



# THE Mail Bag NEWS

★ SOLIDARITY

★ EDUCATION

★ ORGANIZATION



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

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## It's A Wrap Term Ending Report

By Frank Salazar, President



**F**irst of all, I would like to thank the membership for nominating and electing me and my team by acclamation. We have been trying to do our best in representing our membership in all phases of grievance activity whether it's a disciplinary issue or a contractual issue. And, as I will describe

shortly, our team has done a more than adequate job. Per The Constitution for the Government of Subordinate and Federal Branches, specifically Article 6, Duties of Officers, President, it's my pleasure to offer this term ending report on the progress and condition of our Branch.

### Finances

Financially speaking, Branch 2902 is in excellent fiscal health. The Branch has no debt and a contingency fund of over \$385,000. Our Branch leadership has been fiscally responsible and prudent in the allocation of our funds. However, the Branch membership has been in a steady decline. It's not because of representation issues or dissatisfaction. Rather, it deals with the decline in mail volume, Management's need to reduce the number of employees, early retirements, the National Reassessment Plan placing carriers off work or in other crafts, and the excessing of employees to other Branches or crafts due to the implementation of the FSS machines.

When I first started this term in January of 2009, the Branch had a total of 1414 active members of which 1380 were paying dues. Historically, the Branch has not billed members for dues when they have been on LWOP, disability or NRP. As of pay period 23 of 2011, the Branch currently has a total of 1214 active members of which 1184 are

dues paying. The numbers reflect a decline of 200 active members from 2009-2011, and a total decline of 196 total paying members. The numbers will only get worse as volumes continue to decline, more FSS machines come on line, or more early outs are offered. If the USPS goes to 5-day delivery, the situation may become more challenging. Therefore, the Branch has to start preparing today for what may happen tomorrow. In order to remain fiscally sound and to hold costs down, we had to decide not to continue with the annual branch picnic and to only have general membership meetings at Gaunce Hall eliminating our meeting in Newbury Park five times a year. We did not want to take these actions, but the Branch's first duty is protection of the membership through representation and contract enforcement and that's where our focus has always been and will continue to be.

### Organization

I take great pride in the fact that we have an open shop and that we are over 94% organized. During our last 3 year term, Tri-Valley Branch 2902 won three consecutive annual awards (2009-2010-2011) for Membership Organization. The Branch was awarded First Place in Organization among all California Branches with more than 1000 members. I believe that this only reflects the confidence that our Membership has in its current leadership team. However, we can do better. Our goal has always been 100% membership. Although we might not get there, we always strive to educate every carrier on the benefits of joining the NALC. Now more than ever, we need to be organized in greater numbers. We are in the fight of a lifetime with our careers, economic stability, benefits, and work rules. If we don't stay strong and united, we can surely lose all that the

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT...

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previous generations had garnered for us. Talk to that non-member, and get them to join.

### Charity

Branch 2902 continues to be involved in the nation's largest food drive; The Letter Carrier Food Drive. Over the last 3 years, Branch 2902 has collected over 995,897 pounds of food that was distributed in our local communities. Branch 2902 is also involved in raising funds for The Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA). The Branch sponsors an annual MDA Poker Tournament and participates in the national MDA Bowl-A-Thon every November. During the year of the National Convention, the Branch donates, at the Convention, a minimum of \$2,902 raised through the poker tournaments and the Bowl-A-Thon. In the off years, the Branch not only donates funds it has raised to MDA, but also to the Saxsenmeier Scholarship Fund. The Saxsenmeier Scholarship Fund is administered by the California State Association of Letter Carriers and is open to the dependent children or grandchildren of members of NALC Branches within the State of California. The children of some of our Branch members have been a recipient of this scholarship in the past. These are truly worthy causes and we will continue to participate and raise funds in the next term.

### Legislation

Brothers and Sisters, whether you like it or not, we have to get politically involved and motivated in issues that affect us as working men and women, as families, and as Postal employees. We are not out to scare anyone. We don't have too. Just take a look at what some Congressmen and women are supporting. Many in Congress want to protect tax breaks for the super-rich and give tax breaks to the middle class by taxing the middle class or stripping benefits from senior citizens and the disabled. We have to be insane to elect these people. But, they get elected because many of us are apathetic or asleep. A recent bill in Congress supported by House Republicans, which passed in the House, H.R. 3630 the so-called Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2011 extends the current 2% payroll tax cut for one year in part by freezing federal employee pay for an additional year through 2013. It would also increase federal and Postal employee pension contributions by 1½% over three years and eliminate the retirement supplement that is paid to federal workers in lieu of social security for those in FERS who retire before age 62. I don't know about you, but I don't want to work until age 62, if I can retire at age 56! And, how do you call this a middle class tax cut, when the middle class is paying for this cut out of their own pockets?

Last term we had about 3½% of our membership giving to our political action committee, The Committee On Letter Carrier Political Education (COLCPE). At the end of this

term we have about 6½% donating to COLCPE. Even though we doubled the number of our membership donating to COLCPE, we need to get this number higher. Yes, we pay dues to negotiate a contract and enforce it, but we cannot use dues money to donate to politicians. All the money we donate to politicians is through voluntary contributions to COLCPE. COLCPE is job insurance for Letter Carriers. Remember, whatever we gain through negotiations can be stripped away through the legislative process. Just look at the states of Wisconsin and Ohio where conservative, right-wing, anti-union types are trying to strip collective bargaining rights from state employees, police, and fire fighters. However, giving to COLCPE is not enough. We have to get involved in activities like Carrier Corps, or attend a rally, or write or call a Senator or Congressman. On September 27, 2011, members of the Branch participated in rallies at Congressman Berman's and Gallegly's district offices to bring attention to Saving America's Post Offices and 6-Day delivery. Brothers and Sisters, for this term, get involved. Join the Branch in donating to COLCPE, join the Branch in a rally, join the Branch in a letter writing campaign, or join the Branch in a phone bank to get the vote out. We have to get involved. Don't rely on the other guy to get involved. Make an effort!

### Grievance Activity

Although the numbers are not complete for the last term (2009-2011), I have calculated the current numbers and the numbers are as follows:

Letters of Warning Rescinded-	247
Letters of Warning Reduced to Review Periods-	183
Suspensions Rescinded-	47
Suspensions Reduced to L.O.W. Or in Length-	108
Suspension Days Saved (If, they were to be served)-	1,153
Removals Rescinded/Settled-	25
Contract Cases Resolved-	2,512
Contract Cases Denied/Withdrawn-	87
Carriers Removed From Restricted Sick Leave-	44
Total Cash Settlements-	\$392,898.35
Total Overtime Hours Recovered-	4,557.01
Total straight-time Hours Recovered	2,189.74
Total A/L Leave Hours Recovered-	523.03
Total Sick Leave Hours Recovered-	929.95
Total Administrative Leave Hours Paid-	231.15
Total Penalty O.T. Hours Recovered	91.11

Converting the hours recovered at CC1 Step N for each of the years in the term plus the cash settlements recov-

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# Time Flies When You're Having Fun

By Ray Hill, Executive Vice-President

**H**appy New Year! It's Hard to believe that year 2012 is already here. The other day I was channel surfing while watching television and I came across "Back To The Future, Part 2", a movie that was made in 1989. I don't think I actually ever watched any of the "Back To the Future" Movies and I didn't watch Part 2 the other day while I was channel surfing. But I did press the "Info" button on my remote control and read that in the movie they went forward in time to the year 2015. I guess when the movie was made in 1989 the year 2015 seemed a long way off but here we are now in year 2012. My father was right when he used to tell me that the older you get, the faster time seems to fly by.

I am writing this as we wrap up year 2011 and there is currently a lot of tension in many of the Post Offices that I visit. What else is new? Letter Carriers are always under intense scrutiny from Management, especially in the FSS/COR Offices where the routes were not properly adjusted after the implementation of FSS. In some of the offices represented by Branch 2902, because of the incorrect base route times due to improper COR Adjustments, the carriers have to battle with Management on a daily basis over the amount of time that will be required for them to complete their routes. When COR creates a route that is **supposed to be** 8 hours then some Managers and Supervisors are of the usually incorrect opinion that the route really is an 8 hour route. Never mind the fact that the carrier has been consistently using 9 or 10 hours (or more!) to complete the route, DOIS says it should take 8 hours. I was talking to a carrier from the 91324 zone of Northridge today who told me that his case neighbor had been "arguing" with his Supervisor this morning over the supervisor's DOIS Projections for the day. The Carrier asked the Supervisor if he knew how many parcels or accountables the Carrier had to deliver today and the Supervisor told the carrier that no, he did not know how many parcels and accountables the Carrier had to deliver today. The Carrier then responded by asking the Supervisor how he could dispute the time the Carrier was requesting if he had not bothered to investigate the quantity of parcels and accountables the Carrier was asking additional time for but instead had relied solely on DOIS projections. Guess what? The Supervisor had no answer to that question. Therein lies one of the major inherent flaws in the DOIS projection system; parcels and ac-

countable items are not calculated into those projections.

The daily 3996 battle has to be the most aggravating part of the work day for many Letter Carriers and it is not limited only to the FSS/COR Offices. We as a Union have been writing about this battle and preaching (and writing) about the proper way to handle the battle for many, many years.

NALC Headquarters recently sent out the **2011 NALC LETTER CARRIER RESOURCE GUIDE** to all active (i.e. not retired) NALC Members. I hope you all took the time to read or at least skim through this excellent publication that was written at NALC Headquarters and should prove to be a very useful tool for Letter Carriers.

Chapter 1 Section 1 of this NALC publication is titled **"Daily Situations-PS Form 3996 and PS Form 1571...PS Form 3996 vs. Management's Daily Workload Projections"**. This section deals specifically with Letter Carriers daily battles with Management over DOIS Projections and reality. I urge you all to **at least** read pages 1 through 8 of this booklet and follow the instructions religiously. Remember to not lose your cool in the 3996 process; it just isn't worth the aggravation when you are dealing with a Supervisor who simply doesn't get it. Lord knows there are plenty of them to go around.

Speaking of tension, on the Management side, everyone from the Postmasters to the Managers to the front line Supervisors seem to be constantly on edge while dealing with the often unrealistic "goals" that they have been given from upper Management at the District, Area and Headquarters level. Most of these goals look good on paper but they don't translate too well to the reality of the workroom floor.

Local Management has always had a tendency to implement new "rules" in response to the unrealistic goals upper Management rams down their collective throats. Then, local Management rams these new rules down the Letter Carrier's collective throats, because, as we all learned quickly after starting our USPS careers, everything rolls downhill.

For example, Management sets an "absolute" time that they want carriers to be off the street, usually 5:00 PM or 6:00 PM at the very latest. Unless, of course, you are in an

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# Welcome 2012

By Chris Alessi, MBA/NSBA Representative

Happy New Year Brothers & Sisters, I hope you all had a great a holiday season. As we start another year I would like to explain some of the basics of the Disability Income Plus Plan. For the

150 members of Tri-Valley Branch who still have the plan, and to the 5,100 policies still in force your plan stays active. The MBA is no longer offers this plan, but at the last training seminar the director stated that the MBA will be looking into the possibilities of getting the plan again.

The Disability Income is a policy which provides a monthly indemnity to a NALC member when they are disabled from work and they are under a physician's care for the disability. The insured must meet three conditions:

**1-unable to do the material duties of regular occupation**

**2-under the care of a physician for the disability**

**3-Not engaged in any other gainful occupation**

The policy is guaranteed until the policy anniversary date after the insured's 65th birthday. There are three different Disability Income plans: Plan code **Y4573** issued between 1980 and 1990. Plan code **Y4578 & Y4579** issued between 1990 and 1993. The oldest plan Y4573 has only one benefit period – a maximum of 6 months {180 Days} with two benefit amounts available: \$500 or \$1000 per month. The newer plans Y4578 & Y4579 have two benefit periods and three benefit amounts.

## **Y4578**

Benefit Period – 6 months {180 days}

Monthly Amount - \$500, \$1000, \$1500

## **Y4579**

Benefit Period – 12months {360days}

Monthly Amount - \$500, \$1000, \$1500

There is an elimination period for these plans, the number of days beginning with the date that the total disability starts (Incurred date), for which no disability benefits are payable.

The Old Plan Y4573 Elimination Period is: 60 days for on-the-job injury and 14 days for off-the job injury or illness. For the newer plans Y4578 & Y4579 Elimination period is 14 days on or off the job injury or illness.

**Concurrent Disability-** Plan Y4573- At no time shall the insured be considered disabled from two or more disabilities concurrently. Plans Y4578 Y4579 if the total dis-

ability is caused by more than one injury or sickness, or from both, benefits will be paid as if was caused by only one injury or sickness.

**Recurrent Disability-** Plans Y4573– A disability is a recurrence of the prior disability if it is due to the same or related conditions and it occurs within 6 months after the end of the prior disability. Plans Y4578 & Y4579- A disability is a recurrence of the prior disability if it is due to the same or related conditions and it occurs within 12 months after the end of the prior disability. In these cases the disability will be considered a continuation of the prior period of disability whereas the maximum benefit period will be reduced by the number of days benefits were paid for the prior period or {periods} of disability.

**Exceptions to paid benefits –** Plan Y4573 will not pay benefits for suicide or any attempt thereat, whether sane or insane, intentional self-inflicted injuries or any attempted thereat, illegal use of drugs, war, or any act of war, declared or undeclared, or sustained while the insured is engaged in military service, commission of a felony or attempt thereat, pregnancy, childbirth, miscarriage or abortion, (except complications resulting there from), acute or chronic alcoholism, mental, nervous, or emotional disease or disorder. Plans Y4578 & Y4579 are act of war, whether declared or undeclared, normal pregnancy or childbirth, except complications resulting from them.

**Waiver of premiums Provision-**The old plan Y4573, MBA will waive the payment of any premiums due during the continuation of total disability, this waiver will continue until the next anniversary date after disability ends. The new plans Y4578 & Y4579 premiums will be waived after the elimination period while the insured is totally disabled until the disability ends, the insured is responsible for the payment of the premiums once the total disability ends.

**Grace Period-** The grace period for the payment of premiums is the same for all plans of the disability income plus insurance. The grace period is 31 days. If a premium payment is not paid on or before its due, the owner may pay the premium during the 31 days immediately following the due date. During the grace period, the policy remains in force. If the premium is unpaid at the end of the grace period, the disability income policy will terminate

In closing I just want to say thank you for all the members who voted for me as delegate to our next national convention in Minnesota, I will do my best to represent you all. Take Care, and Happy New Year

God Bless you, in solidarity, Chris



# MDA Bowl-A-Thon 2011

*By Sandy Gaunce, Branch 2902 MDA coordinator*

**O**n November 6th, our branch participated in the 3rd Annual NALC Bowl-A-Thon for MDA. This year we had 14 bowlers, bringing in a total of \$789. Everyone received a T-shirt and some also got MDA canvas tote bags.

Our bowlers and their high scores (sorry guys) were: Bev Sucich (120), Sue Degenhardt (113), Dan Gorman (148), Bob Golden (102), Frank Salazar (130), Jim Dearborn (135), David Hyman (174), Ray Hill (169), Matt Hill (118), Richard Uhlman (236), Paul Iwasaki (144), Louie Rodriguez (156), Stephen Kim (139), and Setu (Tattoo) Molina (267).

A big thank you goes out to Bob Golden for the large donation he collected for MDA, to Brunswick bowling alley in Simi Valley for donating the lanes and shoes for everyone, to Donut Time in Simi Valley for the donuts, to Yogi Reiley, APWU, for her donation, and to Dave Hyman for the bagels and cream cheese. Everyone had a lot of fun and I look forward to the 4th annual event.

A little history of the NALC and the Muscular Dystrophy Association. In 1953 our union became MDA's first national sponsor. That fall the Union organized the "Letter Car-

rier's march for Muscular Dystrophy" which raised over 3.4 million dollars. The letter carriers on their designated routes would mention to their customers about their mission to help MDA. They asked if they would like to donate anything to MDA, if so, to leave their porch light on. At the end of the day the carriers would stop by on their way home from work and pick up whatever donations the customer would have for MDA. Since that time the NALC has raised many more millions of dollars to help find a cure and to help those with neuromuscular diseases. This makes me very proud to be the MDA rep. for branch 2902. Thank you for all your support.

**Brad Roseling**  
General Manager

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**Pictured above are the participants of the MDA Bowl-A-Thon held in November of 2011. Everyone received a T-Shirt and a great time was had by all. The branch raised \$789.00 for a great cause. We hope to see even more of you next year for more fun and an even bigger donation to the MDA.**



# Not ready to give up yet... I'm just saying!

*By Angela Hale, Chatsworth Chief Shop Steward*

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I can imagine that all will be surprised that I am finally writing an article, but drastic times call for drastic measures. I have been away for a few months, and I have to say, we're not in Oz anymore! You might think that upper management would have figured all this out by now, but unfortunately they have not! They are still putting people in charge, which really should not be there. There is no "I" in team, and we are supposed to be "TEAM Players". What you have sent to us in Chatsworth, is someone who wants to make a name for her self, at any cost. So, how much do you want to spend, before you figure out that this one does not know the contract? She can sure talk on the phone half the day, but then what woman can't? I've seen the treatment of carriers, and I have noticed that males are treated differently than females. I guess, I should say, most males. That is, if there is something she wants from you. I wonder if that constitutes a hostile work environment?

God help you if you can't do what she wants. She gets an "A" at mocking. Our previous Postmaster was well liked, and I know for a fact that his employees would have done anything for him, and where is he? Well, he must have been doing something right, because I have heard Chatsworth has made more money than last year and was very productive. After all, we are the capital. I also want to tell all of you in Chatsworth, if you only hear that we're at the bottom, and we are the worst office, take pride in how hard we still work, and know that you are #1. There have been some obstacles, route adjustments, and routes overburdened, etc; you do what you can do. Don't let this OIC tell you to make it work, when the only way is from your lunch or break. Don't let her tell you when you are unloading your LLV, that you need to come and check in now while there is a clerk.

