Unit, contact your Steward or the Branch Office. Your Steward will conduct an investigation to determine whether or not Management has violated the ELM Sections discussed above.

Remember, there will be times when Management does have the right to require return to work clearance. However, we need to investigate the situation and file grievances every time that Management **improperly** requires this clearance and delays a letter carrier from returning to work. Hopefully, the training that Management provides to their Management employees on this subject will help alleviate the problem. Forgive me if I don't bet the farm on the probability of that happening, but who knows?

I like the moves that the Dodgers have made during the off-season and I am confident that they will win the Western Division in 2007. With all of their talented youngsters I sincerely believe that they will soon be winning a World Series.

Congratulations to my nephew, Duke Lemmens, on his Oaks Christian High School football team's winning of the California State Division III championship. Oaks Christian's football team was ranked **number 6 in the Nation** by USA Today and was expected to blow out their opponent, Cardinal Newman of Santa Rosa. It turns out that the Cardinal Newman team played the game of their lives and dominated the time of possession, keeping Oaks Christian's powerful offense off of the field for most of the game. The way they played Oaks Christian probably should have lost the game, but they won in overtime, 27 to 20. Oh well, as Al Davis used to say, "Just win, baby". Duke is going to be a Florida Gator next year, so I guess I'm going to have to start rooting for the Gators. Talk to you all in two months...

“Anything one man can imagine, other men can make real”

Jules Verne, French author

\$6800 DOCTORS...

Continued from page 4

cated, hot headed, stubborn stance. The big difference this time is that it cost the Postal Service big bucks, to the tune of \$6800. That's right. Because of the wise decision of the P.M. the Postal Service had to pay the grievant in this matter more than \$6800.00 in back pay for the time spent sitting at home waiting to be cleared by the grievant's doctors and the Postal Service's medical unit. Basically this was the case of the \$6800 doctor's visit. Not a bad vacation!

The sad part of all this is that this is just one in a continuation of bad decisions made by the administrative staff of the Woodland Hills P.O. As long as the Sierra Costal District allows and condones this behavior without any repercussions to those who are responsible I fear that the Postal Service has no place to go but down.

NEWBURY NEWS...

Continued from page 5

Texas. Somewhere in this office there is a PTF who will now make regular to take your place.

I would like to thank all the carriers who helped make this last year a little more tolerable by sharing a joke or making someone smile. I would also like to thank EVP Ray Hill for his support and wisdom this past year. This was his first year working full time at the Union office, and he has been a delight to work with.

It would be great to see some faces from Thousand Oaks/Newbury Park at a Union meeting in 2007. There are going to be issues of great importance to be discussed as the contract goes to arbitration. Make going to a meeting one of your resolutions for the New Year. Happy New Year to all!

Welcome New Members

The following is a list of new members.

If any of these members work in your office stop and welcome them to our branch.

Agoura

Alfredo Samson Jr.

Chatsworth

Natalia Salinas

North Hollywood

Jaime Alvarez

Ana Martinez

Jason Reiffen

Allan Sanchez

Juan Tielemans

Dung Vu

Northridge

Chris Naldo

Oxnard

Mario Lovillo

Michelle Ortiz

Pacoima

Arturo Ayala

Felix Caudillo

Rocio Fraire

Benita Smith

Reseda

Lawrence Manalpit

Teresa Muratalla

Leovani Perez

Patricia Seifert

Binh Tran

San Fernando

Adrian Bonilla

Randy Cohen

Lestor Escobar

Renata Guzauskiene

Olga Medina

Emmanuel Montilla

Felimon Saromo

Santa Paula

Steve Johnson

Simi Valley

Artur Aghakhanyan

Maribel Beas

Joanne McVay

Nelson Ruiz

Thousand Oaks

Glenn Grabhorn

Ignacio Hinojosa

Febe Koesnaidi

Veronica Montelongo

Daniel Oropeza

Frans Van Ouwerkerk

Mario Perez

Renee Stine

Ventura

Jenoveva Becerra

Sara Marquez

Stephanie Miller

Romulo Nocon Jr.

Louis Olivera Jr.

Chad Parker

Sheri Patison

Victor Quilantip

Joseph Quintana

Isela Tellez

Woodland Hills

Byron Las Ramirez

Guillermo Ramirez

Mandeep Singh

Union Meeting

**October 17, 2006
Newbury Park**



President Salazar called the meeting to order at 7:08 PM. Lee Leighton led the pledge of allegiance.

Roll call of officers was done. Asking to be excused were Joe Gutierrez, Paulette Dyer, Lori Stewart, Marva Golden, Steve Leyton, Chris Alessi, Steve Dickerson, Laura Walters, Don Minster, Bev Mattes and Jim Mette. Fred Shaw makes a motion to excuse the brothers and sisters, S/C. President Salazar announces sale of the 50/50 raffle tickets and reminds members to sign the attendance book. The membership reviews the minutes from the September 19 meeting. Marian Walters makes a motion to accept the minutes as printed, S/C.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

President Salazar asks for a moment of silence for Brother Rodney Wittrock from Oxnard who recently passed away.

Elections- Get out and vote! We need to elect labor friendly senate and congress. Last day to register to vote for November election is October 23. We are looking for volunteers to do phone bank work to help get the vote out. Fred Shaw informs the members that Democrat Jill Martinez is running against Elton Gallegly in the 24th district.

Open Season- November 13 through December 11. OPM is offering vision and dental plans for the first time to federal employees. Website info is on www.benefeds.com, or call 1-877-888-FEDS for more information. NALC Healthplan is still rated one of the best.

COMMUNICATIONS

Yoggi Riley of the APWU and NALC taught a class on retirement at the Union office on 9/15. It was well attended and informative. One on one counseling is still available to prospective retirees, but it must be requested. Contact personnel and set up an appointment.

PTF School was held on 10/14. President Salazar taught the class. Approximately 12 PTF's showed up

and discussed leave, forms 3971 and 3996's and several other issues.

New Employee Orientation was done by President Salazar in Van Nuys today. Signed up 28 out of 29 new hires.

Early start times- Currently, Simi Valley starts 6:30-7:00 everyday, Thousand Oaks 6:30 Mon. and

Tues. Out of schedule pay applies if this is not officially made permanent.

PTF'S are not being given case training until they have been in their offices for awhile. PTF'S are being ripped off by being given a non scheduled day when they have applied for sick or annual leave.

Membership discusses the arbitration decision from Woodland Hills, where management tried to end a long standing past practice of allowing carriers to get a beverage from the breakroom.

President Salazar attended the Committee of Presidents meeting in Minneapolis and gives an update on contract negotiations. All craft contracts will expire at the same time. Wages, COLA, benefits are on the line. NALC website has all the information. NALC Healthplan rates are announced. President Young will bring Customer Connect success issue to the table. It generated a lot of business for the Service, and the carriers deserve their share. President Young's focus is to get a negotiated settlement. President Young pulled the plug on Postal Reform due to language attached to it. Election issues discussed. President Young wants to have the legal fees paid for the officers sued by David Nobel.

Hawaiian earthquake discussed by members.

COMMITTEES

MDA- Sandy Gaunce asks for any and all suggestions for raising money.

COLCPE- Ernestine Hernandez reports on COLCPE activity and invites all members to sign up.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

David Hyman announces that he and his wife raised
continued on page 13

Union Meeting

**November 21, 2006
Chatsworth**

7:11PM President Salazar called the meeting to order. Bob Golden led the pledge of allegiance. Roll call of officers was taken. Asking to be excused were Marian Walters, Sandra Gaunce, Jim Dearborn, Joe Vedder, Carlos Delgado, Steve Dickerson, Art Hernandez, Jim Mette, Bev Mattes, Laura Walters and Marva Golden. Fred Shaw makes a motion to excuse the brothers and sisters, S/C.

President Salazar reminds the membership to sign the attendance book and that tickets for tonight's raffle are for sale.

James Perryman makes a motion to excuse C.C. Flatts from the October 17th meeting, S/C.

President Salazar introduces newly elected NBA Manny Peralta as tonight's guest.

The membership reviews the minutes from the October 17 meeting. Fred Shaw makes a motion to accept the minutes as printed, S/C.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Open Season- November 13 – December 11. OPM now offers vision and dental plans. Different plans and rates available. These plans are not associated with the NALC. The NALC Healthplan is a good plan designed for letter carriers. Presentation will be given later in the meeting.

Postal leave year begins on January 6, 2007. Leave will be credited on 1/26/07.

Branch website is announced, www.nalcbranch2902.org. There are links to many sites associated with the NALC. Steward Larry Orcutt from Northridge did a great job setting up the website for the branch.

COMMUNICATIONS

President Salazar has spoken with Marilyn Coleman from personnel in Santa Clarita regarding individual retirement counseling. Those wishing this service must request it from their personnel office.

The letter that District Manager Kerry Wolny sent to all employees was read and discussed by the membership. Wolny addressed people, service and costs in his letter.

President Young pulled the plug on Postal Reform due to language for a 3-day waiting period for continuation of pay for injured employees.

National contract deadline has been extended until midnight 11/30.

Thank you to the election volunteers who made phone calls. Fred Shaw, Sandy Gaunce, Ernestine Hernandez, Bev Sucich and Carlena McKnerney. Membership discusses outcome of the election.

No bills were submitted.

NBA-Elect Manny Peralta presents a Gold Card to Benjamin J. Kelly from Simi Valley for 50 years of membership.

Brother Peralta speaks to the membership expressing his appreciation for being elected. He also spoke about mentoring, labor management meetings, the NALC healthplan, hiring of supervisors and NBA staff.

COMMITTEES

Recreation- Paulette Dyer has coupons for attractions here tonight. She donates See's candy for door prizes.

Retirees- Don Minster announces that the December retiree luncheon will be December 21 at the Home-town Buffet in West Hills.

Health Benefits- NALC video shown to membership.

MBA/NSBA- Chris Alessi speaks to the membership about Target 65 plan, Disability plan (which is closed), and the Maturity Income plan.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS

Trustee James Perryman reports to the membership that the trustees audited the accounts and books and found them to be in order.

GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION

President Salazar presents retiree Sandra Muir from San Fernando with a watch.

continued on page 13

NEWBURY PARK...

Continued from page 11

over \$1200.00 at the AIDS walk.

NEW BUSINESS

Sandy Gaunce makes a motion adopt an E-Board recommendation to make the December 19 meeting dark, S/C.

Paul Drapkin makes a motion to accept an E-Board recommendation to send President Salazar to the installation of the national officers and pay for ticket, travel expenses, 2 nights' hotel and 3 days per diem, S/C.

President Salazar presents Oxnard retiree Kandathil Varughese with his watch.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

The membership discusses transfers, mutual exchanges, routers, working PTF's over 12 hours, and work assignment overtime.

The members review the Treasurer's report. Fred Shaw makes a motion to accept the report as written, S/C.

Retiree from Thousand Oaks, Mary Wallin wins the 50/50 raffle.

The membership drawing was worth \$1081.00. Juani-to Borreta from Oxnard was the name drawn. He was not present to win.

Respectfully submitted by Susan Degenhardt, Recording Secretary

CHATSWORTH...

Continued from page 12

Membership reviews the Treasurer's report. Angel Hale makes a motion to accept the report as written, S/C.

Chris Alessi makes a motion to include all executive board officers in the steward's appreciation dinner. Dan Gorman seconds the motion. Mike Steele speaks against the motion. Chris Alessi speaks for the motion. Don Minster speaks against the motion. Ray Hill speaks for the motion. Vote is taken. Chris Alessi calls for a division. 6-for, 21-against the motion, motion defeated.

Mike Steele makes a motion to always keep this dinner as a shop steward dinner and not allow motions to include all the officers to be made again. Motion is seconded. Brother Alessi calls for a division. 6-against, 22-for the motion. Motion carries.

Lori Stewart makes a motion to adjourn, S/C.

Angel Hale won the 50/50 drawing. Door prizes won by Benjamin Kelly and J.P. Alvarado.

Membership drawing was worth \$1114.00. Fabian Vasquez from San Fernando was the name drawn. He was not present to win.

Respectfully submitted by Susan Degenhardt, Recording Secretary



Branch 2902 President Frank Salazar presents new Retiree Sandra Muir With her retiree watch ... Congratulations Sandra!



Holiday Fun!!! (L-r) Webmaster/Alternate Shop Steward Larry Orcutt, MBA/NSBA Representative Chris Alessi, Reseda Chief Shop Steward Mike Longress and Executive Vice President Ray Hill enjoy a well deserved break at the annual Shop Steward Appreciation dinner held in December.



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RETIREES LUNCH

Where: Hometown Buffet
Vons Center
1855 Cochran Street
Simi Valley

When: Thursday,
January 18, 2007

Time: 11:30am to 12:30pm



Where: Hometown Buffet
Fallbrook Mall
6633 Fallbrook Ave.
West Hills

When: Thursday,
February 15, 2007

Time: 11:30am to 12:30pm

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BRANCH #2902 OFFICERS

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- Frank Salazar

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

- Ray Hill

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT

- Mike Steele

VICE PRESIDENT

- Paul Drapkin

TREASURER/FINANCIAL SECRETARY

- Dan Gorman

RECORDING SECRETARY

- Susan Degenhardt

DIRECTOR OF RETIREES

- Don Minster

MBA/NSBA REP

- Chris Alessi

HEALTH BENEFIT OFFICER

- Joe Gutierrez

ASST. HEALTH BENEFIT

- Marva Golden

SGT.-AT-ARMS

- Bob Golden

TRUSTEES:

Beverly Sucich
Ernestine Hernandez
James Perryman
Sandy Gaunce
Sonny Castellano

“The average man does not know what to do with this life, yet wants another one which will last forever”

*Anatole France,
French author (1844-1924)*

SHOP STEWARD LIST

Agoura Hills Chief S.S.	Greg Gaddis
Chatsworth Chief S.S.	Angel Hale
Alternate	Sonny Castellano
Fillmore Chief S.S.	Call Office
Moorpark Chief S.S.	Lori Stewart
	Robbie Elsaleh
North Hollywood Chief S.S.	Mike Steele
Chandler	Mike Steele
Laurel Canyon	Steve Leyton
Studio City	Mike Steele
Valley Village	Mike Steele
Northridge Chief S.S.	Onofre Varela
Alternate Shop Steward/ Webmaster	Larry Orcutt
Porter Ranch	Marva Golden
Ojai Chief S.S.	Philip Navarro
Oxnard Chief S.S.	Ernestine Hernandez
Pacoima Chief S.S.	Steve Dickerson
	Art Hernandez
Port Hueneme	Call Office
Reseda Chief S.S.	Mike Longres
San Fernando Chief S.S.	James Perryman
M.C.A.	James Perryman
North Hills	C.C. Flatts
Sylmar / Mainflor	Mike Steele
	Yvette Solache
Alternate	Gilbert Leon
Altenate	Ignacio Castellanos
Santa Paula Chief S.S.	Laura Walters
Simi Valley Chief S.S.	Sandra Gaunce
Mt. McCoy Station	Sandra Gaunce
Thousand Oaks Chief S.S.	Jim Mette
	Bev Mattes
Newbury Park	Sue Degenhardt
Ventura Chief S.S.	Laura Walters
East Ventura	Laura Walters
Woodland Hills Chief S.S.	Joe Vedder
	Paul Drapkin
	Carlos Delgado

RECREATION NEWS

SEA WORLD:

Adults: \$42.00 (Reg. \$54.00)

Child: \$37.00 (Reg. \$43.00)

These tickets are good until 5/31/07; each ticket allows you to visit twice before the expiration date.

LEGOLAND:

Adults: \$34.00 (Reg. \$54.00) Savings (\$20.00)

Child: \$34.00 (Reg. \$44.00) Savings (\$10.00)

(2nd DAY FREE: (The 2nd day visit must be within 7 days of the first visit).

SEE'S GIFT CERTIFICATE:

\$11.50 (Retail Value \$14.10)

SIX FLAGS MAGIC MOUNTAIN:

2 FOR 1 Coupon

Questions or any information can be obtained by contacting:

Recreation Director

Paulette Dyer

MIKE STEELE

Will Be Serving
DINNER

At The January
Union Meeting

DINNER starts at 6 p.m.



Chatsworth Carriers participate in the annual Holiday Parade held in Chatsworth last December.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JAN 16 Regular Branch Meeting 7pm
Union Hall-Chatsworth
Dinner served 6pm

JAN 18 Retiree Lunch 11:30am
Hometown Buffet-Simi Valley

FEB 6 Executive Board Meeting 6pm
Executive Council Meeting 7pm

FEB 15 Retiree Lunch 11:30am
Hometown Buffet-West Hills

FEB 19 Presidents Day-Holiday



FEB 20 Regular Branch Meeting 7pm
Garden Palm Hotel-Newbury Park

MAR 6 Executive Board Meeting 6pm
Executive Council Meeting 7pm

MAR 11 Daylight Savings Time Begins



“Ideas are one thing, and what happens is another.”

*John Cage,
American composer & author
(1912-1992)*

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NALC Proposes Radical Changes to Contract

By Frank Salazar, President

On January 28, 2007, the NALC National Rap Session was held in Los Angeles with about 1500 members from across the Nation in attendance, including members from as far away as Hawaii and Puerto Rico. To say the least, the information imparted to us at the Rap Session was truly surprising, jaw dropping, progressive, puzzling, and some might say a radical departure from the norm. The following is a short synopsis of the highlights. Keep in mind however that these are only proposals made by the NALC.



NALC Members from Around the Country gathered at the Rap Session Held at the Wilshire Grand Hotel in Los Angeles

Let me preface my short synopsis by stating that the NALC is seeking a 5-year contract with annual wage increases and continued twice-a-year cost of living adjustments (COLA).

CONTRACTING OUT

The single most important reason as to why we are headed to arbitration is job security. According to President Young, our principle mission is job security with a strong viable Postal Service and a well paid Letter Carrier Craft. However, our job security and financial well-being are being threatened by individ-

uals on the Postal Board of Governors who are basically ideologues who wish to one day privatize or break up the postal service through outsourcing.

Across the nation, the number of rural carriers has been increasing. In many parts of the country, the rural craft is being given territory that should have been city delivery. We have won some grievances and lost many others over the issue of city versus rural delivery. However, a bigger threat is the growth of Highway Contract Routes a.k.a. Contract Delivery Services (CDS

Routes). CDS Routes are now being considered for all new deliveries. Basically, CDS personnel are people off the street bidding to a route for \$X amount a year with no benefits (low wage, no benefit workers). CDS routes are usually awarded in high growth areas like the South Eastern and South Western United States, but also in remote rural areas and dense metropolitan areas like Miami and Las Vegas. Management claims to save at least 50% in labor costs, and it seems that these contractors get little screening and training. There are

continued on page 2

PRESIDENT'S REPORT...

Continued from page 1



numerous problems with CDS Routes such as a lost of trust with the public, privacy and security concerns, and volume and financial losses. In other words, if Postal Management goes heavy on CDS Routes we won't know who is delivering our mail or even if the mail will get to you on time, unopened or at all. Hence, the American Public will loose confidence in the Postal Service and go elsewhere.

The NALC proposes "a prohibition against contracting out any work within territory now served by city delivery letter carriers, including in-fill development and natural additions to existing routes".

DRAMATIC CHANGES TO HEALTH BENEFITS

This proposal got more than a few eyebrows raised and got quite a few puzzled looks. We all know that health care costs are soaring in the United States and that Universal Health Care is becoming a major societal issue for the United States. Ford and GM have forced their active work forces and retirees to pay more for health care, and the recent grocery workers strike in Southern California was initiated over a dispute in the cost of health care benefits. Other companies have either dropped some aspect of their health care benefits programs or made them so expensive that no one can afford them.

Recently, our sister Unions the, APWU and Mailhandlers have been the first to acquiesce to paying higher premiums while getting nothing in return. In their respective contracts, both Unions agreed to pay 1% more in each year for the life of their contracts. Take for example, a 5-year contract with a 6.6% pay increase. The pay increase for this contract over 5 years would only amount to a 1.6% increase, because 5% of the increase would be wiped out by a 1% rise in health premiums in each year of the contract.



NALC National President Bill Young Addresses the Membership with some innovative ideas at the Rap Session.

The NALC proposal is a dramatic change from the norm and will most likely be viewed as controversial and divisive for many, especially for those with HMO plans. The NALC proposes that the Postal Service pay 85% of premiums for those in the NALC Health Plan, and 72% for those in other Federal Employees Health Benefits Program plans. According to our leadership, "This proposal would result in substantial savings to the Postal Service. Unlike the health benefit concessions recently accepted by the three other postal unions, NALC's proposal calls for letter carriers to receive a share of these savings in the form of additional general wage increases. In addition, the incentive to join the NALC Plan will allow the plan to be tailored to the needs of letter carriers and to promote better health". If adopted, it is anticipated that this proposal would save the Postal Service over \$475 million a year. And, half of these savings would be shared with the NALC in the form of pay raises.

Yes, I know . . . most carriers have a different healthcare plan. At the rap session, EVP Ray Hill and I were discussing this proposal, but at the time I could not formulate an appropriate question without further study. Ok, if you choose not to belong, you will be paying more for healthcare. It's a choice you make for yourself. Yes, the price will be steep, but you can take some of the pay raise we receive from the health care savings and apply it to your healthcare premiums. Moreover, if more carriers join the NALC plan it can offer more services, and the premiums will most likely decrease. Also, you can always add your Doctors on as PPO's and the network of participating Doctor's will expand. Furthermore, the NALC Health plan exists for letter carriers and is designed for letter carriers. If you are a member of the NALC and a letter carrier, why not support a health plan that was designed with letter carriers in mind? Hey, if you have a better proposal send it to NALC Headquarters in care of Bill Young.

ALL REGULAR WORKFORCE WITH WEEKENDS OFF

Boy, this got your attention! Yes, what many of you have always wanted was proposed to Management. The NALC proposed "a major restructuring of the city carrier workforce". It was proposed to Management that "all letter carriers would become full-time regulars with Monday-Friday schedules by the end of the contract". "Grade 2 carriers would be retained with revamped duties. All casuals and transitional employees would be eliminated. A Saturday-only workforce of NALC-represented bargaining unit employees would be created. NALC and the Postal Service would jointly approach OPM and, if necessary, Congress to secure regulatory or legislative changes to ensure that retired letter carriers may be employed on Saturdays with no diminution of their annuities. New hires would be Step A and retirees Step O. Retirees would have preference for the positions. Saturday new hires would have priority for vacancies in Monday-Friday workforce. USPS would request authority to offer an early-out. A task force would be created to implement the work-

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PS Form 2488 and the Case of the Illegal Direct Order

By: Ray Hill, Executive Vice-President



The Postal Service (PS) Form 2488, “**Authorization for Medical Report**”, has reared its ugly head yet again. The PS Form 2488 was initially developed to obtain the release of medical information concerning persons that were seeking employment with the USPS. This form **was not** originally intended to obtain medical information concerning current employees.

However, the USPS **does** use the form in an attempt to obtain medical information concerning current employees. Usually, the Form is given to an employee who has suffered from an illness or injury either job-related or not job-related. The USPS asks the employee to sign the Form so that they may obtain personal medical information from the employee’s doctor. **It is important to know that Management may not require an employee to sign a PS Form 2488. Also, the Union recommends that you never sign a PS Form 2488.**

A National Level grievance was filed several years ago challenging the fact that Management had required an employee to sign a PS Form 2488. On April 19, 2001 the NALC and the USPS, at the National Level, came to the following prearbitration settlement on that grievance:

*“...The issue in this case is whether management violated the National Agreement by requiring the grievant to sign **PS Form 2488, “Authorization for Medical Report.”**”*

While we mutually agree that no national interpretive issue is fairly presented in this case, we resolve this case as follows:

Completion of PS Form 2488 by the employee is voluntary.”

If an employee signs a PS Form 2488 it opens the door for the USPS to obtain information regarding **any and all medical problems** the employee may have.

Remember, completion of PS Form 2488 is **strictly voluntary**.

Recently at a Post Office represented by Branch 2902, a Letter Carrier was given a **direct order** by a USPS Labor Relations Representative to sign a PS Form 2488. This carrier had been scheduled for a Fitness for Duty Exam and Management claimed that the Fitness for Duty doctor needed information from the carrier’s doctor regarding his medical condition. So, in

order to get that medical information, the carrier was provided a PS Form 2488 and was then ordered to sign it. I happened to be there at the time that order was given, and I advised the carrier **not** to follow the direct order and sign the form. In the 17 years that I have been a Union Representative, that was the **first time** that I have ever advised a Letter Carrier to disobey a direct order. I say this because I want you all to understand that I am not in the habit of advising carriers to disobey direct orders and I strongly advise against doing so except in two very limited situations.

The Sierra Coastal District’s Work Rules and Rules of Conduct, item #2 reads as follows:

“2. All employees must follow the instructions of management **unless the order is illegal or unsafe**. If an employee disagrees with an instruction, the employee will nonetheless comply with the order and file an appeal. Failure to comply with a ‘Direct Order’ may be grounds for severe disciplinary action.”

As I wrote above, this was the first time that I ever advised a carrier to disobey a direct order. I did so because I felt very strongly that the order was illegal and in violation of Federal Law, specifically the “Privacy Act”. Therefore, if the carrier had obeyed the direct order to sign the PS Form 2488, his rights under Federal Law (i.e. the “Privacy Act”) would have been violated.

The carrier was subsequently issued a 14 Day Suspension charging him with “Failure to Follow Instructions”. We filed 2 grievances resulting from the improper direct order:

- 1) One grievance for the carrier regarding the 14-Day Suspension he was issued for refusing to follow the “Direct Order” and sign the Form.
- 2) A second grievance challenging the propriety of the Direct Order given to the carrier to sign a PS Form 2488.

These grievances were appealed by me to the Dispute Resolution Team (DRT) and I am happy to report that both grievances were resolved in our favor.

The 14-Day Suspension was rescinded in its entirety based on the circumstances involved in the case. In their decision for the grievance filed on the 14-Day suspension, the DRT wrote the following, in relevant part:

“...Furthermore, the DRT finds that if Mr. _____ had complied

continued on page 4

Jump into Spring with Target 65

By: Chris Alessi, MBA/NSBA Rep.



Target 65 is lifelong insurance protection without lifelong payments. This plan is a whole life insurance policy that has limited payments. You pay the same premium until the anniversary date after the insured's 65th birthday. At that time the policy is fully paid up, yet the coverage stays in force throughout the insured's lifetime.

Target 65 will pay the survivors the full amount of the policy, in the event of the insured's death. It also sets aside part of the premium for the future; this is the "CASH VALUE" that grows over time. This can be very helpful during cash emergencies; you can borrow against the cash value at an 8% loan rate.

Most likely the policy will earn dividends. Every year the MBA

determines if your policy will share in the divisible surplus which builds from all participating policies. You may choose to receive your dividends as (1) as a cash payment, (2) to buy additional insurance, or (3) left on deposit with the MBA to earn interest.

An excellent way to start off spring and maintain a lifetime of insurance protection for you and your love ones while paying premiums only during your income-earning years is to sign up today for Target 65. You may pay your premiums once a year, 11 times a year, or biweekly under the payroll deduction plan. The MBA will allow you to return the policy within 30 days of receipt for full refund of your premiums, if you decide not to keep it.

In closing I wish all the brothers and sisters of branch 2902 a very Happy Easter

In solidarity always, take care, and God bless you.
Chris.

PS FORM 2488 ...

Continued from page 3

*with the order, he would have had no time to resort to the grievance procedure and seek adequate relief. Compliance with this order might very well have compromised his right to medical privacy and the harm done may have been irreparable. Consequently, the DRT finds consistent with the just cause principles of the JCAM that Management did not have 'a **fair** and provable justification for discipline'. Therefore the 14 day Suspension will be rescinded and removed from all USPS files..."*

In their decision for the grievance filed on the propriety of the Direct Order given to the carrier, the DRT wrote the following, in relevant part:

*"...the DRT finds Management's order to sign PS Form 2488 violates the National Agreement and the April 19, 2001 National level prearbitration settlement to Case No.:D90N-4D-C94025408 and that it is inconsistent with the Privacy Act Statement on the form. Therefore, **Management is instructed to cease and desist ordering city letter carriers to sign PS Form 2488 Authorization for Medical Release...**"*

Kudos to our local DRT for making the proper, albeit difficult, decisions on these 2 grievances. The above quoted language in their decisions is fantastic and will be very helpful if a similar situation should arise in the future.

I was unsure whether or not I should write this article because I don't want any carriers to misinterpret my message and feel that it is normally OK to disobey a "Direct Order" given to them by Management.

However, you readers of The Mailbag News are an intelligent

bunch and I am sure you understand that you may only disobey a "Direct Order" from Management if that order is **illegal or unsafe**.

Otherwise, you must comply with the "Direct Order" and notify your Union steward so that he or she can investigate the situation and file a grievance on your behalf.

One thing I can say with certainty, if you are ordered to sign a **PS Form 2488, "Authorization for Medical Release"**, you **do not** have to comply with that order.

The December 2002 issue of the **Postal Record** discussed PS Form 2488 in that issue's "**Contract Talk**" article and closed with these words of wisdom:

"...The Contract Administration unit strongly recommends that letter carriers never sign a Form 2488. There is simply too much potential for abuse and the Postal Service may seek to obtain information unrelated to the current illness of injury...So if you receive a PS Form 2488 (Authorization for Medical Report) from the Postal Service just remember your signature could result in a medical free-for-all."

Wise words, indeed. If you have any questions regarding instructions or "orders" given to you by Management, consult with your steward or phone the Branch Office.

The **best time of the year** is here and Spring Training in Major League Baseball will have started by the time you read this. I'm looking forward to a very competitive race in the Dodgers' Western Division because all of the teams in the west have made some significant improvements. I still think the Dodgers will win the west, but we shall see. Talk to you all in two months.

What do I do when I get Hurt at Work?

By: James Perryman, San Fernando Chief Shop Steward



Being a United States Postal Letter Carrier is one of the most physical occupations in the work force. Letter carriers are required to be able to carry up to 35 lbs. of mail in a satchel, walk for up to 5 miles daily, up to 12 hrs per day, for 6 days per week. Letter carriers are required to be able to lift up to 70 lbs, in addition to dealing with the elements of rain, heat, wind, and snow.

When letter carriers are injured at work it can be very dramatic. One of the first reactions of a letter carrier when they get hurt is, Ouch!!! S... t!!! What do I do now? The second thing that may cross a letter carrier's mind is will management write me up for this? The answer is who cares!!! The most important concern a letter carrier should have is their health. Letter carriers should always practice safety, and when an accident or injury occurs you should report it immediately to your supervisor and seek treatment.

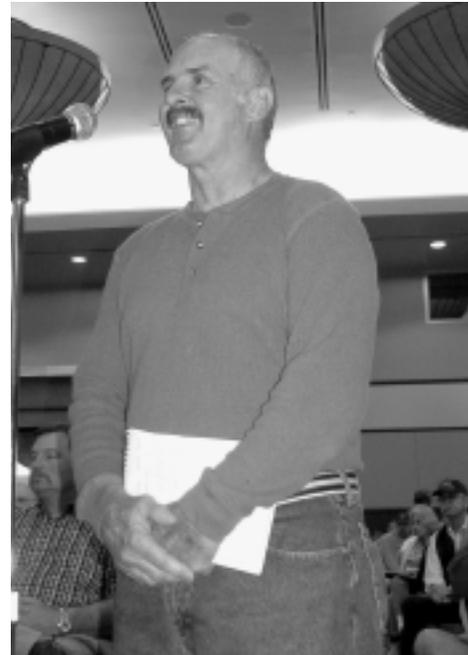
Filing a work related injury claim can be intimidating. However, letter carriers must understand that it is the carrier's responsibility to inform the immediate supervisor if he/she desires to file a claim and seek treatment. Carriers, who chose not to say anything may in fact, jeopardize their claim, which may result in the following: loss of pay, loss of medical treatment, loss of payment for medical expenses, and unnecessary use of sick or annual leave.

There are two types of work related injuries that a carrier can file. One is a CA-1 claim and the second is a CA-2 claim. A CA-1 claim is for when an employee is hurt at work, and the employee knows the place, date, and time when the injury occurred. This type of claim is considered a traumatic injury. A CA-2 claim is for work related injuries that have oc-

curred over a period of time, for example (carpal-tunnel syndrome in the wrist). This type of claim is considered a non-traumatic injury.

Carriers should remember to always practice safety first in their daily work activities. If a carrier is injured at work it will only get worse if the carrier does not report it and seek treatment immediately. Carriers should be sure to have all of his/her questions answered as to the proper way to file a claim and seek medical treatment. Carriers should also remember to contact their shop stewards whenever he/she has a work or non-work related injury for guidance.

Until next time, Go L.A. Lakers, and God Bless.



Branch 2902 Retiree Fred Shaw steps up to the Microphone To Present His Question to the Top Brass at the NALC Rap Session Held in Downtown Los Angeles on January 28th.