These are minutes from your street time, minutes that you will never get back! It's hard to make that percent to standard when there is no clerk to give you your accountable, mail, and no clerk to check you in. I am sorry that I wasn't back to work for JARAP, but I know that Laura was there, and you can't get any better.

## Looking forward to the 120-day reviews

I'm hoping that some of the routes with too much business can be tweaked, so the Service, in Postal Service, can improve. This is what we are, a company that provides a service. We make our money by selling postage to peo-

ple who are selling products and sending them across the country, or all around the world. Not everyone has a computer, and not everyone chooses to send an email, verses a card, or a letter. The "Service", is what makes us stand out.

The vote came in that we are the most trusted public servants, we didn't get that vote for no reason. All this talk of taking Saturday delivery away is crazy. I'm not sure how they think that by taking Saturday business, and giving it to our competitors is going to save them money. This action would certainly break us. UPS, and FEDEX, would be able to offer more jobs to thousands but the aftermath would be that USPS would stand to lose thousands of jobs.

So, who wins? Our SERVICE is our ticket, the extra mile, nobody does it better. Management should be looking around for other ways to make money, such as sending some clerks to get certified for Notary SERVICE, or maybe every office should have passport SERVICE? There are several options we can explore. Someone created the idea of "if it fits it ships", and "click and ship", that in turn created extra revenue. We should be as one, on the same page! I'm not ready to give up yet, are you?

I have been thinking about why we can't get it done as fast as management would like us to. I've come up with several things that I think will help us. We are probably going to need some help from Santa Clarita. #1, Try putting the DPS right side up, you know, so we can read it faster with less strain on the eyes, because it takes no time to turn around 500 letters! #2, Try putting DPS in trays that don't collapse in the middle when you pick it up, so that you don't have to spend the time picking it up off the ground. #3, Stop taking a coverage that is already in order, and take it apart and spin it, and send it to the carriers to throw. So, who's the Goose?? You just cost the carrier a lot of extra time. I'd rather have the extra clerk passing it out in the office, and using that clerk to also pass out accountable mail, and perhaps throw a parcel or two so we can make our leaving time. I'm just saying! I guess what I'm trying to tell management is that there are a lot of very knowledgeable people in each or your offices with all kinds of experience. "You can take a good look at a T-Bone steak by sticking your head up a Bulls Ass, but wouldn't you rather take the Butchers word for it?" I don't know, maybe it is about power, and who needs it. I'm guessing that those same people will be wondering what happened to the Postal SERVICE. Last but not least, #4, Take those scanners and

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# How Unused Sick Leave Affects your Annuity

*By Reg Jones, Columnist for the Federal Times*

**T**here seems to be a lot of confusion about what part unused sick leave plays in your annuity. The short answer is: The more you have, the bigger its role.

Before we get into the details of how sick leave can enhance your retirement benefit, let me clear up two common misunderstandings: First, sick leave can't be added to your service time to make you eligible to retire. Second, it can't be used in determining the amount of the special retirement supplement (SRS) available to some Federal Employees Retirement System retirees. The SRS is based on actual years and full months of FERS service.

Assuming you have met the age and service requirements to retire, you'll get credit in your annuity computation for every year and full month of actual service. Any hours of actual service that don't add up to a full month will be combined with any hours of unused sick leave, and the total converted to additional months of service credit.

Here's how that's done. Because annuities are paid on a monthly basis, a year is divided into 12 equal parts. The end results are 12 30-day months and a 360-day year. The number of hours in a work year, 2,087, is divided by 360 to count an annuity day as 5.797+ hours and a month as 174 hours.

There are differences in the way unused sick leave credit is applied under the Civil Service Retirement System and FERS. Retiring CSRS employees get full credit. Retiring FERS employees are entitled only to half credit until 2014 and full credit thereafter. Until the passage of Public Law 111-84 in 2009, FERS retirees weren't entitled to any unused sick leave credit. When an annuity has both FERS and CSRS components, the FERS component is increased only by the amount of sick leave earned under FERS. Any sick leave balance attributable to CSRS service is added separately.

Here are examples based on a 55-year-old employee with 30 years' service and 1,460 hours of unused sick leave whose high-three, or average salary over three consecutive years of highest pay, is \$80,000.

**Under CSRS:** Based on actual service, the initial annuity is \$45,000 ( $0.015 \times \$80,000 \times 5$  years, plus  $0.0175 \times \$80,000 \times 5$  years, plus  $0.02 \times \$80,000 \times 20$  years). Unused sick leave hours add eight months of credit totaling 1,391 hours, with 69 hours left over and dropped. The final CSRS annuity is \$46,072 ( $0.015 \times \$80,000 \times 5$  years, plus

$0.0175 \times \$80,000 \times 5$  years, plus  $0.02 \times \$80,000 \times 20.67$  years).

**Under FERS before 2014, where the employee has 20 years under FERS and 10 years under CSRS (of the 1,460 unused sick leave hours, 1,100 were under FERS):** Based on actual service, the initial FERS component of the annuity is \$16,000 ( $0.01 \times \$80,000 \times 20$  years). Half credit for the 1,100 unused sick leave hours adds 550 hours to the annuity service credit or three months — 522 hours with 28 hours left over and dropped. The final FERS annuity is \$16,200 ( $0.01 \times \$80,000 \times 20.25$  years).

The initial CSRS component of the annuity is \$13,000 ( $0.015 \times \$80,000 \times 5$  years, plus  $0.0175 \times \$80,000 \times 5$  years). Credit for the remaining 360 unused sick leave hours adds two months of service credit — 348 hours with 12 hours left over and dropped. The final CSRS annuity is \$13,267 ( $\$13,000 + .02 \times \$80,000 \times 0.167$  year). The total FERS/CSRS annuity is \$29,467.

**Under the same FERS/CSRS scenario in 2014 or later:** Full credit for the 1,100 unused FERS sick leave hours adds six months to the service credit — 1,044 hours with 56 hours left over and dropped. The FERS annuity component grows to \$16,400 ( $0.01 \times \$80,000 \times 20.50$  years). With the \$13,267 CSRS component, the final FERS/CSRS annuity is \$29,667.

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**"‘Classic’: a book which people praise and don't read."**

*-Mark Twain (1835-1910)*



# NEW KVETCH: ARE WE OUR OWN WORST ENEMIES?

*By Steve Leyton, North Hollywood Chief Shop Steward*

The newspapers, radio and TV are running lots of stories telling everyone that the Postal Service is going to be cutting service and laying-off workers. The NALC, by submitting petitions urging our legislators to enact the changes the postal unions are pushing for, made an effort to persuade congress to solve the Postal Service's problems. They asked all of us to obtain signatures on these petitions and send them to the union. I was disappointed about how few petitions I was able to contribute to the effort. I was disappointed in how few of us contributed at all. It's weird. Carriers express their concerns all the time about the uncertainty of the future of the Postal Service. Yet, when we had an opportunity to do something that could actually help, we fell short.

We have about 1200 active, uniformed members in branch 2902. Yet I almost never see more than 100 people at our meetings. Sometimes fewer and many are officers or stewards. That's less than 10% showing up. Or you could see it as more than 90% "no-shows". "So what?" you might say, "I pay my dues so that the officers and shop stewards will take care of things. That's what they're paid for." I've got news for you. There is a very strong connection between how successful any union is and how much the members participate. As I try to do two jobs at once at my office, I have often heard carriers proclaiming, "Why am I paying dues if (insert beef here) can happen?" Inevitably, the carriers making the noise have either never been to a branch meeting or have been to a couple of meetings during the course of their careers.

Two major issues affect you every day. First, our contract with the government, the source of your continuing employment, was negotiated by the union, on your behalf, with management at the highest level. If you have a problem with the way that's done, I suggest you actually read that contract. How do you propose to improve it? The union negotiators would like to know.

Whatever your opinion of Postal Management, don't forget that the U.S. government has been negotiating labor contracts since the American Revolution. Our top union officials are letter carriers. That's right. They may be full-time union officials at the moment, but they started as letter carriers like you. But they were carriers who found that they wanted to make a difference. That includes our branch 2902 officers, too.

I think our NALC negotiators do a great job. But the cur-

rent negotiations are taking place in the middle of an economic depression. Our negotiations are also strongly influenced by congress. Congress is populated, to a staggering degree, by people who want to end all government jobs so they can be done by private companies who don't have to pay their workers a living wage. What is even more unbelievable is the number of letter carriers who vote for these vultures.

I've had the honor of either meeting all of our NALC leaders, or hearing them speak. Without exception, they are sharp, and are dedicated to protecting carriers and to the improvement of our jobs. And they work hard, from President Fred Rolando down to our local 2902 officers.

NALC national Secretary-Treasurer, Jane Broendel, for example, described her experience after becoming a letter carrier, "Within five months, I was actively involved because it didn't take me long to see how the union assisted letter carriers," she said. "The support, education and representation offered by the union motivated me—and so did witnessing others' difficulties with management on the workroom floor."

Which brings me to the second major issue: Many of my coworkers on the office floor have so many expectations. They seem to believe that shop stewards possess magic wands that erase any kind of irritation. They believe that shop stewards have universal knowledge of every activity occurring at the office by every employee at all times. They don't need to tell stewards about violations, we should already know. They don't need to produce evidence, make a written statement or go to the trouble of making a written note about something they have witnessed. They don't need to learn the rule that is being broken. Shop Steward will fix everything, automatically. Puh-hlleeeeeeeez!

The USPS and the NALC (us carriers) have a legally binding contract that must be met by both parties. You and management must both live up to the terms of that agreement. You do your job, delivering mail with integrity, safely and efficiently. They do their job, which is facilitating your job. That is, everything they do is meant to be in support of what you do. Right? Look at it this way, if what management is doing is making it harder or impossible for you to do your job, then it's probably a violation.

The shop steward is the policeman for the contract. We're just cops walking a contractual beat. Sure, our NALC leaders are sharper than most lawyers you will ever meet

*continued on page 12*



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## TIME FLIES ...

Continued from page 3

FSS/COR Office like Woodland Hills, where they are just hoping and praying to get all of the mail delivered before the moon goes over the mountain. But that's another story for another day.

On the face of it, that sounds like a great goal, for the Carriers to have all their mail delivered no later than 5 PM or 6 PM. Why? Better service to our patrons, for one thing. Carriers also like to go home at a semi-decent hour for another thing and it's never any fun (or safe, or efficient) to deliver mail in the dark. But if all the mail is **actually delivered** by 5 PM or 6 PM then why must management make it an absolute rule that you have to clock in from the street no later than 5 PM (1700) or 6 PM (1800)? This causes a great deal of stress amongst carriers driving back to their respective offices in often horrendous traffic trying desperately to clock in off the street before the clock turns to 1701 or 1801 lest they turn into pumpkins or possibly burn in hell. If the Carrier is actually done delivering the mail by 1700 or 1800 then why must he or she have to stress out about missing a green light or two on the way back to the office because the time clock is going to change by a click or two? It's crazy. I'm surprised that we don't have more vehicle accidents caused when carriers are driving back to the office like chickens with their heads cut off in the PM before the time clock changes by that one forbidden click.

For another example of a stupid local "rule", in response to the District Manager's attempt to reduce overtime, Management in many of the offices represented by Branch 2902 is telling Letter Carriers that they only have 5 minutes to perform all of their PM office duties when they return from the street. When we learn of this improper instruction we file grievances challenging its propriety. We are always successful in getting this "5 minutes to get off the clock rule" overturned whenever we challenge it. That is because **there is no USPS rule** that dictates that carriers only have 5 minutes to complete all of their PM Office duties. As long as the Carriers are following their flow charts and remaining gainfully employed, it takes what it takes. We acknowledge that 5 minutes to get off the clock in the PM is Management's goal but we successfully argue that it is not a rule, because it is not a rule.

Far too many Letter Carriers try to abide by these bogus, unrealistic rules, leading to them taking "shortcuts" and doing things that can, and often does, get them in a lot of trouble. They will leave their arrow keys and accountables at the registry cage without actually being cleared because there is no accountable Clerk available and they are trying to get off the clock in 5 minutes. Guess who will be responsible if anything is missing without the Carrier being cleared by the registry Clerk? That's right, the Carrier will be responsible. Never leave your arrow key and accountable items at the registry cage unless you have been

cleared by the registry Clerk.

We have had Carriers manually enter their code 722 (return from Street) and other clock ring functions on the Electronic Badge Recorder or EBR (better known as the time clock) in order to make it appear that they were back off the street by 1700 or 1800 or whatever time Management wanted them to be back by. Carriers have manually entered their End Tours (ET) to make it appear that they ended tour prior to going into unauthorized penalty overtime, for example. Then later, management might check their MSP scans and learn that they were still out on the street after the times they manually entered on the EBR. Next comes the fact finding followed by a Suspension Letter or in some cases a Notice of Removal. Not only have the Carriers cheated themselves out of money that they earned and should have been paid when they manually enter an incorrect ET time, they are also risking removal from the Postal Service for falsification of an official record. For What? **Remember, the "cover-up" is almost always worse than the crime.**

I'll say it again; at the very least read pages 1 through 8 of the NALC **Letter Carrier Resource Guide** you recently received in the mail and follow those instructions every day. Never, ever do anything stupid like manually changing your clock ring codes on the EBR. If you follow the USPS rules and give a fair day's work for a fair day's pay you can avoid disciplinary problems while working at the USPS. It ain't rocket science or brain surgery, brothers and sisters. Keep it simple and let management make the decisions (I know that's a scary proposition) as explained on page 6 of the **NALC Letter Carrier Resource Guide**. Take the time to read the entire **Resource Guide** because you will learn a lot from it.

I hope to see a lot of you here at the Branch hall on March 3, 2012 for our Texas Hold'em Poker Tournament. Look for the ad in this issue of the Mail Bag News. I guarantee you that a good time will be had by all and, who knows, you just might catch some cards and win. Until next time...

## Welcome New Members

**Northridge**  
**Rebecca Martinez**  
**Oxnard**  
**Louie Hernandez**  
**Reseda**  
**Dawn Johnson**

## NOT READY TO GIVE UP YET...

*Continued from page 6*

retire them, not the carriers or clerks that you think can't cut it, or that are CSRS and you want to cut them. Give us the tools to compete. Give us a scanner that can track from point A thru Z. Then stop crying about closing plants, people losing jobs, cutting days of delivery, and leaning the herd. Yes, you might have to spend some money to make some money, just get off your ass and compete. Take back our parcel business, and then some! Get out the gloves, reorganize and kick some UPS-FEDEX butt. Then maybe we will have enough money to buy our own planes. Don't ever forget who started this delivery business, THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE!! I'm just saying!

Hey, breaking news in Chatsworth. You've heard about the DPS machine and the FSS machine? Well, now management has come up with the 1 Foot cardboard box that doubles as a clerk!! Now because of this newest invention, they are able to let yet another Clerk go. They installed the security system on the boxes today. So security is definitely gone. Has this got Postal written all over it? You spend a lot of money making a secure accountable mail room that has got a lock on the door, and now we don't need it because we don't have a clerk to run it, and we don't need one because we have the Clerk Box. They will no doubt have to contract a crane operator to move all those boxes on the stand back to the cage to be downloaded, because the human clerk cannot move it. You would need 4 hands to take 3 boxes at a time. Hey, I have an idea. We install a drive-thru on the side of the building connected to the window and we could just wait our turn with the customers. Two mail trucks two customers. I can feel it, this will work!! Do the math, PLEASE!!! For as long as I have been with the Postal Service, I have always advertised for the Postal Service. I believe we take pride in what we do. This all makes no sense. The security of the mail should be our priority. If it's not broken don't fix it. I cannot wait to see who is coming to Chatsworth next, and what they will bring to the table. I'm just saying!

I guess, by the time this issue comes out, we will be a few weeks into the next OIC. Well, you know the drill, a lot of desk moving, pictures or whatever they hung on the walls. I'm surprised the colors of the walls have not changed. It's kind of sad that all this has to happen during the Holidays. All are trying to concentrate on getting the mail out, and making sure our customers get every parcel sent to them through the Postal Service. Instead, we are in Limbo, not knowing what or who is going "manage" us. It is Christmas; maybe we should make a wish list. We wish for a Postmaster who is even tempered. We wish for a Postmaster who listens to us, and thanks us for a good job done, not one that tells us that she wants to be #1, and in order for that to happen we have to do our jobs. Gee Santa, I thought we were doing our jobs! We wish for a Postmas-

ter, who sees all of us as equals, you know, like our old Postmaster. We wish for the person or persons in management that are doing the picking, and eliminating of OIC's or Postmasters, look at the big picture. Instead of trying to change someone, why not take the good and make it better? Last year it was the speech about how bad we are doing, and how half of our work force will be gone. Well, this year we wish that Management would open their eyes, and be more positive about all our futures. If there ever was a time that we needed to believe, it's now.

I'm hoping you all had a Merry Christmas, and a Happy, Hopeful New Year. I want to offer congratulations to the newly retired Dago Bretado, he started with the Postal Service in 1971. I believe that was the same year as the Sylmar earthquake, and James Brown came out with "Make It Funky". Dick Luman, started in 1983. The first Mobile Phone was introduced that year. Mary Ellenberger, started in 1979, that same year they came out with the first Sony Walkman. It's been great to work with all of you. Dago, it's so quiet without you. I can say that there is not one person in our office that hasn't laughed at your incredible wit; you never missed a beat! You left the office every day saying those special words "Goodbye everyone who is slower than me". Dick, I don't even know how many people came to you for advice on everything. I was fortunate to be next to you for at last 15 years. I'm only sorry for not taking any of those stock tips. We had many laughs over in "The Corner", as Lynda Buss used to call it. Mary, most of the time you really didn't have to say anything, it was your facial expressions. You were really good at that. We all spend more time with each other than we spend at home. We will miss all of you, and I'm sure your ears will be burning! Enjoy your retirements, you've earned it.



***Pictured above (L-R) are the latest members of the last punch bunch to receive their union retirement watches. Jan Parker-Chatsworth, Pam Bolin-Northridge, Sharon Bermudez-Woodland Hills & Roy Jepsen-Port Hueneme. Enjoy the well deserved retirement folks!***

## NEW KVETCH...

Continued from page 8

when it comes to our contract. But think about all the cops you ever met. How sharp were they? They're about as sharp as the citizens they serve.

Cops try to use the law to end the crimes, punish the wicked and bring about justice. You know that isn't easy. They need citizens to report crimes, provide evidence and give testimony in court, in public. They need regular people who will stand up for themselves. The citizens live with the criminals in their neighborhoods every day. Those criminals can be intimidating.

So, what do you do? Do you stand up for your rights? Will you report violations, make notes and statements and provide evidence? Or will you be intimidated by punks? Our contract is only as strong as the union. The union is only as strong as the commitment of its members. Show up. If you can't be bothered to get involved, don't be surprised when your job disappears.

Help with issue #1 by giving as much as you can to COLCPE, the fund that helps support the politicians who support letter carriers and our concerns. Help with issue #2 by becoming a more active part of the whole process. Come to branch meetings to learn what your officers are dealing with and how that affects you. You'll also learn specific ways you can help yourself, in your everyday work life and for your long term career. Report anything that may be a violation of your rights to your shop steward. Provide as much detail as possible and write things down. And don't assume that the union knows about a problem just because you discussed it with your friends. Make sure.

**HEY, PTF! IF YOU WORK LESS THAN 8 HOURS A DAY, 5 DAYS A WEEK, TELL YOUR SHOP STEWARD NOW.** I, and others, have mentioned this in previous articles in this newsletter. I can't understand how it keeps happening. You know you're working tons of hours every week, usually more than 40. You see that we still have a lot of TE's around. The contract has provisions for promoting the most senior PTF's to regular carrier. One way is to have an uninterrupted string of at least 8 hours times 5 days for 26 weeks. If you have to clock out early or start late or take a day off, use a 3971 and get the appropriate paid leave. If you are denied paid leave, or a TE works non-OT hours you could have worked, or you simply don't get a full 40 hours this week, tell the union. There may be something we can do. We want to see you get promoted. You have to help us help you. It will work when you make it work.

So, what is "kvetch"? Google it.

**"Good judgment comes from experience; and experience, well, that comes from bad judgment."**

**-Anonymous**

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT...

Continued from page 2

ered for the term totals \$679,110.92. However, we have many National Reassessment Program grievances that have been settled through arbitration or pre-arbitration, but that have not been paid. The overall amount recovered may come close to \$950,000.00, if we were to add those amounts in today. But, we cannot get an accurate total until the back pay awards are actually computed.

We started the term with the National Reassessment Process and many NRP grievances. Most of these grievances have been settled in arbitration or pre-arbitration with the Union only losing one decision. We've been struggling with management in many of our FSS sites over the length of the routes and the poor route structure due to management's unilateral actions in improperly adjusting the routes. And, in a very few offices, we are trying to put a stop to abusive management styles, but we need your help. In our next term, your elected officers will continue to fight the good fight and to police our contract. We thank you for your confidence in re-electing us. We hope to see you at the installation on January 17th, 2012. If not, all for now back in two.

## \$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 whom to pay the bonus to.

## *In Memoriam*

**Gene (Arnold) Gray**  
Active Carrier- Port Hueneme

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## RETIREES LUNCH

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6633 Fallbrook Ave.  
West Hills

**When:** Thursday,  
February 16, 2012

**Time:** 11:00am to 1:00pm



**Where:** Hometown Buffet  
Vons Center  
1855 Cochran Street  
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**When:** Thursday,  
March 15, 2012

**Time:** 11:00am to 1:00pm



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**The quickest way to double your money is to fold it and put it back into your pocket.**

*—Will Rogers*

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Alternate	Lori Stewart
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Sylmar / Main Office	James Perryman
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Simi Valley Chief S.S.	Sandra Gaunce
Mt. McCoy Station	Sandra Gaunce
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**PAULETTE DYER**

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Attn: Dan Gorman  
Financial Secretary-Treasurer

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**JAN 16** Martin Luther King Jr. Day-Holiday



**JAN 17** Regular Branch Meeting 7pm  
Union Hall-Chatsworth  
Installation of Officers

**JAN 19** Retiree Lunch 11:00am  
Hometown Buffet-Simi Valley

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

**FEB 16** Retiree Lunch 11:00am  
Hometown Buffet-West Hills

**FEB 20** President's Day-Holiday



**FEB 21** Regular Branch Meeting 7pm  
Union Hall-Chatsworth  
Dinner served 6 pm

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

**MAR 11** Daylight Savings Time Begins





# THE Mail Bag NEWS

★ SOLIDARITY

★ EDUCATION

★ ORGANIZATION



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

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March – April 2012

## Keep the Love, Keep the Trust

By Frank Salazar, President

For years, study after study has ranked the United States Postal Service as the most trusted Federal Agency. The Postal Service and its employees, especially its letter carriers, is the only Federal Agency that has consistently rated in the top tier of all workers trusted by the American Public. In short, our image, work ethic, reliability, and value to the public are right at the top. During this last Christmas season, many of us viewed the clip of the FedEx delivery man

caught on tape tossing a flat screen monitor over a fence. We can imagine the object hitting the ground with a thud and shattering the screen inside the box with a very angry customer on the other end. Then there was the clip of the UPS delivery guy flipping off a customer on tape and tossing the package on the porch; very poor customer service you would think. I thought to myself, "This isn't over. There are more Postal Service delivery people than FedEx and UPS delivery people, so it's a matter of time before someone catches one of our people doing something wrong."

Sure enough, one of our own members, a regular carrier, out of North Hollywood was caught on tape tossing a parcel over a locked fence. Many of you may have seen



***Pictured above is the National Director of City Delivery, Lew Drass swearing in your new Tri-Valley Branch 2902 officers for the 2012-2014 election period.***

the clip on YouTube. To say the least, the clip didn't put letter carriers in a good light. In watching later news clips, we learned that the package was an antique cuckoo clock that was received damaged. After watching the tape, we could see how the clock could have been damaged. And, we could see what the carrier did wrong. The correct thing to do was to fill out a PS Form 3849 notifying the customer of the parcel and taking it back to the office for pick-up or re-delivery.

If this wasn't bad enough, as I was writing this article, another damaging clip appeared on the net. This time it was a clip of a Portland, Oregon letter carrier defecating in someone's yard. Pretty gross, huh! Now, what kind of message do you think this sends to the public?

This got me to thinking about our jobs. Do we take pride in the work we do or are we doing it just for the money? Of course, we all came to the Postal Service to make a living. That's a given. I also believe that most of us take pride in the job we do. However, this is a bad time to be projecting a bad image. When you get up in the morning and get ready to go to work, do you care how your uniform looks?

*continued on page 2*

# Invisible Hands: The Businessmen's Campaign to Dismantle the Post Office

The leaders of the Postal Service have made no secret of their plans for reforming the postal system. They have issued white papers, given speeches, presented "optimization" programs, and appeared before Congressional committees. The plans are clear: eliminate the layoff protections in union contracts; cut the career workforce by nearly half while tripling the number of non-career workers; reduce service standards for first-class mail; do away with Saturday delivery; give management control of workers' benefit plans; consolidate away over 250 processing plants; and close 15,000 post offices.

What we don't see very often are the players making this all happen. We assume the Postmaster General is making the decisions, but he is merely the front man. Behind him are the USPS Board of Governors, the mail industry stakeholders, and the corporate class as a whole. These business-

men (and women) prefer to keep a low profile, so we rarely hear from them in public. They leave it their surrogates — journalists and academics, politicians and pundits — to speak for them. But it's the businessmen who fund the think tanks, endow universities, make campaign contributions, pay lobbyists, and run the news media. Yet for the most part, they are not to be seen.

In her excellent book *Invisible Hands: The Businessmen's Crusade Against the New Deal*, historian Kim Phillips-Fein paints a very revealing picture of how the corporate class operates. Her theme is the way conservative businessmen worked behind the scenes to undo the New Deal. Believing all would be right if government stayed out of the economy and left everything, in Adam's Smith famous expression, to the "invisible hand" of the market, these busi-

*continued on page 3*

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT...

*Continued from page 1*



Some of us are wearing uniforms that should be trashed. I've seen shirts with stains and missing buttons, and pants with holes in them. Some carriers will say that I can't get the stain out especially on the shoulder from wearing the satchel. Well, there are a few things you can do. First of all, you receive a uniform allotment that your Union bargained for you. Go buy a new shirt. Sec-

ond, use or try stain remover. Third, ask for a new shoulder pad for your satchel. Fourth, try wrapping a towel around the shoulder pad. Or, come by the Union office. We have extra uniforms in very good or brand new condition donated by retirees that we can give to you. Some of us are also not wearing the proper uniform. Don't get me wrong I love our Southern California sports teams, but when you wear non-uniform items such as baseball caps and sweatshirts out on the street it doesn't project a good professional image. And, those of you that are wearing white shoes, "Come On Man! White shoes, No!"

When you're out on the route delivering mail, do you greet your customers with a smile or in some kind of pleasant manner? Or do you just growl at them and go? Do we take care to deliver our patrons mail and packages in the best manner possible? Do we handle their items in a careful and secure manner? The bottom line is that our pa-

trons, the American public, love and trust their letter carriers. They trust us to deliver their mail accurately and securely. They trust us to pick up their outgoing mail and parcels. They expect us to keep an eye out for their elderly, their children, and their property when they are not around. The American public expects us to provide prompt, efficient and reliable service. I know this is hard to do at times and that management gives us a ration of s@#\$, but we have to put our best face forward and uphold our image as that trusted public servant. In other words, we have to keep the love and keep the trust.

I don't mean to preach in this article, but there are a lot of forces aligning against us to destroy the Postal Service (privatize) and it's Unions. In doing my own personal research, I came across an article by Steve Hutkins over at [savethepostoffice.com](http://savethepostoffice.com). The article is entitled, *Invisible Hands: The Businessmen's Campaign to Dismantle the Post Office*. The article is a combination of a critique of a book written by Kim Phillips-Fein of the same name and Hutkin's analysis and opinion of how corporate America is trying to dismantle the Postal Service. I thought the article was so well written and researched that I forwarded it to President Fred Rolando and Director of City Delivery Lew Drass. I also contacted Mr. Hutkins and received permission to re-print his article in our newsletter. If you really want to know what is going on with the United States Postal Service read the article and it will open your eyes. This is why we have to get politically involved and donate to COLCPE. Get involved now, before it's too late. The writing is already on the wall. Check out the article in the following pages. All for now back in two.

## INVISIBLE HANDS...

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nessmen have spent decades working to weaken unions, eliminate social welfare programs, minimize government regulation of their companies, and diminish public services.

While the U.S. Postal Service is obviously not a product of the New Deal, that same conservative agenda is behind the attack on the Postal Service we're witnessing today. Cutting the workforce, closing post offices and plants, and moving toward privatization through outsourcing and divestiture of assets — these are all part of an effort to shape the postal system in ways that serve the interests of an elite business class rather than the good of the country as a whole. The free-market ideology and greed for profits that drove efforts to undo the New Deal are basically what's driving the "postal reform" movement today.

### **Power in numbers: The stakeholder associations**

As Phillips-Fein explains, one of the most common methods for the businessmen to advocate for their agenda was to bond together. Recognizing the power in numbers, they formed associations like the American Liberty League (organized by the du Ponts) and the Foundation for Economic Education (founded with help from B. F. Goodrich), as well as giving new energy to existing organizations, like the National Association of Manufacturers and other industry trade groups.

In the same way, the mail industry stakeholders — the big direct marketing firms, the pre-sort companies, the periodical publishers, and so on — have formed their own organizations to advocate for their interests.

One of the most important of these groups is one operated by the Postal Service itself. The Postmaster General's Mailers' Technical Advisory Committee (MTAC) consists of mailer associations and other organizations related to the mailing industry. Its goal is "to assist the USPS in determining the best course of action to improve service and postal operating efficiency." The MTAC has a page on the USPS website (its part of the National Customer Support Center), and its meeting minutes are published there, albeit in a rather cursory form. But much about the MTAC is cloaked in secrecy.

The MTAC charter says, "A current list of member associations/organizations and corresponding representatives will be published at least quarterly." Apparently there are 58 member organizations, but good luck trying to find a list of the MTAC members on the Internet. A few years ago, when the APWU asked to join the MTAC, it was denied membership, and it took a lawsuit and a year and a half before the MTAC finally relented. A few months ago, word came out that attendance at its meetings would be restricted.

The Direct Marketing Association (DMA) is, according to its website, "the leading global trade association of businesses and nonprofit organizations using and supporting

multichannel direct marketing tools and techniques." It's an international organization representing dozens of industries in almost 50 countries, including nearly half of the Fortune 100 companies. If you want to know who's in the DMA, however, you'll find that the membership directory is off limits — you have to be a member to see the member list.

The National Association of Presort Mailers (NAPM) is, according to its website, "a trade association composed of firms concerned with the present and future of postal work-sharing." Its primary purpose is to represent the interest of presort mailers and to develop workshare programs with USPS "to produce cost saving and service benefits to presort mailers and the USPS." As with the DMA, if you'd like to see the membership list, you'll need to become a member.

There are many other industry associations that are influencing the policies of the Postal Service, such as the National Alliance of Standard Mailers (NASM); DFW Mailers Association; Alliance of Non-profit mailers; Association of Priority Mail Users (APMU); Mail Systems Management Association (MSMA); Mail Order Association of America (MOAA); Parcel Shippers Association (PSA); National Newspaper Association (NNA); and Magazine Publishers of America (MPA).

The corporate stakeholders represented by these organizations are not monolithic in their views, and there's a considerable degree of diversity and even conflict. The periodicals industry, for example, is usually more concerned about the timely delivery of their publications than the direct marketers are. And one wouldn't want to lump the junk mail business together with newspapers and news magazines — delivering the news is one of the most important functions of the mail system.

But most big mailers are primarily interested in keeping postal rates as low as possible. They have generally supported the cost-cutting measures proposed by the Postal Service because they believe the cuts will keep rates down and their profits up. Back in August, for example, the DMA "applauded" the proposed cuts, and in the RAOI Advisory Opinion process, the direct marketing giant Val-Pak made a forceful argument for closing post offices because they lose money and consequently drive up postage rates.

Most of these stakeholders don't care about post offices because big mailers present their mail at Bulk Mail Entry Units, and Saturday delivery is not a major concern either because ad mail would do fine with even three-day delivery (which the Postmaster General says is coming within fifteen years). The industry doesn't care about having a blue collection box on every corner — over the past twenty years, half of them have disappeared, even as the FedEx boxes have become ubiquitous — and they don't care how often the mail is picked up at those boxes. Their interests, in other words, are not those of the average citizen and small business. But they are one of the strongest forces shaping

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the future of the Postal Service.

### Think tanks do the talking

One of the main themes of Phillips-Fein's *Invisible Hands* is that the anti-New-Deal businessmen wanted to keep their activities hidden from the general public. Otherwise, it might look like their attack on unions and public services had selfish motives. They also wanted to give their views intellectual respectability. So they founded and funded think tanks and enlisted journalists and academics to write articles and produce studies extolling the virtues of the free market.

In 1943, Lewis H. Brown, president of the Johns-Manville manufacturing company, got several of his allies in the business community together and formed the American Enterprise Association to provide congressmen with legislative analyses that would promote private enterprise. Most of the money came from major corporations like GM, Ford, Con Edison, and du Pont, and the AEA ended up being investigated by Congress, which questioned how it could provide disinterested research with such sponsors.

The AEA eventually morphed into the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), one of the country's leading right-wing think tanks. The AEI now publishes works like *Saving the Mail: How to Solve the Problems of the U.S. Postal Service* by R. Richard Geddes. Geddes advocates privatizing the Postal Service, and he shows up frequently in news articles about the plight of the Postal Service. The AEI is responsible for many other publications about the desirability of moving the Postal Service toward a more corporate model, such as this one by AEI senior fellow Kevin Hassett, encouraging the Tea Party to push for postal privatization as a means of fighting big government.

Another of the country's well-known right-wing think tanks is the Heritage Foundation, founded in 1973 by conservative businessman Joseph Coors of brewery fame, with the help of contributions from Dow Chemical, GM, Mobile, Pfizer, Sears Roebuck, and Chase Manhattan bank. More recently, the Heritage Foundation has received generous support from the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation and the billionaire Koch brothers. (Harry Bradley and the Koch brothers' father were charter members of the John Birch Society.) The Foundation has a long history of advocating privatization of government agencies, including the Postal Service. Check out its 1986 primer on privatizing federal services, and this long list of articles on its website.

The Cato Institute, the nation's first libertarian think tank, was launched by the Koch brothers, who continue to fund it generously. According to the Center for Public Integrity, between 1986 and 1993 the Koch family gave \$11 million to the institute. The Cato Institute holds conferences and publishes books and papers advocating the privatization of the Postal Service, such as "Restructuring the U.S. Postal Service," The Last Monopoly: Privatizing the Postal Service for

the Information Age, Free the Mail: Ending the Postal Monopoly, and Mail at the Millennium: Will the Postal Service Go Private?