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In Memoriam

Dave Garretson

Northridge

Ed Trujillo

Northridge

ARE WE READY FOR A NEW YEAR?

By: Ernestine Hernandez, Oxnard Chief Shop Steward



I don't know about you, but boy, did 2006 go by fast for me. Were you able to keep up with it? It all seems like a blur to me.

We saw many people come and go this year. Some left happily to retire or to move on to new places like K.C., Felipe, Beverly, Axel, Debbie, & Mike. Some for sadder reasons like Rodney, Mark & Cindy. Some left and gave many of us a sigh of relief, like Tom,

Stacy and Russ.

With all of this came a lot of carriers who finally became regulars. Congratulations to all of you who made it. We also got a lot of new PTF's. Have you met them all? If not, when you see someone you don't recognize and they are wearing a carrier uniform, stop them and introduce yourselves to them. Who knows, one of them may become your best friend if you do. Look out for them and say hi and welcome. Here are some of their names: Cliff, Brian, Kenny, Joseph, Virginia, Michelle, Pablo, Denise, Maria, George, and Mario.

Well, to help all of you keep track of the hours you work and the

weeks that are included on your pay check, I am enclosing a copy of this year's Pay Period Inclusive for 2007. This usually helps sort out any confusion or questions you have about your paycheck.

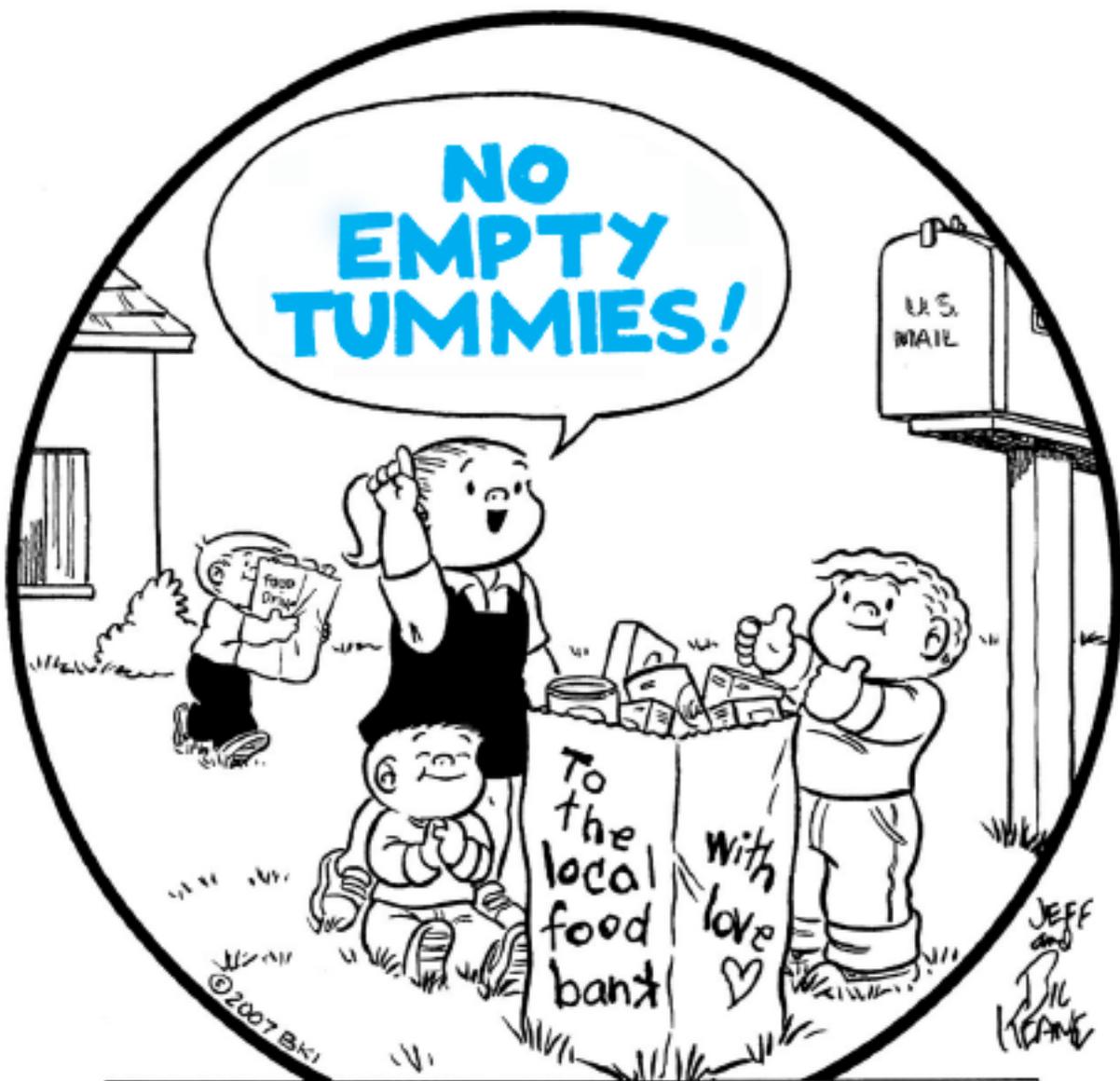
Just a heads up on something you may be doing that may come back and bite you in the ass. I know many of you are skipping your lunch continually just to get off earlier. What you may not realize, is that this is only giving management the impression that you are doing your route in a faster time than you actually are. The data they are looking at does not tell them you skipped your lunch. I have been informed that management is trying to get most routes adjusted by using the average office and street times you have been using all year. So guess what? When they adjust your route, your skipped lunch time will not be factored in, and you will be expected to complete your route in the times you have shown (in their data) that you can do it. You may even face discipline for alleged expansion of street times. So, think twice about giving up your lunch and pm breaks, and stop digging a hole for yourself that you will have a hard time getting out of.

I hope this year is good to every one of you that reads this.

Happy New Year 2007!

2007 PAY PERIOD INCLUSIVE DATES

2007						
PAY PERIOD	WEEK ONE	OT HRS WORKED	WEEK TWO	OT HRS WORKED	PAY DATE	HOLIDAYS
01	12-23 TO 12-39		12-30 TO 01-05		01-12-07	01-01, 01-02
02	01-06 TO 01-12		01-13 TO 01-19		01-26-07	01-15
03	01-20 TO 01-26		01-27 TO 02-02		02-09-07	
04	02-03 TO 02-09		02-10 TO 02-16		02-23-07	
05	02-17 TO 02-23		02-24 TO 03-02		03-09-07	02-19
06	03-03 TO 03-09		03-10 TO 03-16		03-23-07	
07	03-17 TO 03-23		03-24 TO 03-30		04-06-07	
08	03-31 TO 04-06		04-07 TO 04-13		04-20-07	
09	04-14 TO 04-20		04-21 TO 04-27		05-04-07	
10	04-28 TO 05-04		05-05 TO 05-11		05-18-07	
11	05-12 TO 05-18		05-19 TO 05-25		06-01-07	
12	05-26 TO 06-01		06-02 TO 06-08		06-15-07	05-28
13	06-09 TO 06-15		06-16 TO 06-22		06-29-07	
14	06-23 TO 06-29		06-30 TO 07-06		07-13-07	07-04
15	07-07 TO 07-13		07-14 TO 07-20		07-27-07	
16	07-21 TO 07-27		07-28 TO 08-03		08-10-07	
17	08-04 TO 08-10		08-11 TO 08-17		08-24-07	
18	08-18 TO 08-24		08-25 TO 08-31		09-07-07	
19	09-01 TO 09-07		09-08 TO 09-14		09-21-07	09-03
20	09-15 TO 09-21		09-22 TO 09-28		10-05-07	
21	09-29 TO 10-05		10-06 TO 10-12		10-19-07	10-08
22	10-13 TO 10-19		10-20 TO 10-26		11-02-07	
23	10-27 TO 11-02		11-03 TO 11-09		11-16-07	
24	11-10 TO 11-16		11-17 TO 11-23		11-30-07	11-12, 11-22
25	11-24 TO 11-30		12-01 TO 12-07		12-14-07	
26	12-08 TO 12-14		12-15 TO 12-21		12-28-07	
2008 BEGINS						
PAY PERIOD	WEEK ONE	OT HRS WORKED	WEEK TWO	OT HRS WORKED	PAY DATE	HOLIDAYS
01	12-22 TO 12-28		12-29 TO 01-04		01-11-08	12-25, 01-01
02	01-05 TO 01-11		01-12 TO 01-18		01-25-08	01-21



**LETTER CARRIERS
FOOD DRIVE
Saturday, May 12, 2007**



Union Meeting

January 16, 2007
Chatsworth



President Salazar called the meeting to order at 7:00PM. Sgt.-at-arms, Bob Golden led the pledge of allegiance. Asking to be excused were Lori Stewart, Marva Golden, Steve Leyton, Joe Vedder, Mike Longres, Laura Walters, Art Hernandez, Steve Dickerson. A motion was made to excuse these brothers and sisters, S/C.

President Salazar announces the sale of 50/50 tickets and reminds members to sign the attendance book.

President Salazar introduces Joe McDonough of the DRT as a guest at tonight's meeting.

The membership reviews the minutes of the November 21, 2006 meeting. Sandy Gaunce makes a motion to accept the minutes as printed, S/C.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NALC National Rap Session-Sunday, January 28 from 8AM-12PM at the Wilshire Grand Hotel in Los Angeles. All members in good standing can attend. Details are on the latest NALC Bulletin.

MDA fund-raiser afterwards by Branch 24.

Announcement of branch website, www.nalcbranch2902.org. Contains up-to-date information, current Mailbag News articles, and related links

We were contacted by the Roy Tailors Uniform Company who is looking for sales representatives. Contact us if you are interested.

COMMUNICATIONS

The last offer made by the Postal Service was reviewed and discussed by the membership. This information was available from the e-Activist network, and was sent to each and everyone on that network. President Salazar emphasizes the importance of being an e-activist. Contracting out of jobs was reviewed, and will be discussed at the Rap session. APWU ratified their contract. Terms of the APWU agreement were discussed.

President Salazar gave a report on the installation of National officers that he attended in Washington DC in January.

Intervention meeting to discuss the problems in Woodland Hills will take place on January 19, 2007. If the climate does not improve, we are prepared to go formal on this.

Unit route reviews- Some offices are in the process of the reviews. In Agoura, the routes are being adjusted with 7 new positions created.

Grievance activity for the year ending December 2006 reviewed and discussed. Totals for moneys recovered for members reviewed. A conservative estimate of \$415,857.50 was won for members (depending on the pay level of the member). Oxnard and San Fernando were the offices where most of the violations occurred which resulted in payments to the craft.

The branch is currently 94.4% organized. We try to go to the orientations and sign up the new members.

VOE surveys- Do not answer question #16, "are people in my work unit held accountable?" Management has used this against the craft.

President Salazar shares a letter from NBA Manny Peralta's office regarding future training in the areas of grievance training, legislative training, MDA fundraising, COLCPE, and e-AC-TIVIST. The importance of mentoring, and getting the new people involved is discussed.

COMMITTEES

Recreation- Paulette Dyer offers 4 tickets for Legoland for tonight's drawing.

COLCPE- Ernestine Hernandez reports to the membership about the importance of donating to the fund and how it can positively impact our jobs.

Retirees – Don Minster reports that this month's luncheon will be January 18 at the Simi Valley Hometown Buffet. President Salazar and EVP Hill attended last month's lunch.

Health Benefits- Joe Gutierrez reports on the new benefits in the NALC plan. Chiropractic and routine physical exams are now covered. Thank you to those members who stayed with the plan and to those who switched to the plan.

MBA/NSBA – Chris Alessi speaks on the importance of good financial planning. Maturity Income plan benefits are explained to the membership. MBA has six life insurance plans for members. Chris has free MBA appointment calendars for members.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Sonny Castellano makes a motion to excuse Angel Hale from tonight's meeting, S/C.

NEW BUSINESS

Fred Shaw makes a motion to adopt the Executive Board recommendation to send officers and stewards who wish to
continued on page 9

CHATSWORTH ...

Continued from page 8

tend to the National Rap Session in Los Angeles on January 28, 2007, paying mileage (from office or home whichever is less), and ? day per diem and parking, S/C.

Ernestine Hernandez makes a motion to adopt Executive Board recommendation to reimburse President Salazar for attending Branch 2502 Las Vegas installation of officers. One night hotel and two days per diem, S/C.

GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION

President Salazar presents Jim Kusch from Woodland Hills with a retirement watch. Brother Kusch started in 1980 and was on the same route for 25 years.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Returning to work after absence for medical reasons, as outlined in the ELM reviewed and discussed. Recision of restricted sick leave (ELM 513.393) rules reviewed. Medical documentation or other acceptable evidence (ELM 513.364) was discussed.

Marian Walters makes a motion to accept the Treasurers report as written, S/C.

Ted Wells makes a motion to pay a bill submitted by Paul Drapkin for \$36.34 for ink cartridge, S/C.

Ernestine Hernandez makes a motion to adjourn, S/C.

Bev Sucich won the 50/50 drawing worth \$25.50. Ignacio Castellanos won the Legoland tickets.

David Stafford from Northridge was the name drawn for the membership drawing worth \$1149.50.

He was not present to win.

Respectfully submitted by Susan Degenhardt, Recording Secretary

PRESIDENT'S REPORT...

Continued from page 2

force reorganization plan. Finally, the substantial savings to the Postal Service resulting from this restructuring will be shared with all letter carriers in the form of general wages increases."

Ok, so who wouldn't like to be a regular with the weekends off? There may be a few, but . . . be honest, I am sure the majority would love it. The T-6's would still be around, but they will probably have 10 routes instead of 5 and the strings would be overlapping. I have heard some criticism about the Saturday workforce proposal along the vein that it will be hard to get people to just work on Saturday's. Saturday carriers will only get a wage with no benefits. As with all ideas, the bugs will have to be worked out. If we don't get enough retirees and new hires, maybe some Monday-Friday carriers may want to work overtime on Saturdays. No one is forcing any retiree to work. The anticipated savings for the Postal Service is expected to be \$20 billion over 30 years with much of the profit coming from savings in overtime, leave, and benefits savings.

Yes, these are crucial times for the NALC, and difficult times call for innovative and progressive measures. Yes, some of these proposals are radical and may have more than a few flaws, but at least they can stimulate a dialogue between both sides. As with everything we negotiate, the devil is in the details. We elected good honest officers who have the betterment of the men and women of the NALC always at the forefront. We elected this leadership team to make the hard decisions, so we should back them. If we have questions or better ideas, we should contact them. If not, let's let them make the best deal possible for us all. All for now back in two.

"Let us be thankful for the fools. But for them the rest of us could not succeed"

Mark Twain (1835-1910)

Welcome New Members

The following is a list of new members.

If any of these members work in your office stop and welcome them to our branch.

Agoura

Neelam Dubey
Kelly Grant
Premrudee
Pathanathamara

Chatsworth

Lance Neely

Moorpark

Roy Andrade

North Hollywood

Jose Leyva

Northridge

Minard Canayon
Jonah Johnson

Oxnard

Jorge Iglesias
Virginia Savard

Port Hueneme

Amber Pember
Nancy Wilson

Reseda

Jeffrey Sander

San Fernando

Arturo Contreras
Jesus Hernandez
Luis Rizo

Simi Valley

Liza Vasquez

Thousand Oaks

Leticia Castillon
Mike Ruecker
Oscar Salas
Erika Szabo
James Wagner

Ventura

Joseph Bermudez
Richard Diaz
Cody Green
Hector Lopez
Daniel Ross

Woodland Hills

Danielle Gruen

By the Numbers Membership 2006

By Susan Degenhardt

As of Pay Period 26, 2006

Active 1454

Retired 360 (including 18 Gold Card members)

During the last year:	New Members	154	
	Transfer In	9	
Separated	Re activate	0	
Retired			Total 163
Deaths			
(active carriers)			
Transfer out			
Cancel			
Total		124	

**Branch 2902
is 94.4%
organized**



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RETIRES LUNCH

Where: Hometown Buffet
Vons Center
1855 Cochran Street
Simi Valley

When: Thursday,
March 15, 2007

Time: 11:30am to 12:30pm



Where: Hometown Buffet
Fallbrook Mall
6633 Fallbrook Ave.
West Hills

When: Thursday,
April 19, 2007

Time: 11:30am to 12:30pm

Attention: National Association of Letter Carriers

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BRANCH #2902 OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

- Frank Salazar

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

- Ray Hill

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT

- Mike Steele

VICE PRESIDENT

- Paul Drapkin

TREASURER/FINANCIAL SECRETARY

- Dan Gorman

RECORDING SECRETARY

- Susan Degenhardt

DIRECTOR OF RETIREES

- Don Minster

MBA/NSBA REP

- Chris Alessi

HEALTH BENEFIT OFFICER

- Joe Gutierrez

ASST. HEALTH BENEFIT

- Marva Golden

SGT.-AT-ARMS

- Bob Golden

TRUSTEES:

Beverly Sucich
Ernestine Hernandez
James Perryman
Sandy Gaunce
Sonny Castellano

“Believe those who are seeking the truth; doubt those who find it.”

Andre Gide,

French author and critic (1869-1951)

SHOP STEWARD LIST

Agoura Hills Chief S.S.	Greg Gaddis
Chatsworth Chief S.S.	Angel Hale
Alternate	Sonny Castellano
Fillmore Chief S.S.	Call Office
Moorpark Chief S.S.	Lori Stewart
North Hollywood Chief S.S.	Mike Steele
Chandler	Mike Steele
Laurel Canyon	Steve Leyton
Studio City	Mike Steele
Valley Village	Mike Steele
Northridge Chief S.S.	Onofre Varela
Alternate Shop Steward/ Webmaster	Larry Orcutt
Porter Ranch	Marva Golden
Ojai Chief S.S.	Philip Navarro
Oxnard Chief S.S.	Ernestine Hernandez
Pacoima Chief S.S.	Steve Dickerson
	Art Hernandez
Port Hueneme	Call Office
Reseda Chief S.S.	Mike Longres
San Fernando Chief S.S.	James Perryman
M.C.A.	James Perryman
North Hills	C.C. Flatts
Sylmar / Main Office	Mike Steele
	Yvette Solache
Alternate	Gilbert Leon
Alternate	Ignacio Castellanos
Santa Paula Chief S.S.	Laura Walters
Simi Valley Chief S.S.	Sandra Gaunce
Mt. McCoy Station	Sandra Gaunce
Thousand Oaks Chief S.S.	Jim Mette
	Bev Mattes
Newbury Park	Sue Degenhardt
Ventura Chief S.S.	Laura Walters
East Ventura	Laura Walters
Woodland Hills Chief S.S.	Joe Vedder
	Paul Drapkin
	Carlos Delgado

RECREATION NEWS

SEA WORLD:

Adults: \$42.00 (Reg. \$54.00)

Child: \$37.00 (Reg. \$43.00)

These tickets are good until 5/31/07; each ticket allows you to visit twice before the expiration date.

LEGOLAND:

Adults: \$34.00 (Reg. \$54.00) Savings (\$20.00)

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At The March
Union Meeting
DINNER starts at 6 p.m.



Newly Retired Woodland Hills Carrier Jim Kusch(l) accepts his NALC Watch from President Salazar(r) at the January Union Meeting in Chatsworth.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MAR 11 Daylight Savings Time Begins



MAR 15 Retiree Lunch 11:30 am
Hometown Buffet-Simi Valley

MAR 17 St. Patrick's Day



MAR 20 Regular Branch Meeting 7pm
Union Hall-Chatsworth
Dinner served 6pm

APR 7 Passover begins at Sundown

APR 3 Executive Board Meeting 6pm
Executive Council Meeting 7pm

APR 8 Easter Sunday



APR 17 Regular Branch Meeting 7pm
Garden Palm Hotel-Newbury Park

APR 19 Retiree Lunch 11:30 am
Hometown Buffet-West Hills

MAY 1 Executive Board Meeting 6 pm
Executive Council Meeting 7pm

MAY 12 **National Association of
Letter Carriers
National Food Drive**



MAY 13 Mothers Day

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MEMBER: TRI-COUNTIES CENTRAL LABOR COUNCIL, AFL-CIO

VOLUME 49, NO. 3

Circulation 2,500

May-June 2007

No Go! Say It Ain't So!

By Frank Salazar, President

On Good Friday, April 6th, the Postal Service gave their answer concerning our national negotiations and that answer was no agreement. The Postal Service declared an impasse, so once again we are headed for arbitration. Many have criticized that the process is taking too long. However, I would reply that it's better to come to an agreement, if you can, rather than letting a third party fashion an agreement for you. In arbitration, you hope for the best, but you really don't know what you will end up with until it's over and then it's too late. The parties agreed to bypass mediation and go straight to arbitration.

Both parties will begin selecting a panel of three arbitrators. One is selected by the Postal Service, another by the Union, and the third is selected by both parties as the neutral arbitrator and chairman. If the parties cannot agree on a neutral arbitrator, the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service will name the Chairman. Arbitration moves slowly so don't expect any decision soon. The earliest date for a decision could be fall.

The issue or sticking point resulting in an impasse was



the issue of contracting out. Plain and simple, the Postal Service and the ideologues on the Post Board of Governors want to privatize the Postal Service. Take for example, Reno, Nevada.

In Reno, Management converted 10 city letter carrier routes to Highway Contract/Contract Delivery Service routes. The 10 regular city letter carriers will now become unassigned carriers. In Portland, Oregon there was a route that was taking 9 hours a day. Management decided to adjust the route to 8 hours by contracting out 1 hour of the route. If you don't think that this can happen here, it can. Management has plans on the drawing board to do the same here in our district.

All the NALC was asking for was to retain the territory we have now, and the in fill that goes with it. But, that isn't good enough for the Postal Service. As usual, they want it all their way.

NALC Fights Back

"NALC believes that the growth of so-called Contract Delivery Service not only threatens the jobs and incomes of America's 325,000 city and rural letter carriers

continued on page 2

PRESIDENT'S REPORT...

Continued from page 1



ers, but also the long-term viability of the Postal Service.” In my opinion, if the Postal Service were able to contract out, as they would like, it would only be a matter of years before the Postal Service becomes a 3rd world mail delivery system. You’ll mail an item, and hope it gets to its destination. And, you hope it gets there unopened. Plain and simple,

CDS is a mail delivery system. This type of system lacks service, because service will take a back seat to profit and the bottom line. In a CDS environment, deliveries would be contracted out to the lowest bidder, who will mostly likely be minimally screened and unaccountable. For example, in some parts of Nevada large companies are bidding an unspecified amount of dollars for many delivery routes and then subcontracting out the routes for less than the original bid. In one case, a bidding battle ensued between two sub-contractors with the winner bidding \$16,000 a year to deliver a 900-stop route. All a contractor need do is provide his/her own vehicle, his/her own gas, and his/her own insurance at his/her own cost. How this can get done for \$16,000 a year is amazing to me. In reality, the contract will probably be abandoned. Please see the NALC Fact Sheet on contracting out for further information.

To put a stop to this poor business decision, the NALC is supporting Sense of the House Resolution, H. Res. 282. introduced by Congressman, Albio Sires (D-NJ). “A Sense of the House is legislative language which offers the opinion of the House, but does not make law.” The NALC is asking that letter carriers, their friends, and families contact their congressional representatives and ask them to sign on as a co-sponsor of H. Res. 282. If legislation is later introduced to stop the Postal Service from being able to contract out future letter carrier work, we will need as many co-sponsors as we can get.

Please contact your congressional representatives and have them co-sponsor H. Res. 282.

*Note: As I was preparing this article for publication, the NALC announced a demonstration and informational picket in front of USPS Headquarters in Washington D.C. on April 16th to protest the contracting out of city letter carrier jobs. Members of Congress will join President Young and rank and file Letter Carriers at

the demonstration in front of L’Enfant Plaza. There are no plans for nationwide demonstrations and pickets at this time. However, if it were called for we would like as many carriers to join in as possible (go to www.nalc.org for additional details).

Flat Sorting System (FSS) On the Way

The Branch has received more bad or less than good news. We have been notified that the flat sorting machines are due for implementation in the Coastal Sierra District in mid 2009. In late 2008, 4 machines will be built for our area and to be deployed and operational by May 2009. Management plans on eliminating 898 full-time letter carrier positions in the Pacific Area with approximately 252 coming out of the Sierra Coastal District. This is going to be a mess. Those of you that were around when DPS was first implemented will know what I am talking about. The Postal Service plans on withholding vacant routes as they become available. That means current PTF’s may be PTF’s for a couple of years longer than anticipated. Management’s reasoning is that as full-time carrier routes disappear full-time regular carriers will need work. Thus, Management will withhold full-time assignments for these displaced regulars. In the meantime, PTF’s will most likely opt on these full-time vacancies until they are filled and Transitional Employees and Casuals will be hired to backfill for the PTF’s on opts. Sounds like a mess, it is. Be advised that we have filed grievances on these issues, and we will continue to file them as the violations occur. For the record, the NALC does not agree with the unilateral methodology the Postal Ser-

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“It is the individual who is not interested in his fellow men who has the greatest difficulties in life and provides the greatest injury to others. It is from among such individuals that all human failures spring.”

Alfred Adler,

Austrian psychoanalyst (1870-1937)



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WITHHOLDINGS COMING, REMOVALS ON THE RISE AND SOME RESERVISTS MAY BE DUE PAY BACK

By: Ray Hill, Executive Vice-President



Just when things seemed to be running smoothly here in Branch 2902, the Union got smacked with the word that Management will be withholding routes in anticipation of projected savings from the Flat Sequencing System (also known as FSS). FSS is to flats what DPS is to letters: flat mail is sorted by machine in delivery sequence for each route and the

carriers take these presorted flats directly to the street.

In the November-December 2006 issue of the Mail Bag News, we printed a guest article by Indiana Letter Carrier Roberta Clemmer. In that article, Roberta wrote about the FSS system and the problems her office had experienced during their three-month test of FSS.

The USPS has notified the Union that they anticipate a reduction of approximately 898 full time positions in the Pacific Area as a result of the deployment of FSS, which is due to begin in June of 2009. Management plans to withhold 252 full time positions in the Sierra Coastal District. The NALC has filed National Level Grievances on the FSS issue and locally we will be filing grievances every time that we receive notification that a route is being withheld in our branch. Stay tuned for more information on this issue.

In other news, I'm sorry to report that Branch 2902 is currently dealing with too many "Notice of Removals". These Removals, which were issued for a variety of reasons, have been grieved by the Union and are currently in various stages of the grievance procedure.

Listed below are some of the **allegations** that led to the removals Branch 2902 is currently dealing with:

- 1) Mishandling of Mail
- 2) Irregular Attendance/Tardies
- 3) Falsification of Pre-Employment Application
- 4) Failure to Work In a Safe Manner
- 5) Misconduct

As I wrote above, these charges are **allegations made by Management** and I want to make it clear that the Union does not necessarily agree that the allegations are true.

Removal grievances are very time consuming and cause a great deal of stress for the carrier that Management is attempting to remove. They can also be stressful for the Union Representatives handling the grievances, because we know the carriers that are being removed and we have a great deal of sympathy and empathy for them.

Sometimes the Union is successful in defending carriers that have been issued Removal Notices, sometimes we are not. Our success in overturning Removals is dependent on several factors, including the guilt or innocence of the carrier that has been issued the removal, procedural issues, and the past record of the carrier involved.

If the carrier is truly innocent of the charges alleged against him, the Union will be successful in overturning the unjust Removal. Our success rate in other Removal cases varies, depending on all of the factors involved. One thing I can promise you, your Branch 2902 Officers and Stewards do their very best when processing all grievances, including removals.

As long as we follow all of the USPS rules and regulations and refrain from doing anything **really stupid**, we will never receive a Notice of Removal.

So follow the rules, show up for work on time and don't do anything stupid, OK?

Attention: Military reservists

If you were in the military reserves between 1980 and 2000 and you were also working for the USPS, you may be entitled to compensation in the form of money or restored military or annual leave.

The April 2, 2007 issue of the **Federal Times** has an

continued on page 4

COLCPE PIN RECIPIENTS

The following members of Branch 2902 donated through automatic payment, or donated \$100.00 or more to COLCPE in 2006. COLCPE pins were either presented at the March meeting or mailed to those who were not at the meeting. The Branch wishes to recognize them

Chris Alessi
Jose Barba
John Broderick Jr.
Charlene Brown
Sonny Castellano Jr.
Susan Degenhardt
Andrew Denes
Paul Drapkin
Paulette Dyer
Robbie Elsaleh
Sandra Gaunce
Robert Golden Jr.
Daniel Gorman
Ernestine Hernandez
Ray Hill

David Hyman
Steven Leyton
Timothy O'Connor
Ralph Otte Jr.
Philip Robinson
Gary Rodriguez
Frank Salazar Jr.
Fred Shaw
Yvette Solache
Michael Steele
Beverly Sucich
Arturo Valdez
Onofre Varela
Bradley Walker

for their contributions to the letter carrier cause. Won't you join these brothers and sisters in the fight to secure our jobs? Contact COLCPE coordinator Ernestine Hernandez for details about the contests for signing up now.

WITHHOLDINGS...

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article written by Tim Kauffman that is titled **"Reservists eligible for back pay from Postal Service, MSPB rules"**.

This article reads as follows, in relevant part:

"As many as 100,000 military reservists who worked at the U.S. Postal Service between 1980 and 2000 could be eligible for thousands of dollars in compensation because they were improperly charged for their military leave, under a new ruling.

The Merit Systems Protection Board decision expands the scope of a larger back pay issue that ultimately could cost the government half a billion dollars, said Matthew Tully, a New York attorney who is representing affected employees for free..."

The Article goes on to read: *"...Outside the Defense Department, the Postal Service is the largest single employer of Guard and reserve members, Tully said. He said complying with the decision could cost the Postal Service upwards of \$200 million... The policy, which was changed in 2000, had charged reservists for every calendar day they were on military leave, instead of charging them for the actual work days they missed. Reservists who used up their military leave because they were charged for weekends or other days they weren't scheduled to work instead had to use their own vacation days or take leave without pay to complete their annual military training.*

The court decisions require agencies to restore annual leave to current employees or provide back pay to retired workers to make up for the lost compensation or leave that employees incurred because of the policy.

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JUST WHEN YOU CATCH A BREAK

By: Greg A. Gaddis, Agoura Chief Shop Steward



Hello, I hope all is well. Unfortunately not all is well at the Agoura P.O. I didn't think I would be saying this so soon, but "here we go again". Just when the Agoura carriers are enjoying their route adjustments, upper management rears its ugly head.

After 10 years of working on overburdened routes. The Agoura carriers finally caught a break, through the Arbitration settlement. The 60-day review process is currently underway as of this article. It appears a couple of the new routes that management put together from the adjustments, will need to be reviewed. Hang in there Maria and Francisco.

As I was saying, just as the carriers are enjoying their adjusted routes management just couldn't leave a good thing alone. There is another delivery system on the horizon. It's called the Flat Sorting System or FSS. Yes you guessed it, just like DPS. Your flats will be sequenced in delivery order. Well as a result of this new system, management has figured out, without any Union input I might add, that the Agoura office should lose **12 routes**. The Agoura office is scheduled to be on line around May 09'. Fasten your seat belts, its going to be a bumpy ride!

Those carriers who remember the results of the DPS mess in 96' when we lost 6 routes based on managements proposed savings **before** we went on line. The rest is history as the saying goes. Overburdened routes, overtime, penalty overtime, and constant harassment of the 3996 process was the norm. It took three grievances and an Arbitrator to push management to adjust the routes to 8hours.

I have been instructed to file a grievance on the FSS process under numerous contract violations. Including citing the fact that management had not shared any data to warrant the loss of 12 routes, and just how they came up with their findings as the contract stipulates.

I will also let you know that management is going to withhold any vacant routes from now on. This is due to the FSS process. That means the senior PTF's will not be making regular any time soon. I will be filing griev-

ances on this violation also, and request that the senior PTF who should be made regular be "made whole".

We as a Union thought management had learned from their mistakes through the DPS process. But I was wrong; history is repeating itself all over again! By this I mean that management had figured out that an office should come on line with DPS **first**. Then, the office would be reviewed in 60days and make adjustments accordingly. But noooooo...one step forward, one giant leap backwards! Management has it all figured out, the Union doesn't know anything, the carriers who deliver the mail certainly don't know anything. So management decided on paper using their magic pencils, that they can abolish 12 routes **first** and then start the FSS program just as they did back in 96'.

However I do know that whatever happens, carriers will do their jobs in spite of managements continued attempts to wreck havoc any chance they get. Until next time keep your heads up.

Welcome New Members

The following is a list of new members. If any of these members work in your office stop and welcome them to our branch.