The Koch brothers also founded Citizens for a Sound Economy, and one of its senior fellows was James C. Miller III, a well-known advocate of privatizing the Postal Service. Miller is a member of the Board of Governors of the United States Postal Service.

Citizens for a Sound Economy eventually split into FreedomWorks and Americans for Prosperity. According to the NY Times, FreedomWorks is "the Washington advocacy group that has done more than any other organization to build the Tea Party movement." It received \$12 million from Koch family foundations. Like the other Koch-funded organizations, it advocates privatization of the Postal Service.

### How to break a union

In one of *Invisible Hands*' most disturbing chapters, "How to Break a Union," Phillips-Fein examines the war against unions in the 1950s, particularly the efforts of General Electric to destroy the electrical workers union. (In 1954, GM enlisted the help of a failed movie actor named Ronald Reagan to promote its agenda.) From the point of view of the conservative businessmen, organized labor posed a serious threat, not just in terms of how higher wages might impact their bottom line, but also in terms of power and prestige. They also worried that at election time union workers would be mobilized to press for better Social Security benefits, more government spending, and expanded public services. Unions embodied everything the conservative businessmen were against.

The animosity toward unions fuels much of what's going on with the Postal Service today. The leadership of the Postal Service wants to get rid of the no-layoff clause in union contracts so that it can cut hundreds of thousands of jobs. In a USPS white paper released last summer, the Postal Service stated explicitly that it wanted to reduce the career workforce from 580,000 to 300,000, and since there was no way that could happen through "attrition," postal management wants Congress to change the law preventing layoffs. The Postal Service also wants to increase the number of non-career employees from 38,000 to 125,000 — yet another way to undermine the unions.

The leaders of the Postal Service aren't trying to reduce their labor costs just to deal with the postal deficit or to keep the big mailers happy. The corporate class as a whole does not like the good wages that unions make happen. Postal clerks average \$25 an hour, while the sales associates and cashiers at Walmart average \$8.50 an hour. Good wages at the post office help bring wages up across the economy, while poor wages at Walmart drive them down.

Since union contracts have made it difficult for the leaders of the Postal Service to reduce the size of the workforce as drastically and rapidly as it would like, they have used other tactics. Outsourcing, for example, is a great way to

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shift work from postal employees to non-union workers in private industry. The Postal Service now contracts out \$12 billion annually.

At the top of the list of corporations enjoying a profitable relationship with the Postal Service — with \$1.37 billion of business in 2010 — is FedEx, whose founder and CEO, Fred Smith, testified before Congress that “closing down the USPS . . . is an option that ought to be considered seriously.” FedEx has also campaigns against legislation that would make it easier for its workers to unionize.

Workshare arrangements with pre-sort companies are another way to give work to private companies that could be done by postal workers. The huge discounts that these companies are given are often far in excess of what the Postal Service saves by receiving mail pre-sorted, and they end up costing the Postal Service huge amounts of money. The postal unions have been fighting these discounts for a long time, but to little avail. They are a valuable tool for downsizing the Postal Service, and they help move things further down the path to privatization. (For more on presort companies, see the excellent thesis Understanding Postal Privatization by labor historian Sarah Ryan.)

### Follow the money

One of the main tactics the anti-New Deal businessmen used to help keep themselves invisible was to support pro-business politicians like Barry Goldwater and Ronald Reagan. These days, with PACs and other modes of funding and lobbying politicians totally out of control, there are very few politicians who aren't being overly influenced by the corporate elite. In postal matters, the two most prominent of these politicians are Darrell Issa and Dennis Ross.

Issa is the Congressman for California's 49th congressional district and chairman of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. In 2011, his committee held hearings (videos [here](#)) and called as witnesses various individuals to testify that the Postal Service was heading toward catastrophe if radical reforms weren't made. Issa's Postal Reform Act would create an Authority empowered to restructure the postal system and a Commission that would recommend post office closures and consolidations to Congress. These measures would do essentially what the leaders of the Postal Service have been advocating, but the Act would put Issa and his allies in charge, effectively sidelining postal headquarters.

Dennis A. Ross is the Congressman for Florida's 12th congressional district and a member of the Tea Party Caucus. As chair of the Committee on Oversight & Government Reform, he held several hearings last year on the Postal Service, during which his witnesses attacked the postal unions, argued that the Postal Service needs to reduce “excess capacity” (i.e., post offices and plants), and called for changes in the law that will make it easier to close post of-

fices.

Eleven of the 23 Republican representatives on Issa's committee received financial help from Koch Industries in the last election. Issa himself was the largest recipient, with \$12,500 since 2008. Not that Issa really needs the money. His net worth is about \$450 million, making him the richest man in Congress. Ross received \$12,000 from the Koch brothers.

It's not just the Koch brothers who are contributing to the postal legislators. Pitney Bowes is \$5.6 billion-a-year business employing 33,000 workers around the world, selling mail equipment and providing marketing through mail. It's based in Stamford, Connecticut, so no surprise that it has contributed generously to the campaign of Connecticut Senator Joe Lieberman, chair of the Homeland Security Committee, which deals with postal legislation. In 2011, Pitney Bowes also contributed \$10,000 to Darrell Issa and \$10,000 to Senator Susan Collins of Maine, another key player in postal legislation. (If you're interested in doing some detective work, Influence Explorer and Open Secrets are useful sites.)

### Privatization, the Holy Grail

Phillips-Fein's book culminates with the election of Ronald Reagan, who represented everything the conservative businessmen had worked for since the New Deal. Reagan made a stand against unions when he fired the striking air-traffic controllers, he made the tax code less progressive (remember Reaganomics?), he cut social programs like Medicaid and food stamps, and he slashed the budget of regulatory agencies like the Environmental Protection Agency.

Reagan also created a presidential Commission on Privatization. Its 1988 report Privatization: Toward More Effective Government recommended that the private express statutes, which mandate the postal monopoly, be repealed to allow competition in the provision postal services. That recommendation has not yet come to fruition, but the Commission also recommended that the Postal Service more actively pursue contracting out. Fulfilling that recommendation was facilitated by changes to the USPS Procurement Manual (also in 1988), which made it easier for management to outsource without worrying about “full and open competition.” Outsourcing has become one of the most useful tools for privatizing the postal system without an act of Congress.

Reagan, however, can't get the credit for initiating the push toward postal privatization. That goes way back, at least until the 1960s, when a Democratic president, LBJ, charged the Kappel Commission to come up with ideas for reforming the Department of the Post Office. The Commission consisted almost exclusively of corporate executives, with retired AT&T Chairman Frederick R. Kappel as its chair. Its recommendations led to the 1970 Postal Reorganization Act, which “corporatized” the Post Office into the U.S. Postal

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Service.

It was no secret that turning a cabinet-level department into a government corporation would be a big first step toward the ultimate goal, privatization. In testimony before Congress, Kappel testified, “If I could, I’d make [the Post Office] a private enterprise and I would create a private corporation to run the postal service and the country would be better off financially. But I can’t get from here to there.”

For the past four decades, getting from “here” to “there” has remained the Holy Grail for the conservative business elite. All the books and articles put out by the think tanks and their scholars, all the lobbying and campaign contributions, all the organizing and behind-the-scenes networking—the goal has remained constant. The free market ideologues will be satisfied with nothing less than the privatization of the postal system.

In the meantime, the mantra is the same: The Postal Service needs to act more “like a business.” If it can’t be turned into a private corporation, it should at least act like one. If a post office isn’t bringing in a profit (80 to 90 percent of them don’t, at least the way the Postal Service runs the numbers), then close it. If career employees can be replaced by part-time casuals or contract workers, replace them. If there’s “excess capacity” in the system, get rid of it. If there’s a way to undermine the unions, drive down wages, degrade benefits, do it.

As for average citizens, they just don’t seem to be very important to postal management. They are not big customers. The services they might like to see offered at the post office — like an Internet connection or low-cost banking services — aren’t very profitable. Sometimes one even gets the impression that the Postal Service is intentionally alienating its regular customers — causing long lines by reducing the staffing at the windows, not being responsive to complaints, demoralizing postal workers so it’s difficult for them to be courteous. Perhaps management thinks it’s not so bad if people are dissatisfied with the Postal Service. Maybe it will make them happy to hear about plans to privatize.

### Dismantling the legacy

In 1970, when the U.S. population was about 200 million and first-class mail volumes were not quite 50 billions pieces, there were around 43,000 post offices (including contract postal units). Today the U.S. has over 300 million people, first-class mail volumes are about 78 billion pieces, and there are around 35,000 post offices. While population and mail volumes have increased by more than 50%, the number of post offices has declined by almost 20%. Yet somehow we are expected to believe that there are too many post offices.

Almost every one of the country’s post offices is a valued part of the community it serves. If you have any doubt

about that, just read a few hundred of the thousands of news articles that have come out over the past few months, describing the frustration, anger, and sadness people express when they hear their post office may close.

While the focus has been on the 3,600 post offices on the Retail Access Optimization Initiative (RAOI) list, the Postal Service wants to close half the country’s post offices. The retail end of the business will continue to be moved to the “alternate retail outlets” the Postal Service claims that customers prefer — Wal-Mart, CVS, Office Depot, Costco, your local supermarket. There are already 50,000 alternative places to buy stamps — more locations than there are post offices. Though the Postal Service never labels it as such, this is yet another form of outsourcing and privatization.

The leaders of the Postal Service are committed to dismantling what they call — with considerable disdain — the “legacy” of “brick-and-mortar” post offices. The legacy hangs around their neck like an albatross, weighing them down and holding them back from progressing into a light and fluid post-office-less future. They say “brick and mortar” to make the post office seem old fashioned, passé, a nostalgic icon of a bygone era.

These leaders want the Postal Service be fashionably chic — like those European countries that are closing their village post offices as part of their privatization programs. Headquarters doesn’t like the way people get attached to their post office, or the way the workers in the post office give a face to the postal system and the government. The bonding to a place and the human connection make people care too much about what happens with the postal system as a whole, and that just gets in the way of what postal leaders are trying to do.

During the Great Depression, the federal government built over a thousand post offices, as well as many schools, libraries, and federal buildings. These buildings are usually an important place in a town, and many are on the National Register of Historic Places. Constructing these buildings put hundreds of thousands of people to work, but they had another purpose.

The New Deal wanted people to feel connected to their federal government, to have faith in its permanence, to see that it was a part of their community. Considerable attention was also given to the architectural design of the New Deal post offices, and most are adorned with beautiful murals depicting scenes from local history. They bring an element of culture to the community, and they remind people of their past.

Now the country is being told that we cannot afford to keep these post offices. Historic New Deal post offices are being closed and sold off, right and left. Just over the past few months, the Postal Service has closed and/or sold the historic post offices in Westport, Connecticut; Palm Beach, Florida; Ukiah, California; and Pinehurst, North Carolina.

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Over the coming months, the same will happen to three post offices in California — in Venice, Palo Alto, and La Jolla. The historic post offices in Northfield, Minnesota; Athens, Pennsylvania; and Camas, Washington are also threatened. Many are closed without even a public meeting because the Postal Service is relocating postal services to another location and not actually “closing” the post office.

The Postal Service says these historic post offices are too big — the mail handlers and carriers were probably moved to an annex years ago, thus creating “excess capacity” — so now it doesn’t make any sense to hold on to them, and selling them would bring in much needed revenue. Maybe so, but there’s something else going on.

These post offices are a proud reminder of the great things our government and our postal system can do. These are indeed icons, symbolic of everything the conservative anti-government businessmen have been crusading against since the New Deal. Closing these post offices and

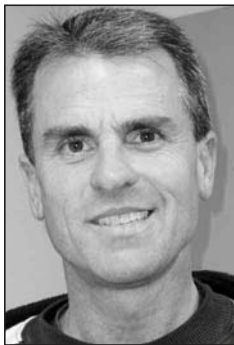
selling them to private businesses, to be turned into real estate offices and restaurants and clothing stores, is yet another mode of privatization and sad proof that the attack on the New Deal continues to this day.

The whole thing is sad, really. Depriving workers of a decent salary and job security and the promise of a secure retirement, treating communities as so insignificant they don’t even deserve a post office, transferring historic public buildings to private hands for private profits, putting the interests of the wealthy corporate elite above those of the country as a whole — it’s more than sad, it’s a crime. It won’t be good if the nation’s lawmakers permit it to happen.

**“When the post office is closed, the flag comes down. When the human side of government closes its doors, we’re all in trouble.”**

— Jennings Randolph, U.S. Senator from West Virginia, 1958-85

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## Ask and Ye Shall Receive

By Ray Hill, Executive Vice-President

Fortunately, the overwhelming majority of Letter Carriers will work their entire USPS career without ever having to undergo the unpleasant experience of being interrogated by either a USPS Postal Inspector (PI) or a Special Agent (SA) of the USPS Office of Inspector General (OIG).

Those few Letter Carriers that have had to suffer through an interrogation by either a Postal Inspector or OIG Special Agent can attest to the fact that it is not a whole lot of fun, especially if they failed to request Union representation for their interrogation.

Article 17.3 of our National Agreement states, in relevant part: “...If an employee requests a steward or Union representative to be present during the course of an interrogation by the Inspection Service, such request will be granted. All polygraph tests will continue to be on a voluntary basis...”

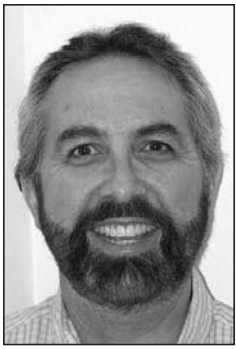
This also applies to interrogations, or interviews, with OIG Special Agents. The key phrase in Article 17.3 as written above is “...**If an employee requests** a steward of Union representative to be present...” If you do not ask for a steward or Union Representative to be present, the Inspection Service or the OIG will not provide such representation. Also, **they will never ask you** if you want a Union Representative present and **they will never offer** to provide a Union Representative for your benefit. **YOU HAVE TO ASK FOR IT!**

We have written occasional reminders about the requirement that **you must ask** for representation in the Mail Bag News going as far back as I can remember. Nevertheless, it seems like at least once or twice a year we still find out about a carrier who was being accused of some sort of violation of the USPS rules, including allegations of criminal acts, who allowed the Postal Inspectors or the OIG to interrogate them without asking for Union Representation. Almost always, when that happens, things do not turn out well for the carrier involved.

When the Postal Inspectors or the Special Agents of the OIG come sniffing around wanting to interrogate you, rest assured that they do not come in peace looking for a way to prove that you are innocent of the allegations that they are investigating. No, brothers and sisters, they are there for one reason only; to hand you a shovel and hope and pray that you are foolish enough to provide them with enough information to dig your own grave.

The main problem with agreeing to be interrogated by Postal Inspectors or OIG Special Agents without the benefit of Union representation is that there are no witnesses, other than the Inspectors or OIG Special Agents who interrogated you, that can verify what was actually said during the interrogation. The only record of the questions they asked you and how you responded to those questions will be the Postal Inspector’s Investigative Memorandum (IM) or the OIG’s Report Of Investigation (ROI), depending upon which of the 2

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# STOP THE MADDNESS!

*By Paul Drapkin, Senior Vice President*

Unbelievable! That is all that I can say about what is currently going on in our fair city of Woodland Hills. I understand the Postal service is going through some very difficult times right now.

However, for management to see this as some sort of ability to set aside our contract that was bargained in good faith is driving me to madness. Management seems to have completely forgotten that it is actual people that work for them and not just some pawns in a desperate game of chess.

As you know, back in September, as a result of the FSS implementation in the Woodland Hills P.O., management excessed 10 Full-Time Regular Carriers to several parts of the southland. Under article 12 of the National Agreement, management has this right. However, there are certain limitations on which management can do this. The most important is that management must be able to justify that there is no longer enough work at the installation to keep the excessed regular work force gainfully employed for 8 hours per day.

That certainly has not been the case in Woodland Hills. Immediately after the 10 Full-Time Regulars were excessed, the overtime skyrocketed out of control. As those of you who work in Woodland Hills know, if you are an overtime desired carrier, you have been working most days up to 10/12 hours respectively, and sometimes beyond. If you are an 8 hour carrier, you have been mandated on a regular basis for the same amount of hours as the OTDL carriers. Hell, you might as well have been signed up on the OTDL because you are working the same amount of hours as them without the possibility of equality. Management can not possibly look any of us in the eye and say that there was not sufficient work to keep those excessed carriers gainfully employed, but they do.

Management has an obligation to insure that dislocation and inconvenience to employees in the regular work force is kept to a minimum. But they don't. Our fellow carriers that were involuntarily excessed to other installations are suffering on a daily basis. Whether it be because they are forced to drive long distances that they normally would not drive, and therefore spend longer times away from their families, or because they are working in unfamiliar territory, or because, as is the case with at least one carrier, they are doing custodial work that they did not sign up for, or a mixture of all of the above, it does not matter. Management has done nothing to keep the dislocation and inconvenience to a minimum.

Another issue that I find maddening is that management is required, to the extent possible; minimize the impact on the regular work force employees by separation of all T.E. carriers and the reduction of PTF hours. Management did separate all the T.E.'s in the office who were on the rolls prior to the excessing of the Full-Time Regular carriers. However, shortly after the excessing occurred, management began borrowing, and subsequently **hired** new T.E. carriers who were simply reassigned from other installations. This is a complete contradiction of the T.E. hire versus excessing memorandum of article 12 which states that a full-time letter carrier may not be excessed and the resulting vacancy filled by a TE, except where management can demonstrate that, as a result of legitimate operational changes, there is insufficient work to continue to support a full-time position. I am sure that management is arguing that the newly hired T.E. carriers are not filling any real vacancies that the excessed Full-Time Regular carriers actually had because they were unassigned regular carriers and therefore did not hold any real assignments. This is simply a fallacy. Those unassigned carriers were doing the exact same work that the newly hired T.E. carriers are currently doing. The only difference is that management has complete control as to which assignments and at what time these T.E. carriers will work. That is all this comes down to, management wanting to replace the regular workforce with T.E. and or Casual or PTF carriers. In this case, when they could not get the regular carriers to volunteer to become PTF's (who could blame them), management simply did what they wanted (contract be damned) and forced the regulars out and then filled the resulting vacancies with the T.E.'s (and borrowed PTF's and involuntarily reassigned regular carriers from other installations and borrowed regular carriers, including one of our own excessed carriers) or whatever other underhanded maneuver they could conjure up in order to get the mail delivered on a daily basis. This is just more proof that our employer is completely infested with the disease commonly known as moral ineptitude. Management has decided that they no longer are bound by the constraints of an agreement that they willingly signed.

To make matters worse, management never complied with the parts of the contract that required them to reduce the PTF hours prior to the excessing of the Full-Time regular carriers. In fact, the exact opposite occurred. In between the implementation of the FSS and the actual excessing of the Full-Time Regular carriers, the PTF hours significantly increased. PTF's went from working more

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# JOB PROTECTION 101!

By, Ernestine Hernandez, Vice President

It's really hard to believe how fast time is moving. It seems like a week ago that we started 2011, and now we have started 2012!?! Why is it that it seems like we are always running? Running to finish the

routes, running to stop changes to our jobs, and running to keep up with the changes we've seen come down. This year is no different. We already have had to contact our Legislative House representatives this year to stop damaging legislation from going forward that will significantly hurt our jobs. But it doesn't end there. More vile legislation will try to sneak in to get around these efforts in order to control how we will live in the future: either super rich or super poor. I don't know about you but I don't think I will qualify as super rich, but I know I'll be damned if I'm going to sit down and let the latter come about without a fight. COLCPE, GET INVOLVED, COLCPE, GET INVOLVED, COLCPE, GET INVOLVED, COLCPE, GET INVOLVED, COLCPE, GET INVOLVED!

I don't care how many times I have to say it to make sure everyone hears the message. It will take a united effort to make people realize we are under attack and we need to fight back to hold on to what we have. And if you believe it won't affect you because you are retiring soon or you have already retired, then you are only fooling yourself. Start gearing up for the next fight at election time. Prepare yourself to put in the time to assist in getting people elected who really care that you have a job, a home, a choice! Our core freedom rights are being sold to the highest bidder at the same time that our voices are being stifled.

It's sad to see how many people don't want to fight be-

cause they feel we can't do anything against the super rich, not realizing that we outnumber them by 95 percent. Or maybe it's because we outnumber them that people feel that all of our voices are not needed, but nothing could be further from the truth. Look around, can't you see our numbers shrinking? With fewer voices, we are less likely to be listened to. Tell me, are you going to give in to defeat? Not me! I will rally to get more people to get involved.

Let's start with COLCPE. Will this little diddle help to remind you to sign up for COLCPE today? Try it and see.

I'M NO FOOL NO SIR-EE

IF I WANT TO WORK 'TIL I'M 53

I'LL GIVE TO COLCPE YES SIR-EE

'CAUSE I'M NO FOOL

I'M NO FOOL NO SIR-EE

I SEE THEM COMING AFTER YOU AND ME

LET'S STOP THEM WITH COLCPE YES SIR-EE

'CAUSE I'M NO FOOL

I'M NO FOOL NO SIR-EE

I'VE GOT TO LOOK AFTER MY FAMILY

I GIVE TO COLCPE YES SIR-EE

'CAUSE I'M NO FOOL

Oxnard carriers really pulled it off again with contributions to the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) by raising over 13,000.00 in payroll and cash contributions for local and national charities, including the Postal Employees Relief Fund. You can see what we can do when we all stand together to improve our world!

## ASK & YE SHALL RECEIVE...

Continued from page 7

agencies conducted the interrogation.

When they prepare the IM or ROI, the Postal Inspectors or OIG Special Agents have a tendency to edit their reports significantly, usually in order to overemphasize certain points while underemphasizing, or omitting altogether, other points. Take a wild guess which points they like to overemphasize in their reports? That's right; the ones that tend to incriminate you! Guess which points they like to underemphasize or omit altogether in their reports? Right again; the ones that create reasonable doubts regarding your guilt or help to refute any possibility of guilt whatsoever.

At the end of November, 2011, a carrier from our branch was accused of some serious "Mishandling of the Mail" by

a customer that lives on his route. Management went out to the home of the customer that had lodged the complaint against the carrier, interviewed the customer and obtained a statement from both the customer and the customer's roommate.

Later that same day, Management contacted the OIG and 2 of their Special Agents drove to the Post Office where the carrier works in order to interrogate him. **Unfortunately, the carrier did not ask for Union representation during his approximately one hour and 20 minute interrogation by the OIG.** Therefore, the only witnesses that could testify as to what transpired during the interrogation are the 2 Special Agents that interrogated the carrier and the carrier himself. That's 2 against 1 and the carrier did not take any notes during the interview. Without the benefit of a Union Repre-

continued on page 11



# Paid UP AT AGE 90

*By Chris Alessi, MBA/NSBA Representative*

**H**ello brothers and sisters, spring is right around the corner and just like spring cleaning, it's a good time to clean up our Life Insurance needs to see if they are right for your current needs.

The **MBA Whole Life Paid UP AT AGE 90** this is a limited payment plan designed exclusively for Letter Carriers and their family. This is a very affordable whole life insurance policy, backed by the NALC. Whole life insurance provides a way to give your family financial security both during your lifetime and beyond. In the event of your death, your survivors receive the full amount of your policy. While you're alive, you are setting aside money you can use as a nest egg for your family. To keep costs low as possible, premiums are paid throughout the insured's lifetime, up until age 90.

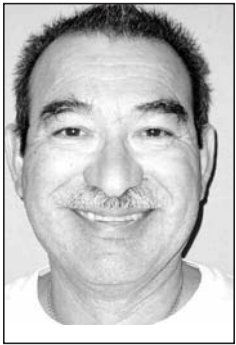
The MBA allots a portion of your premium to build up "cash value" of your policy so your nest egg can grow as you earn tax-deferred interest at above market rates. In times of need, you can borrow against this cash value at a low interest rate (8%) and still keep your policy in force. You may also decide to surrender your policy in exchange for

the entire cash value.

Every year the 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 a cash payment each year, to buy additional insurance coverage, or to keep it on deposit with the MBA to earn interest.

You will always pay the same premium amount throughout the life of the policy. You can even add a disability rider and the MBA will pay the premiums due for the length of your total disability. You can choose the amount of protection your family needs from \$10,000 - \$100,000. You can decide how often you want to pay your premiums. Monthly, annually or biweekly under the automatic payroll deduction plan. You may return the policy for a full refund of your premiums within 30 days for any reason you decide not to keep the policy.

In closing, Please write or call your Senators and tell them to vote NO on S1789. This bill will allow the USPS to stop door to door delivery. We have to let them know how serious this bill is and that we must not take away such a valuable service. Take Care, and God Bless you. In solidarity always.



# A New Year, New Rules

*By Joe Gutierrez, Health Benefits Representative*

**A**nother year is here and nothing has really changed for letter carriers here and across the country. Over the past 30 plus years the union made great gains for letter carriers from wages to job security, retirement to health benefits.

Now we are in the fight of our careers and we as letter carriers, whether working or retired, have got to wake up and get involved. Do not wait for the other guy to handle the problems we face. We have to elect and support the politicians who will protect our rights as we have earned them. They have to stand up and make sure that the Post Office is not gutted and sold to the highest bidder. Our forefathers created and wanted to protect the Post Office to serve us, the people of the United States at a cost that everyone could afford. Voting for these politicians does not stop there. We must stay on them to craft legislation or vote in the best interest for us as letter carriers.

Onto health benefits. A new year is here and with it comes new deductibles that have to be met, and this is true for all plans not just ours. One thing to remember is to use

doctors, labs, hospitals or any medical facility that is a PPO provider. To find out, all a member has to do is turn his health card over and call the PPO provider number to locate one.

There have been some changes to the plan that I will cover here and in later articles. Precertification is required for MRI, CT/CAT, MRA, NC, and PET for outpatient services call for approval first. Specialty drugs all need prior approval. The plan will waive one; two if self and family when the member completes the Health Risk Assessment questionnaire, co-pays a savings of \$20-\$40. There is no charge for certain preventative care such as annual routine physical exam, age 3 or older. Adult routine immunizations and test, well child care to age 21 and routine immunizations up to age 21. Finally, do not forget to use Quest Diagnostics and Lab Corp for all lab work and you will not have to pay. Call if you have questions on this.

In closing I want to say thank you for allowing me to be your HBR and congratulations to Mary Stanley on her position as the new assistant HBR for Branch 2902.

## ASK & YE SHALL RECEIVE...

Continued from page 9

sentative being present to advise the carrier and to take notes of what transpired during the interrogation, all we have is the paperwork provided by the OIG and that's not a good thing.

When I later received a copy of the OIG Special Agent's Report of Investigation (ROI) from Management, I was surprised by the brevity of the report, especially in light of the fact that the carrier was interrogated for approximately one hour and 20 minutes!

In the report, the OIG Special Agent wrote one short paragraph proclaiming that the carrier denied the allegations that were being made against him. In the next paragraph of the report, the Special Agent wrote that the carrier "eventually" admitted that he was guilty of the charges. That was really the gist of the entire report, 2 short paragraphs leaping from the carrier's denial of the charges to his "eventually" admitting that he was guilty of the charges. What the hell happened during the one hour and 20 minute interrogation? Lord knows there were a lot more than 2 short paragraphs worth of dialogue that transpired during that time but conveniently, none of that dialogue was included in the ROI.

I called the OIG Special Agent that had interrogated our carrier and left him a voice mail asking if he would contact me ASAP. I did not receive a call back from the Special Agent so I called him again about 5 days later and left him another message to give me a call. The Special Agent called me back later that day and I told him that I needed to ask him a few questions regarding his interrogation of our carrier and the subsequent Report Of Investigation that he prepared. I was just about to start asking him my questions when he stopped me and stated, *"Before you go any further I need to let you know that OIG Special Agents will not answer questions from Union representatives regarding active, ongoing or pending investigations"*. I told him that I only had a couple of questions and I told him that we did have the right per Article 17.3 of our National Agreement to question OIG agents. I asked him if we could meet face to face and he told me that I would have to fly to Honolulu to do so. It turns out that he now works in the Honolulu District. Again, I said I only have a couple of questions. He stopped me and said, once again, *"OIG Agents will not answer questions from Unions regarding ongoing, active or pending investigations"* I then told him that I would write, *"For the record"*, that he refused to answer any of my questions regarding his interrogation of our Letter Carrier. He said *"I referred you to Labor Relations"*. I told him that Labor Relations cannot answer any of my questions because Labor Relations was not there for the Interrogation; **you** were there for the interrogation.

After I concluded my pointless conversation with the Special Agent, I contacted one of the Sierra Coastal District Labor Relations Specialists and explained the situation to him. To his credit, he agreed with me that the Special Agent should have answered my questions and he told me that he

would look into the matter for me. We played phone tag for the next 4 weeks while the Labor Relations Specialist tried to schedule an interview for me with the OIG Special Agent. I found out during these 4 weeks that the OIG requires that a representative from their "Office of General Counsel" (Law Department), domiciled in Washington DC, participate in all interviews of their Special Agents by Union Representatives such as myself. Therefore, the Labor Relations Specialist had to coordinate the interview with the Washington DC participant from the OIG General Counsel Office and the OIG Special Agent from Honolulu. I was finally able to interview the OIG Special Agent this week and sometime in the future I will write about the interview and give my impression of this particular OIG investigation and the subsequent Report filed by the Special Agent.

Suffice to say at this time that the Report was definitely biased and omitted some important facts that would have been helpful to the Letter Carrier involved. As I hinted earlier in this article, the OIG's interrogations are not conducted in a manner that is intended to exonerate an accused carrier; the interrogations are conducted in a manner that will help to convict an accused carrier. If it wasn't so harmful to our Letter Carriers I would find it laughable how protective the OIG is of their precious Special Agents, refusing to allow them to be interviewed by Union Representatives without a lawyer present to "hold their hand" throughout the interview. The OIG Special Agents love to badger and cajole our Letter Carriers while interrogating them, especially if the Carrier fails to request Union representation during their interrogation.

When the shoe is on the other foot and the Union wants to interview the Special Agent, the OIG makes it more difficult than attempting to interview the President of the United States or the Pope.

Remember, if a Postal Inspector or a OIG Special Agent wants to "talk" to you, ask for a Union Representative to be present and politely refuse to answer any questions from them until you are provided that representation. **That is your right, but you have to ask for it!** The job you save may be your own.

It was a great Super Bowl game and the Dodgers will soon be sold to someone other than Frank McCourt. Things are definitely looking up. Talk to you next time.



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# The Good Life

By Bev Sucich, Director of Retireesd



**W**ell folks, another year has gone by. I am very pleased to serve you for another term as Director of Retirees. I want to thank everyone who voted for me in the December 2011 election. I will do

my best to make the retiree luncheon a success and I will try to think of some good ideas for 2012. I am open for any suggestions that you want to give me. You are part of this organization and I would love to have ideas for some activity that you might like. I know you like to get together & visit with your retired co workers for lunch but we can do something different even if it is just one thing per year.

I will be going to the convention in July in Minnesota and I will be attending the retiree meetings. I hope to come back with some good information for all of the retirees. I know we are going to get some new retirees very soon.

I am going to give a quick rundown of the winners for the past 4 luncheons. I will not be naming the gifts this time. There are just too many to do for this article.

## **October 2011 Canoga Park Hometown Buffet**

Joe Majzel, Don Minster, Maynard Owens, Ed Smith.

## **November 2011 Simi Valley Hometown Buffet**

Al Cox, John Mendez, Lois Perkins, Hal Grunland, Maynard Owens, Bill Everett, Al Covarrubias, Joe Messineo, Ed Smith, Carmen Lucio, and Sandy Gaunce.

## **December 2011 Canoga Park Hometown Buffet**

Don Minster, A.M. Fitz, Lois Perkins, Joe Majzel, Jon Mc-

Claren, Dave Perez, Ed Smith, Greg Gaddis, Dan Gorman, & Al Covarrubias.

## **January 2012 Simi Valley Hometown Buffet**

Maynard Owens, Sonny Castellano, and Ed Smith.

As you can see, we did have a few duplicate winners. What is your secret Maynard, Ed, Lois, Al Covarrubias, and Don?

I want to thank Joe Gutierrez for all the extra gifts he donates to the Branch for our luncheons.

Jean Graham had gotten hurt a few months back, but she is doing much better. She sure is a great spirited woman for being 90 years old. She is always smiling.

Don Estermans wife Myra is also recovering from a minor illness. Best Wishes to both of you gals.

Bill Everett out of Santa Paula will be receiving his 60 year union membership pin. We thank you for your devotion to our branch.

Just a reminder that if you choose to cancel your membership from the union when you retire you can not get reinstated. If you have the NALC Health Plan you must stay in the union. You will receive the Mail Bag News, Postal Record & a free lunch for you and your guest every month. It is only \$2.00 a month and you can not beat the price.

In closing I just want to remind you all to try to donate to COLCPE if you can. This is an election year so it will help our fellow carriers. We need to deliver 6 days a week.

Take care & be safe. Everyone have a happy St. Patrick's Day.

## **STOP THE MADDNESS...**

*Continued from page 8*

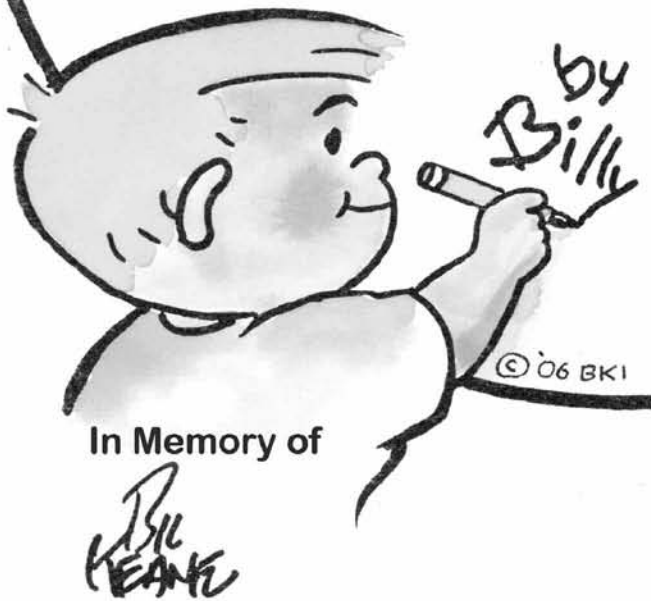
than 40 hours per week to 50 or 60 hours per week. By any stretch of the imagination, this can hardly be considered a reduction.

So, what is the union doing about all this madness you may ask? Of course we are filing the grievances that are necessary to uphold the rights of those highly inconvenienced regular carriers who were wrongly involuntarily excessed. The problem is that the grievance procedure is sufficiently backlogged that these grievances may not see an arbitrator, or even pre-arbitration for close to a year. That is exactly what management is hoping for. They are hoping that they can stall this entire process long enough that in the meantime they can continue to attempt to fit their round peg into a square hole.