Pacoima

Mayra Aguirre
Jessie Garcia

Thousand Oaks

Glen Carmona

Ventura

Erik Fuentes
Gabriel Medina



NALC FACT SHEET

Department of Legislative and Political Affairs — National Association of Letter Carriers, AFL-CIO
100 Indiana Ave. NW — Washington, DC 20001-2144 — 202-393-4695 — www.nalc.org © NALC

February 12, 2007

Postal Service Contracting Out

NALC Calls for Congressional Oversight

The Postal Service is seeking to dramatically expand the practice of contracting out delivery services across the country. NALC believes that the growth of so-called Contract Delivery Service not only threatens the jobs and incomes of America's 325,000 city and rural letter carriers, but also the long-term viability of the Postal Service. It believes that Congress should closely scrutinize this practice in the course of fulfilling its oversight function. NALC stands ready to assist both the House and the Senate as it undertakes this work.

Background

The United States Postal Service is the second largest employer in the country. It provides excellent and highly affordable universal postal services. Today it delivers twice as much mail to tens of millions of more households and businesses than it did when it was created 35 years ago, but with significantly fewer employees. Efficiency gains from automation and new business processes have eliminated nearly 100,000 jobs over the past decade alone. Thanks to the hard work of more than 700,000 workers, the U.S. Postal Service is the most efficient postal service in the world. And thanks to their unions, these workers earn solid, middle-class wages and have decent pension and health benefits. In contrast to the nation's largest employer, Wal-Mart, the USPS is an exemplary employer.

Unfortunately, postal management is placing this success and the future of the Postal Service at risk by turning to outsourcing as a key business strategy for its core function. Contracting out the delivery of mail is increasingly being promoted not just in the most rural areas where Highway Contract Routes (HCR) have long been an option, but also in urban and suburban areas. In recent years, postal management has initiated a major effort to promote contract delivery, and in 2006, the USPS renamed the HCR program Contract Delivery Service (CDS). Delivery managers have been instructed to favor CDS using contract employees over delivery by career city or rural letter carriers for all new deliveries.

The growth in CDS has been dramatic in many parts of the country. In the Southeast Area, for example, the

number of homes and businesses served by contractors has exploded in recent years, rising by 34% since 2002. Over that same period, the number of city and rural delivery points grew just 6%.

NALC Opposes Outsourcing of Delivery Jobs

Outsourcing delivery is contrary to the broad public interest

- By using contract delivery workers, the Postal Service has bypassed the normal recruitment and hiring processes that ensure that only qualified and trustworthy people are entrusted to handle Americans' mail. In so doing, it is also undermining the federal policy of granting preference to veterans of the Armed Services for postal jobs.

- Using contractors undermines the accountability of the Postal Service. CDS contractors often sub-contract their delivery work to unknown individuals. Neither customers nor the Postal Service can know who is responsible for service problems or delivery concerns.

- The CDS contracting process lacks transparency; wage levels are reportedly less than 50% of those enjoyed by career letter carriers, but other payments and fees paid to contractors for "vehicle expenses" and "overhead costs" eat up whatever labor cost savings might exist. The details of CDS contracts are subject to little or no scrutiny.

Outsourcing delivery threatens the sanctity and security of the mails

- Recruited with minimal screening, CDS contractors and their unscreened sub-contractors open the possibility that convicted felons, identity thieves and other undesirable workers will gain access to Americans' mail and their mail boxes.

- The danger of bio-terrorism through the mails was demonstrated with the anthrax attacks of 2001. Granting access to the mail stream to an unaccountable, low-paid work force foolishly risks the security of the mails.

- Outsourcing mail delivery to contract workers weakens the ability of the Postal Inspection Service to prevent, in-

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THINGS THAT PISS ME OFF

By: Joe Vedder, Woodland Hills Chief Shop Steward



I am writing this article with a twinge of guilt. Guilt inflicted upon me by my fellow shop steward at the Woodland Hills / Calabasas P.O., union brother, friend and, more importantly, as far as this article is concerned, editor of the Mailbag News, Paul Drapkin. He's been reminding me that I haven't written anything for our local union rag in quite awhile. I keep telling

him that I do my best writing, for the Mailbag, when I'm pissed off about something. I guess I've either been way too content lately, or just mellowing with age, because it usually takes a lot to piss me off these days. But, to get Paul off my back, exorcise some demons and do a little venting, I've compiled a litany of THINGS THAT PISS ME OFF!!

Some supervisors piss me off. Not all of them and not even the ignorant ones. You can cure ignorance with knowledge and I'm always willing to educate them, as long as it's done on the clock and I'm getting paid for it. The supervisors and postmasters who piss me off are the ones who abuse their authority and think that just because they are in a position of power, vested with dominion over a carrier work force and carry around a clip board, act as if they have carte blanche to be a...holes. Stupid supervisors *really* piss me off. You can't fix stupid. How else are you supposed to feel about a supervisor who has a history of dishonesty and dispensing misinformation? Someone who is predisposed to questionable and abusive behavior and couldn't spell "cat" if you spotted them the C and the A?

A supervisor who gives you a deer in the headlights look whenever you ask them any thing more complicated than, "can you give me a 96?". We have far too many supervisors of limited capabilities and suspect capacities. Who should listen more and speak less. Whom if they heeded this advice would probably be less likely to babble on endlessly about subjects they don't know anything about.

The people representing the USPS, during our current contract negotiations, really rattle my cage. Our craft carries the entire postal operation on their backs. We fix everyone else's mistakes. The buck stops with us. We're the ones who get the misaddressed mail to the right person. It's the carriers who take mail mis-cased to the

wrong route and get it to the right route. We're the postal workers who still function magnificently in spite of overbearing and moronic managers and burdensome and often ridiculous rules. The positive feelings that the vast majority of our customers have about the USPS were hard earned by the letter carriers. The USPS should be giving our entire craft some serious ass kissing and be bending over backwards to meet our contractual demands.

It pisses me off when my puppy takes a poop in the middle of my bedroom. I thought I had that mutt potty trained!

Scanners tick me off to no end. It's not that they don't perform a valuable function. They make great paper weights and they keep my coverage's from blowing all over the cab when my LLV windows are open. They can also occasionally be used as a chock block, if your LLV doesn't have one. They can even make for a wonderful weapon to chuck at an attacking dog, so long as you have good aim and a decent arm. Scanners usually do just about everything that is expected of them. And that's what pisses me off about scanners! They don't do nearly enough. The USPS dispenses more pieces of mail to more people, to every corner of the globe, than all of the world's other delivery services, public and private, combined. USPS hardware should be on the cutting edge of delivery technology. Yet we're technologically behind our competitors. The scanner was invented to create an electronic tracking system and eliminate any need for a paper trail. But now, we've got both, which is a waste if time, energy and materials. UPS downloads all information, concerning any delivered item, into a computerized clipboard. It's quick, efficient and doesn't need or waste paper. Our postal hierarchy cries that UPS' method is too expensive. How can that be? We're a friggin' monopoly that generates billions of dollars daily! We should be hemorrhaging money! There's enough of a cash flow to not only bring our delivery process into the twenty first century, but to also give us hefty raises too. Someone at the top of the postal compost pile needs to be held accountable for this travesty!

I'm grieved at the thought that I may never get a chance to go out with and romance Lucy Liu.

Scabs piss me off! They're all a bunch of ungrateful thieves. What else do you call people who take for noth-

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Once-in-a-Lifetime Premium

By: Chris Alessi, MBA/NSBA Rep.



The single payment plan offered by the MBA is designed for NALC members, which provides a financial building block for complete peace of mind. This is a whole life insurance plan for a single once-in-a-lifetime premium. This plan is offered exclusively to NALC members by your Mutual Benefit Association, a part of our great union and a part of your life. This insurance is

provided as a service for you, **not to profit from you.**

The single payment plan is convenient and offers immediate cash value, instant low-interest loan availability and of course, death benefits. It cannot be cancelled at any time without the owner's request. The coverage is available in any amount from \$5,000-\$50,000. This plan is great for everyone. It's especially well suited for children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, husbands, wives, or even retirees who could use some added security in life.

WITHHOLDINGS...

Continued from page 4

Tully said the average back payment has totaled \$3,500, although employees have received anywhere from \$400 to \$14,000 depending on how long they were in the reserves.

Reservists who believe they are owed back pay must file the case with MSPB..."

If you were in the Military Reserves between 1980 and 2000 while working for the USPS it is **possible** that you are entitled to some sort of compensation. If you want to pursue this matter, visit the "Federal Times" web site (www.federaltimes.com) and check out the April 2, 2007 article by Tim Kauffman.

The article mentions a web site for the attorney, Matthew Tully, who is representing reservists without fee. **Please understand that Branch 2902 has no knowledge of this attorney, Matthew Tully, and this article does not indicate that we are endorsing him or his work.**

The single payment plan is easy to buy. Just fill out the application form and send it in. You will receive your policy to examine for thirty days. If you're not fully satisfied or any reason, return it for a full refund of any premium you've paid. There is no risk, so enroll now in the rock-solid **Single-Payment Plan**, and give a financial building block to someone for whom you really care.

Our Brother Remembered

In closing I would like to give a tribute to Jon Gaunce, 1st President of 2902. Jon passed away 11 years ago. He would have been 52 years old on 5-23-07. Jon always fought the good fight for letter carrier's rights and all people's rights. Jon gained much respect from the top managers in the Postal Service and all Letter Carriers throughout the country. I thank you very much Jon and want to let you know that you will never be forgotten.

In solidarity always,
God Bless, Chris

I have simply thrown this information out to you reservists so that you can investigate the situation yourself. **Branch 2902 will not be representing letter carriers with regards to back pay for reservists because you must file the case with the MSPB. Visit the Federal Times web site if you are interested in pursuing this matter on your own.**

Baseball is Back

The Dodgers have started the season with 6 wins and 3 losses and so far they look pretty good. There is a hell of a long way to go but I think they are going to have a great year. We shall see...

In Memoriam

Deborah Mercier

Thousand Oaks

Navy Vang

Sylmar

THINGS THAT PISS ME OFF...

Continued from page 7

ing what others have to pay for? Without the union, we're all casuals. No benefits, no annual, no sick leave, no bargaining or worker's rights and one small sorry ass paycheck every two weeks. I wouldn't piss on a scab if they were on fire.

Prejudice angers and bewilders me. I can't fathom how the color of one's skin, their ancestry, gender, choice of religion, or their place of origin has anything to do with their character, decency, intelligence, or human rights. Life is too short to get hung up on something as terribly trivial as bigotry. Live and let live. Pursue happiness however you see fit just as long as it doesn't harm anyone or interfere with their right to pursue happiness. And don't say that I'm prejudiced against scabs. That's tantamount to saying that I'm also prejudiced against murderers and child molesters.

Carriers who won't stand up for themselves or don't go to a shop steward whenever they're being abused or taken advantage of by their postal manager(s), piss me off. There are some, who work among us, who fear their supervisors. What kind of working environment have they created for themselves? How can they live like that? They can just go to their union rep, who has enough backbone for both of them. Wimps piss me off too.

Whenever the Dodgers lose, or when the Yankees win, I

get pissed off. I get pissed off a lot during baseball season.

President Bush pisses me off. He lied to us about our reasons for going to war. Now, thousands of Americans have died in a war that we had no business getting into in the first place. I felt like a voice in the wilderness when I said, from day one of this war, that Bush was getting us into a very bad situation. I wake up now finding that most of the nation has come over to my side. Only Bush's rich buddies at Haliburton have benefited from this conflict. Bush has gutted nearly every law that protects the environment and the blue collar working class. He and his rubber stamp congress have passed legislation that has stripped us of some of our civil liberties and immunity from the invasion of our privacy.

Five shelf cases on anything but all apartment and / or condo routes irritate the hell out of me. If you don't know why already, then read my September of '04 article in the Mailbag.

It chafes my butt that I've been playing the lottery for twenty years and yet still find myself having to work for a living. It also pisses me off that I don't win as much playing craps, as Ray Hill does. I know that life isn't fair, but gimme a break!

People who bitch too much, like I'm doing here, piss me off. So I'm takin' off!

NALC FACT SHEET...

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investigate and prosecute mail theft, mail fraud and other illegal uses of the mail (for example, child pornography, etc.).

Outsourcing delivery is a foolish business strategy

- Successful businesses do not out-source their core functions. Professional letter carriers are the public face of the Postal Service. The public's trust in letter carriers is an essential business asset of the Postal Service.

- The success of programs like Customer Connect, which uses city letter carriers as sales agents for postal products, and technological strategies such as Intelligent Mail require highly skilled and strongly motivated letter carriers. Low-paid, unskilled, here-today-gone-tomorrow contract workers would doom such programs and strategies to failure.

- Outsourcing the last mile would undermine the basic trust mailers and patrons have in the postal service and backfire: volume and revenue would fall, offsetting any

short-term cost savings. Outsourcing undermines the public service orientation of the Postal Service

- Letter carriers bring tremendous goodwill to the Postal Service through the intangible contributions they make to their communities. Programs such as Carrier Alert, whereby letter carriers look out for the well-being of elderly and disabled Americans, and the NALC National Food Drive would atrophy with the spread of Contract Delivery Services.

- Contract workers would not and could not be counted on to go the extra mile for the public interest. How many CDS workers would fulfill the commitment made by the NALC, the USPS and the Department of Homeland Security to distribute vaccines and medicines in the face of a national emergency. The fulfillment of that commitment, made in the Cities Readiness Initiative, will depend on having the most dedicated and professional letter carriers possible.

For further information, please contact the NALC office of Legislative and Political Affairs 202-662-2833.

An Invitation to Join

The following are non-members of the NALC. We wish to extend an invitation to join Branch 2902 in the efforts to preserve and secure the future rights all letter carriers.

Agoura

L. Bateman
W. Schoen

Chatsworth

M. King
E. Lopez

Fillmore

L. Boschee
D. Tucker

Moorpark

M. Arnold
B. Arrasmith
P. Martino

North Hollywood

C. Andersen
R. Caldwell

Northridge

S. Biondi
R. Martinez
A. Nicoletti
Z. Zaun

Oxnard

J. Villa

Pacoima

A. Ayala
M. Barrios
R. Delcomyn
D. Lopez

Port Hueneme

J. Dreiling
N. Nipper

Reseda

J. Andersen
L. Coulter
M. Guevara
R. Uribe

San Fernando

H. Alvarado
L. Glass
W.Hale
F. Saromo

Simi Valley

M. Boian
J. Lewis
D. Miranda
D. Paniagua
A. Portaro
D.W. Servaes

Thousand Oaks

G. Barraza
M. Beltran
A. Garcia
L. Granados
M. Gray
T. Grimme
J. Hoback
S. King
M. L'Heureux
P. Lo Biondi
D. Matheson
C. Mears
P. Parham
A. Tolo
L. Wiedhopf

Ventura

C. Bareng
M. Burke
D. Defratus
C. Freeman
R. Freeman
A. Gonzalez
R. Magana
P. Mason
E. Schaupp
E. Southerland
N. Vea
L. Wittrock
T. Zavala

Woodland Hills

M. Castro
P. Deluca
T. Le
D.A. Wilson
D.L. Young

PRESIDENT'S REPORT...

Continued from page 2

vice used to make its projections and a national level grievance has been initiated. Sorry PTF's, but this is the Postal Service's doing. Make sure you opt on any and all vacant assignments.

What You Can Do To Help

If you haven't already become an NALC E-Activist, please sign up and do so. Becoming an E-Activist will give you the latest political news and instruct you on what you can do to become effective at the most opportune time. Moreover, try and make any donation you can to COLCPE, which is the Letter Carrier Political Action Committee. Many of our up coming battles will have to be fought on the legislative battlefield. If we

want to keep our well paying jobs and benefits, we will have to do battle with corporate privatizers. Yes, we pay dues to negotiate a good contract. But, whatever we negotiate can be taken away with the stroke of a legislative pen. All COLCPE money is made up of voluntary contributions and no dues money. The NALC is asking for \$5.00 a pay period or whatever you can give. Money is the mother's milk of politics and a little donation can go a long way in placing the people we need in the halls of Congress. So, please consider giving to make a difference. In addition, when the NALC asks, please write your Senators and Congressional Representatives. Letters to your representatives at the right time can greatly influence legislation that affects us. Let's be proactive and not reactive in protecting our jobs and our futures. All for now back in two.

Union Meeting

February 20, 2007
Newbury Park



President Salazar called the meeting to order at 7:05PM. Fred Shaw led the pledge of allegiance. Roll call of officers was done. Asking to be excused were Chris Alessi, C.C. Flatts, Steve Leyton, Marva Golden, Onofre Varela, and Angel Hale. Fred Shaw makes a motion to excuse the brothers and sisters, S/C.

Members are reminded to sign the attendance book, and buy 50/50 raffle tickets for tonight's prizes.

Membership reviews the minutes of January 16 meeting. Fred Shaw makes a motion to accept the minutes as printed, S/C.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

President Salazar reads a thank you letter from United Way for AFL-CIO Holiday project. A letter from NBA Manny Peralta concerning safety was reviewed. Joint labor-management committees need to meet to help keep the workplace safe. The number of successful bids for letter carriers have been set back to zero for now, due to the contract expiration. Carriers will not be denied a bid due to the number of successful bids they were awarded over the past five years under the last contract. The Branch was contacted by Branch 4006, Canoga Park to have a Texas Hold'em joint MDA fundraiser

To take place spring/summer. Details will be worked out with Canoga Park. Roy Tailors Uniform Company is looking for representatives in this area. Contact the branch if interested.

COMMUNICATIONS

President Salazar gave a detailed report on the National Rap Session that several members of the branch attended on January 28 in Los Angeles. The proposals from NALC and Postal Service were reviewed. NALC is against the contracting out of letter carrier jobs. APWU opened the door for increased employee premiums for healthcare. The proposals are in tonight's handout and on the NALC website.

Minor route adjustments were done in Agoura with seven new positions created. This was a result of an

arbitration decision where management failed to do unit route reviews. North Hollywood will be done soon.

NALC will speak with members who are preparing to retire. Have all records ready when making the call.

DRT grievance activity report for Quarter 1, 2007, reviewed by membership. Moorpark has more grievances at the DRT level than any other office in the district; Woodland Hills is third highest. Branch 2902 has 56% of the appeals for the district.

The Branch took in close to \$500,000.00 in grievance settlements for 2006.

VOE surveys are discussed by the membership. **Do not** answer #16, "are people being held accountable?" This has been used against members in the past. **Do** answer the rate your supervisor questions.

Branch and NBA's office are still working on the Intervention process in Woodland Hills.

COMMITTEES

Recreation- Paulette Dyer reports that there will be a Laughlin trip next year on the President's day holiday. She donates tickets for the Aquarium of the Pacific and two boxes of See's candy for tonight's raffle.

COLCPE- Ernestine Hernandez reports that there are new drawings for members who sign up fellow members to contribute automatically to COLCPE. Prizes are airfare anywhere in the U. S., and tickets for 2008 Superbowl. CSALC President will be at March 20 meeting in Chatsworth to hand out COLCPE pins. Currently 41 members of the branch are automatic/ or over \$100.00 contributors.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Dan Gorman makes a standing motion for the Branch to donate \$100.00 to the Spring project from AFL-CIO for Easter baskets for children in shelters, S/C.

GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION- Know Your Rights

continued on page 13

Union Meeting

**March 20, 2007
Chatsworth**

President Salazar called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM. Bob Golden led the pledge of allegiance. Roll call of officers was taken. Asking to be excused were Art Hernandez, Steve Dickerson, Marva Golden, Laura Walters and Lee Leighton. Fred Shaw makes a motion to excuse these brothers and sisters, S/C.

An announcement of 50/50 tickets for sale and a reminder to sign in for tonight's meeting.

President Salazar introduces tonight's guests, NBA Manny Peralta, CSALC President John Beaumont, Food Drive Coordinator for Region 1 Paula Miller, and Joe McDonough from the DRT.

The membership reviews the minutes from the February 20th meeting. Fred Shaw makes a motion to accept the minutes as printed, S/C.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Letter Carrier Food Drive will be on May 12. It is on the second Saturday in May.

Paulette Dyer has donated tickets for an Avenger arena football game which will be raffled off to benefit MDA. Flyer is available.

Postage rate hike to 41 cents for a first class letter, effective May 14, 2007.

Members are reminded to scan all Express Mail as it is our most valuable product. We must stay competitive with UPS and FedEx by providing the service our customers have paid for.

COMMUNICATIONS

Minor Route Adjustments- Working with management by taking the average street and office time and consulting with the carrier to make the adjustments. New routes in San Fernando have been made.

Lobby hour changes- Effective April 2 most offices will have lobby hours from 8:30-5:30, and Saturday 9:00-2:00. Collections have also been changed from 5:00PM to 3:00PM.

DRT grievance activity for the branch- Grievances appealed to this level have dropped somewhat, due to management being more contract compliant. Article 8

and Article 41 grievance activity are still high in Oxnard and San Fernando, but are being settled at the informal level. DRT has worked hard and are getting the decisions rendered quickly and fairly.

Flat Sorting System (FSS) - District Manager informed us that the machines would be here in 2008, and projected to go on line in 2009. Management will begin to withhold routes, which means that PTF promotions will cease. Management plans to eliminate 898 positions in the Pacific area. In our Branch's area they plan to eliminate over 200 full time positions. A grievance has been filed at the national level over the methodology.

Locally we will file grievances in the offices affected by the FSS and any withheld positions. We will be taking steps to protect carrier's rights and uphold the contract.

Contract Delivery Services- USPS headquarters wants the district to contract out all new delivery. An ad was found on Craig's List for contract delivery in Kansas. Lowest bidder gets the route. No benefits of any kind. Must provide own van and insurance. Must supply own replacement carrier. This is already going on in Las Vegas and Miami areas. This will undermine the service that the American public has grown accustomed to. Who knows who or what will deliver the mail.

Congressional Budget Office recommendations- These are recommendations for cutting Government costs. Government to pay flat fee for employer cost of health premiums, use the high five average instead of high three to determine retirement benefits, restructure matching funds for FERS, raise retirement contributions for employees.

Food Drive- Video presentation and Food Drive Coordinator Paula Miller speaks to the membership. Region 1 has a campaign to beat New York "Knockout New York", or "Get off Your Fanny and Help Manny". She notes that the contracting out of carrier jobs will hurt, if not destroy the Food Drive. The national goal is to increase the amount by 10% over last year. Sandy Gaunce announces that Food Drive cards and posters have been ordered, food banks contacted, and she is currently looking for someone to volunteer to print thank you cards.

continued on page 13

CHATSWORTH ...

Continued from page 12

COMMITTEES

Recreation- Paulette Dyer donates Six Flag Magic Mountain adult pass for tonight's raffle.

COLCPE- Ernestine Hernandez announces the new contests and prizes for signing up members to contribute.

Retirees- Don Minster announces the next luncheon will be on April 19, at Hometown Buffet in West Hills.

MBA/NSBA- Chris Alessi speaks to the membership about the Target 65 plan, a whole life plan with limited payments. There is no premium due after the age of 65. Enrollment is open to family members and retirees. Policy builds cash value. Premiums as low as \$2.30 per pay period.

NEW BUSINESS

Sandy Gaunce makes a motion to adopt an E-Board recommendation to reimburse any probationary employee all Union dues collected if they do not pass probation if that request is made in writing, S/C.

Fred Shaw makes a motion to adopt an E-Board recommendation to donate \$100.00 to the Saxsenmeir scholarship fund, S/C.

Sandy Gaunce makes a motion to adopt an E-Board recommendation to raffle off the Avenger tickets that were donated by Paulette Dyer with the proceeds to benefit MDA, S/C.

GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION

CSALC President John Beaumont speaks to the membership about the contracting out of letter carrier jobs and how members of the Senate and House of Representatives are viewing this. We must get more legislatively and politically involved President Beaumont asks "what is your job worth?" Only 1000 out of the 40,000 letter carriers in California give to COLCPE. President Beaumont presents pins for automatic contributors and those that contributed over \$100.00 during the last year.

NBA Manny Peralta addresses the membership about COLCPE. The cost of donating \$5.00 per pay period is equal to two minutes pay per day. COLCPE donations open the doors of Congress for NALC representatives to discuss our concerns. He shared a horror story about contracting out and tells the membership that President Young is speaking to those on Capitol Hill about the dangers of contracting out our jobs. NBA's office will have a campaign school for the 2008 election. NBA Peralta presents VP Paul Drapkin with a plaque for Steward of the Year for 2005-2006.

Membership reviews the Treasurer's report. Lisa Leal makes a motion to accept the report as written, S/C.

Thank you to Mike Steele for another delicious Corned Beef and Cabbage dinner.

Lisa Leal makes a motion to adjourn S/C.

50/50 drawing for \$33.50 was won by Sandy Gaunce. Door prize was won by Jim Dearborn.

David Mai from Thousand Oaks was the name drawn for the membership drawing worth \$1218.50. He was not present to win.

Respectfully submitted by Susan Degenhardt, Recording Secretary

NEWBURY PARK...

Continued from page 11

NALC press release regarding the "Do Not Mail" bill. President Young states to key legislators that it would be detrimental to the Postal Service. Advertising mail generates first class mail and business reply mail.

Step 4 and pre-arb decisions regarding gassing up of vehicles, washing of vehicles, supervisors opening postal vehicles reviewed and discussed.

Election of physician when hurt on the job, MI EL 540-91-1, dated January 25, 1991 discussed.

Step 4 decision regarding limited duty job offers reviewed and discussed.

President Emeritus Mattes reminds the members that in order to be entitled to "continuation of pay" a CA-1 must be filed within 7 days of the date of injury.

Membership reviews the Treasurer's report. Sandy Gaunce makes a motion to accept the Treasurer's report as written, S/C.

Lori Stewart makes a motion to adjourn, S/C.

Joe Vedder won the 50/50 drawing worth \$15.50. Door prizes won by President Salazar, Carlana McKnerney, and Greg Gaddis.

Membership drawing worth \$1175.00. Name drawn was B. Link, retiree from Ventura. This member was not present.

Respectfully submitted by Susan Degenhardt, Recording Secretary

\$20 BONUS

Any union member who signs up a non-member will receive a \$20.00 sign up bonus. Ask your steward for form 1187 to give to the non-member. Have the non-member sign up for union membership and either send the form to the branch office or give it back to the steward. Make sure you write your name on the top right corner of the form so we know who to pay.



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North Hollywood, CA 91603



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818-769-0451 fax

www.NorthHollywoodFCU.org

RETIREES LUNCH

Where: Hometown Buffet
Vons Center
1855 Cochran Street
Simi Valley

When: Thursday,
May 17, 2007

Time: 11:30am to 12:30pm



Where: Hometown Buffet
Fallbrook Mall
6633 Fallbrook Ave.
West Hills

When: Thursday,
June 21, 2007

Time: 11:30am to 12:30pm

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EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

- Ray Hill

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT

- Mike Steele

VICE PRESIDENT

- Paul Drapkin

TREASURER/FINANCIAL SECRETARY

- Dan Gorman

RECORDING SECRETARY

- Susan Degenhardt

DIRECTOR OF RETIREES

- Don Minster

MBA/NSBA REP

- Chris Alessi

HEALTH BENEFIT OFFICER

- Joe Gutierrez

ASST. HEALTH BENEFIT

- Marva Golden

SGT.-AT-ARMS

- Bob Golden

TRUSTEES:

Beverly Sucich
Ernestine Hernandez
James Perryman
Sandy Gaunce
Sonny Castellano

“Television is a devise that permits people who haven’t anything to do to watch people who can’t do anything.”

Fred Allen,
American Comedian (1894-1956)

SHOP STEWARD LIST

Agoura Hills Chief S.S.	Greg Gaddis
Chatsworth Chief S.S.	Angel Hale
Alternate	Sonny Castellano
Fillmore Chief S.S.	Call Office
Moorpark Chief S.S.	Lori Stewart
North Hollywood Chief S.S.	Mike Steele
Chandler	Mike Steele
Laurel Canyon	Steve Leyton
Studio City	Mike Steele
Valley Village	Mike Steele
Northridge Chief S.S.	Onofre Varela
Alternate Shop Steward/ Webmaster	Larry Orcutt
Porter Ranch	Marva Golden
Ojai Chief S.S.	Philip Navarro
Oxnard Chief S.S.	Ernestine Hernandez
Pacoima Chief S.S.	Steve Dickerson
	Art Hernandez
Port Hueneme	Call Office
Reseda Chief S.S.	Mike Longres
San Fernando Chief S.S.	James Perryman
M.C.A.	James Perryman
North Hills	C.C. Flatts
Sylmar / Main Office	Mike Steele
	Yvette Solache
Alternate	Gilbert Leon
Alternate	Ignacio Castellanos
Santa Paula Chief S.S.	Laura Walters
Simi Valley Chief S.S.	Sandra Gaunce
Mt. McCoy Station	Sandra Gaunce
Thousand Oaks Chief S.S.	Jim Mette
	Bev Mattes
Newbury Park	Sue Degenhardt
Ventura Chief S.S.	Laura Walters
East Ventura	Laura Walters
Woodland Hills Chief S.S.	Joe Vedder
	Paul Drapkin
	Carlos Delgado

RECREATION NEWS

SEA WORLD:

Adults: \$43.00 (Reg. \$56.00)

Child: \$38.00 (Reg. \$46.00)

Each ticket allows you to visit twice before the expiration date.

SEE'S GIFT CERTIFICATE:

\$11.50 (Retail Value \$14.10)

SIX FLAGS MAGIC MOUNTAIN:

2 FOR 1 Coupon

At monthly meetings (every third Tuesday of the month) coupons and flyers for various venues

Cookies for sale

Questions or any information can be obtained by contacting:

Recreation Director

Paulette Dyer

MIKE STEELE

Will Be Serving

DINNER

At The May

Union Meeting

DINNER starts at 6 p.m.



National Business Agent, Manny Peralta speaks about the importance of our COLCPE donations at the March union meeting in Chatsworth as he presents pins to those members who donated \$100 or more to COLCPE in 2006.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- MAY 15** Regular Branch Meeting 7pm
Union Hall-Chatsworth
Dinner served 6pm
- MAY 17** Retiree Lunch 11:30am
Hometown Buffet-Simi Valley
- MAY 28** Memorial Day-Holiday 
- JUN 5** Executive Board Meeting 6pm
Executive Council Meeting 7pm
- JUN 17** Fathers Day
- JUN 19** Regular Branch Meeting 7pm
Garden Palm Hotel-Newbury Park
- JUN 21** Retiree Lunch 11:30am
Hometown Buffet-West Hills
- JUL 3** Executive Board Meeting 6pm
Executive Council Meeting 7pm
- JUL 4** 4th of July-Holiday 

“Man stands in his own shadow and wonders why it is dark”

-Ancient Zen saying

THE MAIL BAG NEWS

NALC BRANCH 2902
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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF TRI-VALLEY BRANCH 2902,
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS AFL-CIO

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PROUDLY REPRESENTING: AGOURA, ARLETA, CALABASAS, CHATSWORTH, FILLMORE, GRANADA HILLS, MISSION HILLS, MOORPARK, NEWBURY PARK, NORTH HILLS, NORTH HOLLYWOOD, NORTHRIDGE, OJAI, OXNARD, PACOIMA, PORT HUENEME, RESEDA, SAN FERNANDO, SANTA PAULA, SIMI VALLEY, SYLMAR, THOUSAND OAKS, VENTURA, WESTLAKE, AND WOODLAND HILLS.

MEMBER: LOS ANGELES COUNTY FEDERATION OF LABOR, AFL-CIO

MEMBER: TRI-COUNTIES CENTRAL LABOR COUNCIL, AFL-CIO

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In Memoriam

All for the Good

By: Frank Salazar, President



Once again, I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to all who participated in our 15th Annual Food Drive. It's hard to believe that it has been 15 years. I know it's always a tough day. However, on that second Saturday in May we do a lot of good. The food banks are very appreciative and those we help get the assistance when they need it most. Our total this year was less

than last year, about 70, 996 lbs. less. Last year we took in about 355,806 lbs. (177.9 tons), and this year we took in about 284,810 lbs. (142.4 tons). There was good advertising on radio and some on TV, but with the high gas prices and the hustle and bustle of everyday life we came close. The negative criticism from National Public Radio directed at Campbell Foods did not help. NPR blasted Campbell foods stating they only help in order to move their product and get advertising. I guess donating over 1 million pounds of food doesn't help. What corporation in America does not commit a host of sins?

I would also like to thank the Postmaster of Woodland Hills for being very supportive of the Food Drive. The Postmaster allowed every carrier in the station to view the NALC Food Drive DVD; he allowed posters to be displayed and was overall generally supportive. I would also like to thank Supervisor Edwin Mendoza at the MCA station in San Fernando for getting his Postmaster to host a BBQ at both buildings. The carriers appreciated a good meal after a hard days work. And, thank you to the OIC in Northridge for being new to our area and also sponsoring a BBQ. Also, thanks to Simi Valley for another excellent BBQ and to any others I may have missed.