The problem is that no matter how you add it up, the District manager and his MPOO's like Vikki Noblitt, and

Rick West and Mike Martino, do not know how to add. They continue to swear that the carriers are just screwing the P.O. because they are unhappy with the results of the last route adjustment and if they would only learn to like being bent over all would be well again. In fact, management sent over that great soothsayer Mike Martino for several weeks in an attempt to get a handle on things in Woodland Hills. What changed? All we got was the usual nonsense from management with no changes in the routes. Hello! Earth to "Magic Mike" and "Kaptain Kerry", the only thing that is going to work is to fairly adjust the routes. Of course, when the union requested that inspections take place 60 days after the implementation of the FSS management refused to conduct the route inspections. After all, management was only willing to conduct route inspections on precisely the lightest weeks of the year; once again, moral ineptness presents itself in the greatest possible light with the dates that were chosen.

I would expect nothing less from management!



**SATURDAY  
MAY 12, 2012**

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CARRIERS  
FOOD DRIVE**



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## RETIREES LUNCH

**RAFFLE AT 12:30**

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

**When:** Thursday,  
April 19, 2012

**Time:** 11:00am to 1:00pm



**Where:** Hometown Buffet  
Vons Center  
1855 Cochran Street  
Simi Valley

**When:** Thursday,  
May 17, 2012

**Time:** 11:00am to 1:00pm



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- Chris Alessi

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Greg Gaddis  
David Hyman

need a quote for here

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Fillmore Chief S.S.	Call Office
Moorpark Chief S.S.	Robbie Elsaleh
Alternate	Lori Stewart
North Hollywood Chief S.S.	Steve Leyton
	Louie Rodriguez
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Laurel Canyon	Steve Leyton
Studio City	Greg Gaddis
Valley Village	Steve Leyton
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Porter Ranch	Larry Orcutt
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Alternate	Frankie Mercado
Alternate	Rocio Fraire
Alternate	Lorie Moore
Port Hueneme Chief S.S.	Kathi Albritten
Reseda Chief S.S.	Ray Hill
San Fernando Chief S.S.	James Perryman
Alternate	Albert Reyes
M.C.A.	James Perryman
North Hills	C.C. Flatts
Sylmar / Main Office	James Perryman
Santa Paula Chief S.S.	Laura Rowe
Simi Valley Chief S.S.	Sandra Gaunce
Mt. McCoy Station	Sandra Gaunce
Thousand Oaks Chief S.S.	Jim Mette
	Alex Lopez
	Walter Williams
Alternate	Mary Stanley
Newbury Park	Jim Mette
Ventura Chief S.S.	Laura Rowe
East Ventura	Laura Rowe
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Child: \$46.00 (Gate price \$61.99)

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Additional Gift Cards can be purchased for \$5.00 each.

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

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**PAULETTE DYER**

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## DINNER

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Union Meeting

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## \$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 whom to pay the bonus to.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

**MAR 11** Daylight Savings Time Begins



**MAR 15** Retiree Lunch 11:00am  
Hometown Buffet-Simi Valley

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

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

**APR 17** Regular Branch Meeting 7pm  
Union Hall-Chatsworth

**APR 19** Retiree Lunch 11:00am  
Hometown Buffet-West Hills

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

**MAY 12** NALC National Food Drive





# THE Mail Bag NEWS

★ SOLIDARITY

★ EDUCATION

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

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

VOLUME 54, NO. 3

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May – June 2012

## NALC Juggles Eight Fronts While Trying To Save America's Postal Service

By Frank Salazar, President

**B**rothers and Sisters, this is one of the toughest times in the Postal Service and on the workroom floor. The economics of the Postal Service are in a precarious position, and our job is not getting any easier. Expenses far exceed revenues and the Postmaster General's focus is primarily on downsizing. Instead of finding ways to increase revenues and grow our business (mail & parcel delivery), the USPS leadership is looking to dismantle our greatest strength; the last mile delivery network, we can't let this happen!

The Postal Service is in a very serious predicament, where our job security, wages, and benefits are on the line. The situation is so precarious that the NALC rallied at all Senate Offices across the nation on April 12, 2012. Members from our Branch rallied with fellow members of Branch 24 Los Angeles, Br. 4006 Canoga Park, Br. 2200 Pasadena, and Branch 2462 Van Nuys at Senator Boxer's office in downtown Los Angeles and at Senator Feinstein's Office in Westwood. We know that not everyone could attend the rallies late on a Thursday afternoon in downtown Los Angeles,



***Pictured above are several members of Branch 2902, along with many members of other branches who participated in the "Save the Postal Service" rally held in front of Senator Boxer's office in downtown Los Angeles on April 12.***

but we can all write, call, or email our Senators and tell them how to vote on our issues. The Postal Service's economic and legislative position is so precarious that our National President Fred Rolando has made numerous robo calls to us to describe our situation and to call us to action. Heed the call before it's too late. Don't leave it to the next guy!

I've just returned from a Committee of President's Meeting with Branch President's from across the

nation and with National President Fred Rolando and Director of City Delivery Lew Drass. These are the 8 fronts we are fighting on as described by President Rolando and paraphrased by myself. The first front is legislation. The current legislative battle is Senate Bill 1789. As many of you know, S.1789 does not address the overpayments into the CSRS or FERS plans, it does not protect 6-day delivery, and it calls for the suspension of house to house or business to business delivery in favor of cluster boxes and NDCBU's. The Postal Service and the NALC need the right legislation to

*continued on page 2*

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT...

Continued from page 1



make corrections done by previous congressional actions such as the onerous and unnecessary pre-funding for current and future retirees. However, every time we go to Congress, we open the doors to other people's agendas. Basically, we want our surpluses back from CSRS and FERS plans. We want standardized operating and accounting procedures, and why should the Postal

Service keep pre-funding future retiree health benefits when no other federal agency or private company in America does it at the rate of the USPS. It's not fair.

If we don't fight in the legislative arena, management will get 5-day delivery and 80,000 Carriers may lose their jobs. Management will relax mailing standards and more jobs will be lost. In the meantime, Congressman Issa of California and Ross of Florida will force those left to pay more into their retirements. Also, these two Congressmen intend to get rid of the FERS supplement wiping out 40% of our retirement and forcing all of us to work longer (62). Find out more, become an E-Activist.

The second front is the political front. Yes, many of us hate politics, but this is how our system works in the United States. We need the right politicians in office to listen to us and vote on our issues. We get their attention with money. Unfortunately, as the saying goes "Money is the mother's milk of politics". We raise money to give it to politicians, so they can listen to us and vote on our issues. Then, we give them more money to get them re-elected. We need to raise funds to play the political game, because politics will make or break us. But, politicians also pay attention to rallies, calls, and letters. The makeup of our membership mirrors the American Public. We have people from all races, religions, geographic areas, and ages, etc. People vote in elections for different reasons like abortion, gun control, environment, religion, etc. However, the NALC leadership is focused on preserv-

ing our jobs and benefits. We need the right politicians in office to listen to us to defend our jobs and benefits. This is why we should donate to COLCPE; the Letter Carrier's political pac. Consider donating to COLCPE. See the NALC website to learn more.

The third front is the Media. The American public is our best friend. Letter Carriers are part of the community. For the last six years, we have been voted the most trusted federal employees. We give the public the truth. Operationally, we made a \$200 million profit last quarter. The Postal Service only experienced a loss because of the onerous pre-funding obligation for future retiree health benefits that cost the Postal Service a needless \$5.5 billion per year. As an organization, the NALC and its members have to address the bad messaging in the media. The Postal Service is not broke, we do not take tax payer money, and we are not obsolete. Consider responding to the editor in local newspa-

pers when you see a media article that is misleading or blatantly false.

The fourth front is the Business Model of the USPS. The Postal Service doesn't have a valid business plan to replace lost revenue. The only plan that the Postal Service has is to cut or dismantle the Postal Service to meet falling revenue. The NALC hired Ron Bloom of Lazard Investment to do our due diligence and talk with other companies about their needs concerning the Service. The NALC validated the Postal Service's projections and notes there will be losses in the future because there is no business

plan. When Lazard talked with FedEx, they learned that FedEx's fastest segment for profit was the last mile of delivery. Basically, FedEx uses the Postal Service in many areas to deliver the last mile. The Service has a very good business and excellent network, but the USPS lacks sales representatives at the highest levels or they don't even exist. The NALC wants to expand the last mile of delivery and capture more last mile business. The NALC wants the Service to partner with other companies such as banks and explore and set-up partnerships. There are so many things we can do with our delivery network, but the USPS leadership has no vision.



***Pictured above are (L-R) Matt Kozlo, the Legislative Liaison for branch 24, Frank Salazar, branch 2902 President, Rafi Nazarians, the Field Representative for Senator Barbara Boxer and Larry Brown, President of branch 24 as the NALC representatives presented petitions and discussed S 1789 at the rally held in front of Senator Boxer's office on April 12, 2012.***

continued on page 4



# Overtime Equitability Tracking – A Flawed Process

By Ray Hill, Executive Vice-President

At the end of every calendar quarter (three months) I get a lot of questions from branch members regarding the equitability of overtime hours that were distributed amongst the Carriers on the Overtime Desired List (ODL) during the quarter that had just ended.

As I always tell the ODL carriers that I talk to, the system that we currently use for determining overtime equitability really is far from perfect and it is definitely unfair to some of the Carriers on the ODL. Here is how equitability is tracked during each calendar quarter. Management has a list of all of the Carriers on the ODL and they track **separately** how much overtime those ODL Carriers work each day throughout the quarter, both on their own assignment and off their own assignment. If a Carrier works two hours of overtime on their own assignment on a particular day then they are considered unavailable to work overtime off their own assignment that day and it is not considered an “overtime opportunity” lost by that ODL Carrier. However, the overtime that an ODL Carrier works on their own assignment is not tracked when determining equitability. Only the hours that the ODL Carriers work **off** their own assignments are tracked for determining equitability. At the end of the quarter all the hours worked off their assignment by the ODL Carriers are added up and then divided by the number of Carriers on the ODL to determine what the average number of hours worked by the ODL Carriers off their assignments was for the quarter.

At the end of every quarter, the Stewards of the Branch request a copy of the ODL tracking for the quarter that just ended. Then the Stewards verify the average number of overtime hours worked off of their assignments by the ODL Carriers during the quarter. The stewards separate those ODL Carriers that are at or above the average of overtime hours worked during the quarter from those ODL Carriers that are below the average number of overtime hours worked during the quarter. Then the Stewards determine if any of the Carriers “refused” any overtime during the quarter. For example, if Management asked an ODL Carrier to come in to work 8 hours on their Non-scheduled (N/S) day but the ODL carrier refused to do so, then 8 hours must be added to that Carrier’s total hours for the quarter. Bear in mind that only actual refusals are calculated in this manner; if Management calls an ODL Carrier on their day off and leaves a message on their answering machine while they are at the beach then that is not considered a refusal. They must actually talk to the ODL Carrier who must refuse their

offer of overtime for it to be considered a refusal that will then be added to the ODL Carrier’s total number of hours for the quarter.

Next the steward tries to find hours that can be paid to the ODL carriers that ended up below the average for the quarter. The carriers that were below the average are only entitled to be made whole up to the average. If the steward can find overtime hours that were worked on any day during the quarter by an ODL carrier that ended up above the quarterly average when a carrier that ended up below the quarterly average was available to work then the steward will ask that the below the average carrier be paid those hours that were worked by the carrier that ended up above the average.

In order to do this, the steward “backtracks” each day from the end of the quarter to the beginning of the quarter looking for days any carrier that ended up below the average was available to work overtime but a carrier above the average was given the overtime instead. The carriers that ended up below the average are entitled to be made whole, **up to the average only**, for any hours the steward can find where the above average carrier was given overtime work instead of an available below the average carrier. As the steward adds up hours to pay a carrier, up to the average only, the steward must also subtract the hours that they taking from the carrier that ended up above the average. Once the steward subtracts enough hours to bring the above average carrier to the average they can subtract no more hours from that carrier. This process continues until all of the hours worked by the above the average carriers have been redistributed to the below the average carriers.

However, this does not mean that every carrier will receive pay for every hour that they are below the average. The carrier must have been available to work the overtime on the day in question when a carrier above the average worked overtime instead of them.

To put all this boring verbiage in a nutshell: When evidence indicates those below the average were available and were not worked, yet ODL carriers above the average were worked, then those below the average will be made whole, up to the average, for those hours of overtime where they were available yet ODL carriers above the average were worked instead. Get it?

I wrote earlier in this article that the system is far from perfect and is definitely unfair to some of the carriers on the ODL. I also wrote earlier in the article, the overtime hours

*continued on page 6*

# The Good Life

By Bev Sucich, Director of Retirees



**G**lad to be writing another article for our retirement group. Everyone seems to be doing fine.

As most of you know, the Hometown Buffet in Simi Valley has closed permanently. We are going to the Sea Horse Buffet located at 2022 First Street in Simi Valley on May 17th. It is on the corner of First Street & Los Angeles Avenue. Driving East or West on the 118 freeway, you will take the First Street exit and turn either right or left, depending on which way you are coming from and go south to First Street and the restaurant is on the left hand side of the street. If you passed Los Angeles Ave, you have gone too far. I am just trying to help the people who do not know the Simi Valley area.

The restaurant is a Chinese buffet with a small sushi bar, Mongolian style section, salad, fruit, and dessert bar. It has some American dishes, fish, vegetables and pizza. HOPE TO SEE YOU ALL THERE!

Our February luncheon at HTB in Canoga Park had 19 members and 12 guests. The winners were John Mendez (Starbucks gift card), Lucille Meehan (HTB gift card) and Sonny Castellano (Red Robin gift card).

We had our March luncheon at Simi Valley HTB (our last one there) with 19 members & 9 guests. We had quite a few winners because Joe Gutierrez, from Las Vegas again donated quite a few gifts. I want to thank Joe for donating these gifts. I am only going to mention the winners for March. They are Lois Perkins, Rudy Hernandez, Al Cox, Maynard Owens, Don Esterman, Dan Gorman, Joe Majzel, Dave Perez, Sandy Gaunce, Jim Dearborn, and Ed Smith.

Last month we honored one of our retirees from Santa Paula, Bill Everett, with a 60 year union membership pin. Congratulations Bill for staying in the union for 60 plus years. WAY TO GO BILL.

Mothers and fathers out there, have a great time on Mother's Day May 13th and on Father's day June 17th.

Please call your Senators and Congressmen and tell them to vote no on S1789, the 5 day delivery issue. Contribute to COLCPE and keep yourself updated on news from Medicare and Social Security if you receive these benefits.

Stay safe until next time.



**Retiree Bill Everett is awarded his 60 year union membership pin by Director of Retirees, Bev Sucich at the Retirees luncheon.**

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT...

*Continued from page 2*

The fifth front is Interest Arbitration. The NALC was not able to come to an agreement with the Postal Service in federal mediation. Therefore, the NALC is now entering interest arbitration. The NALC has been talking with the Postal Service since the Anaheim convention in 2010. We have always been building a case for arbitration, just in case things didn't work out. The Union, however, still seeks a negotiated settlement even though we are in the arbitration process.

The sixth front is Collective Bargaining. President Rolando believes that if the right people in the Postal Service had power, we would have a contract. The NALC is not interested in an APWU type package and we are not interested in wage cuts. The last mile of delivery is our future, and the job is getting harder. The NALC is looking for a way to make Transitional Employees (TE's) career employees and to

stop the one year separations. The NALC wants TE's to have job security, a health plan, a 401k plan, wage increases and a COLA. The NALC also needs assurances that the Postal Service will not contract our jobs, and of course, we are looking for wage increases and retaining all the current benefits for our career employees. The bottom line is vision. The USPS has no long term vision, while the NALC has a long term vision. The Postal Service is only focused on the short term.

The seventh front is the Contract itself. The NALC has to enforce it every day. The grievance procedure and the arbitration process is the only mechanism we have to right the wrongs that have been done to our members. It's very important that these mechanisms run like a fine tuned clock. Take for the example, the National Reassessment process. Many of our members were adversely affected by NRP. We challenged the NRP in arbitration and are currently 242 wins and 36 losses for those cases that went to arbitration.

*continued on page 13*

# BINGO NIGHT

TO BENEFIT THE  
**MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY  
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**EARLY BIRDS START AT 6PM**

**REGULAR GAME STARTS AT 7PM**

**50/50 PAYOUTS!!!**



# For A Better Tomorrow

By Chris Alessi, MBA/NSBA Representative

**A**s we put our time in day in and day out do we stop to think if we are going to have enough money saved for the future to have a good quality of life when we retire? Now is the time to start a Maturity Income Policy through your MBA. At the present time all policies such as a qualified traditional or Roth IRA and a non-qualified deferred annuity plans are earning 4.5% interest on all your contributions.

**Traditional IRA-** In a traditional IRA, the contributions you make each year can be deducted from your federal income taxes. In addition, earnings accumulate tax-free until the time of withdrawal. Upon distribution at age 59½ or older, the earnings and principle are taxed as ordinary income. The maximum annual contribution for a single filer under the age of 50 is \$5,000 and (\$6,000) for those 50 and older-with income eligibility limits of \$56,000 for single filer and \$90,000 for a married couple filing jointly.

**Roth IRA-** Contributions to a Roth IRA are not tax-deductible, but your earnings accumulate tax free. At the time of withdrawal, earnings are tax free from taxes if the owner has held the IRA for a minimum of 5 yrs and are at least 59½ yrs old. This Roth IRA allows you to contribute a maximum of \$5,000 per person each tax year (\$6,000 for those 50 and older) if your adjusted gross income does not ex-

ceed \$107,000 for single filers and \$169,000 for married couples filing jointly.

**NON-QUALIFIED ANNUITY** -There are no age or income limits for eligibility, no limits on your annual contributions to the plan, and no requirements to begin taking mandatory distributions at a certain age. Earnings accumulate tax-free until time of withdrawal, and then distributions are taxed only on the interest you've earned. The non-qualified annuity is not an IRA, but a deferred investment contract that makes regular payments upon annuitization.

**Choose how you receive your maturity Income** – Options include monthly payments for as long as you live, a joint annuity payable during the joint lifetimes of two people, and a lifetime annuity with a guaranteed minimum of 5, 10, 15, or 20 years.

So start your nest egg growing today for a better tomorrow, and join the MBA and keep yourself and loved ones secure for the future.

In closing, as I am writing this article on April 10th 2012, I am reminded that on this date 16 years ago, we had to say good-bye to our founder and President of Tri- Valley Branch 2902, and a great friend & Brother of all Letter Carriers, Jon D. Gaunce. On May 23rd Brother Jon would have been 57 years old.

In solidarity always, God Bless you.

## OVERTIME EQUITABILITY TRACKING...

*Continued from page 3*

carried by an ODL carrier on their own assignment are not tracked when determining equityability. However, the time spent carrying overtime on their own assignment deems them to be "not available" for overtime on another assignment.

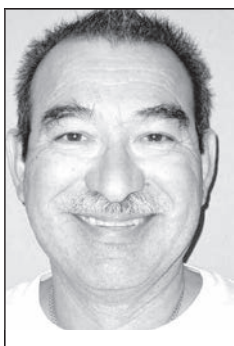
In many cases, the carrier that works a lot of overtime on their own assignment ends up with more **total** overtime hours for the quarter than the carrier that does not work much overtime on their own assignment. However, the carrier that does not work much overtime on their own assignment will usually end up with more "tracked" overtime than the carrier that does work a lot of overtime on their own assignment and consequently is often "not available" to carry overtime off of their assignment. What this means is that a carrier that worked **more total overtime** for the quarter (including the overtime hours worked on their own assignment) might ended getting paid from an overtime equityability grievance at the end of the quarter because they often end up below the average of tracked (off assignment) overtime hours for the quarter. I am of the correct opinion that

the current manner in which we determine overtime equityability really is unfair due to this flaw that dictates that we only track off assignment OT hours. I strongly believe that overtime equityability should be calculated hour for hour and that it should not matter if the overtime an ODL carrier works during the quarter is on or off their own assignment. All overtime hours should be calculated and tracked when determining the average. After all, overtime hours are hours, right?

At the **NALC National Conventions** that take place biennially (every two years), the delegates vote on **Resolutions** submitted by various branches that are attempting to change or clarify existing contractual language.

In 1980, at the NALC's 52nd Biennial Convention, the delegates voted in favor of Resolution #3 regarding Overtime Equityability that resolved, in relevant part, "**overtime worked on a carrier's own route to be used to determine equityability**". In 1990 at the NALC's 57th Biennial Convention the delegates voted in favor of Resolution #46 that resolved that the parties should "**count all OT hours to determine equityability**".

*continued on page 11*



# Medicare and the NALC Health Plan...Partners in Your Health

*By Joe Gutierrez, Health Benefits Representative*

**H**ello everyone, I hope you all had a happy Easter and are now getting ready for the hot summer months. This month's issue of the mail bag news will be about Medicare. First off I can't tell you to join or not, that is a decision you have to make. I personally like the security of having that extra coverage to protect me from high medical bills. You must remember that there is a penalty for joining late, 10% a year for each year that you delay in purchasing Medicare when eligible. If you decide to enroll in the Medicare plan do so before any penalties take effect. Once you join Medicare, the NALC medical plan becomes secondary and Medicare is primary. There are instances when NALC is primary and if you need help give me or the plan a call and we will assist you. Remember that with Medicare and the NALC plan both are fee for service plans and just about all doctors and hospitals are covered.

With Medicare as primary NALC will waive co-payments for office, allergy coinsurance when billed by physician's facilities. All calendar year deductibles are waived.

With the NALC health plan you do not need to join Medicare part D. If at some point you wish to join part D there is no penalty to join at a later date. The savings in having both plans in my opinion is not worth the cost of the premium as the savings is not that great. Again if you have any questions give me or the plan a call, you also can speak to Assistant Health Benefits Representative Mary Stanley and she can answer your questions also. Precertification in most instances is waived if you have Medicare, but it is always wise to double check with us just to be on the safe side.

Medicare part A, hospital care is free to all eligible citizens. Part B medical insurance is \$99 if signed when eligible otherwise a penalty is incurred Part C is another medical plan that you don't need if you keep the NALC health plan. Part D is the prescription plan that you also do not need when you have our health plan; I hope this helps in making a decision about Medicare.

Enjoy the summer and make those phone calls to your representatives to protect your jobs and retirement. The more involved you are the safer your job is.



# Thanks for the Vote... Of Confidence!

*By Mary Stanley, Assistant Health Benefits Representative*

**I** want to thank everyone for trusting me to be the assistant to the Health Benefits Representative. I promise that I will work hard to fulfill that trust.

I want to take a minute to share with you my own personal experience. For years, my husband and I had Blue Cross health insurance, because we thought it was the best. Unfortunately, the premiums and co-pays continuously increased and benefits decreased. Finally, a year ago we transferred to the NALC insurance, and we couldn't be happier. We have saved a lot of money and the coverage is great. The recent change from a PPO to an OPA network has increased our options. The prescription coverage by CVS Caremark is also good. We get the same savings at the CVS pharmacies as we get with the mail order process. Finally, lab work is fully covered at Quest Diagnostics.

Share with your friends that it is not too early to begin

evaluating the programs to consider changing to the NALC health insurance. As a further incentive, the current contract negotiations with management, which include consideration of benefits, will probably, further improve the comparison between the NALC insurance and the other medical plans.

Again, thank you for your support.



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# But it's NOT FAIR!

*By James Perryman, San Fernando Chief Shop Steward*

**H**ello to my fellow brothers and sisters. I want to thank you for your support in electing me as Trustee and a Delegate for this year National Convention. I look forward to dedicating my services to contin-

ue to learn, grow, and protect our member's rights and the best interest of our local Branch 2902. Although, it has been a challenging year for many Letter Carriers during these times, it's a blessing that we still have jobs. Hopefully we will continue to have our jobs to provide food, clothing, and shelter for our family, by supporting the NALC in the fight for a fair contract.

Let's discuss the issue of fairness. What is the definition of FAIR? The dictionary definition illustrates that it means: Equal opportunity, Equal amount, and Equal to all or both parties. Many employees at the Postal Service, whether craft or management, believe that they understand the definition of fairness. Sometimes I don't know if all employees actually understand what fairness means at the work place. Example: There have been a number of changes to the routes throughout the Sierra Coastal District. In this process routes were abolished. Some of the abolished routes had senior Carriers who had been on the route for 25-30 years. Therefore, the routes under the senior Carrier, who assignment was abolished, will go up for bid. In some cases there may be many carriers who may lose their assignment within a city or zone due to the reposting of the routes. In addition, all Letter Carriers within the delivery station may be eligible to bid on the available posted assignments/routes. In some cases even if the Letter Carrier works in a different city or zone, that is within the delivery station, regardless of his/her seniority, they may also be eligible to submit bids for the available posted assignments. This is when the route adjustment process becomes frustrating, confusing, and unfair to some Letter Carrier, and Managers.

The National Agreement was signed by the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS AND THE POSTAL SERVICE, regarding the issue of assignment abolishment. It was written and agreed to with the intent of fairness. This provision of the contract gives the Letter Carrier(s) who has dedicated the most years of service to the USPS the opportunity to bid on good routes. Just think about when you began your career as a PTF Letter Carrier. Let's face some facts. Some Letter Carrier's definition of PTF meant, Part Time Fool. We all were PTF's when we began to carry mail. Most PTF's we were given the worst work hours, the heaviest swings, and the longest routes. Some PTF's may have felt like part time fools for putting up

with Supervisors who were unrealistic, and veteran Letter Carriers who always tried to give us too much when giving away swings, I know I did. However, there was a light at the end of the tunnel, because we knew someday we will become regulars. We will be able to bid on available assignments, even if the route was long, heavy, and undesirable. It did not matter because you knew it was your assignment. You also knew that someday, when you put in years of service and built up your seniority, eventually you will be awarded a good route through the bidding process. Just imagine if your assignment was abolished, and we did not have this process. Would you want to go back to carrying to worst and heaviest swings on any route? HELL NO! Let's not forget about the Supervisor who does not want to deal with having to give a 30 year veteran long ass swings. We know that management does not want to deal with more possible headaches. This is just an example why the party's wrote and agreed to the provision regarding this issue.

Although, this agreement may be confusing and unfair to some Postal employees, it is the rule that we must follow. The same thought of fairness was also applied when the Union and Postal Service signed agreements such as; work scheduling, overtime, and annual leave. Just remember that seniority has its privileges and you will get your turn someday. While some may disagree with the rules and provisions, it's still recognized as a fair process by the party's. This is just a reminder for the members who are frustrated with all the changes that have been implemented throughout our district over the past years, which includes excessing Letter Carriers. There will be more changes to come and the Union will make a diligent effort to insure that the rights of Letter Carriers will be protected and fairness will be enforced.

Since we are on the subject of changes, I want to inform our members that if anyone is having difficulties with all the changes at work or at home and you need to talk to someone, EAP is available for you. I'm a member of the District Advisory Committee for the Sierra Coastal District. One of my responsibilities as a committee member is to ensure that ALL Postal employees are aware about the EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM. EAP can be used for just about any issue that a Postal employee is having. Meeting with an EAP counselor is FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL for Postal employees and their immediate family members. If you need help dealing with some issues please give them a call at 800-327-4968 or email [www.EAP4YOU.com](http://www.EAP4YOU.com). They can help you.

Until next time God Bless and go Lakers!



# CHATSWORTH

*By Angel Hale, Chatsworth Chief Shop Steward*

**H**ello from Chatsworth, yes we are still on the map. We haven't merged with any other office yet and we did get our Postmaster back for which we are grateful. I'm thinking that

the smile on our Postmasters face may have been wiped off just a little, maybe too much B. S.? Anything goes in Van Nuys when you're Station Manager. Couldn't have done that much damage, he went right out and picked up a few more big accounts for Chatsworth. More Postmasters should be doing that, customers like that. Carriers need to notice those big brown trucks that pull up at peoples businesses or their homes. This could all be our business. It once was, and it could be again, even if we do have the Dinosaur scanners. Ask your people if they would mind speaking to someone about getting a better price on their packages that are being shipped. Who do you know today that doesn't want to save some money? We can't leave our fate up to just anyone. We all have to chip in and go the extra mile, for the future of the Postal Service, for our future.

Well, I am sure that everyone knows that our contract is still up in the air. Saturday delivery is right next to it. I hope everyone took a look at their Postal Record last month. Half the magazine is filled with names of Carriers that have given to COLCPE. This is one of the tools that is being used to help us fight for our jobs. As I looked at all those names, it made me think about the fact that it is not just the Postal jobs that are at stake. It is also the paper companies, who sell to the card companies, ink companies, the machines; it just goes on and on. People run everything, and all those people would also be taking a hit. I believe this is known as the Domino effect. We all need to chip in to make sure that we have the politicians to go fight for us.

Today I received a letter from one of my customers asking me if I could bring the mail to the door because her and her husband can not make it to their box on the street without the worry of a fall. This made me think about Congressman Issas' brain-fart H.R. 2309 which would radically downsize the USPS and gut its employees' collective-

bargaining rights. It also proposes ending door-to-door mail box delivery service for 90 percent of American households and businesses that now receive it. So I guess I'll just tell my customer that it's been nice serving them all these years, but you will have to find a way to make it down the street. You will have to take it up with the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee. That won't be a problem, will it? I have one word for you, COLCPE!!!,, to save our customers, to save our jobs. I'd like to say Congratulations to Jan Parker on her retirement. Jan started in Chatsworth in 1984. Gas was \$1.10 a gallon. The first Apple Computer sold in 1984. Also, DNA was first used. The stamp was 20 cents. Alright, now that you're crying, I just want you to know that it has been a pleasure working with you. When those guys were giving you the business, you gave it right back. You held your own. I was so grateful for the laughs. We hope that you keep in touch. I also had the pleasure of presenting a retirement watch to Dago Bretado at the March union meeting.



***New retiree Dago Bretado is presented with his retiree watch by Chatsworth Chief Shop Steward Angel Hale at the March union meeting.***

Carriers, we will make it over all these bumps in the road if we just stick together. I believe that President Rolando will get us to where we need to be.

## 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.

### **Oxnard**

Michael Hoggard

### **San Fernando**

Hans Alvarado



# Munoz My Hero

*By, Steve Leyton, North Hollywood Chief Shop Steward*

On November 12, 2011, Justin Byrne, a resident of Valley Village, woke up after a long work night to hear an urgent knock on his door. When he opened his door, he found Miguel (Mike) Munoz, his veteran North Hollywood letter carrier, warning him of the danger of a gas leak in the apartment building. As Byrne wrote in a letter to the Postal Service, "By the time I had gotten into the hallway I could easily tell that the entire hallway (leading up to two other units) was flooded with gas...A single spark from static, from a flame...or a small spark from some other source could of ignited those fumes...and a lot of us would have lost a lot." Mike gave Byrne instructions for turning off the gas, but, lacking the proper tool, Byrne phoned the landlord, who rushed over. It was later learned that an elderly upstairs resident had turned her gas stove on without realizing the flame was out, and had left the building.

Munoz found a child was home in apartment #1. But the boy did not speak any of the six languages in which Mike tried to warn him of the danger. As Byrne took the child out of the building, Mike turned his at-

tention to the upstairs apartments where he knew more kids and at least one elderly resident lived. With no thought of the danger to himself, he called upon his instincts and military training. He hurried up the stairs to alert any remaining residents to the danger. "At the time, I didn't worry about the danger," Munoz later said. "I lost a child. I didn't want to see that happen to someone else." Although no other residents were home, from the moment he entered the building and smelled the gas, Munoz risked his life to keep his customers from harm.

"I thank god that there are still people out there that are willing to go out of their way to help others." Byrne wrote in his letter, "I am thankful that there are still men and women like Mike Munoz who understands that when someone requires help and could be within a life threatening situation, instead of turning the other cheek they step up to the plate and take action."

In his letter to Mike, Postmaster General Donahoe wrote, "Your efforts remind us all of the ties that bind communities and our country together. We are fortunate to have an employee of your caliber represent your community and this organization. Well done!"



**Mike Munoz, North Hollywood hero!**



***Pictured at left are Martin Diaz-1st place, Kenny Eng-2nd place, Javier Rueda-3rd place, Charles Guerro-4th place and Danny Acosta-5th place, the most recent winners of the MDA Poker Tournament held at the branch union hall in March. Thanks for supporting the MDA and the Saxsenmeier Scholarship. We are glad that you all had a good time in the name of charity. The branch raised \$500 in one night for these very worthy causes.***

## OVERTIME EQUITABILITY TRACKING...

Continued from page 6

Once the NALC Convention votes in favor of a Resolution to attempt to change or clarify contractual language the Resolution becomes an “**Official Position**” of the NALC. Our National Officers attempt to implement those “**Official Positions**” when bargaining our **National Agreement** (better known as our contract).

At the Branch 2902 meeting in January 2012, NALC’s National Director of City Delivery, Lew Drass, was here to install the officers of the branch for our new terms of office.

During Lew’s question and answer session at the meeting, I brought up the above written “**Official Positions**” taken by the Union and asked him if the overtime equity topic ever came up during contract negotiations. Lew affirmed that it was the position of the NALC that overtime “hours are hours” and that it should not matter whether overtime is worked off the ODL Carrier’s assignment or on the ODL Carrier’s assignment, all hours should be tracked and counted when determining equity.

Lew told us that it was the USPS that was resistant to the ‘hours are hours’ approach to equity and that it was the USPS that refused to agree to change the system during contract negotiations.

I was surprised to hear this but after thinking about it I realize that the Postal Service must fear that it would actually cost them more grievance money if we used the “hours are hours” approach to equity. If that really is true, then it further underscores the fact that the current system of determining overtime equity really is flawed and biased in favor of those carriers that work a lot of overtime on their own routes. I plan to investigate this theory (that “hours are hours” would cost the USPS more grievance payouts than the current system) as I look at overtime equity grievances in the future.

However, having said all of this, until the overtime equity provisions of the contract are changed, we are forced to live with and enforce the process as it now exists, meaning that it will remain far from perfect and definitely unfair to some carriers on the ODL.

While I’m on the topic of things being unfair, how is it possible that Frank McCourt “bought” the Dodgers with \$430 million of borrowed money from Fox, proceeded to drive the storied franchise into bankruptcy while driving away all of the teams’ previously loyal fans, and then is lucky enough to sell the team for **2.15 Billion Dollars** while still being allowed by the new owners to retain an interest in any future development of the 300 acres of property surrounding the stadium? WTF? Don’t get me wrong, I love Magic Johnson, but after paying McCourt 2.15 billion dollars, Magic and his Guggenheim Partnership should have insisted that McCourt take his unbelievably lucky Billion Dollar profit (after paying off all of his debts), pack his bags

and get his sorry ass off of the Dodger Stadium property, both literally and monetarily speaking. Unbelievable! Anyway, until next time, have a good spring.