Route Inspections

As many of you know, we have been conducting route inspections in some of our offices using a joint minor process bypassing full count and inspections. The branch has used this process with some of our offices in the San Fernando Valley. For the most part, we have adjusted routes to as close to as 8 hours as possible through the use of territorial adjustments, which created a few new routes. Yes, we know there are some large routes out there, but management is required to review these routes within 60 days and adjust them to 8 hours. There are a few problems, but we are in the process of working them out. I recently met with the MPOO covering the area, and she indicated that we may no longer be able to do territorial adjustments due to

a lack of vehicles. Therefore, we may retain routers (which no one wants), create walk out routes, or do some sort of hand-offs. To say the least, it's an evolving process.

We attempted this same process in the northern part of our branch with the MPOO covering the 930 zip codes. We had an agreement that was to be implemented in Oxnard and would have theoretically adjusted all routes to 8 hours and created 4 new routes. The problem was the implementation. The route inspection team leader in charge of implementing the adjustments was creating numerous violations, which in turned caused grievances. Carriers in Oxnard complained to Steward, Ernestine Hernandez that Management did not meet with them, management did not take their comments into consideration, management was adding territory to their route that was already 8 hours or that management took off to little and added way to much. All these problems were brought to management's attention. At first, management ignored the problems and blamed the Steward. We took the grievances to a higher authority and some problems were fixed. However, other violations occurred. To make a long story short, grievances had to be filed to correct violations that never should have occurred. Management tried to blame the union, who only wanted to do the right thing. Management stated, "Don't you want 4 new routes?" I stated, "Not if you're going to screw up the 87 others. Keep your 4 routes and properly adjust the 87. We'll get what we get."

Nonetheless, Management called me to cancel the minor route inspection process. I guess they got tired of fixing all the problems they were creating. I informed the Postmaster that even though he canceled the minor process, he still had to adjust the routes to as close to 8 hours as possible. I guess my words fell on deaf ears and we had to file grievances in each zone. The result, management conducted a full count and inspection, in the last week of May, right be-

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Editors Note: Due to the suddenness of President Emeritus Beverly Mattes passing, The Mail Bag News was unable to include any articles in tribute to her. Please stay tuned for the September-October issue of the MBN which will be dedicated to her.

UNION: YES

By: Ray Hill, Executive Vice-President



When I became a full-time Union Officer in January of 2006, I wrote an article in the Mail Bag News in which I mentioned the fact that I missed delivering mail on the same North Hollywood park and loop route where I pounded the pavement for over 17 years. I became an integral part of the neighborhood during those 17 years and I still miss my patrons, working outdoors and the “forced” exercise

that I was paid to do on a daily basis while delivering mail.

I always carried a pocket radio with me throughout my carrying career and I listened to hundreds of baseball games, football games, and basketball games over the years.

If there wasn't a game on, I usually listened to sports talk on my radio. Yeah, that's right; I'm one of those idiots that enjoy sports talk on the radio. Back in the mid to late 1990's, I used to hear Branch 2902 carrier “Manny from Oxnard”, who is actually Manny from Newbury Park, call in and speak his mind on a variety of sports related topics while on his lunch or breaks. Those were some good calls, Manny.

The reason I'm speaking about sports talk radio is because I'd like to tell you about something I heard this morning while I was taking my daughter to school. We were listening to Colin Cowherd's show on ESPN Radio and he made some comments that I strongly disagreed with. Before you accuse me of child abuse for subjecting my 17 year old daughter to sports talk radio you must understand that, no doubt due to my many years of brainwashing the poor child, my daughter loves sports and actually enjoys listening to Colin Cowherd with me as we drive to her school in the morning.

Normally I agree with Colin Cowherd's opinions and I like his show, however today he made some comments about Unions that caused my blood pressure to rise just a bit. When I turned on his show this morning, Cowherd was talking about the NFL Players' Union and the dispute that is currently going on between that Union and some former NFL players regarding pensions and health benefits. During his discussions with people calling in to the show, Cowherd stated that he wasn't “really a Union guy” and went on to make some derogatory comments about Unions in general.

Cowherd said that he had once belonged to a Union and that his Union had done nothing for him. He also said that, in his opinion, Unions do nothing for good, productive work-

ers and that Unions serve to protect the “lazy”, non-productive members of their respective work forces.

Cowherd said that he felt that only a handful of American workers who perform what he called “physically demanding work”, including firefighters and law enforcement officers, were deserving of “Union protection”.

Letter carriers certainly perform physically demanding work yet we were not mentioned, either positively or negatively, in Cowherd's discourse over Unions.

Although I disagree with Cowherd's opinion of labor Unions and how they serve their membership, I am afraid that there are many people, both Union members and non-members (scabs) alike, who share that same negative view.

The old, tattered Webster's Dictionary that I keep in my office defines a “labor union” as “***an organization of workers formed for the purpose of advancing its members' interests in respect to wages, benefits and working conditions***”.

Amen and hallelujah to that, brothers and sisters!

First and foremost, a Union's purpose is to advance “its members' interests in respect to wages, benefits and working conditions”. **And that means all of the Union's members.** The NALC does an excellent job of doing just that.

However, as I wrote above, I feel that many people agree with Colin Cowherd's opinion that a Unions tend to **neglect** the productive, competent workers and to **protect** the non-productive, incompetent workers.

I know a few letter carriers, all NALC members, who share this same view and feel that our Union does serve to protect carriers that they feel are lazy and non-productive.

With all due respect, to that I must say “**Bullshit!**”

Our Union serves to protect the welfare of all letter carriers.

There are, however, a few carriers that consume an inordinate amount of the Union's time and resources, almost always on disciplinary matters such as letters of warning, suspensions and removals.

continued on page 8

DISABILITY INCOME PLUS QUESTION & ANSWER

By: Chris Alessi, MBA/NSBA Rep.



This plan is no longer available to the national membership of the NALC. **In our branch** there are still 150 brothers and sisters that are fortunate to still have an active policy. In the early 90's the MBA decided to stop writing any new policies because the plan was losing approximately a million dollars per year. Just a few years ago the plan started breaking even and at the

present time is starting to have a positive cash flow, but the MBA is still not ready to re-open the plan at this time.

How does member file a claim for benefits?-There are two claim forms used by the MBA to pay disability income plus claims. The first form is used to open a claim. The second form is called the Supplementary Statement of Continuing Disability. This form is used to receive continuing benefits.

What is an elimination period? - This is a period of time a member must be totally disabled before becoming eligible to receive benefits under the policy. The elimination period for plan Y4573 (6 Month plan) is 14 days for an off-the-job injury and 60 days for an on-the-job injury. For the plans Y4578 and Y4579 (12 month plan) it is 14 consecutive days for both on-the-job and off-the-job injuries and illnesses.

How long does it take to process a claim? - The amount of time it takes to pay a claim varies with each case. MBA must verify all info on the claim form. This often involves writing to doctors, hospitals and supervisors. MBA makes every effort to process claims for benefits as quickly as possible. Members can avoid delays by making sure all medical documentation from the treating doctor to support your disability is supplied with the claim.

What restrictions apply to this plan? - The insurance provided by this plan does not cover loss caused by: an act of war, whether declared or un-declared; or normal pregnancy or childbirth (except complications resulting from them).

How does this policy define and handle pre existing conditions? - A pre-existing condition is a sickness or a physical condition for which an insured has received medical advice or treatment during the 12 months before

the policy date. If a total disability starts within two years from the policy date and is due to a pre-existing condition, benefits will not be paid, unless the insured has gone for a period of one year without receiving any medical advice or treatment for that condition.

What does a total disability mean? A total disability, as defined in the policy, means because of injury or sickness, the insured is unable to perform the main duties of his or her regular occupation, is under the care of a physician for the cause of the disability, and is not engaged in any other occupation for remuneration or profit. The total and irrecoverable loss of sight in both eyes, or of one hand and one foot, or of speech, or of hearing shall be considered a TOTAL DISABILITY, even if the insured engages in his or her regular occupation or is not under the care of a physician.

Can a member collect disability income benefits if they return to work for Light duty?

No. MBA stops benefit payments on the date the insured is released for light duty by the doctor. However, if no light duty work is available the member should send a verification statement from his or her supervisor to the MBA claims department.

What if a member returns to work, and then suffers from a recurrent disability? -If the insured performs the duties of their regular occupation after a period of a total disability, any subsequent disability resulting from the same cause will be considered a new period of disability. If the insured has not worked 12 continuous months after a disability and suffers a subsequent disability from the same cause, that subsequent disability will be considered a continuation of the prior period of disability. In such a case the maximum benefit period will be reduced by the number of days benefits were paid for the prior period (or periods) of disability.

What if a policyholder fails to pay premiums?- MBA's Disability Income Plus policy provides a grace period of 31 days from the premium's due date. The policy stays in force during this grace period. If the delinquent premiums are not paid before the 31-day grace period ends, the policy is cancelled.

Have a great summer, God bless you, in solidarity always, Chris

Are you ready for a picnic?

National Association
of Letter Carriers
BRANCH 2902 PICNIC



Vasa Park, Agoura Hills, CA
September 9, 2007
11:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
(map on back)

All-You-Can-Eat-Lunch-Buffer 12:00 noon – 2:00 p.m. ONLY

BBQ Sliced Beef, BBQ Chicken, BBQ Baked Beans, Potato Salad, Garden Salad,
Rolls and Butter Fresh Watermelon Slices & More

Hotdog Grill Station (11:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.)

Grilled Hotdogs, Fresh Buns, Chili, Cheese & all the Fixin's

Beverages & MORE!

Soft Drinks Served all Day!
California Wine Selections, Domestic Beer Selections and O'Douls

Desserts and Sweets!

Ice Cream Novelties...YUMMY Delicious Chocolate Chip Cookies & Cotton Candy

Entertainment

Get ready for laughter and good times!
The Biggest & Baddest 3 Piece Obstacle Course! Tiger Bounce!
Splash around in the HUGE Swimming Pool,
Picnic Games & Races, Prizes & MUCH, MORE!!!
Enjoy face painting and balloon art from the Clown

**Remember to Bring Your
Bathing Suits and Towels!**

RSVP

Please detach and return by August 9, 2007

Member's Name: _____

I Yes, I will come to the Picnic and bring _____ adult guest(s) (Over 18)

I Yes, I will be bringing my children

Please Specify Number of Children

Age 8 and Under: _____

Age 9 and Above: _____

**MEMBERS & FAMILIES
NO PETS PLEASE**



PRESIDENT'S REPORT...

Continued from page 2

fore summer, after a postage rate increase. The MPOO and Postmaster have been trying to spread some mis-information stating that the union cancelled the agreement and gave up 4 routes. This is not true. We had an agreement, why do you think management went to all the trouble of telling carriers what they wanted to add and take off without their input? If there was no agreement, why all the work? And, how did management come up with adding 4 routes, before they attempted any type of improper consultations?

Nevertheless, we will monitor these adjustments closely. You carriers in Oxnard hang tough, assert your rights to an 8 hour assignment, and back your Steward, Ernestine Hernandez she is doing a great job.

National Reassessment Process

Attention rehabs and limited-duty carriers, management is trying to scare many of you into becoming PTF clerks. It has been reported to me that management is telling injured carriers that they are trying to get them back to work or off the rolls and working for Wal-Mart or some other company. And, that if they want to save their career and avoid this scenario that they better become clerks. Don't be fooled or intimidated by management. Rehab and limited-duty carri-

ers have rights. Per section 546.142 of the Employee Labor Relations Manual, there exists a pecking order which management must follow. Management has to provide you all with work within your restrictions and craft during your regular hours of work. If there is not adequate work, they have to look for work in the other crafts. Management can also move your hours or location to provide you this work. We have injured carriers casing and carrying, doing lobby director work, working the windows, casing P.O. Box mail, doing nixies, etc... In short, you do not have to change crafts. Do not change crafts! If you have been instructed to do so please file a grievance as soon as possible and give us a detailed statement.

The Reassessment Process calls for a review of injured carrier's medical restrictions and attempting to place them into productive work as much as possible. The only people that could possibly be moved outside the Postal Service are those that are so restricted medically that there is no suitable work for them to do within the Postal Service. The problems most of our injured are experiencing is getting current medical information and having their current rehab job offers or limited duty job offers modified. Again, there are rules management must follow. If you are having problems with management's requests for medical documentation or with a new job offer, see a Steward immediately so we can help. Again, don't believe the hype. If your are an injured carrier, you don't have to transfer crafts.

DOIS Says?

Let me say this straight out, DOIS is a management tool. Don't be afraid of a Supervisor when he/she comes around after you requested a 3996 and they state "DOIS says . . ." DOIS isn't Simon and who cares? Management cannot use DOIS to adjust your route and management cannot use DOIS as the sole basis for discipline against you. DOIS is a Management program that along with other information helps your Supervisor to evaluate your workload for the day. But, who knows the route better? You or DOIS? Funny thing, your Supervisor will always tell you when DOIS indicates that your route is 8 hours or under, but do they ever tell you when DOIS indicates that your route is over and you need 3 hours of assistance? No! I've seen DOIS indicate a route at 3.5 hours and the carrier asked for 2 hours. Did Management give that carrier 3.5 hours? No, they didn't. They attempted to cut the 2 hours request to a lower time instead of giving the carrier 3.50 hours like DOIS said. Moral of the story, stick by your most accurate estimate and leave DOIS to the Supervisor to ponder. Don't get hung up on Management's numbers. Make a proper request, don't argue with management's DOIS numbers, and call from the street at the appropriate time, if you have to.

Contracting Out

Contracting Out has hit home in Thousand Oaks. I have

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Directions to Vasa Park

Ventura Fwy (101)

Exit at Kanan Rd and go South towards the ocean 3.2 miles.
Turn Right/West on Triunfo Canyon Rd.
Vasa Park/Camp Keystone is 1/3 mile on the Right

From Pacific Coast Hwy (1)

Take Kanan Rd North towards Agoura 8.8 miles.
Turn Left/West on Triunfo Canyon Rd.
Vasa Park/Camp Keystone is 1/3 mile on the Right

PRESIDENT'S REPORT...

Continued from page 6

recently been informed that the Cal-Lutheran University Village will be put up for bid to be contracted out. Management estimated that it would cost over \$60,000 for a Letter Carrier, and over \$50,000 for a Rural Carrier to deliver these 300+ deliveries. However, a contract carrier it is estimated would only cost the Postal Service in the mid \$30,000's. Management loves contracting out because (1) They don't have to hire a body, pay a union wage or benefits. (2) They don't have to provide a vehicle, maintenance, fuel, or insurance. But, you get what you pay for. The Postal Service can hardly retain recent new hires, and these people are paid a union wage and benefits. The job is not easy and it requires a good work ethic something that management is trying to acquire on the cheap. Things are getting so bad that they are offering recent retirees the opportunity to bid on these contract routes. Why would somebody want to retire and go back to work for the same employer for less pay and no benefits? You got any ideas, let me know.

In order to monitor Management's scheme to contract out in our branch, I am asking any member who lives in the area to send me newspaper articles, letters to the editor, or complaints about late mail delivery or other delivery problems at the University Village. If any of you have family members attending or working at Cal-Lutheran with inside knowledge of late or poor mail delivery have them give the union a call or send in some information. We can use this information in a national level grievance, if needed.

In addition, a new Senate bill S. 1457 authored by Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) attempts to stop management's scheme to contract out new deliveries and the potential destruction of the Postal Service and our livelihoods. The bill is properly titled the Mail Delivery Protection Act of 2007, which forbids the Postal Service from entering into any contract "with any motor carrier or other person for the delivery of mail on any route with 1 or more families per mile." I am pleased to announce that both our Senators (Boxer & Feinstein) have signed onto the bill as co-sponsors. Please take the time to contact your Senators and thank them for supporting this bill. If you don't support your own job or retirement by writing, no one else will. Please write as soon as possible and check out the NALC website to become an e-activist.

MDA Fundraiser

On short notice, in early June, Branch 2902 and Branch 4006, Canoga Park hosted a Texas-Hold'em Fundraiser for Muscular Dystrophy. The fundraiser attracted 66 card players from both branches, with many friends and family in attendance. Also in attendance were members from Br. 1100 Garden Grove and the National Business Agent Manny Peralta. We had a blast, raising over \$1500.00 for MDA after prizes and expenses. We had such a good time that we want to do it again in late October. We had a lot of players

with skill and some that played in the World Series of Poker that couldn't beat some amateurs. I guess its more luck than skill. If you feel like testing your luck, come out to our next fundraiser and see how well you can do. It's all in good fun and for a worthy cause. My thanks to Ray Hill, Greg Gaddis, Bev Sucich, Susan Degenhardt, Lisa Leal, and Sandy Gaunce for helping out. Also, to Danny Acosta and Joe McDonough of Canoga Park who had the idea and did most of the organizing, and to Charlie Miller President Branch 1100 and NBA Manny Peralta for attending and bringing their group and thanks to all those who attended. Hope to see you at the next one. All for now back in two.

Welcome New Members

The following is a list of new members. If any of these members work in your office stop and welcome them to our branch.

PACOIMA

Marcus Barrios
Rebecca Delcomyn

SIMI VALLEY

Guy Nohrenberg

VENTURA

Richard Freeman – Erik Fuentes
Cesar Ruiz

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Texas Hold'em MDA Fundraiser

The Following is a list of the Winners of the cash prizes awarded at the Texas Hold'em MDA fundraiser held at the Union Hall on June 2nd. Why don't you show up for our next one and see if we can add your name to the list!

CRAIG GILDROY-CANOGA PARK CARRIER	\$850.00
WILLIAM MAGANA-FRIEND OF DANNY	\$450.00
ANTHONY PASTORAL-FRIEND OF CARRIER	\$200.00
DAVID DELAO-BRANCH 1100-VICE PRESIDENT	\$170.00
FRANCISCO PADILLA-FRIEND OF DANNY	\$150.00
ALBERT ARROYO-BROTHER OF MISSION HILLS CARRIER	\$130.00
SCOTT STEINER-CHATSWORTH CLERK	\$110.00
J.P. ALVARADO-MOORPARK CARRIER	\$85.00





Food Drive



2007



LIFE ON A CONTRACT ROUTE

Guest editorial by Retiree Ken Garrison

Since August of 1992 I have lived in Rosamond California. My mail is delivered by a contract route. Since then, service has been all downhill.

- Averaged a new carrier about once a year
- Delivery is anywhere from 10:30 to after dark
- My neighbors deliver some of my mail
- My neighbors know what magazines I subscribe to
- They know my retirement income
- They know my checking account
- They know my credit card account
- They know all my bills

That's strange since I'm a private person and seldom talk to any neighbors. The regular contract carriers often hire someone to carry their route. Most of my missing mail was local utility bills, so can't complain on that.

Lately the service has improved, but doubt that will last. Retired since 1987 and still have vivid nightmares about EVS station.

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Newly retired Carrier, Dennis Foley, out of the Fillmore P.O., is presented with his retirement watch by President Frank Salazar at the May Union Meeting in Chatsworth. Congratulations Dennis!

25 Year Pins

The following members are invited to the September 18th meeting to be presented with their 25 year membership pins. Please call the Union Hall and let us know if you will be present to accept.

Agoura

Jerry Kinkade
Glen Taylor

Reseda

Steven Robinson

Chatsworth

Mary Ellenberger
Louie Garcia
Anthony Skor

San Fernando

Karen Anderson
Manny Arredondo
Jose Betancourt
Andy Colantone Jr.
James Faulconer
Russell Kennedy
Gerald Pereira
Joaquin Planells
Larry Quintanilla
Angel Reyes
Rene Torres
Christina Velis

North Hollywood

Cresencio Aranda
Ralph Esparza
Michael Estes
Robert George Jr.
Oliver Logacz
Dick Liu
Edwin Lurssen
Willie McIntyre
Gerald McKiernan
Walter Merriman
Ralph Pitts
Peter Schemm

Thousand Oaks

Kenneth Brown
Susan Degenhardt
Jim Johnson
Jose Martinez
Othello Silla
David Slattery
Audrey Topley-Harvey
Mary Wallin

Northridge

Peter Butcher
Catherine Jacobs
Susan Jensen
Kristen Kieldrup
Wayne Madura
Daniel Olsen
Ronald Valente

Woodland Hills

Samuel Alfonso
Sharon Bermudez
Gary Bergman
Richard Cimino
Sam Fuqua Jr.
James Kusch
George Landers
Mark Mendenhall
William Mitchell III
Jerry Mudd
Stephen Sapovchak
Laurel Vasile
Joe Vedder

Oxnard

Alberto DeLuna
Dave Pettis

Pacoima

Steve Dickerson
Raul Torres
Gary Traba
Olivia Valdivia

Port Hueneme

John Shimmel

Union Meeting

**April 17, 2007
Newbury Park**



President Salazar called the meeting to order at 7:07 PM. Don Minster led the pledge of allegiance. Roll call of officers was taken. Asking to be excused were Mike Steele, James Perryman, Angel Hale, Jim Mette and Steve Leyton. Fred Shaw makes a motion to excuse these brothers; S/C. Joe Gutierrez makes a motion to excuse himself from the January and February executive board meetings, S/C.

President Salazar announces the attendance book and the sale of tickets for the 50/50 drawing with proceeds to benefit MDA.

President Salazar asks for a moment of silence for recently deceased members, Navy Vang-Sylmar, Deborah Mercier-Thousand Oaks, and Michael Stadnik-Reseda, and for the victims of the shooting at Virginia Tech. Chris Alessi requests that the moment of silence also recognize the 11th anniversary of the passing of Brother Jon Gaunce.

Members review the minutes from the March 20th meeting. Chris Alessi asks to make an addition to MBA/NSBA report on Target 65 Plan. There are no premiums due after "anniversary date" after age 65. Fred Shaw makes a motion to accept the minutes as printed with the correction, S/C.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Food Drive- May 12, 2007. It is the 15th anniversary of the food drive. Please submit pictures from offices in the branch for publication in the Mailbag, on the website and for submission to the Postal Record. Postcards for customers will be sent to the offices within a week for distribution. Sandy Gaunce asks for help in finding printers for making thank you notes. Food drive posters are available tonight to post up in grocery stores and other places where the public will see them.

Avenger tickets- Paulette has the raffle tickets for the game on April 28, with the proceeds going to MDA. She has donated the tickets and the drawing will be held tonight at the end of the meeting.

MDA fund-raiser- Joint fund-raiser with Canoga Park. Texas Hold'em tournament tentatively set for June 2 at 2902's branch hall. Details are still being worked out.

COMMUNICATIONS

Contract update- We have now gone to arbitration. Contracting out is the main issue. NALC picketed USPS headquarters

in Washington, DC on Monday, April 16. Reno, Miami, Las Vegas all have territory going to CDS (contract delivery services). Misdelliveries, missing mail, mail not delivered, are some of the current problems.

Both sides will pick an arbitrator and then will jointly pick a neutral arbitrator. NALC is working to make the public and congress aware of the contracting out issue and the related problems. President Salazar read a press release from the NALC about contracting out of letter carriers jobs. Membership reviews copy of House Resolution 282 dated March 28, 2007 which states "that it is the sense of the House of Representatives that the USPS should discontinue the practice of contracting out mail delivery services". CSALC President Beaumont urges members to write their senators and congresspersons to support this resolution.

Thank you letter from United Way AFL-CIO for \$100.00 donation from the branch to the spring project was read to the membership.

Committee of President's meeting- President Salazar gives a report on the latest updates from President Young from the COP. Contract issues discussed. Health plan issues discussed. Our contract is going to arbitration. NALC is backing the "Vote by mail" initiative. "Do not mail" list was defeated. Retirees are going to be targeted to pay more for benefits. "Windfall elimination" will not be changed any time soon.

Withholding of assignments- FSS has May 2009 target date for this area. There will be four machines for the district. First they were going to withhold routes in a 100 mile radius, now it's a 50 mile radius. Membership discusses the possible problems with coverages.

Minor adjustments- Problems with MPO in Ventura county. NALC wants eight hour assignments and will work towards getting those assignments.

COMMITTEES

COLCPE- Ernestine Hernandez speaks about the contests for COLCPE. 2/1-6/30 two roundtrip tickets to anywhere in United States, 7/1-11/30 tickets to Superbowl. To be eligible you must either be a first time person signing up for GIMME 5 COLCPE donation, or a current contributor signing up two new contributors to GIMME 5.

Health Benefits- Joe Gutierrez reports on the benefits of belonging to the NALC Health plan. Go to any doctor, no waiting for referrals, plan accepted nationwide, chiropractic care, access to a local health benefit officer.

continued on page 13

Union Meeting

May 15, 2007
Chatsworth

President Salazar called the meeting to order at 7:10PM. Sergeant-at-Arms, Bob Golden led the pledge of allegiance. Roll call of officers was taken. Asking to be excused were Steve Leyton, Steve Dickerson, Joe Gutierrez, Art Hernandez, and Greg Gaddis. Fred Shaw makes a motion to excuse these members, S/C. President Salazar reminds the membership to sign the attendance book and 50/50 raffle tickets are for sale.

President Salazar introduces guests Mireya Ramirez and Luis Villegas from the US Postal Service FCU in San Fernando, Maria Cardoza-Pleasant and associates from Union Plus Mortgage, Joe McDonough and Dan Acosta from Branch 4006-Canoga Park, and Bob Schultz from Brookfield Uniforms.

The membership reviews the minutes from the April 17 meeting in Newbury Park. Fred Shaw makes a motion to accept the minutes as written, S/C.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mireya Rodriguez and Luis Villegas speak to the membership. Benefits of membership are presented.

Checking accounts and various loans are available. Refinancing of auto loans available. Visa credit cards are available at competitive rates.

Joel Lyle from Union Plus Mortgage speaks to the members about Union Plus and the history behind the program. He also informs the members of the current home mortgage options that Union Plus offers.

The Executive Board has a recommendation to co-host with Branch 4006, a Texas Hold'Em tournament to benefit MDA on June 2, 2007. Branch 4006 member Dan Acosta speaks to the membership about the details of the tournament. Sandy Gaunce makes a motion to split the costs and profits (to MDA) of the poker tournament with Branch 4006, S/C.

COMMUNICATIONS

President Salazar reads a letter from the family of carrier Navy Vang of Sylmar. Brother Vang recently passed away and the family is very appreciative of the support from the brothers and sisters of this branch.

The SEIU has sent out a letter to boycott Red Cross blood donation centers. Issues of safety and respect for their employees and donors are of concern. Alternative blood donation centers are provided in tonight's handout.

President Salazar reads a thank you letter from the San Fer-

nando Valley Interfaith Council thanking the letter carriers for all their hard work in the food drive.

Food Drive update was given. With 20 offices reporting there is a total of approximately 221,541 pounds. Looks like there is less than last year. Please send in any pictures from the food drive for the Mailbag News and our website.

Contract update- Richard Bloch was chosen as the neutral arbitrator. NALC will be represented by Bruce Simon. Four weeks of hearings are scheduled. We should hear something around mid to late November.

Contracting out- We were put on notice that Thousand Oaks has an area by CLU that is being contracted out. We are reminded of what happened when the Postal Service contracted out the custodial jobs. The negative impact of contracting out far outweighs the savings that the Postal Service projects. President Salazar reads a letter from President Young to all NALC presidents about contracting out.

Withholdings and FSS- The district plans to eliminate 898 jobs through FSS.

Minor Adjustments- Adjustments are being done in some offices in the San Fernando Valley, but in Oxnard the carriers will be going through route inspections.

COMMITTEES

Recreation- Paulette Dyer reports that the prices are going up \$2.00 for Sea World tickets.

COLCPE- Ernestine Hernandez reports on the contests for those who sign up for COLCPE donations or get others to sign up for COLCPE.

Retirees- Don Minster informs the members that the retiree luncheon will be on May 17 at the Simi Valley Hometown Buffet.

MBA/NSBA- Chris Alessi reports on the old disability income plan which is closed to new enrollment. There are 150 members of this branch on that plan.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS - None

GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION

Retiree Dennis Foley from Fillmore is presented with a watch by President Salazar.

continued on page 13

CHATSWORTH ...

Continued from page 12

The membership reviews the Financial Secretary/Treasurer's report. Yvette Solache makes a motion to accept the report as printed, S/C.

Know your rights- Be careful of what you say. It can and will be used against you. Two employees have recently been placed in an off duty status due to alleged inappropriate remarks about recent school shootings.

Marva Golden makes a motion to adjourn, S/C.

Thank you to Mike Steele for the dinner. Thank you to Bob Schultz of Brookfield for the donation of door prizes.

Larry Orcutt won the 50/50 drawing worth \$23.00. Door prizes won by President Salazar, Sarah Pena, Hal Grunland, Steve Packer, Carmen Lucio, and Chris Alessi. The membership drawing was worth \$1283.50. The name drawn was Joe Slotnick from Woodland Hills. He was not present to win.

Respectfully submitted by Susan Degenhardt, Recording Secretary

NEWBURY PARK...

Continued from page 11

MBA/NSBA- Chris Alessi speaks to the membership about the Single Payment Plan. It is a whole life plan where you pay the premium one time only. Once a member is signed up, it offers an instant cash value, and cannot be canceled without owners consent. Children, grandchildren, and spouses are eligible.

30 day money back guarantee. Rate chart is in brochure.

Retirees- Don Minster announces that the retiree luncheon will be on the third Thursday, the 19th of April.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS - None

GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION

Refer to tonight's handout where the NALC fact sheet explains the Postal Services plans for contracting out of letter carrier jobs.

Know Your Rights

Membership reviews and discusses job postings, 204B's working overtime, removing your name from the overtime desired list, mutual exchanges per EL311, and Branch 2902's T-6 agreement.

Trustees review and approve bill from Sandy Gaunce for \$7.49 for CD envelopes for food drive videos. Marion Walters makes a motion to pay the bill, S/C.

Membership reviews the Treasurer's Report. Sandy Gaunce makes a motion to accept the report as written, S/C.

Marva Golden makes a motion to adjourn, S/C.

Debbie Riggs won the 50/50 drawing for \$22.00.

Bob Golden won the Avenger football tickets.

The membership drawing was for \$1250.50. The name drawn was Christina Reveles from San Fernando. She was not present to win.

Respectfully submitted by Susan Degenhardt, Recording Secretary

UNION YES...

Continued from page 3

Usually these few carriers have attendance problems and often they have an uncanny knack for failing to follow the USPS rules and regulations, sometimes purposely, sometimes not purposely. These few carriers make up a very small percentage of the workforce, which I would estimate to be about 1 to 5 percent.

I believe that other letter carriers see the Union spending a great deal of time helping these few carriers and that is why they form the opinion that the Union serves to only help the very small group that seems to constantly be in trouble with Management.

But the Union does much more than simply defend these few carriers.

The Union also enforces the contract and looks out for the benefit of all carriers, even if it appears that some carriers get much more attention from the Union than others.

I am pleased to say that in my 18 years as a Steward and Officer of the Branch, I have seen many a carrier that is constantly in trouble reform and rehabilitate his or her self and learn to show up for work on time and follow all of the USPS rules and regulations.

It makes me very happy when I see these "frequent flyers" get their shit together and turn it around on the job.

It is important to remember that the Union serves a far greater purpose than to simply protect members of the workforce that have disciplinary problems.

As a Union we work to advance all of our members' interests in respect to wages, benefits and working conditions.

I still like Colin Cowherd's show, but he doesn't know shit about Union's.

Until next time, please forgive some of my above written language and go Dodgers!

In Memoriam

Maurice Day

Retiree- North Hollywood

C. Gonski

Retiree- San Fernando

Michael Stadnik

Retiree- Reseda

James A. Sonsini

Retiree-North Hollywood

RETIREES LUNCH

Where: Hometown Buffet
Vons Center
1855 Cochran Street
Simi Valley

When: Thursday,
July 19, 2007

Time: 11:30am to 12:30pm



Where: Hometown Buffet
Fallbrook Mall
6633 Fallbrook Ave.
West Hills

When: Thursday,
August 16, 2007

Time: 11:30am to 12:30pm



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- Don Minster

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- Chris Alessi

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- Joe Gutierrez

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SGT.-AT-ARMS

- Bob Golden

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Sandy Gaunce
Sonny Castellano

“It is easier to live through someone else than to become complete yourself”

Betty Friedan,

American feminist and author (1921-2006)

SHOP STEWARD LIST

Agoura Hills Chief S.S.	Greg Gaddis
Chatsworth Chief S.S.	Angel Hale
Alternate	Sonny Castellano
Fillmore Chief S.S.	Call Office
Moorpark Chief S.S.	Lori Stewart
North Hollywood Chief S.S.	Mike Steele
Chandler	Mike Steele
Laurel Canyon	Steve Leyton
Studio City	Mike Steele
Valley Village	Mike Steele
Northridge Chief S.S.	Onofre Varela
Shop Steward/ Webmaster	Larry Orcutt
Porter Ranch	Marva Golden
Ojai Chief S.S.	Philip Navarro
Oxnard Chief S.S.	Ernestine Hernandez
Pacoima Chief S.S.	Steve Dickerson
	Art Hernandez
Port Hueneme	Call Office
Reseda Chief S.S.	Mike Longres
San Fernando Chief S.S.	James Perryman
M.C.A.	James Perryman
North Hills	C.C. Flatts
Sylmar / Main Office	Mike Steele
	Yvette Solache
Alternate	Gilbert Leon
Santa Paula Chief S.S.	Laura Walters
Simi Valley Chief S.S.	Sandra Gaunce
Mt. McCoy Station	Sandra Gaunce
Thousand Oaks Chief S.S.	Jim Mette
Newbury Park	Sue Degenhardt
Ventura Chief S.S.	Laura Walters
East Ventura	Laura Walters
Woodland Hills Chief S.S.	Joe Vedder
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RECREATION NEWS

SEA WORLD:

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Child: \$40.00 (Reg. \$47.00)

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Recreation Director
Paulette Dyer

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Union Meeting

DINNER starts at 6 p.m.



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- JUL 17** Regular Branch Meeting 7pm
Union Hall-Chatsworth
Dinner served 6pm
- JUL 19** Retiree Lunch 11:30am
Hometown Buffet-Simi Valley
- AUG 7** Executive Board Meeting 6pm
Executive Council Meeting 7pm
- AUG 16** Retiree Lunch 11:30am
Hometown Buffet-West Hills
- AUG 21** Regular Branch Meeting 7pm
Garden Palm Hotel-Newbury Park
- SEP 3** Labor Day-Holiday 
- SEP 4** Executive Board Meeting 6pm
Executive Council Meeting 7pm
- SEP 9** Branch 2902 Picnic
Vasa Park 11:00am

“An expert is a person who has made all the mistakes that can be made in a very narrow field.”

Niels Bohr, Danish physicist (1885-1962)

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THE Mail Bag NEWS

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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS AFL-CIO

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MEMBER: LOS ANGELES COUNTY FEDERATION OF LABOR, AFL-CIO

MEMBER: TRI-COUNTIES CENTRAL LABOR COUNCIL, AFL-CIO

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GOOD-BYE TO A GOOD FRIEND



ELECTION NOTICE

This is official notice to all members of Branch 2902 that nominations for convention delegates for both state and national conventions will be accepted at the October 16, 2007 meeting beginning at 7:00 p.m. at the Palm Garden Hotel, 495 N. Ventu Park Rd. Newbury Park, and at the November 20, 2007 meeting beginning at 7:00 p.m. at the Union Hall, 21540 Prairie St., Ste. C, Chatsworth. The number of convention delegates and compensation will be decided at the October meeting prior to nominations. All nominations must be accepted verbally or in writing at the nominating meetings, or they must be received in writing not later than seven calendar days after the close of nominations. Failure to accept nominations as stated will result in automatic decline of the nomination. The president,

executive vice president, senior vice president, vice president, recording secretary and treasurer-financial secretary will be convention delegates by virtue of their office. Voting will be done by secret ballot at the December 18, 2007 meeting. Members may make written requests for absentee ballots to: Election Committee, 21540 Prairie St. Ste. C Chatsworth, CA 91311. Requests for absentee ballot must be received no later than December 4, 2007. Completed ballots must be received at the branch office no later than 5:00PM on the day of the election per Article XI of the branch by-laws. Address changes must be sent in as soon as possible to ensure prompt receipt of a ballot.

Hello To A New Contract

By: Frank Salazar, President



As many of you were surprised to hear, our President Emeritus, Beverly Mattes suddenly passed away this last June 19th, from complications of diabetes. Bev, "The Boss" as I affectionately called her, was a good and able Union Representative. Bev took over leadership of the branch at a very difficult time. She took over after our founding President, John Gaunce became gravely ill. The

1994-1998 National Agreement had just been settled and we were entering into local negotiations with the 17 installations we represent. Bev did a great job meeting the challenges, carrying us through, and continuing in the traditions of Branch 2902.

Bev gave me the opportunity to become a full-time officer during President Gaunce's illness and she kept me on after his death. Bev gave me the freedom and flexibility to represent our membership in a way in which I thought we could apply the maximum amount of pressure for the maximum amount of return. I hope to carry on in that same vein with those officers I work with.

I worked with Bev for many years, and I came to respect her character, loyalty to friends and family, honesty, and transparency. Bev loved the Branch and the NALC. Bev was a giver, a helper, a friend, a confidant, and many other things to many in our membership. I have already said my peace about her at her memorial service, and what I have left to say is that we loved the Lady and we will miss her very much. Rest in Peace Beverly. (Please see the other articles in this newsletter for more about Bev.)

Tentative Agreement on the Table

Well, well, well, looks like a little political pressure in the right places at the right times can really make things happen. The Postal Service was all set on engaging the NALC in arbitration over the issue of contracting out. However, strategic picketing by the NALC on contracting out, the introduction of H. Res. 282 by Congressman Albio Sires (D-NJ), and the introduction of the Mail Delivery Protection Act of 2007 by Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) not to mention the numerous calls and letters to Senators and Congress people by e-activists and family members brought the Postal Service back to the table. The highlights of the tentative agreement are as follows:

The length of the proposed contract will be 5 years.

General Wage Increases as follows:

November 25, 2006	1.40% (retroactive)
November 24, 2007	1.80%
November 22, 2008	1.90%
November 21, 2009	1.90%
November 20, 2010	1.85%

Once the contract is ratified, the Postal Service will begin a full back-pay calculation covering hours worked since November 25, 2006. This may take some time, so when these checks will arrive is unknown at this time. These pay increases will raise the average basic salary of city letter carriers by \$4,200 over the life of the contract.

COLA Cash

There will be 9 COLA's over the lifetime of the agreement. The current COLA formula remains the same. There will be a one-time lump sum of \$686 representing the time between July 2006 and May 2007. The lump sum payment will be paid as soon as possible after ratification of the agreement. However, the payment will not become a part of the basic pay. So, if you plan on retiring hold-off for a little while. "Only city carriers in a pay status during the pay period immediately prior to the effective date of the payment will receive the cash payment." Carriers who have separated or retired since November 2006 will be eligible up and until the day they retired.

Health Benefits

We still have them and we still have a choice of plans, although in time our health benefits will be a wee bit more expensive. Currently, the Postal Service pays 85% of the FEHBP average premium. If the tentative agreement is ratified the employer share would remain at 85% in 2007 and 2008, then drop to 83% in 2009, 82% in 2010, 81% in 2011, dropping to 80% in 2012. Compared to other Federal agencies that only have 72% of their health benefits paid, we are still ahead of the game. Using averages, an NALC member currently pays about \$67 per pay period for family coverage and \$28 per pay period for individual coverage. If healthcare premiums and costs remain constant, by 2012 a family will be paying \$21.84 a pay period more and an individual will be paying \$9.23 more.

Subcontracting Protections

There will be no contracting out of existing work. A Memorandum of Understanding prohibits the contracting out of all existing city carrier work for the life of the agree-

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Under proposed terms, the average letter carrier salary would increase \$4,200 over the life of the contract solely from general wage increases. This chart

outlines the basic wage increases provided under the proposed contract for both regular city carriers (Grade CC-1) and city carrier-technicians (Grade CC-2).

2006-2011 National Agreement

General Wage Increases

CITY CARRIER GRADE 1

Step	Salary as of 11/20/06	11/25/06 <u>1.4% Inc</u>	11/24/07 <u>1.8% Inc</u>	11/22/08 <u>1.9% Inc</u>	11/21/09 <u>1.9% Inc</u>	11/20/10 <u>1.85% Inc</u>	Total Increase
A	\$37,995	\$532	\$684	\$722	\$722	\$703	\$3,363
B	\$41,445	\$580	\$746	\$787	\$787	\$767	\$3,667
C	\$42,782	\$599	\$770	\$813	\$813	\$791	\$3,786
D	\$45,344	\$635	\$816	\$862	\$862	\$839	\$4,014
E	\$45,698	\$640	\$823	\$868	\$868	\$845	\$4,044
F	\$46,052	\$645	\$829	\$875	\$875	\$852	\$4,076
G	\$46,400	\$650	\$835	\$882	\$882	\$858	\$4,107
H	\$46,753	\$655	\$842	\$888	\$888	\$865	\$4,138
I	\$47,107	\$659	\$848	\$895	\$895	\$871	\$4,168
J*	\$47,455	\$664	\$854	\$902	\$902	\$878	\$4,200
K	\$47,809	\$669	\$861	\$908	\$908	\$884	\$4,230
L	\$48,160	\$674	\$867	\$915	\$915	\$891	\$4,262
M	\$48,514	\$679	\$873	\$922	\$922	\$898	\$4,294
N	\$48,868	\$684	\$880	\$928	\$928	\$904	\$4,324
O	\$49,218	\$689	\$886	\$935	\$935	\$911	\$4,356

* Step J used to represent "Average Letter Carrier" - see chart at bottom.

CITY CARRIER GRADE 2

Step	Salary as of 11/20/06	11/25/06 <u>1.4% Inc</u>	11/24/07 <u>1.8% Inc</u>	11/22/08 <u>1.9% Inc</u>	11/21/09 <u>1.9% Inc</u>	11/20/10 <u>1.85% Inc</u>	Total Increase
A	\$39,758	\$557	\$716	\$755	\$755	\$736	\$3,519
B	\$43,426	\$608	\$782	\$825	\$825	\$803	\$3,843
C	\$43,510	\$609	\$783	\$827	\$827	\$805	\$3,851
D	\$46,134	\$646	\$830	\$877	\$877	\$853	\$4,083
E	\$46,515	\$651	\$837	\$884	\$884	\$861	\$4,117
F	\$46,898	\$657	\$844	\$891	\$891	\$868	\$4,151
G	\$47,275	\$662	\$851	\$898	\$898	\$875	\$4,184
H	\$47,654	\$667	\$858	\$905	\$905	\$882	\$4,217
I	\$48,037	\$673	\$865	\$913	\$913	\$889	\$4,253
J	\$48,408	\$678	\$871	\$920	\$920	\$896	\$4,285
K	\$48,792	\$683	\$878	\$927	\$927	\$903	\$4,318
L	\$49,174	\$688	\$885	\$934	\$934	\$910	\$4,351
M	\$49,550	\$694	\$892	\$941	\$941	\$917	\$4,385
N	\$49,938	\$699	\$899	\$949	\$949	\$924	\$4,420
O	\$50,317	\$704	\$906	\$956	\$956	\$931	\$4,453

Average Wage Increases and Estimated COLAs

Date	Type of Increase*	Average Amount**	Average Per Pay Period
Nov. 25, 2006	General wage increase: 1.4%	\$664	\$25.54
To be announced	Cash payment	\$686	N/A
Sept. 2007	COLA (May-July 2007)	\$114	\$4.38
Nov. 24, 2007	General wage increase: 1.8%	\$854	\$32.85
March 2008	COLA	\$347	\$13.35
Sept. 2008	COLA	\$349	\$13.42
Nov. 22, 2008	General wage increase: 1.9%	\$902	\$34.69
March 2009	COLA	\$354	\$13.62
Sept. 2009	COLA	\$358	\$13.77
Nov. 21, 2009	General wage increase: 1.9%	\$902	\$34.69
March 2010	COLA	\$362	\$13.92
Sept. 2010	COLA	\$366	\$14.08
Nov. 20, 2010	General wage increase: 1.85%	\$878	\$33.77
March 2011	COLA	\$370	\$14.23
Sept. 2011	COLA	\$372	\$14.31
Total During Contract (Exlc. Cash Pymt.)		\$7,192	\$276.62

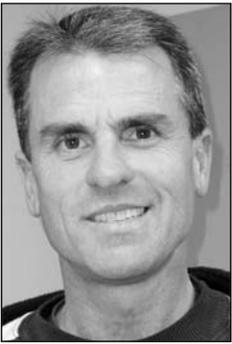
* Value of COLAs depend on changes in the level of the Consumer Price Index; figures shown above are based on CPI increases of 2.2 percent annually (Congressional Budget Office forecast).

** Dollar amounts and percentages shown represent those for CC Grade 1, Step J.

The following are Essays, personal tributes and just short thoughts about President Emeritus Beverly Mattes that we as a Branch have chosen to share with each other and anyone else who has felt the loss that we have since the passing of our beloved past President.

FAREWELL TO A GREAT LEADER AND FRIEND

By: Ray Hill, Executive Vice-President



In the last twelve months, three great human beings that were near and dear to me have died.

On June 10, 2006 my wife's grandmother died five days before her 93rd birthday.

On April 6, 2007 my father died about two weeks after his 80th birthday.

To complete this sad trilogy of death, Branch 2902 President Emeritus Bev Mattes passed away on June 19, 2007.

When Bev died, at the far too young age of 57, the NALC lost one of its truly great leaders.

Those of us who have knowledge of the inner workings of Branch 2902 know how important and valuable Bev was to the Branch and the membership that she represented for many years.

I was talking to our Vice President, Paul Drapkin, after Bev died and he described his involvement with the Union to me.

Paul told me that another one of our great and late past Presidents, Jon Gaunce, inspired him to become a steward. However, Paul told me that it was Bev Mattes that had mentored him as he progressed in his career as a Union activist.

Likewise, it was Jon Gaunce who inspired me to become involved with the Union.

Back in the day, Jon used to kick some serious ass when he represented Branch 2902 in the grievance procedure. I was so impressed by the way he went about his business that when North Hollywood steward Roger Nevrel

left the USPS in 1990, I decided to attempt to take his place.

I remember asking Jon during a station visit what I would have to do to become a steward. He told me to start coming to the monthly steward meetings in order to gain some knowledge and to demonstrate my commitment to the job.

Shortly thereafter Jon certified me as a Branch 2902 steward and 17 years later I'm still here.

Although it was Jon Gaunce that got me interested in the Union, like Paul Drapkin it was Bev Mattes that truly mentored me throughout my Union career.

When I started as a steward in 1990, the North Hollywood Postal Installation was neck deep in the bull-shit being spread by Postmaster Dale Herbert and his band of evil underlings.

At the time, the Dale Herbert regime was getting all that they could handle from Jon Gaunce and Branch 2902.

Back then, the Herbert crew took a twisted, sick delight in just plain screwing with their craft employees, carrier and clerk alike.

That Management crew also enjoyed flagrantly violating the National Agreement but they were getting their collective asses kicked by Jon, Bev and the NALC in the grievance procedure.

During my first few steward years I was filing well over 200 grievances a year in my station alone.

These were not easy grievances and many of them involved tough, tough issues that would have been difficult for a veteran steward to deal with, let alone a rookie like myself.

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More than Just the President

By: Paul Drapkin, Vice President



In our lives we meet lots of people. Sometimes we make a connection, sometimes we don't. On June 19th we lost someone with whom I had a definite connection. Yes, she was the President of Tri-Valley Branch 2902 for most of the time that I have been a Steward, and therefore in most respects my boss as a union activist. But she was much more than that. She also became my friend... my mentor.

Bev was the one I went to when I could not figure it out, where to turn, where to look. We had a connection and she always made me feel welcome. Welcome to call her. Welcome into her office. Welcome into her home. Welcome into her world. She was truly one of the most giving people I have known. She gave of herself to her family even when most would not have been able to continue with the tribulations that were evident. She gave to her union all the time and energy that anyone could ask for. She gave to all of us who were lucky enough to have studied under her, all the knowledge and encouragement that we could soak up. But most of all she gave her heart. I will always feel very fortunate that I was able to be included in an ever so fractional way as part of her life. I know that she will always be included in my memory as a very large part of mine.

I have said on many occasions that the person who inspired me to become a union Steward was Jon Gaunce. He was far and away the father of Branch 2902 as we know it today. Unfortunately Jon passed away just a few years after I became a steward. However the mother of branch 2902 was Bev. She picked up where Jon left off, and did it with grace, and skill and for those of us who were close to her, she did it with love. Bev loved being a union activist. She loved the interaction with both sides. Naturally she sided with the union member most of the time, however she was always fair. She was not afraid to recognize when one of our members was out of line and say so, but she always did it with love.

Cicero once said, "The life given us by nature is short; but the memory of a well-spent life is eternal." I can not think of a better way to sum up Bev's life, for she truly was here on this planet with us for only a short time... she went way too early. But the memory of her well-spent life will live on in the hearts and minds of those of us who knew her for eternity.

TENATIVE NEW CONTRACT

As I am sure you all have heard, pending ratification by the members of this union, it appears that we will soon have a new contract. I could easily reiterate all the details of terms of the new contract, however by now I am sure that most of you have read or heard most of the important details. I for one was very pleased to see that the parties involved were able to reach an agreement without having to resort to the arbitration process.

On the surface most of us will see the pay raises and the COLA's and be happy with that part of the agreement, nothing wrong with that. For me the most important part was the agreement that appears to eliminate management's ability to contract out our *existing* routes. The proposed contract includes new protections against contracting out city carrier work. "These new protections, the first of their kind since the 1973 National Agreement, are contained in two new Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs). One prohibits outsourcing of any **existing** city delivery services **during the term of the contract** and the other establishes a National Joint Committee on subcontracting that will seek to "develop a meaningful evolutionary approach to the issue of subcontracting" to address the outsourcing of **new** delivery points. As the Committee does its work, there will be a six-month moratorium on "any new subcontracting in offices in which city letter carriers are currently employed."

My only reservation on this subject is the part that talks about "during the term of the contract". I hope that the parties will be able to work out a permanent resolution to the contracting out of city carrier routes. Maybe the part about "seeking to develop a meaningful evolutionary approach to the issue of subcontracting" is what is meant by that. I suppose that the devil will lie in the details. I don't know about you but I still have a long way to go before I can consider retirement and I sure do not want to have to go through this every 4 or 5 years when it comes time to negotiate the contract.

"I contend that for a nation to try to tax itself into prosperity is like a man standing in a bucket and trying to lift himself up by the handle".

-Winston Churchill

My Friend, My Mentor

By: Susan Degenhardt, Recording Secretary



It has been over a month now since she left us to fend for ourselves. It is so hard to believe that I cannot just pick up the phone and call her to chat or ask a question. "Polly, put the kettle on" was one of our favorite sayings when one of us needed to have a long face to face conversation. The coffeepot would be readied and the calendar for the evening would be cleared without hesitation.

She made herself so accessible to all who needed her. Her time was your time. She would always find some time to help others. She handled OWCP cases for the branch that took many, many hours to detangle and organize. As a steward I would always refer the member with OWCP questions to Bev. The branch will feel the loss for many years to come.

She had an amazing memory. She was great at remembering actors, lines and songs from classic movies and would use some of these to interject humor into a tense situation or to clarify a point she wanted to make. Her wonderful sense of humor always prevailed in even the most difficult of times. If she heard a good joke she wanted to share it with everyone. I miss laughing along with her.

She loved this Union and the members she represented. To her they were indeed her "brothers and sisters". The passion she had for fighting against the wrongs committed against carriers was fierce. Her commitment was unwaver-

Thoughts of Bev

By Fred Fred Shaw, Retiree

Bev used to go out of her way to say hi and ask how work was going whenever she came into the Woodland Hills P.O. It was nice to have a union president that knew you by name.

She had very big shoes to fill when Jon passed away and she did it well, with determination and ability.

Bev was a credit to the NALC and a powerful advocate for the carriers of branch 2902.

I will miss her.

ing. Many, many brothers and sisters of this branch can, and hopefully did, thank Bev for her hard work and perseverance in saving their jobs.

Most members and many of the branches throughout the nation remember when she took over the leadership of this branch when Brother Jon passed. It was a very difficult time and she stepped up and did the branch and Brother Jon proud. She continued to work for the branch even when her own health was failing, up until just a few days before she passed away. What an amazing woman she was.

Her keen sense of right and wrong extended into her private life too. She once got a ticket for turning left from an outside lane of a narrow street onto a busy boulevard. This was near the Woodland Hills Post Office. At the time there was only one left hand turn lane and traffic would always be backed up. Anyways, she made the turn and of course, there was a cop who gave her a ticket for the illegal turn. She made a stink about it and before long, there were two turn lanes. She did have to pay the fine, but the wrong had been righted. I take that route to drive to the union office and think of her everytime I make that now legal turn from the outside lane.

We were the closest of friends for 27 years. Through divorces, deaths, injuries, weddings, children, and grandchildren, the kind of friend that you can call in the middle of the night or early in the morning. There are only a handful of these friends that you have in your life. I was truly blessed to have her as one of my friends.

I miss her very much and think of her everyday and when it is my turn to pass on, I know I will hear her say, "Polly, put the kettle on".



THE PASSING OF A DEAR FRIEND

By: **Greg A. Gaddis, Agoura Hills Chief Shop Steward**



Hello from Agoura Hills, the first part of my article is dedicated to President Emeritus Beverly Mattes. I want to express my deepest sympathy to the Mattes family and friends upon the passing of Bev. The words teacher, friend, councilor, leader, compassionate, strong, humorous, and understanding are just a few heart felt expressions of who Bev was to me. I know that without Bev, I probably would not be

a Union Steward today. To express who I am today as a Steward, is because of Bev is an understatement! Bev mentored me to become not just a good Shop Steward, but to become a good human being in my dealings with management and the craft. I have learned so much from my short time with Bev. I know I can turn within myself when times are stressful and remember what Bev has instilled in me, and use the tools and wisdom to get through the "hard times". I will truly miss you dear friend...

Frustration in Agoura

The next part of my article is about the frustrating things that have happened in Agoura. It seems I was just writing about route adjustments and the monetary settlement that occurred recently. And it's now back to square one. The carriers received route adjustments and we picked up new routes. Life seemed too good to be true, and it was. I received notice from President Frank Salazar that the Agoura office will have full route inspections in September. Yes, we will be going back to the days of botched inspections and numerous grievances and even lower moral as a result of inspections.

All of the route adjustments, case and label changes, scheme changes, and address changes to the mailers were all for nothing! I have not been told but my guess is that because of the low volume, management figures they might be able to reduce routes through the inspections. It just does not make sense that after all the time and MONEY spent, and only because an arbitrator had to force them to adjust routes, that now it all may be changed again. I know what you are all saying right now, "When does the Postal Service have to make sense?"

If it is going to happen, I will make sure management follows the M-39 chapter 2. My advice to all the regular carriers is, "go by the book". Do your routes like the professionals you are everyday. Do not give management any reason to deduct time from your inspection. Just show them the time it takes to do your route is the time it takes and let the "chips fall" where they may. I will file grievances for any and

all inspection violations that occur. Until then, continue to do your routes, during office work and street work, take your breaks including lunch. If you do the route properly, management will not be able to deduct time for any time wasting practices. Just remember that management will be watching you a lot more now. To make sure you are doing everything right, before the week of inspections.

On a last note I just want to say for the record. I wish management would treat everyone equitably and fairly. I know first hand that is not the case. When fact-findings are conducted asking questions about a few pieces of mail left at the case and about resume vacation mail. I know management is not treating everyone equitably. On any given day there could be mail left at a carriers case, a vacation hold is not resumed on the day it is supposed to be, forwards are not being posted the day it is received, accountable mail is not cleared, etc. To single out one carrier for minor **alleged** mistakes and ignoring others, or to take what others say and not do a though investigation before conducting a fact-finding is creating a stressful and hostile environment. To those who may fall under the microscope, just continue to do your job in spite of management's nit-picking tactics. Stay well, until next time.



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My Buddy Bev

By: Joe Vedder, Woodland Hills Chief Shop Steward



Jeez, I miss her. I still can't think of her in the past tense. I find thoughts like, "I need to speak to Bev about this OWCP case", or, "I haven't talked to Bev or gotten a hug from her in quite awhile", wandering into my head before reality instantaneously creeps in and tells me that I'll won't ever be able to do that with her again. Most of us are far more replaceable than we'd like to admit, but not Bev. She is irreplaceable.

Not just for her knowledge about everything postal, or her expertise in the areas of worker's compensation, the contract or labor relations, but because she was such a wonderful human being. I hope that this doesn't come off like some trite eulogy, because it's coming from deep within my heart and soul. My life is a better place for having known Beverly Mattes. She was smart, funny, articulate, witty and so tirelessly giving of herself. Any one of these admirable qualities would make for an interesting person. But, Bev had them all and many more. She could be tough, when she had to be. I've seen her rip into a postmaster, using language that would make your ears bleed. But, she preferred to be loving and maternal. I've also seen her take a weeping postmaster into her arms and comfort them until their sobbing stopped. She could make a postal manager or carrier cringe and cry for their mommies as she relentlessly and justifiably chastised them. A few minutes later, she had those same people laughing so hard that they couldn't catch their breath and tears were streaming down their cheeks.

I was raised, as a shop steward, under the late, great Jon Gaunce's no nonsense take-no-prisoners approach to dealing with management. Bev's softer touch didn't always sit well with me, in the beginning of her 2902 presidency. If a manager screwed up, I wanted to crucify them, just like they did to their carriers when the opportunity presented itself. Like the time I filed a grievance against a postmaster for intentionally lying and falsifying his response to a carrier's injury. My case was undeniably solid and my evidence was damning. The ELM said that such an offense was punishable by a several thousand dollar fine and many months in prison. So that's what I asked for in my grievance. If I'd had my way, by the time that I was through with that postmaster, he'd be someone's bitch in San Quentin. But, Bev let the postmaster off with a slap on the wrist and made him re-write his injury report so that it correctly favored the injured carrier. I was infuriated. Bev told me that sometimes lenience was occasionally a remedy too. Why use a sledge hammer on the head when a tweak of the nose would

accomplish the same thing? That hard ass postmaster was never a problem, in Woodland Hills, again. Bev could be a postal manager's worst nightmare, when that approach was required. But, she'd rather be the voice of reason and motherly moderation and expected management to show the same restraint towards her legion of unionized carriers as well.

Back when Bev used to do all of Woodland Hills / Calabasas' step two and formal A grievances, I would often personally drive to the union hall after work to slip our grievances through the mail slot in the door. It was usually very late and everyone who worked at the Prairie Street office would have already locked up the place and gone home hours before. But, sometimes, I'd arrive and find the light in Bev's office still burning. She was still writing grievances and letters. So I'd walk in, never intending to do more than just say "hi", drop off the grievances and go home. But, often times, I'd sit down in front of her desk and we'd just talk.....and talk, and talk and talk for hours. Shop talk would evolve into such *minor* subjects as God, life and the meaning of it all. Sometimes we'd be real serious and sometimes we'd laugh so hard that I would half expect someone in a building down the street to start banging on the window and yell at us to shut up. After solving all of the world's problems, and a few of our own, we'd call it a night and go our separate ways.

When I'm old and senile and can't recall where the bathroom is, I will still remember Bev and miss her. Bev's life wasn't nearly long enough, but it was well lived. She is on a very short list of great people whom I have had the pleasure to know. If there's a heaven, Bev's there. The organized multitude of saints are well represented by Bev, Jon, Joe Hill, Samuel Gompers and many of labor's late leaders. Sorry Teamsters, I don't think that Jimmy Hoffa made it through the pearly gates.

Touching on the Tentative Agreement

Just because we didn't get screwed by Postal management as badly as we could have, doesn't mean that we got a good deal with the tentative National Agreement. We can live with it. Just like we can live with only one leg, or one arm or even one lung. We can survive; we're just not very happy or comfortable with it. But if I had my druthers, I'd prefer the complete package. Two legs, arms and lungs and a hard earned, well deserved GOOD contract. I would have liked to see us get a lot more money than the other crafts, only because we work harder than they do under far more adverse conditions. A definitive, long term settlement should have been reached concerning Article 32. It's only our livelihoods at stake.

The Bev I Knew and Will Sorely Miss

By: Ernestine Hernandez, Oxnard Chief Shop Steward



I had no idea how much this woman would impact my life. Beverly Mattes, our Union Branch President, my mentor, my supporter, and my very good friend.

I had not meant to become a union steward when I went to my first union meeting, but immediately became hooked on the strength and unity in the room commanded by Bev. There was no doubt she knew her stuff. And what got to me was that she was not afraid to share that knowledge with everyone in the room and make them feel like they could make a difference too.

I had been working for the Postal Service for 14 years and never realized how hard others were working to protect our interests. How they were making themselves available so we could have a voice in how we were being treated by our managers. Up until then, I had always thought I had no say in how I was treated by management. That my rights were always going to be at the whim of my immediate supervisors.

But then I was led into this new concept (to me anyway) that I had a right to choose to stay on a route I had opted or bid on. That management did not have the right to deny me, or anybody else that right. That I and everyone else had the right to be treated with dignity and respect, and thankfully, that I could earn as much as everyone around me, and enjoy the same benefits.

Bev communicated this to everyone in the meeting and encouraged comments from the stewards in attendance about how they were making this work in their offices.

I felt this was what was lacking in our offices (Main & Saviers Station). I decided to get more involved. I had been hearing too much groaning in our office to continue to sit back and do nothing. So, I asked Bev what I needed to do to become a steward.

I'm not ashamed to say that Bev looked at me very skeptically. I would have too. I know I didn't look as if I could, or would want to, handle the responsibility. But there was something about not having to be bullied at work that caught my attention. It seemed to light a fire in me that all but consumed me. Bev seemed to watch me soak it all in, with wonder. I'm sure she must have felt it wouldn't last. But for some reason, it did.

I was impatient to put some of this new found knowledge into practice, but Bev told me to be patient. That I was required to complete at least six months of training, and then become certified, although I had already been voted in as a steward for our office.

Finally, that day came. I felt confident, but did not realize how it would be to actually come face to face with a supervisor (Ric Davis) and tell him that what he was doing was wrong. To say the least, he was surprised and tried to squash my confidence then and there. It didn't work, because I had Bev and all the other Union officers and stewards to back me up, plus a very strong contract to boot. I have since used that boot a lot!

Bev encouraged me with words and by her strong example. She let me ask her numerous questions and was a non-stop source of advice. She was not one to tolerate fools, but never made me feel like one. I think she was proud of me. Her unexpected protégé. She introduced me to many people including Vince Sombrotto our former National President, and Bill Young our current National President. I felt honored to be included as a member, and was treated as a valued asset, which seemed pretty amazing, compared to how we are viewed as just a body at work.

It broke my heart to see Bev being ravaged by her illness. She did not like having to be bothered with taking care of herself, but because of that, it overtook her to the point of not letting her get around by herself. Luckily, she allowed me to bring my daughter Cindy to assist her at home, where she was confined. They got along great. Cindy helped her get out and around and really brought her spirits up, although she was still in a tremendous amount of pain.

Bev told me I had brought her an angel, and it made me happy I could do that small thing for her, because to the end, she never stopped helping me. She had always been my angel.

“Show me a man who claims he is objective and I'll show you a man with illusions”

*Henry R. Luce,
American magazine publisher
(1898-1967)*

She Did It Her Way

By: Marva Golden, Assistant Health Benefits Representative

They call it the silent killer. We know it as diabetes. Often it strikes without any warning.

I remember how I found out I had diabetes. I also remember when Bev found out she also had diabetes. One day while visiting Bev at the union hall she was talking about some of the things she was feeling and how tired she was of them. I told Bev that I was experiencing those things and found out that I was diabetic. I asked Bev to let me test her with my glucose meter. She didn't like the needles but she let me test her. Her blood glucose was extremely high. I suggested she check with her doctor. She did and found out that she also had diabetes.

After finding out she was diabetic we talked more, compared more and kept an eye on each other. Bev did not like the new changes in her lifestyle. I tried to tell her that she would get used to the changes but I guess she really couldn't.

Bev was a beautiful person and we loved her. She was also full of love. It was in her voice, in her mannerism and in her heart. If you ask me how long I knew Bev I could not tell you. She was the kind of person that made you feel as though you had known her forever. I thought of her as family. Bev had a big heart and tried to help everyone, but she forgot to help herself.

Bev spent a lot of her after hour time helping grievants and answering questions from her shop stewards. I know because I called her many nights for help with grievances. She spent so much time helping others she forgot to take care of herself. I think she tried but not enough. If anyone knows how hard it is it is me.

It seems like forever that Bev has tried to get me to come to her house for lunch and to swim. I kept putting the visit off. Recently I called to check on her and she asked me when I was coming out there for lunch. I promised her I would come out the following Thursday. I told Bev that neither of us could do any cooking so I offered to pick up something for lunch. Bev would not hear of it, she had already made plans. That Thursday I wanted to go but was not feeling up to it. Something told me to go anyway and I am so glad I did. That was the last time I talked to her. Approximately 2-2-1/2 weeks later my friend was gone. That visit was our goodbye. When the visit ended we hugged and said we loved each other. We also took a picture together. During the visit we tried to keep it upbeat but Bev was tired and sad. I know she was having pain. She had to do many things that were making her unhap-

py. Some of those things she was doing reluctantly and some she had decided she would not do at all. It was the health decisions that she refused to deal with.

I understand totally how Bev felt. To go from independent to dependent is very hard to accept. Bev's health was deteriorating and she had decisions to make and options (that weren't really options). She had to weigh the quantity of life against the quality of life. Bev made that decision and I'm sure it was hard. Bev was a lot stronger than she thought.

We all loved Bev and will miss her sorely. Bev will always be in my heart and I will remember her with love and laughter. I will remember her amazing strength because "she did it her way". I would like to dedicate this Emily Dickenson poem to the memory of Bev.

If anybody's friend be dead,
It's the sharpest of the theme
The thinking how they walked alive, —
At such and such a time

Their costume, of a Sunday,
Some manner of the hair, —
A prank nobody knew but them,
Lost, in the Sepulcher. —

How warm, they were, on such a day:
You almost feel the date, —
So short way off it seems-;
And now- They're centuries from that. —

How pleased they were, at what you said; —
You try to touch the smile,
And dip your fingers in the frost; —
When was it, Can you tell,

You asked the Company to tea,
Acquaintance, just a few,
And chatted close with the grand thing
That don't remember you?

Past Bows, and Invitations,
Past Interview, and vow,
Past what Ourselves can estimate,
That makes the quick of Woe!

A Tribute to Bev

By: Sandy Gaunce, Simi Valley Chief Shop Steward



Bev was a remarkable woman. There are very few people capable of taking over the responsibilities of a union president with a branch as large as ours, especially in a time of grief, shock, turmoil and unfinished business. It was not a smooth and planned transition but an emergency situation. Even though Bev was going through her own sense of loss with Jon's death, she picked up the pieces,

accepted the responsibility, went forward and did a damn good job.

Although it was not planned, was she unprepared? I think not. She was experienced, well trained and most importantly she had the makings of a true leader. She was not afraid to stand up to anyone. She never had a problem getting in the face of a Manager, Postmaster or District Managers when she believed a carrier was harmed. She was strong, dedicated and vigilant. One carrier in Simi said she always reminded him of a modern day freedom fighter. Bev felt the punishment should fit the crime and she called it the way she saw it even if it meant telling a Steward or Carrier they were wrong. I respected Bev for that.

Outside of work Bev was my friend. We became very close through the years. I will miss the visits at the Union Hall, home, training and conventions, our phone conversations and Millie's tortilla soup on some Tuesday nights after meetings. Yes, Bev was tough but those of us who were fortunate to have known her well saw her soft and compassionate side. I am proud to call her my friend. She was always there for me and anyone else who needed her.

When Bev knew her health was failing she gracefully stepped aside and passed the torch on to Frank. Many were sad to see her go, but Bev knew best. Again I respected her for that.

After Bev gave up the position of branch President, she still worked until her last few days here on earth. She couldn't drive and couldn't walk very well. From her home she met on Formal A grievances. She was our OWCP person and more. She was available 24/7 when any one of us needed advice.

In closing I would like to quote Bev, in Jon's passing she said: "I know we will see each other again and we will talk

for hours as we did before." Well, I hope Bev found Jon and they are talking for hours as she said they would. I also hope she knew how much she was loved and appreciated.

My sincere condolences and prayers go out to her grandchildren, Sierra and Christopher, who Bev held closest to her heart, her children, the rest of her family and her best friend Sue Degenhardt.

Bev, may the Lord keep you in his care.
The struggle continues...



Saying Goodbye to a Great Union Sister

By: Chris Alessi, MBA/NSBA Rep.



As I sit here writing this article it is so hard to believe that our great union sister Bev Mattes is gone. It's been almost two months and it still feels to me that she is still with us.

Bev has always been a very strong force for our branch, with great leadership and integrity. In 1996 when our former president Jon Gaunce passed on, Bev had very big shoes to fill, and she just

stepped right up to the plate and did a tremendous job in taking over the presidency. She fought hard for all letter carriers of branch 2902 and for our contractual rights and never backed down. Bev also stayed current on important legislative issues that were very important to letter carriers and to the betterment of the Postal Service, along with many educational sessions for new carriers and stewards.

At our national conventions, Bev was always well prepared on all the key issues that needed to be addressed

on the convention floor, she gave the delegates much important information and debates with the strategies on the important resolutions that needed to be voted on. Branch 2902 can be very proud of the great leadership that will always be instilled in us because of a great woman like Bev Mattes.

Just as much time and effort that went into keeping our branch strong and together Bev had the enormous job in her private life raising and taking care of her two grandchildren Sierra and Christopher who she loved very much and were a huge part of her life. Yes, our great union sister had a very big heart that was always considerate and caring, and she will never be forgotten. I will miss you very much Bev.

In closing I would like to send my deepest condolences to all the family, friends, and the brothers and sisters of Br.2902 for your loss and may our good lord keep you strong and give you peace and comfort during this time.

God Bless you, in solidarity always, Chris

FAREWELL TO A GREAT LEADER...

Continued from page 4

I'm not talking about such things as simple Article 8 grievances here.

No, I'm talking about some very complex grievances that dealt with extremely unprofessional, bullying behavior from Boss Man Herbert and his staff.

As I was quickly shoved into the deep end of the grievance procedure, I had about a zillion questions that I needed to be answered.

And who do you think it was that invariably answered every single one of the annoying questions that I had? That's right, it was Bev Mattes.

Bev patiently walked me, baby step by baby step, through the most difficult grievances that I filed during those hellish early years as we fought the good fight against the Dale Herbert regime and the forces of evil.

Bev spent many, many hours helping me back in those days.

Whether she was on the clock or off the clock, Bev was always available to help me.

She spent lots of nights, at home, talking to me on the telephone about those complex grievances and the proper way to investigate, develop and argue them with Management.

You can believe me when I tell you that she definitely had the patience of a saint and is deserving of canonization.

Bev was as smart as they come; with great knowledge of our contract she had a way of explaining complex things so that they made absolutely perfect sense to me.

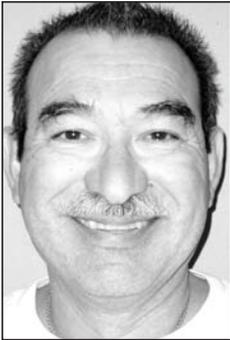
Having knowledge is one thing; being able to share that knowledge with others so that they too "get it" is something else. Bev was able to do just that as well as anyone that I have ever known. She was a damned good teacher.

In 1995, Jon Gaunce became gravely ill and Bev stepped in and took over the duties of Branch President. Jon eventually died on April 10, 1996, also at a far too young age.

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Fondest Farewell to Bev

By: Joe Gutierrez, Health Benefits Representative



Greetings Everyone, I want to begin by sending my personal condolences to the family of Bev Mattes. As you are all aware by now, Bev passed away in June. Our union has lost a great friend, leader and a valuable asset. Her presence and knowledge will be sorely missed.

Bev had a lot to do with me staying involved in the union. At times I wondered what I was doing and where I was going. I often asked why I should stay involved when we are so often under appreciated for what we do. Jon Gaunce, and later Bev Mattes would step in and help explain what I was doing and how important it was to the membership. Each one would explain what it meant to be a union official and why the membership needed us. I would listen to them and come away feeling a lot better about what I was doing.

Even in retirement, Bev was always there to answer questions. She will be missed by all. Thanks Bev for guiding me in the right direction.

FAREWELL TO A GREAT LEADER...

Continued from page 12

After Jon's death, Bev continued to run the Branch and was officially elected as our President for the term beginning in January of 1997. Jon Gaunce was idolized by the membership and following him as Branch President was an extremely difficult, often thankless, undertaking and Bev performed admirably and expertly under the most trying of circumstances. Thanks in large part to Bev; the Branch remained strong at a time that we could have easily weakened.

When our last round of Branch elections took place in November of 2005, Bev chose not to run for another term of office due to the health problems that she was dealing with.

Although Bev was no longer our President, she continued to serve Branch 2902 in other capacities that helped to reduce the workload for Frank and myself.

Bev was an OWCP expert, and she continued to assist the Branch in the time consuming area of Injury

NALC Health Benefits Seminar in Las Vegas

In October I will be at the Health Benefits Seminar. If anyone has a concern or question that may be addressed at the seminar, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me and I will do my best to help resolve the issue.

November is open season and the question will be asked, which plan is best for the membership? For me the answer is simple. I will go with the plan that offers me the best benefits. A plan where my medical needs are always taken care of. A plan where there is no waiting to see a specialist. A plan where I can see a doctor anywhere in the country or in the world for that matter. A plan where I choose. Not where the plan chooses for me. A plan made for union members and owned by union members. A plan that I only wish was better supported by the membership.

As a side note, a member from the Valley Village station attempted get in touch with me and before I had a chance to address her issue I accidentally erased her phone number. I apologize for this and ask that she please get in touch with me again.

Thanks to all the members who belong to the Health Plan for your continued support.

Compensation. Up until the time of her death, Bev was also handling grievances at the Formal A level in two of our larger offices, Thousand Oaks and Oxnard.

Aside from missing Bev as a friend and mentor, on a selfish note I also miss all the help that she was giving to the Branch. I also hate the fact that I can't just pick up the phone and call her every time I have a question regarding Injury Compensation. Damn it Bev, you left us too soon!

Although she died way too young, I'm glad that Bev is finally free from the pain and physical suffering that she endured these last couple of years. She really was one of a kind and she cared very, very much for the Branch 2902 membership that she fought for all those years.

Rest in peace, Bev. I miss you.

Truly Missed

By: James Perryman, San Fernando Chief Shop Steward



Farewell to a leader, teacher, mentor, and friend. Beverly Mattes was a very special thoughtful and kind person that was also, bright, witty, and stern. I remember meeting Bev in 1994. It was during the time when the Postal Service implemented DPS in our station. Management became overzealous and really screwed up our route/assignments when they made unreasonable adjustments

based on the time savings due to the impact of DPS. Management was out of their mind when they added 1–3 hours to each route based on their idiotic methodology for DPS impact. Management had the audacity to blame the carrier's deficiencies as reasons for routes becoming overburden and out of adjustment. Management gave carriers discussions and issued discipline to any carrier that failed to meet management's adjusted times. Carriers became frustrated and upset. Some carriers were even intimidated by managements actions and began running their routes. Some carriers also began skipping their breaks, lunches, and comfort stops, in an

attempt to meet the adjusted office and street times. Bev made a visit to our office to reassure the carriers that everything was going to be alright. She reminded carriers to stand firm, stand strong, and hold your ground. She also reminded carriers to be consistent, and don't play games. Eventually management's fabricated issued discipline was grieved and thrown out, thanks to the union representatives, and President Bev Mattes' actions. Carriers that followed Bev's guidance were successful in receiving proper route adjustments. Bev's course of action for this issue was a part in what inspired me to become a shop steward. This memory of Bev is one of many memories that I have but, this memory I will cherish the most. She helped me to become a better letter carrier, a better Shop Steward, and a better leader. I have learned so much from Bev, and I will surely miss her. I have no doubt that Bev is in heaven, and I am sure that if anyone is messing with one of God's angels, like Postal management tries to mess with Letter Carriers, she will give them a good tongue lashing and a firm hand to set them straight, because Bev always stood for protecting workers rights and justice.

Until next time, God Bless, and Go Lakers.

The Woman Could Make Things Happen

By: Greg Martin, Simi Valley

I just want to express my feelings on the passing of a great woman, Bev Mattes. I didn't know her very well, but what I did learn about her I learned from talking to her on occasion about a problem, and listening to her at the union meetings. She was a fantastic union president. She had a way of getting to the meat of an issue in a heart beat. She didn't take any crap, and got results when dealing with management.

A few years ago, while I was a shop steward here in Simi Valley, management was dealing out discipline like there was no tomorrow for every negative 4584 they issued. Letters of warning for things like not signaling once in an observation. One day while delivering my route, my turn signal lever broke off. I could no longer signal. So I

called my supervisor and told him I needed a new LLV. You all know what he said, "Keep going, I know you can't signal, so it's OK." I told him no, it's not OK. If you can write someone up for not being safe because they didn't signal once, how does it make it safe for me if I can't for the next 4 hours? He told me, I don't have a truck to send you, keep going. So I called the union hall, and ended up talking to Bev. I told her what was going on, she told me to stay put and she would call me back. A few minutes later, I get a call back from her; she talked to the Postmaster at the Main office. They would be sending me another truck. Sure enough, the truck they didn't have showed up 30 minutes later. Bev could make things happen. She will truly be missed.

Out of Respect...Long Pants

By: Don Arnold, Jr., Northridge Post Office

I arrived back to work from a much needed vacation with my family and friends to hear of the passing of Bev, and I was saddened... very saddened! The day of her service, I brought an extra uniform, in case I would not have had time to head home and shower after my workday. I worked my shift, and was forced into overtime, due to not having enough personnel in our office (as usual), even though my supervisor knew that I was planning on attending the service. I arrived back at the office and washed at the men's restroom sink, hoping that it would be enough to remove the filth from the street and mail, and I put on my clean uniform. Take note that I wore long uniform pants to Bev's service, which I have never worn on the street, unless attending a funeral service, out of respect to our sisters and brothers who have passed. The significance of this is great, because there are people on my route that truly believe the Postal Service won't allow me to purchase long pants; otherwise, why would I show up in the rain and wind wearing shorts to deliver the mail? On this day though, it was nearly a hundred degrees, and after working nine hours, I was heading to a service wearing long pants, simply out of respect. I traveled on the 101 Freeway towards the beautiful city of Moorpark, the place where Bev found solace after the daily fights with not only management of many offices besides mine, but also irate union brothers and sisters, much like me. My car was almost out of gas, and I had forgotten to put money in my pocket before leaving home, so there I was, driving in unknown territory, cashless, late, exhausted, and sweating like no one ever should, just to say goodbye to someone who saw the issues of the day on the other end of the spectrum. I had no idea where exactly I was going, but after all, I am a postman, and in time, I found my destination. It gave me time to think about how our lives crossed, why they crossed, and what we had offered each other along the way.

I arrived at the church to find the parking lots full, and I had to park quite a distance away, and then I roamed the church grounds until I found the room full of people, remembering our sister Bev, in ways they should have. I slipped into a pew near the back, by the sound operator's board, still sweating from the drive, the heat, the long pants, the stress of my tardiness, and of management not caring enough to make certain that anyone who wanted to attend, would be easily able to. I listened intently to the three speakers who talked of Bev, a woman, a mother, a grandmother, a leader, and a friend, with all her bad habits, her heart of gold, and her love for the things she found worthy in this world and in her life.

I had never really known Bev personally, so I learned

more than I offered. I related well to her in that hour. When pictures of her life were put overhead on the screens, I related even deeper, and when one of her favorite songs was played, a song by Brenda Lee, I nearly lost it! Nothing makes a person relate more to another, I think, than a song you both love, where both have experienced heartbreaks in the foreground of your lives, while that song played in the background for each of you. I was finally seeing Bev Mattes as a person, trying to get through her life, while helping others do the same. She didn't do her job as I necessarily would have, but she did it the best way she knew how. And she did it for me and others like me.

I looked around the room, and behind the handkerchiefs and tears, I saw other Carriers, some Management members, family, friends, loved ones, and even Clerks, most of whom she didn't deal with as the NALC local President (although with their union representatives, they probably wish they had). There were a lot of people grieving, but there should have been a lot more! We all related to this woman who fought for us, our jobs, and our livelihoods. We owe her a great deal of gratitude for her worthy efforts... especially those of us who crossed her along the way. I regret that from our office, only our Shop Stewards and I was there. I was surprised, and saddened. What she fought for, with some success and some failure, were the rights that only through negotiations can we obtain; the rights of those who were vocal, filed many grievances, and stood their ground, as well as those who never spoke up about the injustices they encountered along the way, those who let others fight their fights for them, and those who really don't give a damn either way, right or wrong. I didn't see one management member from our office there, even though they worked with her in private meetings, hammered out grievance issues, called on her or accepted her calls when a settlement might be reached, and dealt with her on a regular basis over the years. Respect is a really funny thing; you have to earn it. And I believe Bev did do that. She held a position that is regarded with honor, and she stepped forward to take the reigns while the horses were running full speed toward the cliff's edge. She didn't always do the job my way, but she did it, and she gave it her best. And in the end, so many of those she did it with, and did it for, were too busy to put on a pair of long uniform pants just to say a personal "Thanks, and may God bless you".

All those years, all those meetings, all those trips, all

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT...

Continued from page 2

ment. The MOU also prohibits the contracting out of new deliveries in offices that only have city delivery.

A second MOU establishes a joint Union Management committee to review existing policies and practices concerning contracting out of mail delivery services.

There will be a 6-month moratorium from date of ratification on the contracting out of mail delivery in any office that employs a city letter carrier.

President Young will seek a legislative ban on contracting out, if an acceptable agreement is not reached during the moratorium period.

Casuals Out, Transitional Employees In

In 1991, an Arbitrator named Mittenthal issued an award that created the Transitional Employee (TE) category. TE's were created to help the Postal Service implement automation. At that time, Delivery Point Sequencing of letters was coming on line. Under the tentative agreement, Management will be able to employ up to 8,000 TE's during all phases of the Flat Sequencing System implementation with a limit of 8% TE's in our craft in any one District.

All Casuals, which are a temporary, low wage, no benefit, non-union workforce, will be eliminated and replaced by TE's. TE's will make \$5-\$6 an hour more than Casuals, they will be bargaining unit employees with some limited rights and access to the grievance procedure, they will receive wage increases and COLA's, and have the opportunity to become career employees. However, TE's will be limited to an appointment term of 359 days with at least a 6-day break in service. PTF's will be given a preference in scheduling straight-time hours over TE's, but TE's are entitled to a 4-hour guarantee on days they are scheduled.

Uniform Allowance

Under this proposed agreement, the uniform allowance will rise 2.5 % annually from the current \$328 per year to \$371 by 11/20/10. But, of course, nothing stays static and the price of uniforms will also probably rise.

\$336 effective November 25, 2006
\$345 effective November 24, 2007
\$353 effective November 22, 2008
\$362 effective November 21, 2009
\$371 effective November 25, 2010

Series of MOU's

Also attached to the proposed tentative agreement is a series of Memorandums of Understanding relating to the following:

Third Bundle Pre-Arbitration Settlement
S-999 Mail Pre-Arbitration Settlement
DOIS Pre-Arbitration Settlement
COR Pre-Arbitration Settlement

Flat Sequencing System Pre-Arbitration Settlement and MOU's

I would refer any member who wishes more details to refer to the August edition of the Postal Record, the material enclosed with your ballot on the proposed agreement, the NALC bulletin found on your office Union bulletin board, or the NALC website at www.nalc.org.

Please note that ballots were mailed out to all 217,505 active members on August 6th. By the time you read this article, you should have received your ballot, read most of the material and hopefully have voted.

The leadership of the Branch recommended a **Yes** vote on the proposed tentative agreement. Yes, we would all like more. However, given the political climate, economics, inflationary pressures, and runaway health care costs, it's in all probability the best agreement that can be negotiated at this time. Could we gain more by going to arbitration? Maybe. Could we lose more than we can stand to gain? Perhaps. In all, I think it's wiser for the NALC to be able to fashion its own agreement with the Postal Service on our own terms rather than let a third party make that decision for us. Either way, we as individual members have a say in the matter. This is a lot more than Union members in other industries can say. All for now back in two.

**The AIDS walk
Los Angeles
is coming up
Sunday, October 14th.**



The USPS is a Corporate sponsor and encourages all members to participate by either walking or sponsoring someone on the 10 Kilometer walk! In Hollywood starting at 10 a.m.

**David Hyman of North Hills
(818) 893-8613 will be walking in case you'd like to sponsor a Branch 2902 member.**

**For walk forms or more info call
(213) 201-WALK or visit their web site at
www.aidswalk.net**



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In Honor of a Fallen and Lost Leader

By: Manny Centeno - Newbury Park Carrier

A co-worker who sacrifices their time for others with no regard for themselves is a perfect definition of someone who we all respected and for those of us who knew her well; Beverly Mattes will be sorely missed.

In Newbury Park, at our old address on Newbury Road, we were like a family. It was known as “the country club” back in the day because of how easy we had it being separate from the Thousand Oaks main office. Rarely did we receive visits from Russ Jacobsen, the first postmaster that I ever knew. We knew that when the big wigs came to our little office it was either for a retirement announcement or celebrating one of our many milestones that we had achieved as a team!

Our team leader was our Union representative Bev! She was always there for all of us if we had any questions. She wouldn't mind even the dumbest of questions! She would laugh her trademark laugh then say “let me look into that one”, if she didn't have an immediate answer. I for one will always be indebted to her because she saved my “ass” during my 90 day probation.

It was my ticket out of Safeway and the night crew. My family was so excited for me that they threw a big party for me. Needless to say, I had far too much to drink in celebration of finally being given a chance (after a 2 year wait) by the “good old Post Office”. I showed up to work hung over, and still a little drunk, (as some of you have probably done the same). I could not perform my duties that day because I couldn't concentrate or keep from barfing in the restroom! After about 2 hours into my tour the Station Manager, I.B. Claxton came over to me and knew I was out of it. He threatened me with being fired. I explained to him what had happened and he didn't want to buy it. Then came **Bev**. She begged him to give me another chance and talked I.B. into letting me go home and sleep it off! He made me promise to never do it again or he would fire me.

I believe that had it not been for Bev, I would not have survived probation nor would I be here some 24 years later! I know that there are probably others of you who have similar stories, but I for one would like to say once again- Thank you Bev, I love you, and I will miss you!

OUT OF RESPECT...

Continued from page 15

those grievance forms, all those reports, all those calls, all those arguments... they were all for people like you, and for people like me. She had the guts to stand above the crowd, and to say when something wasn't right. Many years ago, a very wise man told me that the ones who stand above the crowd to speak, to make things right, are the very ones who get shot, because they are the easiest targets. That wise man was my dad. Since then, I have held others who do that in very high esteem, no matter how they speak to the crowds. Their way may not be my way, but they had the guts to become a target, and we should honor that fact.

Bev Mattes was standing above the crowd. She stood up for us, and for our principles, and as a result, she became a target, even to people like me, who thought she should have been even stronger, meaner, and take less hits from Management. Who was I to judge her performance? I was no one other than a single member of an angry mob.

One day, when my time has passed, I hope all of you remember this letter. I hope you find my effort as worthy as Bev's was, and even though I didn't do my job exact-

ly the way you would have, I hope you make a little more effort than you did for Bev. Just show up wearing long pants to say good-bye, out of respect.

May she rest in peace, and know that all I can do personally is to say, “Thank-you”.



Union Meeting

**June 19, 2007
Newbury Park**



President Salazar called the meeting to order at 7:09PM. Sergeant at Arms Bob Golden led the pledge of allegiance. Roll call of officers was done. Asking to be excused were James Perryman, Mike Steele, C.C. Flatts, Jim Mette, Ray Hill, Bev Mattes, Steve Dickerson, Art Hernandez, Onofre Varela, and Sandy Gaunce. Fred Shaw makes a motion to excuse these brothers and sisters, S/C. President

Salazar announces to the members to sign in on the attendance book and that 50/50 raffle tickets are for sale. The membership reviews the minutes from the previous meeting on May 15. Fred Shaw makes a motion to accept the minutes as printed, S/C.

ANNOUNCEMENTS-

President Salazar informs the members that Bev Mattes is gravely ill and is in the hospital. The membership expresses their love and concern for her and observes a moment of silence for her.

Retirement Seminar-Sunday, July 8, 2007, 12PM-4PM at the Union Hall in Chatsworth. Class will be taught by Yoggi Riley.

COMMUNICATIONS-

Grievances-Overall grievance activity has decreased. Removals, emergency suspensions have increased. A report from the Dispute Resolution Team was read to the membership. Moorpark has the highest grievance numbers per 100 employees; Woodland Hills and San Fernando still have high activity. Branch 2902 has 33% of the complement, with 55% of the grievance activity for the district.

IMD's- New scanners have a safety warning that has not been conveyed to the employees regarding the electromagnetic field, and the effects it may have on electronic medical implants, like pacemakers, when the scanner is held close to the implant. Employees need to be aware of this issue.

Food Drive- Overall totals were down. Membership discusses reasons for the decline. A few offices did take in more than last year, but most offices took in less.

MDA Fundraiser Holde'm tournament held on June 2, was a success. We put it together on short notice with Branch 4006 Canoga Park, and were able to raise over

\$1500.00. We are planning to do another in October.

3999's- One day evaluations are being conducted everywhere. Managers are trying to capture any undertime they can. Office time is the target. Coverages are coming out of order; letter mail is not being processed through DPS, messy mail in 775 tubs.

Route inspections are finished in Oxnard. Volume was down due to rate increase. We want to be fair and have the routes properly adjusted.

COMMITTEES-

Recreation- Paulette Dyer reports on L.A. County Fair tickets that will be available in August.

COLCPE- Ernestine Hernandez will conduct sign-ups at the July meeting. Anyone who signs up at the meeting will receive a Gimme 5 T-shirt, and be entered in the contest.

Retirees- Don Minster announces luncheon will be Thursday June 21 at the Fallbrook Hometown Buffet 11:30-1:00.

Health Benefits- Joe Gutierrez informs the members that he will be attending the Health Benefit seminar in October. If members have questions about the plan, he will take the questions to the seminar. He also reminds the members that now is the time to begin planning for open season changes. Chiropractic care now available through NALC. Costs for premiums have been held. Plan is nationwide unlike plans like Kaiser.

MBA/NSBA- Chris Alessi speaks about the group accidental death insurance policy. He also announces that the Single Payment plan will be revised with new information from actuaries.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS-

E-Board recommendation to send President Salazar, EVP Hill, and VP Drapkin to leadership conference on 8/26/07, pay \$35.00 for each registration and per diem for the day. Ernestine Hernandez makes a motion to adopt the recommendation, S/C.

E-Board recommendation to send President Salazar and HBR Joe Gutierrez to Health Benefit seminar October 14-

continued on page 21

Union Meeting

**July 17, 2007
Chatsworth**

President Salazar called the meeting to order at 7:07PM. Sergeant at Arms Bob Golden led the pledge of allegiance. Roll call of officers was taken. Paulette Dyer and Mike Steele asked to be excused. Fred Shaw makes a motion to excuse these members, S/C. The membership is reminded to sign the attendance book and purchase raffle tickets.

George Woods and Sylvia Perez from Priority One Credit Union are introduced as guests.

The minutes from the June 19 meeting in Newbury Park are reviewed and accepted as printed by the membership in a motion made by Fred Shaw.

All bills are to be submitted at this time.

ANNOUNCEMENTS-

President Emeritus Bev Mattes passed away on June 19 from complication of diabetes. The officers and members of this branch miss her very much. She handled grievance meetings for two of our largest installations, Thousand Oaks and Oxnard, and OWCP cases. The members observe a moment of silence for her. Condolences from Manny Peralta's office, the CSALC, and branches from the area have poured in as word has spread. Next Mailbag News will be dedicated to her memory. Deadline for submission of an article is August 10.

The picnic information is included in the handout. September 9, Vasa Park, Agoura Hills.

Branch 4006 and Branch 2902 are co-hosting another Texas Hold'Em Poker tournament to benefit Muscular Dystrophy on Saturday October 20th beginning at 7:00 PM. It will be held here at the Union Hall in Chatsworth. Details are in tonight's handout.

George Woods and Sylvia Perez from Priority One Credit Union speak to the membership about products and services available with the credit union.

President Salazar reads a letter from Congressman Howard Berman supporting the fight against contracting out of letter carrier jobs.

A letter from CSALC President John Beaumont was read to the membership thanking the branch for the \$100.00 donation to the CSALC Saxsenmeier scholarship.

Legislation currently going through the state of California

that calls for discontinuing the practice of contracting out mail delivery services in California. CSALC President John Beaumont and Branch 1100 and an assemblyman from Orange County worked on this legislation. Joint Resolution 27 was adopted by the State Assembly and copies of it will be sent to President Bush, Postmaster Potter and all members of the Senate and Congress. With this resolution, California has gone on record as opposing contracting out of mail delivery services.

President Salazar informs the membership that Vice President Paul Drapkin has been chosen to be the NALC backup for Joe McDonough of the DRT. A report was discussed with the membership on DRT activity.

Retirement seminar held on July 8 was well attended. Yoggi Riley of the APWU and NALC taught the class.

Contract update- A tentative agreement was reached by NALC and USPS. Details were reviewed and discussed. Ratification materials will be mailed to each active member.

Steward Lori Stewart reminds the membership that it is important to use all of their uniform allotment each year. Any amount not spent by the anniversary date is lost.

COMMITTEES-

COLCPE- Ernestine Hernandez speaks to the members about the current contest, and has brought her laptop to the meeting to help members sign up online.

Retirees- Don Minster informs the retirees that the luncheon will be held this Thursday, July 19, 2007 in Simi Valley at Hometown Buffet.

NALC Health Benefits- Joe Gutierrez tells the members about the benefits that the NALC plan offers that are better than other plans. NALC is recognized nationwide, member doctors submit claims electronically, always an HBR available to answer questions, well care plans and support groups. Open season is in November. NALC just sent proposals to OPM for 2008 plan.

MBA/NSBA- Chris Alessi speaks about Hospital Plus plan. Benefits are paid regardless of income, not taxable, active and retired members are eligible, \$30-\$100 per day plans available, premiums as low as \$4.05 per pay period.

continued on page 21

NEWBURY PARK...

Continued from page 19

17 in Las Vegas. Recommendation to pay hotel, airfare, travel expenses and four days per diem for President Salazar, and pay three days lost time, four days per diem and mileage for HBR Gutierrez. Chris Alessi makes a motion to accept the E-Board recommendation, S/C.

E-Board recommendation to spend \$100.00 on refreshments for the retirement seminar that will be held on July 8 at the Union hall. Fred Shaw makes a motion to adopt the recommendation, S/C.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS-

The membership discussed the problems with the DOIS program and the problems with managers who rely solely on DOIS projections.

Medical updates- What is proper and what is improper when management requests an update.

The National Reassessment program is discussed.

Marian Walters makes a motion to accept the Treasurer's report as printed, S/C.

Trustees report on the audit of the books and found the books to be in order.

No bills were submitted.

Lori Stewart makes a motion to adjourn, S/C.

50/50 drawing took in \$30.00. The prize worth \$15.00 was won by Guy Nohrenberg.

The membership drawing was worth \$1308.50. The name drawn was Walter Merriman from North Hollywood. He was not present to win.

Respectfully submitted by Susan Degenhardt, Recording Secretary

In Memoriam

Manuel Baltazar
Active Carrier - Sylmar

Norma L. Jones
Retired Carrier - Chatsworth

CHATSWORTH...

Continued from page 20

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS-

Fred Shaw makes a motion to adopt an Executive Board recommendation to commission a portrait of Bev Mattes for the meeting hall. The Branch will pay cost; price will be at President's discretion, S/C.

Good of the Association - Know your rights

Bid counting was reset beginning November 23, 2006. Any successful bids after that date count towards the total for the new contract.

FMLA certification guidelines are reviewed and discussed by membership.

Sandy Gaunce makes a motion to accept the Treasurer's report as written, S/C.

Thank you to Bev Sucich for cooking and thank you to Linda Gomez for helping with tonight's dinner.

Marva Golden makes a motion to adjourn, S/C.

50/50 drawing for \$28.00 was won by Robbie Elsaleh from Moorpark.

Membership drawing was worth \$1346.50. Rhonda Silkwood from Oxnard was the name drawn. She was not present to win.

Respectfully submitted by Susan Degenhardt, Recording Secretary

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Walter Gropius,
German-American architect (1833-1969)



RETIREES LUNCH

Where: Hometown Buffet
Vons Center
1855 Cochran Street
Simi Valley

When: Thursday,
September 20, 2007

Time: 11:30am to 12:30pm



Where: Hometown Buffet
Fallbrook Mall
6633 Fallbrook Ave.
West Hills

When: Thursday,
October 18, 2007

Time: 11:30am to 12:30pm



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EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

- Ray Hill

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT

- Mike Steele

VICE PRESIDENT

- Paul Drapkin

TREASURER/FINANCIAL SECRETARY

- Dan Gorman

RECORDING SECRETARY

- Susan Degenhardt

DIRECTOR OF RETIREES

- Don Minster

MBA/NSBA REP

- Chris Alessi

HEALTH BENEFIT OFFICER

- Joe Gutierrez

ASST. HEALTH BENEFIT

- Marva Golden

SGT.-AT-ARMS

- Bob Golden

TRUSTEES:

Beverly Sucich
Ernestine Hernandez
James Perryman
Sandy Gaunce
Sonny Castellano

“The usefulness of a meeting is in inverse proportion to the attendance.”

Lane Kirkland,

American labor leader (1922-1999)

SHOP STEWARD LIST

Agoura Hills Chief S.S.	Greg Gaddis
Chatsworth Chief S.S.	Angel Hale
Alternate	Sonny Castellano
Fillmore Chief S.S.	Call Office
Moorpark Chief S.S.	Lori Stewart
North Hollywood Chief S.S.	Mike Steele
Chandler	Mike Steele
Laurel Canyon	Steve Leyton
Studio City	Mike Steele
Valley Village	Mike Steele
Northridge Chief S.S.	Onofre Varela
Shop Steward/ Webmaster	Larry Orcutt
Porter Ranch	Marva Golden
Ojai Chief S.S.	Philip Navarro
Oxnard Chief S.S.	Ernestine Hernandez
Pacoima Chief S.S.	Steve Dickerson
	Art Hernandez
Port Hueneme	Call Office
Reseda Chief S.S.	Mike Longres
San Fernando Chief S.S.	James Perryman
M.C.A.	James Perryman
North Hills	C.C. Flatts
Sylmar / Main Office	Mike Steele
	Yvette Solache
Alternate	Gilbert Leon
Santa Paula Chief S.S.	Laura Walters
Simi Valley Chief S.S.	Sandra Gaunce
Mt. McCoy Station	Sandra Gaunce
Thousand Oaks Chief S.S.	Jim Mette
Newbury Park	Sue Degenhardt
Ventura Chief S.S.	Laura Walters
East Ventura	Laura Walters
Woodland Hills Chief S.S.	Joe Vedder
	Paul Drapkin

RECREATION NEWS

SEA WORLD:

Adults: \$45.00 (Reg. \$57.00)

Child: \$40.00 (Reg. \$47.00)

Each ticket allows you to visit twice before the expiration date.

SEE'S GIFT CERTIFICATE:

\$11.50 (Retail Value \$14.10)

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*Coming soon, L.A. County Fair Tickets.
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At monthly meetings (every third Tuesday of the month) coupons and flyers for various venues

Cookies for sale

Questions or any information can be obtained by contacting:

Recreation Director - Paulette Dyer

• During the week of Sept. 18, 2007 thru Oct. 9, 2007 please contact the Union office for all Tickets and Questions you may have

DINNER

Will Be Served At The
September
Union Meeting
DINNER starts at 6 p.m.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- SEP 18 Regular Branch Meeting 7pm
Union Hall-Chatsworth
Dinner served 6pm
- SEP 20 Retiree Lunch 11:30am
Hometown Buffet-Simi Valley
- OCT 2 Executive Board Meeting 6pm
Executive Council Meeting 7pm
- OCT 8 Columbus Day-Holiday 
- OCT 16 Regular Branch Meeting 7pm
Garden Palm Hotel-Newbury Park
- OCT 18 Retiree Lunch 11:30am
Hometown Buffet-West Hills
- OCT 31 Halloween 
- NOV 4 Daylight Savings Time Ends 
- NOV 6 Executive Board Meeting 6pm
Executive Council Meeting 7pm
Election Day—Do Not Forget To Vote 

“Suppose you were an idiot. And suppose
you were a member of Congress....
But then I repeat myself.”

-Mark Twain

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MEMBER: TRI-COUNTIES CENTRAL LABOR COUNCIL, AFL-CIO

VOLUME 49, NO. 6

Circulation 2,500

November - December 2007

Contract Signed: COLA & Back Pay on the Way

By: Frank Salazar, President

Its official, the 2006-2011 National Agreement was signed by PMG Potter and President Young on October 9th. If you haven't already heard or read, the NALC membership overwhelmingly ratified the agreement on a new five-year contract by an almost 9-1 margin. The vote was 104,346 in favor and 11,895 against.

Show Me the Money

The lump sum payment everybody has been waiting for in the sum of \$686 will be paid in our Pay Period 21 paychecks. Yes, it's coming in one check. And, for those of you wanting to know the date of PP 21, that will be the paycheck for October 19th. By the time you read this article, you should have already received it.

Part-time carriers with fewer than 2,000 paid hours over 26 pay periods ending with pay period 20 (Sept. 15-28, 2007) will receive pro-rata shares of the \$686 lump sum according to the following breakdown: Less than 500 hours-25%, 500-Under 1,000 hours-50%, 1,000-Under 1,500 hours-75%, and 1,500 hours or Over-100%.

This lump sum COLA was owed to us for the period November 2006 through May 2007. However, this COLA will not be rolled

into our base pay. No other deductions will be made to your COLA, except for federal FICA withholding. Don't look for the next COLA increase that was due in September. Turns out we get nothing, due to the fact that there was not a significant



25 Year union member pin recipients Jim Kush, Susan Degenhardt, Ralph Esparza, Jim Johnson, Oliver Logacz and Gary Traba show off their new jewelry at the September meeting at the union hall. Thanks for your continued support of the NALC !!!

increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI), which our COLA is tied to. Looks like somebody in Washington was playing with
continued on page 2

PRESIDENT'S REPORT...

Continued from page 1



the numbers again.

In addition, the 1.4% general wage increase that we were suppose to start earning on November 25, 2006 will be implemented in Pay Period 21, and will be reflected in our October 19th paychecks. And, following all this we are due back pay from the 1.4% general increase we should have started earning back on November 25th, 2006. This back pay which covers

the period November 25, 2006 through the end of September 28th, 2007 will be paid in our regular paychecks on November 30th (PP 24).

Ok, if you followed this so far guess what? We start earning another general pay increase of 1.8% on November 24th, 2007. Monetarily, this isn't such a bad year. I just hope the Postal Service computers don't crash.

COLCPE

Committee on Letter Carrier Political Education (COLCPE) is our political arm that is made up of voluntary donations. The NALC has an ongoing campaign called "Gimmie 5 for COLCPE". National is trying to beef up our political clout in Washington D. C. by getting as many members as possible to contribute automatically to COLCPE from their paycheck or checking accounts. Let's be real, \$5.00 a pay period is not going to break us. \$1.00 a pay period won't break us either. The NALC looks out for our interests very well. Our dues money goes to collective bargaining and contract enforcement, but all this can be taken away or damaged with a legislative pen. COLCPE is job insurance at the political level. We can all give something to COLCPE even if it's \$1.00 a pay period. We saw the political pressure exerted on the Postal Service, which brought it back to the bargaining table. There is no excuse not to give. This contract even calls for an additional allotment that carrier's can use to give to COLCPE. So the excuse that you have to many allotments doesn't work. It's easy to sign up. You can do it over the internet at www.NALC.org or you can find links at our website, www.nal-branch2902.org. You can also call the union hall or cut out the

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insert in the Postal Record. The time to contribute is now.

NALC Health Plan Reduces Rates

Open Season, November 12 through December 10, is fast approaching and the NALC has reduced its rates for the upcoming year. Active Carriers bi-weekly contributions for Self-Only has reduced (-\$6.19) to \$32.61 and Self & Family (-\$6.31) to \$54.54. Retirees monthly contributions have also dropped: Self-Only (-\$12.18) to \$127.40 and Self & Family (-\$10.77) to \$247.00. The NALC Health Plan has zero costs for lab work when using an authorized lab such as Quest-Unilab, which equates to no money out of your pocket. In addition, the 2008 Plan includes lower out of pocket costs for surgical and anesthesia procedures, no cost for inpatient room and board at a PPO facility, lower cost for emergency care at a non-PPO hospital due to an auto accident, concussion or heart attack and improved catastrophic care. There are many other benefits available so check out the brochure that will be mailed to you. Compare the NALC Plan to your plan and see if it can work for you. The NALC is a good plan designed for letter carriers by letter carriers. The more we support the plan, the better the rates. You get what you pay for, so check out the Plan for yourself.

Lack of Training & Knowledge

As employees are starting to retire throughout our District, it is becoming most evident that those replacing those leaving are not up to par and are lacking basic skills. This is not just apparent on the workroom floor, but also in the Departments at District Headquarters in Santa Clarita.

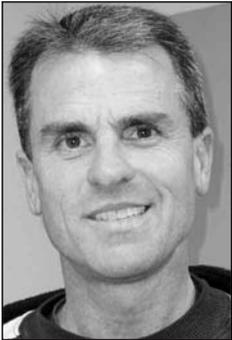
It's sad to see a Supervisor or Manager jumping on a carrier for getting back 1 minute after five or for not holding 6 inches of flats on their arm when they are trying to case into a stuffed 5-shelf case, when the Supervisor is costing the operation tens of thousands of dollars in a quarter. Here are a few examples of what I am talking about:

204b's are poorly trained and unknowledgeable about the contract. Ok, you can expect this from people who are learning. But, 204b's should have some one knowledgeable they can go to for questions or advice. Management, for the most part, sends 204b's to an Associate Supervisor Program and the instructors are adequate. However, when 204b's get to the field, they are placed under Managers who don't believe in the processes they are taught and 204b's are told to forget most things they are trained to do. Also, there is very little follow-up and little support. Some of these Supervisors fresh out of ASP have been placed into operations they know nothing about all by themselves. Some have even been placed in OIC positions, until the MPOO realized that there was no Postmaster in the Office. On the other hand, many employees are selected to 204b by default because no one wants to do the job. And, this type of 204b should never be given the opportunity to supervise, due to their character and disposition. Upper Managers are aware of this, but they throw up their hands saying that they can't do anything about it. So this type of Supervisor is like the kid in grade school that gets passed

continued on page 8

Virtually Irreplaceable

By: Ray Hill, Executive Vice-President



There are certain “constants” in this universe, things that we can count on day after day, year after year, decade after decade and century after century.

In the morning the sun rises in the east and in the evening the sun sets in the west.

We all have to pay taxes or else risk going to prison for tax evasion.

Barring any future discovery of the Fountain of Youth, all of us will die someday.

You get the point, right? There are certain things that we all take for granted and correctly assume will continue to happen because they always have.

Since North Hollywood Local NALC Branch 2740 merged with Branch 2902 in August of 1985, one of the “constants” within the Branch has been the presence of our Senior Vice President, Mike Steele.

Mike has always “been there” for Branch 2902, making himself available to do anything and everything that was asked of him by former Branch Presidents Jon Gaunce and Bev Mattes and current Branch President, Frank Salazar.

We can always count on Mike to cook up a delicious meal for the membership at our Branch meetings at the Chatsworth Union hall.

Up until about 4 years ago, Mike organized the Branch 2902 picnics and he also did most of the work involved in preparing for those picnics. Mike bought the food for the picnic, bought the drinks for the picnic, bought the charcoal for the picnic, obtained free ice from the North Hollywood Ice Company for the picnic, cooked the food at the picnic (with assistance from other Branch Members) etc. etc. etc.

On the day of the picnic Mike would arrive early to set things up and after the picnic Mike stayed late to break things down.

Mike put a lot of hard work into preparing for the Branch Picnic and he also made sure to cook up a couple of tons of his famous chili for the membership to enjoy.

About 4 years ago, Branch 2902 started having our picnics at a location where the food is catered and so Mike no longer has to do all of that hard work.

Mike started as a letter carrier with the North Hollywood Post Office in 1959.

He likes to say that when he was hired on as a North Hollywood Letter Carrier back in 1959 he only had to answer 2 pre-employment questions:

Can you ride a horse?

Can you shoot a gun?

I don't know if Mike can ride a horse, but I sure as hell know that he can shoot a gun.

He was an Officer and Steward for North Hollywood Local 2740 for many years before that Branch merged with Branch 2902.

Mike also handled the North Hollywood Branch Picnics back in the days before the merger with Branch 2902.

For many, many, years Mike has faithfully served the membership of the NALC Branches that he represented.

Now I've got some good news and some bad news to share with you.

The good news is that Mike Steele is planning to retire at the end of this year.

The bad news is that Mike Steele is planning to retire at the end of the year.

This is good news for Mike, but it is bad news for the rest of Branch 2902.

Personally, I have mixed feelings about Mike's upcoming and well-deserved retirement.

While I am happy for Mike, I would prefer that he does not retire, because replacing him and the work that he does for Branch 2902 will be virtually impossible.

Mike is planning to move to Arizona after he retires and I'm glad about that because in 2009 the Dodgers are planning to move their Spring Training site to Glendale, Arizona. I believe that Glendale is about a 2 hour drive from where Mike is moving.

I Guess I'll have to go visit Mike in the spring of 2009. By that time, maybe the Dodgers youngsters will have matured

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AN HONOR AND PLEASURE

By: Mike Steele, Senior Vice President



It is hard to believe that it has been 47 years since I joined the NALC. Time sure goes by fast. At the end of December I will be retiring as your Senior Vice President and Chief Cook.

I have seen many changes since I started as a Letter Carrier in 1959 when I was just 18 years old and fresh out of high school. After about 5 months as a letter carrier I receive a Letter of Charges against me for damaging government property. I got sunburned real bad and could not put a shirt on for a few days so I was off work. Well I was the government property the Post Office was referring too. That really pissed me off because I am not anybody's property. I ask the old timers where is this union I hear everyone talking about.

I quickly joined this great UNION and found out my rights. I started to work as a steward to protect other carriers from the abuse and unjust acts from management.

In 1959 we were paid \$2.00 an hour as a substitute (now known as a PTF). We got NO overtime pay.

We came to work at 6 a.m. and sat in the swing room on our own time till 9:00 a.m. to see if we were needed to work. We had no 10 minute breaks, only a 30 minute lunch. We got no cost of living pay and no scheduled pay increases. We had to go to Congress to get a raise.



Ignacio (Nacho) Castellanos (r) is presented with a T-Shirt by President Salazar for his volunteer help with the upcoming elections.

The strike of 1970 changed the way we worked and got paid. A lot of good men and women have stood together to get letter carriers what we have today.

Carriers should look at the NALC Health Plan. It has been great to me and I believe the best one. Without the NALC we would still be working in the dark ages.

As members of this Union you should say thanks to your stewards and officers for their work. It is not easy being a steward. There is a lot to know and you learn something new almost everyday you do the job. I have been very lucky. I have received a lot of thank-yous from carriers over the years.

Those thanks keep you going.

IT has always been a pleasure cooking at the meetings and doing the picnics. Joe De Nicolo and I cooked at the November 1990 meeting for the first time. It was spaghetti, and I have cooked spaghetti at every November meeting since then.

I am ready to slow down and enjoy sometime with my wife Gail doing lots of traveling, fishing, ATV riding and visiting friends.

I believe that I leave our Branch in very good hands with Frank Salazar, Ray Hill, Paul Drapkin, Don Gorman, Sue Degenhardt and the rest of the executive council members.

It has been Honor and a pleasure to represent all my brothers and sisters in this great Branch.

Welcome New Members

The following is a list of new members.
If any of these members work in your office stop
and welcome them to our branch.

North Hollywood

Susana Cisneros

Moorpark

Antonio Gonzalez

San Fernando

Ana Alvarado
Ricardo Chumpitaz
Felico Fernandez
Mario Gonzalez

Milton Herrera

Chalee Kaidee

Robert Lagonas

Cruz Ramos

Santa Paula

Ronald Sotelo Jr.

Thousand Oaks

Ramses Bernal
Janet Pimentel

CHANGES

By: Paul Drapkin, Vice President



We as human beings usually don't take to change very well. We get comfortable with what we do. We get comfortable with our jobs, our homes our friends our spouses, we even get comfortable with the way we drive to work every day. We as Letter Carriers are very guilty of this. We have a job in which routine is the name of the game. We work the same route every day and most of us stay on the same route for years because we get comfortable with

our routine. When our routine is broken we feel uncomfortable with the change.

Sometimes change is for the better. Recently we have had some big changes here at the Woodland Hills P.O. The biggest change of course is that Postmaster Joe Yuson has moved on to bigger and better things as the Officer in Charge of the Santa Monica P.O.

Now I could easily sit and bash Joe for all the ill feelings that he caused while he was at this P.O. but instead I will simply say that this is certainly a change that I believe most employees will not feel uncomfortable with. While it is true that the P.M. and I (and a lot of you) often banged heads over almost every issue you could think of I am not going to wish him any ill will. I can only say thanks for the memories because he only strengthened my resolve to continue to fight for what I believe to be right. Letter Carriers are the absolute backbone of the Postal Service and they deserve to be treated with nothing but dignity and respect for the amazing accomplishment that we achieve every day under the most adverse conditions. Unfortunately Joe Yuson was never able to see that. He was only able to see the negative. Only able to see the few carriers that he believed were hurting him and took it out on the rest of us in the most disrespectful ways possible. Attitude is everything and unfortunately Joe chose to have a bad attitude. This was conveyed across the workroom floor and I don't know about you but I know that when I get nothing but a bad attitude from management I do not work in the most productive mode that I am capable of. Joe simply could not understand this and his "numbers" often reflected it. I guess that Joe was guilty of what I was talking about when I said that change is often uncomfortable. He was unable to change and rather than make himself feel uncomfortable by changing his ways he was simply going to continue to make the rest of us feel uncomfortable. Too bad.

Another big change that has occurred is the fact that with Yuson leaving he has decided to take Supervisor Lisa Boatwright with him. Why, I do not know. Unlike Joe, I will not hesitate to bash Lisa. This woman was one of the biggest dis-

ruptions to the workforce here in Woodland Hills that I can remember. She was completely unorganized. She was unable to complete the simplest tasks and a less than honest person on top of it all. She had no ability to listen to what the real issues were when you were speaking to her and instead was only concerned with her being able to get the last "jab" in prior to ending a conversation with her.

She actually believes that she is an asset to the Postal Service. One Look at her office and desk could tell anyone that she was nothing but, and will continue to be a liability to the Postal Service. Her mouth has no ability to stay closed for one minute and other than the fact that she is the perfect "yes" woman for Joe I can not figure out what he sees in her as an asset to his administrative staff. Good riddance!

However, do not get too complacent with either of these changes as these are simply Details that both Yuson and Boatwright are on and both may be back.

Another change that we see since the departure of the P.M. and Lisa is the attitude of the workplace. Part of that is the choice of who the Post Office has brought in as Officer in Charge. Luis Hernandez is currently the Postmaster of the Tarzana P.O. Most of us know Luis from when he was here several years ago as a supervisor working for then Postmaster Jennifer Vo. Luis' style is a 180 degree turnaround from that of Joe Yuson. That is not to say that Luis is a pushover. Not by any means at all. But his attitude towards the workforce is completely different. Luis is quiet and respectful rather than loud and disrespectful. The Stewards in this office have a great relationship with Luis and I am sure that as you get to know him, you will too. We should welcome him as one of the good kind of changes that we see so infrequently in the Postal Service. As I said earlier, attitude is everything and I believe that Luis has the right attitude to help put the Woodland Hills P.O. back on the right track.

Another change that has occurred is the return of Supervisor Frank Bustos. Frank had had enough of the Postal Service B.S and actually resigned about a year ago. I guess with the new regime change, Luis was able to convince Frank to return to the ranks of Postal supervision. Maybe his hiatus from Postal life has injected him with a newfound energy that will allow him to survive life in the Postal Service. Good luck Frank, you're going to need it!

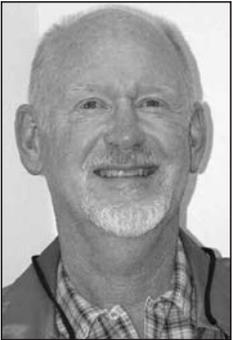
Got Ya!

As everyone knows by now, another big change in Woodland Hills is the retirement of a legend. A Carrier, who in my mind was the epitome of what a professional Letter Carrier should

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HEY BUDDY YA GOT A BAND-AID

By: **Greg A. Gaddis, Agoura Hills Chief Shop Steward**



By now you have all heard or read about our contract being ratified by the Union members, who took the time to vote on it. I hope all of you reading this article gave your voice through your vote, whether you agreed or not. As a result of accepting the contract, you have also received the pay increases and lump sum payment on your October paychecks. For those carriers who have dropped out of the Union and non-

members, I wonder if you gave back the increases you received? Since you do not feel the need to belong to this Union! My guess is those scabs kept the money.

Hey, I'm bleeding here

As in prior years, I have continued to cover other offices as the Shop Steward. Filing grievances, meeting with carriers, trying to teach management contract compliance, etc. It still amuses me the things that go on in the offices I cover. For instance in the Thousand Oaks office, Management told carriers that if they needed a Band-Aid, they would have to find a supervisor and the supervisor would log in their name

before giving out the Band-Aid. It's true; I can't make this up. Before the directive actually went into effect, I let postmaster Kelleen know I would be filing a Formal A grievance directly to her. Kelly told me her hands were tied and the order came from safety. Let's see, a carrier is bleeding and has to find a supervisor to get a Band-Aid. Isn't that a safety issue??? But wait, safety issued the instruction in the first place. Go figure, only in the Postal Service can you experience the insane day to day happenings that go on.

So you want a day off!

In my office, a PTF Carrier requested a N/S day off for a medical appointment and a daughters' school function. The request was made in advance and was approved. The supervisor told the PTF they had to bring in documentation to cover the day. I had to file a grievance to put a stop to the instruction given. The PTF requested a non-paid day off, because of working 6-days a week for the past several weeks. The PTF could have requested sick leave and would have been paid. So follow me, the carrier had an approved non-paid day off but had to bring in documentation to cover the day??? The grievance had to go all the way to the Dispute Resolution Team (DRT). Even the postmaster would not settle this ridiculous instruction. As usual the DRT settled the grievance and instructed management that they did not have the right to instruct the carrier to bring in documentation for a non-scheduled day off.

A pot to P _ _ _ in

At the Sylmar office, management wants to convert a park and loop route to a walk out route. This means the vehicle is taken away and the carrier starts from the post office and walks to the route to deliver the mail. This is done with a pushcart. This can be done where the mail is put in relay boxes for the carrier to pick up during their deliveries. However, this route is all residential. There are no bathrooms available. Usually a walk out route has business deliveries where bathrooms are available. Management's answer to what does the carrier do when they need to use the restroom. The carrier can use the restroom at the post office before leaving and otherwise they can ask a customer to use their bathroom, or the carrier can call the office to be picked up. Even if the carrier was to ask a customer, (which they do not have to do) where do they put the pushcart full of mail? I can hear it now "Get your Depends before you leave to do your routes" This may be added to our uniform allowance? I can hear it now, "would you like the extra absorbent or regular"? I better stop before management gets any ideas. Until next time, I'm sure I will have more stories to tell...

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Where is the credibility? Where is the professionalism? Where is the integrity?

By: Ernestine Hernandez, Oxnard Chief Shop Steward



Have you noticed supervisors taking regular carriers off the route they have bid to work on and put them on other routes? I am not talking about swings, but whole routes in the office and on the street. Why is this happening more and more? It's because management has failed to properly train all available PTF and unassigned carriers to work on all routes and now they don't want to absorb the cost of the extra overtime. Instead, supervisors

take a regular carrier, who has bid off of a difficult route or T-6 string, and puts them to work on those routes, just because they are familiar with it. How can the "available" carriers become familiar with the difficult routes, if they are not allowed the time to work and learn them?

I am constantly finding out that a regular carrier has been taken off of his or her bid route to work on another route, after being told by a supervisor that he/she will get paid "out of schedule" premium pay (This is a sweetheart deal and is OT all day, instead of just few hours, provided the supervisor actually puts the carrier in for the out of schedule pay).

Upper management only hears, what they want to hear, which is that all routes were carried by a certain time. But supervisors are giving them this at a much higher cost (money and service wise) than they may realize, because now two routes were carried by substitute carriers who were not thoroughly familiar with the route they are given. The regular carrier's bided route that he or she was taken off of was either carried by an unassigned carrier, a PTF carrier, or a casual carrier, or most likely split among them all. When the customer complaints start coming in, supervisors do very little about it and only respond that a substitute carrier carried the route on that day. Supervisors hide this all the time and end up paying additional overtime in numerous grievances because it is a blatant violation of Article 8, & 41. So where were the savings?

I also wonder how many of you have noticed the preferential treatment 204b supervisors are given by regular supervisors when they are returned to the craft. For instance, although a 204b cased a route recently on a rainy day, she was shielded by a supervisor from having to go out and deliver the mail like the rest of us had to, and instead was switched back to 204b, and paid as if she had worked higher level all day. Her clock rings for that day, and performance reports on the route were

changed by the supervisor to reflect this. And what about the Saviers Station 204b's who never had to work on their day off last quarter, although both are on the 10/12 hour overtime desired list. Instead, non-ODL carriers and Work Assignment carriers were brought in to work on their non-scheduled days causing more grievances to be filed.

There is one last thing I would like to make all of you aware of. We recently went through route inspections in our office and many of you know your route was not properly adjusted. Now supervisors are coming around to everyone trying to make them work their route in 8 hours to show that's how the route was adjusted. Now don't freak out! There are things you need to do to show the truth about your route.

1. Fill out a PS Form 3996 listing all the mail you have at your case including: 1st class letters and flats, all other classes of letters and flats (no matter what day or color it is tagged), all coverage's you have, plus parcels and accountable items with your estimate of how long you estimate it will take you to deliver it all, to the time you get off the clock. If you haven't received all your mail, but have turned in your 3996, request it back from the supervisor before you leave from the office to add anything to it. Make sure you inform the supervisor of additional time needed or if he wants you to cut any mail and write it on your 3996.

2. If you are instructed by the supervisor to cut any mail, you should request a PS Form 1571 to fill out and list what has been cut for that day. If the supervisor fails to provide a Form 1571 to you, notify the steward immediately. Be sure to turn it in to the supervisor before you leave the office. As it stands now, not all mail that is being cut is being reported, so it appears as if you have carried more than you actually do. This is why upper management believes you can carry more mail in less time than you actually did or can.

3. If you see that you are falling behind out on the street be sure to call in to a supervisor to request assistance or authorization for additional overtime. Make sure you include all the time needed to return to the office, finish your office duties and to get off the clock. If no one answers the phone, do not give up trying, but do factor in the additional time needed to call in to the total time needed. If it is taking a ridiculous amount of time to get through to a supervisor, then call the Union office at (818) 700-9747 to have the message relayed to management. This may also help to fix that call in problem.

The Real Associate Program for Supervisors (TRAPS)

Due to the highly classified nature of this article the authors name has been withheld upon request

It's about time that someone courageously steps forward and blows the whistle on managements Top Secret Postal operation known as "The Real Associate Program for Supervisors" (TRAPS). TRAPS positions have been highly classified for sometime now, and I have been a member of those privileged, above the regulations, squads since their inception when John E. Potter was appointed Postmaster General back in June 2001. This program is designed to attract, select, and train the worst possible leaders for the front-line supervisor positions. TRAPS calls on all inexperienced and uneducated personnel who have no common sense and/or the ability to inspire, motivate, and value people, to join the squad. The following are actual job descriptions taken from the classified postings that take place underground near Postal headquarters and around the country on an ongoing basis:

"TRAPS management squads will develop technical, operational, administrative, and leadership skills that will greatly assist the postal service in dehumanizing its carrier workforce so they can become increasingly aggravated, irritated, and annoyed. This will be accomplished through TRAPS intense and comprehensive degradation/humiliation workshops and on-the-job cage fighting techniques. Applicants who meet the requirements will learn the critical knowledge

and skills necessary to become highly ineffective leaders of the U.S. Postal Service. TRAPS is a 16-week training program, combining demeaning tactics training and on-the-job assignments, to provide a practical hands-on experience. Bullying, dishonesty, and backstabbing are important aspects of the program. TRAPS trainees are assigned 1 cheerful, positive and productive carrier as a test of their capabilities to get under his/her skin for the final exam. You must be able to demonstrate that you can fully implement all of the harassment procedures that you will be trained on in class. As part of the TRAPS team, you will support the Postal Service in its struggle to promote an enthusiasm of less productivity, efficiency, and caring by all carriers. If you hate working with people, want to make them unhappy, and be associated with a mistreatment and abusive elite squad, then TRAPS is the right job for you."

Although I felt a duty to report on the maliciousness of the Postal Services institution of TRAPS squads, I had to request anonymity and relocation under the witness protections program for my family's safety. I am hopeful that something positive can come out of this and carriers all over the United States can finally have real professional, knowledgeable, educated, and true leaders.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT...

Continued from page 2

along without learning the basics.

After many years of supervision we have Supervisors in offices that still cannot do a weekly schedule, holiday schedule, or post an opt. There are 52 weeks in a year and 10 holidays a year and they still mess up a schedule even after all this practice. You'd figure a Postmaster would teach them something. But, then I have dealt with Postmasters who didn't have any delivery experience prior to being placed into an OIC position and did not know what to do in the case of an accident.

The worst offices in terms of repeat violations in our Branch are Oxnard and San Fernando. In both of these offices there are continual Article 8 violations. Carriers who are not on any overtime desired list are constantly forced to work unwanted overtime when auxiliary assistance is available. There are

numerous Article 41 violations where carriers are taken off their assignments to case and carry another route or routes. Carriers not on the list are being forced to work on their non-scheduled days. And, for some reason, no one in these offices can track the OTDL hours worked. While that Manager is harassing you over 15 minutes on your 3996, he/she is costing the operation tens of thousands of dollars each quarter in grievances and this has gone on for years. The MPOO's probably don't care because no one is tracking the grievance numbers at the informal level. I wonder if someone is looking at the bottom line on expenses or is it just hidden with other costs? This would be a great source of savings for the service, but it takes training, mentoring, and at times corrective action.

Goodbye Sister Golden

I'm sad to report that former long time Chief Steward of the Northridge Installation, Assistant Health Benefits Representative, and former Branch Trustee Marva Golden

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NOTES FROM MT. McCoy STATION, SIMI VALLEY

By: Greg Martin, Carrier at Large

First I would like to talk contract. I have been asked by several non-union members, (OK, let's not be nice and call them scabs) what good is the union? I even had a scab tell me that he could negotiate a better pay raise than the union. He must be suffering from delusions. Let's look at what we got in this contract compared to what the postal service offered us.

First they offered no pay increase in the first year, just a lump sum payment, and then 1% in the next two years. What we got is an 8.85% increase over the next 5 years. The postal service then wanted all COLA's paid as a lump sum, with no more COLA's by the end of the contract. How kind of them. I think this is one reason that they never settle a contract on time. They know that the first COLA is going to be a lump sum payment, which probably saves them millions over time. What we got are our COLA's that combined with the pay increases, will add around \$276 dollars to our pay checks. They wanted family health care to cost us an additional \$1300 per year. Over 5 years, that is \$6500. Instead we will be paying 5% more by the end of the contract, well less than what they offered. The Post Office also wanted to cut annual leave, sick leave, night shift premium, Sunday premium, and overtime premiums. That didn't happen. They wanted more low paid no benefit workers, via casuals and contracting out. Well no more casuals and a NO to contracting out of existing work.

It's too bad that scabs get the benefits of our Unions labor and our union dues. The scabs should be thanking each and every union member, because without us, they would not be seeing any of the benefits of this contract.

OK, on to a major problem. Here at the Mt. McCoy Station we have been having some trouble with our vacation hold mail. A year and a half ago I wrote in the Mail Bag News (March-April 2006 issue) about a problem with our vacation hold mail system. The problem then was that vacation hold mail was being held up to 18 months past its redelivery date. Well, here we go again. The Post Office should put a disclaimer for the customers to read, **"Your mail is held at your own risk. Not responsible for misplaced vacation hold mail, your mail given to another customer, or untimely redelivery of your mail. Mail may be held up to 18 months past redelivery date."**

I was out for 6 weeks (not my choice, but a story to be told next time), and when I came back, a customer told me that when he went to the Post Office to get his mail after a vacation, the Station Manager told him that he didn't have any mail. The Station Manager asked him if he was sure he put

in a hold! She talked to him in a way that sounded like she thought he was nuts. By the way, the guy whose mail was held for 18 months told me the same thing about the Station Manager. Anyway, the customer also told me that his mail showed up 2 weeks later. I went to my manager with this story, and he told me that he knew all about it. He told me that the Station Manager went to get 2 different customers vacation hold mail, and gave my customers mail to the wrong person. **That's great.**

Our vacation hold mail is held at a central location at my office. We have to rubber band each vacation hold address together, or it won't be picked up. This time of year (summer) it could take a few minutes. By the way, our Station Manager said at a standup we get zero time to do this. For the past month now vacation mail has not been picked up by the clerks each day. It has sat for days at our cases. At one point, after finally being picked up, there were 5 U-Carts full of vacation mail waiting to be sorted to their hold slots. Customers coming back from vacation during this time were not getting all their mail.

To make matters worse, when we get the vacation mail back for redelivery or when the customers pick it up, there is mail for other addresses mixed in. It is such a mess. Our Delivery Managers are helpless in this matter; the Station Manager has total control and is completely to blame for this mess. Management says they care, but they don't. They say that they are short handed. I have a solution. Work your clerks on overtime if you have to, to get the job done. That would show Management cared.

PM Cage clerks are hard to find these days. I think they may soon be an endangered species. I was lucky to see one once in it's natural habitat. Yes, the cage. A few weeks ago, I came back and management could not get me a cage clerk to clear my accountables, again. They make you feel like a jerk for wanting to be cleared for stuff they make you sign for. Most people just leave their accountables on the cage shelf, and leave it at that. I normally don't do that. I can't tell you how much extra overtime I have gotten from waiting for a cage clerk. Anyway, this time I had a Registered and I was not going to leave it. My manager said, **"Give it to me, and I will clear it for you"** I said, **"No, I need to see it cleared."** He said, **"What, don't you trust me?"** I wanted to say no, but I chickened out, and said, "What if I give it to you, and before you clear it, you drop dead, and the Registered falls under something. They will be looking for me the next day asking for it." After I gave it

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SUMMERTIME CELEBRATION

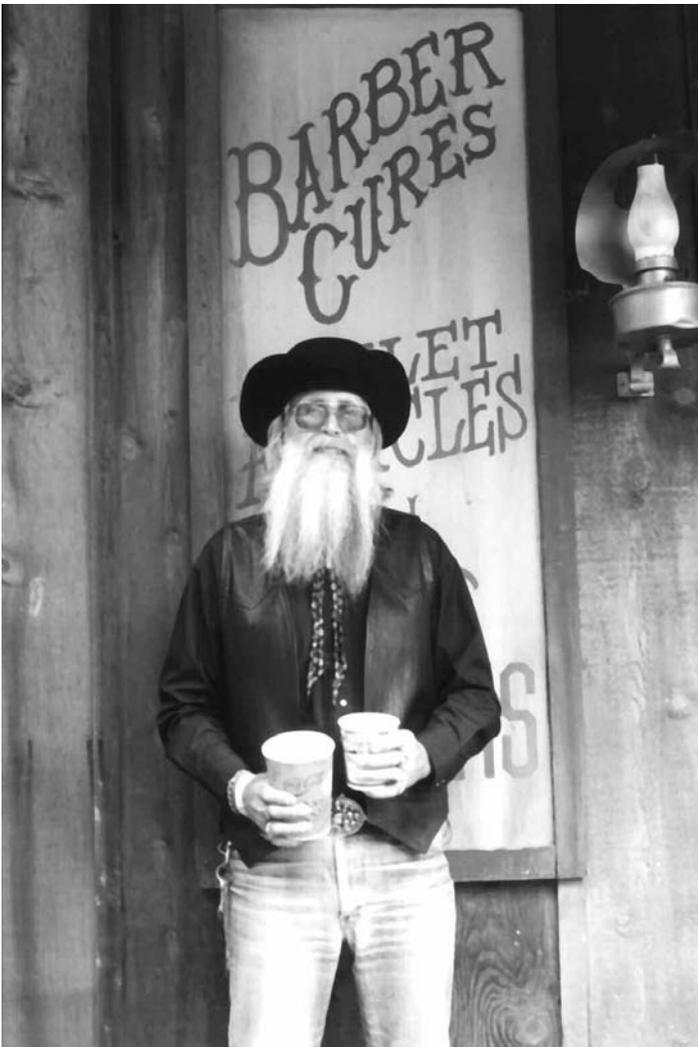


*BRANCH 2902
ANNUAL PICNIC 2007*

CHANGES...

Continued from page 5

be, A Carrier who served his patrons for more than 24 years on route 710. A Carrier who is a member of the million mile club. A Carrier who rarely called in sick, and a Carrier who did not run the crap out of his route simply to please management or in hopes of being picked for more overtime use. That is Bill Speer. Bill had over 40 years in as a Letter Carrier here in Woodland Hills, and the way he went was classic Bill Speer. The man never said a word to anyone about the fact that he was retiring, including management who was shocked when Bill failed to show up for work on September 4th, the day after the Labor Day holiday. You see Bill had arranged with Shared Services weeks in advance to retire on this date, however, someone at Shared Services failed to inform management at the local level of Bill's impending retirement and it completely caught management off guard on the day after a holiday when they were already several routes down. It was Bill's last one finger salute to a Postal Service that he has seen a hell of a lot of changes to over the past 40 years. Bill is one of the last remaining Carriers who was around for the strike that paved the way for the original Post Office to reform into what we now know as the Postal Service.



“Wild” Bill Speer finally decides to Hang’ em up.

Bill was always a big supporter of the union and he was also a big supporter of me as I went from a fledgling Letter Carrier to a Union Steward (even though he warned me many years ago that I was making a big mistake) and now as Vice President of this great branch. I personally want to thank him for his professionalism as a Carrier and his Friendship. As diehard Raider fans we have been through a lot of ups and downs together. I believe that we all will miss seeing that old 57’ Chevy pull into the parking lot every day. Good luck in your retirement Bill.

Saying Good-By

Another big change that is about to occur is the retirement of Branch 2902’s Senior Vice President, Mike Steele. Mike has been an integral part of this branch as both a Steward and an officer for as long as I have been working for the P.O.

Although I was not around for it, I know that Mike was basically responsible for North Hollywood merging from its own local into Branch 2902. North Hollywood is a very big office and it really helped to make up a large part of this branch as we know it today.

Mike has been through a hell of a lot in his years as a Steward in North Hollywood, especially having to deal with a Postmaster the likes of Dale Herbert.

Mike has actually been retired as a Carrier from the P.O. for many years but has continued on as the Senior Vice President of this branch. He has also continued to fill in as a Steward at many of the offices covered by this branch that have lacked the presence of a Steward, including most of the North Hollywood Stations and the Sylmar station of San Fernando.

I first got to know Mike many years ago when I saw that our branch was having this huge picnic that it put on for all the members and their families and Mike was practically alone in putting it together. Yes Mike had 4 or 5 guys who helped him out but he was the one who completely organized the picnic, bought all the supplies, set up the facilities, did all the cooking and spent days at his home preparing the ingredients for his famous chili. This is a huge branch and it takes a small army to put on a spread like that. I became involved along with the others to help Mike in this undertaking. Let me tell you that I have never worked so hard or so long in my life. Mike and “the crew” would start very early in the morning setting up, serving up, cooking, pouring beer and then cleaning up until late into the evening.

The picnic for this branch has now become so big that we simply “contract out” (sound familiar) the job so that those of us who used to put in 12 hour days putting on the picnics may now enjoy the time with our friends and family like the rest.

Anyway, Mike was responsible for many years in insuring that everyone had a great time at the branch picnic and I have to admit that it just does not seem the same without Mike and “the crew” putting on the annual branch picnic.

For me Mike was always the utility guy that the branch would always turn to when it needed a spot to be filled. He knows the

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Happy Holidays from the MBA

By: Chris Alessi, MBA/NSBA Rep.



As this year quickly comes to an end it's a good time to look back and count our blessings for another year. This is also a good time to ask ourselves how much insurance protection does an individual or a family need? Because people are living longer these days, even under normal situations our life expectancy is not known, we do not know how long our time on this earth is.

When you decide how much insurance is needed you should always consider the following seven items: Final expenses, including funeral costs, Debts, including mortgage, Estate taxes, College expenses for all children, Survivor living expenses, Daily living expense, And lastly, Inflation.

So if you do not have any insurance or you would like to start with new insurance you can choose from five different plans that the MBA offers.

Foundation 2- A whole life insurance coverage plan that builds cash value and earns tax deferred interest.

Premium Choice- A Universal insurance plan that builds cash

value and you can stop and start premiums, or increase and decrease premiums at any time.

Start- A 20 year limited payment plan with fixed premiums. The policy is paid in full after 20 years and also has cash value.

Target 65- A whole life limited payment plan to age 65 with fixed premiums. The coverage stays in force throughout the insured's life and also has cash value.

Prime protection- A 5-year Term insurance plan that is renewable and convertible. This plan also includes a "Disability Waiver" that will pay your premiums if you become disabled.

In closing I just want to express my deepest condolences to all of the family and friends of Marva Golden. Marva was a good friend and a great union sister to all of the brothers and sisters who knew her. She was a great asset to our branch and she will never be forgotten.

I wish all of the members of Branch 2902 and their families a great Thanksgiving and a very Merry Christmas filled with Happiness, Peace, and Love.

God Bless You, in solidarity, Chris

VIRTUALLY IRREPLACEABLE...

Continued from page 3

enough to win a World Series.

Good luck in your retirement Mike and thanks for all the hard work you have done for the Branch. See you in Arizona in 2009.

On September 15, 2007 Marva Golden died. Marva was a Branch 2902 Steward at the Northridge Post Office for many years and she also served as a Branch Trustee in the past. Marva was our Assistant Health Benefits Officer at the time of her death.

On September 22, 2007 I attended the "homecoming celebration" for Marva and I found the service to be really uplifting. Marva's celebration was well attended by her Northridge Post Office co-workers, carriers and clerks alike. Many of the carriers that attended her service took extended lunches in order to be there.

When the service ended, they had to drive back to their routes

in pouring rain and then finish delivering the mail. Talk about going "above and beyond". Thanks to all of you Northridge carriers that were there for Marva.

Marva was a valuable asset to the Branch for many years and she too will be extremely difficult to replace. We all miss her very much.

Talk to you all in two months...



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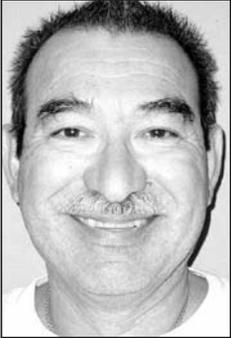
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Open Season...Your Opportunity to Step Up to a Better Plan

By: Joe Gutierrez, Health Benefits Officer



Again we have lost another great union member. Marva Golden passed away. She was the Assistant Health Benefits Representative and will be missed by everyone involved in union affairs. Whenever a volunteer was needed, her hand was always up no matter what the task. Marva we will always miss you.

Another year has come and gone. I can't believe how fast it happens. I don't know if it is because I am older or the years are shorter, I know it can't be because I am working harder.

November is on its way and with it so is open season, the time of year when we have a chance to change insurance providers. If you have the N.A.L.C. plan and make no changes, you will continue to have an excellent plan. Those of you enrolled in the other plans now have a chance to enroll in one of the best plans available.

The N.A.L.C. plan is changing our Hospital and Medical

Provider to the Healthcare Shared Administration PPO Network.

In 2008 if you are covered with Medicare A and B you still pay no out of pocket expenses for covered charges.

The N.A.L.C. premium for employees for 2008 has been reduced, the premium is \$32.61 for self (down \$6.19) and \$54.54 for self and family (down \$6.31), a great saving. I don't believe the other plans have a reduction, if so not as large.

Cigna will have an increase of hospitals and PPO providers compared with Coventry or First Health. You can check with the website to see if your doctor is a PPO provider, if not you can submit their name to Cigna and they will determine to include that physician in their PPO plan. Go to www.nalc.org and go to the health benefits department to verify if your doctor is part of the network plan.

By the time you read this in the Mail Bag News I will have attended the HB seminar. They will discuss in depth all the plans under Cigna.

Tribute to Bev Mattes

By: Yvette Krogh, Retired Carrier, Ojai

I too, want to add a tribute to Bev Mattes. I was truly saddened to read of her passing. What a wonderful president she was.

She and Jon Gaunce were the forces behind the Ojai Post Office becoming members of Branch 2902. I am just as shocked to hear of Bev's death as I was Brother Jon's.

We had many problems in Ojai at this time and Jon or Bev, or both of them would stop by unannounced to check on things. I can't tell you what that meant to me as a letter carrier in that office. They taught me what my rights were and how to stand up for them.

I have been retired for ten years, since June of 1997.

I could not have made it to retirement without Bev on my side.

Due to space limitations, the MBN was unable to include this article in the last issue. However we wanted to include it now as we had afforded all who wanted to be as part of our tribute to Bev.

"Suppose you were an idiot. And suppose you were a member of Congress.... But then I repeat myself."

— Mark Twain

CHANGES...

Continued from page 11

union hall like the back of his hand and on many occasions when nobody else knew where to look for certain items Mike would know exactly where it was and could make it appear in just a matter of minutes.

Guys like Mike Steele are not just difficult to replace, they are impossible to replace and this branch has been very lucky to have him since the days of the merger with Jon Gaunce at the helm.

I know that Mike and Jon were very close and it must have been difficult for Mike to see not one but two of the great leaders of this branch pass on at such young ages.

I know that Mike has been waiting patiently for his wife Gail to retire so that they could move to Arizona and live out the American retirement dream. I wish him and Gail nothing but the best and I am sorry to see someone that I have been proud to call my friend leave our branch. He will always be remembered as a legend in branch 2902's history. Good luck Mike and happy retirement. The state of Arizona will be much better off with you as one of its citizens.

Saying Good-By Part II

Unfortunately, here I again have to send my condolences to the family of one of my fellow union officers. Marva Golden was the Chief Shop Steward of the Northridge P.O. for many years and Branch 2902's Assistant Health Benefits Representative. She also served as a Trustee for the branch

PRESIDENT'S REPORT...

Continued from page 8

passed away last September from complications of diabetes. Marva was a good friend and Unionist. She was always involved in Union activities and she was always there to lend a helping hand. Marva adored her grandchildren and loved taking photos. We will all miss her dearly. Rest in peace Marva, we all will miss you.

Steele Retires (again)

Well, well, 47 years of Union activity seems to be enough for long time NALC member and Branch 2902 Senior Vice President Michael Steele. Mike has been around longer than most of us have been alive. Mike I believe retired from the Postal Service back in 1997 from the Valley Village Office in North Hollywood. Mike has been working for the Branch in some capacity ever since I have been around. I can't say enough about the guy. Mike has always been willing to work for the Branch with or without pay. He always did whatever we asked of him and he did it well. Mike put on the picnics way back when we first started. He gathered the supplies, shopped for the food, organized the help and transported the goods. He also cooked, cleaned and made sure everything went according to Hoyle.

Steele also does all the cooking at our Branch meetings, and

for many years. Marva was a wonderful union activist and a regular contributor to the Mail Bag News with her biting commentary on the management of the Northridge P.O.

Marva was a true asset to this branch and will be sorely missed. Although she was in failing health for the past few years she was always in attendance at the union meetings and a fixture when seeking a motion to adjourn them. I make a motion to the man upstairs to allow Marva through the Pearly Gates. Do I have a second?

The Biggest Change

As all of you know by now the biggest change is that we as a union have ratified our new 5 year contract with the Postal Service. Is it perfect? No. Are there things that I do not like? Yes. However this union had enough strength to put pressure on the Postal Service to return to the bargaining table and resolve the outstanding issues that kept us from having to proceed to arbitration. That in and of itself is enough to cheer over. It means that we do not have to hold our collective breath while we leave our fate in the hands of an outsider with whom we have no way of knowing how they will rule. I have always hated it when we have had to go to arbitration. I always feel like we have no say-so in our future when we do. Thanks to your voices being heard in Washington D.C. by our representatives, the Postal Service "saw the light" and figured that they had better resolve the impending contracting out issue (if only on a temporary basis) or Congress may settle it for them. I only hope that the leaders of this union will be able to hammer out a permanent solution to the issue of contracting out before this latest contract expires. The future of our jobs and the Postal Service are riding on it!

a hell of a cook is he. Mike did a little bit of everything for the Branch. We need something fixed, call Mike. Need an office covered, call Mike. Need some supplies, call Mike. No other officer around, call Mike. Most of all Mike has been a good and faithful friend that you can trust to help you out when you need help the most. Branch 2902 is going to have a big loss when he finally retires to his new home in Arizona. And, when he finally hangs up that old satchel, we wish him the best of health and a long and happy retirement. Best of luck Mike!

2007 Picnic

If you weren't there, you missed a good one. The Branch's 2007 picnic was a great success. Believe it or not many members had not attended a picnic before, and did so for the first time this year. Some had not attended in years, but all were pleasantly surprised at the location in the Agoura Hills and how smooth things went. It was a nice sunny day, blue skies with mild temperatures. There was plenty of green grass, shade, and seating. The kids had a blast in the pool and on the 274 ft. water slide, inflatable obstacle course, and jump houses. There was also lots of fun with the picnic games, face painters, and cotton candy. The food was good and the beer was cold until it ran out, but all in all it was a very good time of fun and fellowship. If you missed this one, come and check it out next year. It was fun for the kids and a nice day for the adults to kick back, eat, drink, and socialize. All for now back in two.

Union Meeting

**August 21, 2007
Newbury Park**



President Salazar called the meeting to order at 7:10 PM. Sergeant-at-Arms Bob Golden led the pledge of allegiance. Roll call of officers was done. Asking to be excused were Mike Steele, C.C Flatts, James Ferryman, Yvette Solache, Angel Hale, Fred Shaw and Joe Vedder. Sandy Gaunce makes a motion to excuse these members, S/C.

Everyone is reminded to sign the attendance book and that there are raffle tickets for sale.

Membership reviews the July 17 meeting minutes.

Ernestine Hernandez makes a motion to accept the minutes as printed, S/C.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

List of offices that will undergo route inspections is reviewed. The Branch is conducting a route inspection school on Thursday, August 30th from 6-8:30PM.

Branch picnic- September 9, at Vasa Park in Agoura. Sign up sheets are sent out to stewards.

No Limit Texas Hold'em tournament to benefit Muscular Dystrophy, Saturday, October 20 beginning at 7:00PM at the Union Hall in Chatsworth. This is a joint fundraiser with Branch 4006.

September 1st is Labor Union night at the Irwindale Speedway. NASCAR races that night offer 1/2 off of the regular \$15.00 admission. Show your union card at box office or buy tickets online with promo code LUN0901.

Ballots for ratification vote due back by August 27. Computer glitch caused about 16,000 members to not get ballots. National is working to fix the problem.

COMMUNICATIONS

Membership discusses the upcoming fall route inspections.

New steward training to be provided by the Business Agents office on Thursday, October 18, and Thursday, November 15 from 6-9PM at the Branch 2902 union hall in Chatsworth. Training session is open to all branches in the area.

Business Agent's office is also doing a Local Memorandum of Understanding school. Those interested in opening up their local agreement in October should attend. Date will be announced.

President Salazar speaks on the tentative contract and the newest provisions, including the provisions regarding the TE's.

Flat sequencing issues are discussed by the membership.

COMMITTEES

Recreation- Paulette Dyer has LA Zoo coupons, Gene Autry Museum coupons and LA County Fair tickets. She donates a See's candy tote for tonight's raffle.

COLCPE- Ernestine Hernandez announces the details for the contest for Superbowl tickets. Sign up members for donating to COLCPE. Winner of last contest announced in latest Postal Record.

Retirees- Don Minster announces the retiree lunch will be on September 20 at Hometown Buffet in Simi Valley.

Health Benefits- Joe Gutierrez announces that proposals for next year have been submitted to OPM. Joe and President Salazar will be attending the Health Benefit seminar in October.

MBA/NSBA- Chris Alessi reports on Maturity Income Plus plan. Allows you to supplement your retirement, has flexible premiums, optional benefits to choose from. Currently drawing 5 ^%. Interest earned is tax deferred until withdrawn. Can be used as an IRA. Partial withdrawals allowed. New brochures are coming out in 2009 for insurance policies because of adjustments in life expectancies.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS - Chris Alessi makes a motion to adopt a unanimous E-Board recommendation for ratification of the proposed contract, S/C.

Membership reviews the proposed budget for 2007- 2008. Ernestine Hernandez makes a motion to accept the proposed budget, S/C.

EVP Paul Drapkin makes a motion to set aside by-laws and move the October 16 meeting to October 23 due to President Salazar being out of town attending the Health Benefit seminar. Vote taken, motion fails.

Becky Seeley makes a motion to excuse Laura Walters from the June meeting, S/C.

GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION

T-shirts are presented to branch volunteers for their volunteerism in the upcoming campaign.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Membership discusses the upcoming route inspections and reviews some MOU's and arbitration decisions regarding route inspections.

Light duty issues are discussed and reviewed by the members.

Membership reviews the Treasurer's report. Marian

Walters makes a motion to accept the report as printed, S/C

Manva Golden makes a motion to adjourn, S/C.

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Union Meeting

September 18, 2007
Chatsworth

President Salazar called the meeting to order at 7:1 OPM. Roll call of officers was taken. Asking to be excused were Laura Walters, Yvette Solache, and Fred Shaw. Joe Gutierrez makes a motion to excuse these members, S/C.

Members are reminded to sign the attendance book. Debbie Riggs is selling the 50/50 tickets for tonight's meeting. Membership reviews the minutes from the August 21 meeting. Ted Wells makes a motion to accept the minutes as printed, S/C. Bills should be submitted at this time.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

With regrets President Salazar announces the passing of our dear Marva Golden. She was currently the Asst. HBR for the branch. She was previously the shop steward for Northridge, and a past trustee for the branch. She passed away on September 15. Details for her services will be sent out as soon as they are known. Art Arroyo a retiree from Ventura recently passed away. Leiand Fry, an active carrier from North Hollywood also passed away. President Salazar asks for a moment of silence for these recently departed brothers and sister.

MDA fund-raiser on Saturday, October 20 at this Union hall.

Texas Hold'em tournament held jointly with Canoga Park branch 4006. Flyers with details in tonight's handout, and on branch website.

Sandy Gaunce announces that MDA is sponsoring a Walk-a-thon on October 27 at Balboa Park and wants to get some teams together for this fund-raiser also. There will be food, refreshments and entertainment. Details will be announced.

OPM announced that NALC healthplan costs would be reduced for 2008. Active carriers, self only will be \$32.61, self and family will be \$54.54 per pay period. Annuitants, self only will be 127.40, self and family \$247.00 per month.

Beginning steward training conducted by NBA's office on 10/18 and 11/15, here at the Union hall. The NALC is looking for members who are interested in becoming stewards to attend.

COMMUNICATIONS

Contract Update- The contract was overwhelmingly ratified. Details of when cash payment and retroactive payments will be made are not known at this time. Assembly Joint Resolution 27- The California State Assembly went on record opposing the contracting out of letter carrier jobs. This resolution will be sent to the President of the United States, members of Congress and the Senate, and PMG Potter. CSALC President John Beaumont was a driving force behind this resolution.

President Salazar gave a report on the State Leadership conference.

Agoura, Northridge and Mt.McCoy fall route inspections have been canceled. North Hollywood will now undergo route inspections.

President Salazar reported on the September 9th branch picnic.

The President's meeting held at Santa Clarita highlights discussed, DRT report, grievance activity.

COMMITTEES

Recreation- Paulette Dyer reports that she will have information at the November meeting for a 2008 Laughlin trip.

COLCPE- Ernestine Hernandez gives updates on the number of branch members who currently contribute, and reminds the members of the contest for Superbowl tickets.

Retirees- Don Minster announces the next luncheon will be on September 20th at Hometown Buffet, Simi Valley.

Health Benefits- Joe Gutierrez reports on the upcoming changes in the NALC Healthplan.

MBA/NSBA- Chris Alessi reports on Foundation 2, a whole life insurance plan, which includes a disability rider.

NEW BUSINESS-

Greg Gaddis makes a motion, asking to be excused from the August 21st meeting, S/C.

Ernestine Hernandez makes a motion to send the President, EVP, Senior VP, Vice President, and Recording Secretary to the National Training conference in Las Vegas on November 16-18, R/T airfare, two nights lodging, and three days per diem, \$40.00 travel expenses, and up to 2 days lost time, seconded.

Secretary German makes a motion to amend the motion to exclude the Senior VP from the conference due to the Senior VP's intended retirement from office, seconded.

Point of information called, By-laws were reviewed, and the motion to amend was ruled out of order. Back to the original motion made by Ernestine Hernandez, motion carries.

GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION

25-year pins were presented to Ralph Esparza-N.Hollywood, Oliver Logacz-N.Hollywood, Susan Degenhardt-Thousand Oaks, Jim Johnson-Thousand Oaks, James Kusch- Woodland Hills, and Gary Traba-Pacoima.

Membership reviews the TSP returns chart in tonight's handout.

Ignacio (Nacho) Castellanos is presented with a T- Shirt for volunteering to help with upcoming elections.

Know your rights-

Route inspection provisions reviewed and discussed.

continued on page 17

NOTES FROM MT MC COY...

Continued from page 9

to him, I followed him around a while to see if he was going to live long enough to clear it. A week later, while I was waiting for a cage clerk again, I read a sign they have posted on the cage. It was about Registered accountably. I don't think anyone has ever read it, not even management. The very last line on the sign tells you, "NEVER give up a registered without getting a signed receipt for it." So the next time a manager says to me, "What, don't you trust me?" I'll point to his sign and say, "**What, don't you read your own sign?**" One day I only had some postage due money to turn it, it took 10 minutes, on overtime. I got paid more for the time waiting for the cage clerk, than the money I had to turn in.

Do you ever wonder why management can waste as much money as they want, but if you get back one click late, they are all over you? Case in point, the Tuesday before the Harry Potter books came out, they called a stand up. The only subject was, if you get a Harry Potter book before Saturday, don't deliver it. Then on Friday, at another stand up, we spent another couple of minutes on this subject again. We only received one Harry Potter book before Saturday. It came on Friday, and this was after all the carriers left. Management spent from what I figure to be 3 to 4 man hours on this subject. **What a waste.**

Another case in point, management was doing a one day

NEWBURY PARK...

Continued from page 19

Sonny Castellano won the 50/50 raffle for \$15.00, Becky Seeley won the door prize, and Ernest Morrison, a retiree from Oxnard was the name drawn for the membership raffle for \$1371.50. He was not present to win.

Respectfully submitted by Susan Degenhardt, Recording Secretary

CHATSWORTH...

Continued from page 20

Holiday mandate provisions were reviewed and discussed.

Membership reviews the Treasurer's report. Chris Alessi makes a motion to accept the report as written, S/C.

Lori Stewart makes a motion to adjourn the meeting in honor of Marva Golden, S/C.

Carmen Lucio won the 50/50 drawing for \$28.00. Felix Esparza, Mike Fontenette, and C.C. Flatts won the door prizes that Bob Schultz from Brookfield donated to the branch.

Valentina Aparicio from San Fernando could have claimed membership drawing for \$1409.50 if she had been present at the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by Susan Degenhardt, Recording Secretary

count on a carrier near me. Two managers took her into the office because she wasn't picking up enough flats at a time. What a waste of time. As we all know, with the way flats come, upside down (I will have whole stacks come this way) letters mixed in with the flats, flats falling on the floor when you try to pick them up (sometimes they fall from the breeze created by a passing manager) flats pushed up to the sides of the flat rack, flats folded over addresses, flats inside of flats, buckets on the floor. I believe that the regulation is to pick up 6" of flats at a time, but when they come this way, you are lucky to pick up 6 flats at a time. This regulation was written when we got our flat mail in an organized way. I know the mail comes from a machine now. There are times that my flat rack looks like a 5 year old placed the flats there. Management should look at their inability to get our mail to us in an orderly way first before they try to push outdated regulations down our throats. Hey, at times, there were up to 4 managers watching this carrier. Just another foot note, the last time a manager did a one day count on this carrier, the manager quit that day. This other manager is now gone as well and good riddance. He was starting to be a problem, sorry Moorpark. This guy is a fallen Postmaster. Why does the Post Office try to recycle bad management personal, and inflict them on hard working Carriers?

Let's explore the one day count a little more. Management was conducting one day counts in our office on what I think they consider to be problem people. I asked several carriers what deficiencies management found on their work and was told, "Nothing." So, management spent 8 hours following around these carriers for nothing? What a waste. I was told by a carrier that the information for their one day count was thrown out because of the up coming route inspections. Now wait a minute. The ex-Postmaster told me that our union won a grievance in Santa Ana that one day counts had to be done on every route before a route inspection. Now all his **HARD** work is in the waste can. Why? Because he didn't do **HIS** job and find something wrong? Management has **WASTED HUNDREDS** of dollars on these one day counts. One carrier clocked off one click late a few days ago, and there were several managers scolding her. I just hope someone high up in Postal management reads this and scolds the managers at my office for wasting countless hours on this nonsense.

One last thing. Why does it only take 2 managers to manage our office on a Saturday, but 4 to 5 managers to do so during the week? Is it because they just use their best managers on Saturday? Is it because they don't have enough managers to schedule on Saturdays? NOT. Or is it because you don't really need 4 to 5 managers. Think of the money the Postal Service can save here. My guess is it would be well over \$100,000 a year. That's just in my office. Think of the savings nation wide. But what do I know; I'm just a letter carrier.

Well that's it. Just one last thing to say, 3996 please, better make that two. Oh, I can be a stinker, can't !!!!!

In Memoriam

Marva N. Golden

Assistant HBR,
Retired Carrier-Northridge

Arthur M. Arroyo

Retired Carrier - Ventura

Leland E. Fry

Active Carrier - North Hollywood

RETIREES LUNCH

Where: Hometown Buffet
Vons Center
1855 Cochran Street
Simi Valley

When: Thursday,
November 15, 2007

Time: 11:30am to 12:30pm



Where: Hometown Buffet
Fallbrook Mall
6633 Fallbrook Ave.
West Hills

When: Thursday,
December 20, 2007

Time: 11:30am to 12:30pm



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- Dan Gorman

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- Susan Degenhardt

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- Don Minster

MBA/NSBA REP

- Chris Alessi

HEALTH BENEFIT OFFICER

- Joe Gutierrez

ASST. HEALTH BENEFIT

- Marva Golden

SGT.-AT-ARMS

- Bob Golden

TRUSTEES:

Beverly Sucich
Ernestine Hernandez
James Perryman
Sandy Gaunce
Sonny Castellano

“The more we learn the more we realize how little we know.”

R. Buckminster Fuller
(1895-1983)

SHOP STEWARD LIST

Agoura Hills Chief S.S.	Greg Gaddis
Chatsworth Chief S.S.	Angel Hale
Alternate	Sonny Castellano
Fillmore Chief S.S.	Call Office
Moorpark Chief S.S.	Lori Stewart
North Hollywood Chief S.S.	Mike Steele
Chandler	Mike Steele
Laurel Canyon	Steve Leyton
Studio City	Mike Steele
Valley Village	Mike Steele
Northridge Chief S.S.	Onofre Varela
Shop Steward/ Webmaster	Larry Orcutt
Porter Ranch	Call Office
Ojai Chief S.S.	Philip Navarro
Oxnard Chief S.S.	Ernestine Hernandez
Pacoima Chief S.S.	Steve Dickerson
	Art Hernandez
Port Hueneme	Call Office
Reseda Chief S.S.	Mike Longres
San Fernando Chief S.S.	James Perryman
M.C.A.	James Perryman
North Hills	C.C. Flatts
Sylmar / Main Office	Mike Steele
	Yvette Solache
Alternate	Gilbert Leon
Santa Paula Chief S.S.	Laura Walters
Simi Valley Chief S.S.	Sandra Gaunce
Mt. McCoy Station	Sandra Gaunce
Thousand Oaks Chief S.S.	Jim Mette
Newbury Park	Sue Degenhardt
Ventura Chief S.S.	Laura Walters
East Ventura	Laura Walters
Woodland Hills Chief S.S.	Joe Vedder
	Paul Drapkin

RECREATION NEWS

SEA WORLD:

Adults: \$45.00 (Reg. \$57.00)

Child: \$40.00 (Reg. \$47.00) ages 3-9

SEE'S GIFT CERTIFICATE:

\$11.50 (Retail Value \$14.10)

SIX FLAGS MAGIC MOUNTAIN:

2 FOR 1 Coupon

At monthly meetings (every third Tuesday of the month) coupons and flyers for various venues

Cookies for sale

Questions or any information can be obtained by contacting:

Recreation Director - Paulette Dyer

MIKE STEELE

Will Be Cooking

Spaghetti & Meatballs

at the November

Union Meeting

DINNER WILL BE SERVED AT

THE DECEMBER MEETING

DINNER starts at 6 p.m.

ATTENTION ALL DIRECT DUES PAYING RETIREES!

MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE DUE
AND PAYABLE, JANUARY 1, 2008

Please remit your \$24 to the branch office:

21540 Prairie Street. #C

Chatsworth, CA 91311

Attn: Dan Gorman

Financial Secretary-Treasurer

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

NOV 12 Veterans Day-Holiday



NOV 15 Retiree Lunch 11:30am
Hometown Buffet-Simi Valley

NOV 20 Regular Branch Meeting 7pm
Union Hall-Chatsworth
Dinner served 6pm

NOV 22 Thanksgiving Day-Holiday



DEC 4 Executive Board Meeting 6pm
Council Meeting 7pm

DEC 5 Hanukkah Begins



DEC 18 Regular Branch Meeting 7pm
Union Hall-Chatsworth
Dinner served 6pm

DEC 20 Retiree Lunch 11:30am
Hometown Buffet-West Hills

DEC 25 Christmas Day-Holiday *Happy Holidays*

JAN 1 New Years Day-Holiday



JAN 8 Executive Board Meeting 6pm
Executive Council Meeting 7pm

***Note that this is a change from the 1st
Tuesday of the month to the 2nd Tuesday
due to the January 1st Holiday***

THE MAIL BAG NEWS

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