## By the Numbers Membership 2011

*By Susan Degenhardt,  
Branch 2902 Recording Secretary*

As of Pay Period 26, 2011

**Active 1218**  
**Retired 397 (including 29 Gold Card members) =**  
**1615 total members**

During the last year:

Separated	12
Retired	24
Deaths	1
(active carriers)	
Transfers out	23*
Cancel	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>

New Members	4
Transfer In	7
Re activate	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>

\*Increase due to excessing of carriers from Thousand Oaks and Woodland Hills

**Branch 2902 is 94.2% organized**

### *In Memorium*

**Bruce A. Simonds**  
Retired Carrier- Reseda

**Fred N. Wright**  
Retired Carrier- Thousand Oaks



# Union Meeting

**March 20, 2012**  
**Chatsworth**

The meeting was called to order by President Salazar at 7:07PM. Pledge of allegiance was led by Sonny Castellano. Roll call of officers was taken. Asking to be excused were C.C. Flatts, Bob Golden, Lori Stewart, Joe Gutierrez, Kathi Albritten, and Joe Vedder. Fred Shaw makes a motion to excuse the brothers and sisters, S/C. Members are reminded to sign the attendance book, and purchase tickets for the 50/50 drawing. Members review the minutes from the February 21 meeting. Fred Shaw makes a motion to accept the minutes as written, S/C.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

President Salazar informs the members of the accident that took the life of Branch 24 member Anthony Earl Dunn. Brother Dunn was hit by a vehicle while standing at the back of the LLV. Members observe a moment of silence for Brother Dunn. Members pass the hat to aid his family.

May 12 is the date for the NALC Food Drive. The cards have been sent to the offices. Cards and bags must be delivered. We must make sure all the food is picked up from the customers.

Member Appreciation Night- Dodgers vs. Cardinals on September 15. Tickets sold at cost of \$26.00, with all you can eat hot dogs, nachos, sodas, peanuts, etc.

MDA Poker tournament- The Texas Hold'em Poker tournament was held on 3/3. Each of the two host branches took in over \$500.00 for MDA.

Contract update- We will be going to mediation, then onto arbitration if the mediator cannot get the sides to settle. Members are informed of the issues that are on the table.

Early out rumors are discussed.

Zip codes within certain offices are moving into other offices. When our zip codes move into offices that are not within our branch we will lose members. These carriers will merge into the branch that represents that office. Facilities are being closed down. We need to help get the pre-funding burden lifted from the Postal Service.

The transportation/highway bill that had the FERS rider in it will now go forward without that rider. The rider would have eliminated the supplement that bridged the loss of income to retirees that were under the age of 62.

Pre-arbitration decision brought back 5 excessed carriers to Woodland Hills.

TSP- President Salazar reviews the latest returns on the TSP funds. The advantages of contributing are reviewed.

Members are informed about S1853 and HR 3591. Both of these bills contain the language to eliminate the pre-funding mandate, and maintain 6-day delivery. Members are urged to contact their representatives to support these bills.

## COMMITTEES

*Recreation-* Paulette Dyer gives members information on the Gibbons Center. She donates two \$5 gift cards for the raffle.

*COLCPE-* Ernestine Hernandez tells members that donations to COLCPE are used to fight attacks on the Postal Service that affect us as employees. She encourages members to also sign up for e-Activist.

*Retirees-* Bev Sucich reports on the March luncheon where member Bill Everett was presented with a 60 year membership pin. She announces the next luncheon will be at the Canoga Park Hometown Buffet.

*Legislation-* David Hyman announces the latest updates for the LA Federation of Labor. He has several flyers for upcoming events.

*Health Benefits-* Asst. HBR Mary Stanley reports that the NALC Healthplan is union owned and operated. There is a smoking cessation plan called Quit for Life. She reminds members that they should use PPO doctors, labs and hospitals whenever possible to keep out of pocket costs down.

*MBA-* Chris Alessi recognizes Brother Don Esterman and his wife Myra for being strong union members. Chris informs the members about the Paid up at 90 whole life insurance plan. He also compares the cost of FEGLI plans vs. MBA plans in retirement.

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Fred Shaw makes a motion to untable the motion from last meeting, S/C. Brother Shaw withdraws his original motion to have the Branch endorse Brad Sherman for the 30th Congressional District seat.

**NEW BUSINESS - None**  
**GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION**  
***Know Your Rights***

*continued on page 13*

## CHATSWORTH...

*Continued from page 12*

Dago Bretado from Chatsworth is presented with a retirement watch by President Salazar.

Ernestine Hernandez tells members that Food Drive T-shirt order forms are due tonight, and buttons can be purchased from unionstuff.com

Members review provisions covering turning letters for parcels and loading and delivery of parcels.

Members review the Treasurer's report. Don Minster makes a motion to accept the report as written, S/C.

Ernestine Hernandez makes a motion to adjourn (in memory of Marva Golden), S/C.

Louie Rodriguez won the 50/50 raffle, and a door prize. Ernestine Hernandez won a door prize.

Membership drawing was worth \$1342.50. Nilo Gatus from Woodland Hills was the name drawn. He was not present to win.

Respectfully submitted by Susan Degenhardt, Recording Secretary

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT...

*Continued from page 4*

The NALC is developing a comprehensive training program to put together a core of trainers to train advocates for specialized areas such as discipline, NRP, route inspection, etc.

The eighth front is the NALC itself. The Union must be ready to adapt. Anything can happen in a re-election year. Nationally, the NALC is in good shape, but we have to be ready to adopt at all levels. Every branch is losing active members due to retirements, attrition, excessing, transfers, etc. But, we must be able to adapt quickly and maintain a way to right wrongs. We must have back-ups for every position. The NALC membership should not have to battle each other for whatever reasons. We are a family and families tend to fight once in a while, but we are still a family. We must stay united, organized, and active on all these fronts and in the end, hopefully, we will come out ok. Stay informed. Become and E-Activist and consider donating to COLCPE. Get involved. Make phone calls, email, and write to your Senators and Congress people. Lets all make an effort to Save America's Postal Service and our jobs. All for now back in two.

# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

## Joint City Delivery Meeting

**Nov 16, 1983, page 6.**

Reference volume alone, without additional evidence to substantiate wrongful expansion of street time, can not sustain a disciplinary action.

## Step 4 Settlement

**March 13, 2002, Q98N-4Q-C-01045840**

The Managed Service Points (MSP) initiative is a national program intended to facilitate management's ability to assess and monitor city delivery route structure and consistency of delivery service. The following reflects the parties understanding of MSP: The parties agree that management will determine the number of scans on a city delivery route. Time credit will continue to be given during route count and inspections and will be credited in total street time. MSP does not set performance standards, either in the office or on the street. With current technology, MSP records of scan times are not to be used as timecard data for pay purposes. MSP data may not constitute the sole basis for disciplinary action. However, it may be used by the parties in conjunction with other records to support or refute disciplinary action issued pursuant to Article 16 of the National Agreement. City letter carriers have the option of using a personal identification number (PIN) other than the last four digits of their social security number.

## Step 4

**August 4, 1977, NCN 7044**

Street supervision will be conducted in a proper and businesslike manner and it will not be accomplished with the intent of harassing a carrier.

## Pre-arb

**October 22, 1985, H1N-1N-D 31781**

There is no set pace at which a carrier must walk and no street standard for walking.

## Step 4

**June 11 1982, H1N-5C-C-1155**

It is not a requirement for a carrier on a foot route to carry 4 inches of flats on his arm while delivering mail. Carriers may opt to carry flats on their arm, unless instructed not to, as part of their daily routine, provided there is no loss in carrier efficiency. However, management may reasonably expect the carrier to perform his duties and travel his route during route inspections in the same manner as he/she does throughout the year (Part 915, M-41 and Part 234.224, M-39).

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## RETIREES LUNCH

**RAFFLE AT 12:30**

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

**When:** Thursday,  
June 21, 2012

**Time:** 11:00am to 1:00pm



**Where:** Sea Horse Buffet  
2022 First Street  
Simi Valley

**When:** Thursday,  
July 19, 2012

**Time:** 11:00am to 1:00pm



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## BRANCH #2902 OFFICERS

### PRESIDENT

- Frank Salazar

### EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

- Ray Hill

### SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT

- Paul Drapkin

### VICE PRESIDENT

- Ernestine Hernandez

### TREASURER/FINANCIAL SECRETARY

- Dan Gorman

### RECORDING SECRETARY

- Susan Degenhardt

### DIRECTOR OF RETIREES

- Bev Sucich

### MBA/NSBA REPRESENTATIVE

- Chris Alessi

### HEALTH BENEFIT OFFICER

- Joe Gutierrez

### ASSISTANT HEALTH BENEFITS REPRESENTATIVE

- Mary Stanley . . . . .

### SGT.-AT-ARMS

- Bob Golden . . . . .

### TRUSTEES:

- Debbie Riggs . . . . .
- James Perryman . . . . .
- Sandy Gaunce . . . . .
- Greg Gaddis . . . . .
- David Hyman

After eating an entire bull, a mountain lion felt so good he started roaring. He kept it up until a hunter came along and shot him. The moral: When you're full of bull, keep your mouth shut.

**-Will Rogers**

## SHOP STEWARD LIST

Agoura Hills Chief S.S.	Greg Gaddis
Chatsworth Chief S.S.	Angel Hale
Fillmore Chief S.S.	Call Office
Moorpark Chief S.S.	Robbie Elsaleh
Alternate	Lori Stewart
North Hollywood Chief S.S.	Steve Leyton
	Louie Rodriguez
Chandler	Greg Gaddis
Laurel Canyon	Steve Leyton
Studio City	Greg Gaddis
Valley Village	Steve Leyton
Northridge Chief S.S.	Onofre Varela
Shop Steward	
Webmaster	Larry Orcutt
Porter Ranch	Larry Orcutt
Alternate	Kurt Whitesell
Ojai Chief S.S.	Philip Navarro
Oxnard Chief S.S.	Ernestine Hernandez
	Johnny Boyd
	Pablo Galvan
Pacoima Chief S.S.	Steve Dickerson
Alternate	Frankie Mercado
Alternate	Rocio Fraire
Alternate	Lorie Moore
Port Hueneme Chief S.S.	Kathi Albritten
Reseda Chief S.S.	Jeff Hastert
San Fernando Chief S.S.	James Perryman
	Albert Reyes
M.C.A.	James Perryman
North Hills	C.C. Flatts
Sylmar / Main Office	James Perryman
Santa Paula Chief S.S.	Laura Rowe
Simi Valley Chief S.S.	Sandra Gaunce
Mt. McCoy Station	Sandra Gaunce
Thousand Oaks Chief S.S.	Jim Mette
	Alex Lopez
	Walter Williams
Alternate	MaryStanley
Newbury Park	Jim Mette
Ventura Chief S.S.	Laura Rowe
East Ventura	Laura Rowe
Woodland Hills Chief S.S.	Joe Vedder
	Paul Drapkin

## RECREATION NEWS

### SEA WORLD:

Adults: \$46.00 (Gate price \$69.99)

Child: \$46.00 (Gate price \$61.99)

### SEE'S GIFT CERTIFICATE:

\$13.50 (Retail Value \$16.50)

For each See's Gift Certificate purchased received one \$5.00 Gift Card. (While supplies last)

Additional Gift Cards can be purchased for \$5.00 each.

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

**My famous homemade oatmeal chocolate chip cookies are 4 for \$1.00.**

**PAULETTE DYER**

# THE MAIL BAG NEWS

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## BEV SUCICH

Will be serving

## DINNER

At the May  
Union Meeting

**DINNER starts at 6pm**

## TRI-VALLEY BRANCH 2902

### ANNOUNCES

### MEMBERSHIP APPRECIATION

### NIGHT AT

## DODGERS STADIUM

### VS. THE ST. LOUIS CARDINALS

**SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 15, 2012**

**6:10PM**

**TICKETS ARE IN THE RIGHT FIELD**

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SODA**

**TICKETS ARE \$26 EACH**

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**(818) 893-8613 or at**

**davidahyman@aol.com**

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**MAY 12** NALC National Food Drive



**MAY 13** Mother's Day



**MAY 15** Regular Branch Meeting 7pm  
Union Hall-Chatsworth  
Dinner served 6 pm

**MAY 17** Retiree Lunch 11:00am  
Sea Horse 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  
Union Hall-Chatsworth  
Dinner served 6 pm

**JUN 21** Retiree Lunch 11:00am-CANCELLED  
Hometown Buffet-West Hills

**JUL 3** Executive Board Meeting 6pm  
Executive Council Meeting 7pm

**JUL 4** Independence Day-Holiday





# THE Mail Bag NEWS

★ SOLIDARITY

★ EDUCATION

★ ORGANIZATION



OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF TRI-VALLEY BRANCH 2902,  
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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July – August 2012

## Branch 2902 Collects 413,358 lbs. Of Food To Help Stamp Out Hunger

By Frank Salazar, President

As the President of the Branch, I would like to say "Thank You" to everyone who participated in this year's Letter Carrier Food Drive; Letter Carriers, Rural Carriers, Clerks, Mail Handlers, Custodians, 204b's, Supervisors, and Postmasters. To say the least, it was a great success. Nationally, the Letter Carrier's Annual Food Drive collected over 70 million pounds of food. Locally, we picked up 120,000 lbs. more food than we did last year, and this is the highest total we have had since I've been President. We think that the

current economic conditions and the use of the plastic bags supplied by Ralphs Supermarkets (Kroger Food) gave more awareness to our food drive. I know that the bags were difficult to handle and the cards just added to our work load, but we really feel that the bags made a big difference. When our customers read the card and then saw the blue bag, it was a reminder and a convenient way to donate the needed food, and, it worked. This program



*Pictured above are just a few of the armies of Letter Carriers who hauled in the goods on the nation's largest one day food drive. Once again hearty thanks are in order for the great work that branch 2902 Carriers performed.*

only works, because we have a national sponsor like Campbell Foods to supply the cards, Valpak and AARP to give advertising, and a local sponsor like Ralph's to supply the bags. The program also works because we Letter Carriers and Rural Carriers make the effort to deliver the cards and bags and pick up the food.

As many of you know, during the summer months, many food banks run low on food. Our food drive helps build up those food banks during the low contribution months of summer.

The current unemployment rate in California is about 11%, which doesn't take into account those who have given up looking for work and the under-employed. Current poverty statistics for the State of California ranks us 8th in the United States for food insecurity (hunger) at 15.9% of the population behind the states of Mississippi 19.4%, Texas 18.8%, Arkansas 18.6%, Alabama 17.3%, Georgia 16.9%,

*continued on page 2*

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT...

Continued from page 1



Ohio 16.4%, and Florida 16.1%. Our food drive makes a difference. Thank You for helping make our fellow man's condition a little bit better.

### 6-Day Counts

In late May, the Branch leadership was put on notice that Management will conduct 6-Day mail counts and physical inspections beginning this fall and continuing through May of 2013. Tentatively scheduled for

September of this year are the offices of Fillmore, Ojai, Port Hueneme, and Simi Valley's Mount McCoy Station. I will not list the rest of the offices and the dates of the inspections, because in my experience with Management the dates are subject to change without notice and some offices may even drop from the list for various reasons.

At the National level, the Joint Alternate Route Adjustment Process was not extended. Locally, Management feels that they got all the savings they could get out of the JARAP, and figure they can get more savings by conducting 6-day counts. Since Management put our Branch on notice, I figured I should get the word out. Per the Handbook M-39 Chapter 2 at section 231.5, in order to get a fair and reasonable evaluation "... the carrier must perform duties and travel the route in precisely the same manner as he/she does throughout the year."

So, if you have been violating the safety rules, or if you have been swiping incorrectly, or if you have been carrying your route out of order, now is the time to correct those deficiencies. Conversely, if your labels are messed up, your DPS is out of order, or if there is a problem with your line of travel now is the time to get it fixed. Put your request into Management in writing. If they fail to fix the problem, see your Steward. Otherwise, if you feel that Management did a poor inspection, evaluation, and adjustment on your route, sees your Steward to file a grievance so we can get you an 8 hour route. To be forewarned is to be forearmed.

### 1-800-I-Snitch

If you've checked the bulletin boards on the workroom floor or checked the postal sites on the internet, you may have come across some flyers from the USPS-Office of the Inspector General (OIG) requesting that you turn in fellow employees for crimes, misconduct, or misusing or improperly storing 775 tubs. Currently, the United States Postal Service & the USPS Office of Inspector General are running a campaign called "Help Us Pick out the Bad Apples."

Requesting that you turn in those that you know or suspect are cheating or stealing from the U.S. Postal Service. (Yes, we know that most of them are Managers and Supervisors.) The Other program deals with 775 tubs or MTE's (Mail Transport Equipment) and the improper use or storing of them by Postal employees or patrons. In theory, there are good reasons for these programs. However, in practice, they don't always work as designed. Be careful before you consider making such a call. For the most part, the OIG will not go after a Manager unless it's really egregious. I've tried to get the OIG to go after time card fraud, but they didn't really care unless Management was stealing hours to get a bonus. The OIG really wants craft employees.

### San Diego Slugs

Talking about the Office of Inspector General going after craft employees, a recent report conducted by the USPS-OIG declared that the Letter Carriers in San Diego were a bunch of slugs and that the Supervisors were basically incompetent and if they did their jobs properly in supervising Letter Carriers they could save :06 minutes per route, which equates to 83,900 hours per year, which equals about \$3.4 million savings annually. Wow! No, the OIG didn't call the Carriers in San Diego slugs or the Managers stupid or incompetent, they kind of implied it. Here we go again with the OIG trying to value their existence to Congress and their cost to the Postal Service by nit picking craft employees. The OIG observes a few Carriers doing

something not quite kosher and they want to extrapolate that behavior to all the Letter Carriers in San Diego. Hey, I could walk into the OIG's office on any day and observe an agent picking his/her nose, talking to his/her significant other on a cell phone, coming to work late, talking to the agent in the next cubicle, reading a newspaper, or going for that fourth cup of coffee, which can all be consid-

ered time wasting practices.

What the Service is trying to do overall is squeeze Letter Carrier street times. Since the economic times are very difficult, and with the Postal Service losing millions of dollars and tons of letter volume, Management figures they can squeeze Carrier street times to close the gap. That's the reason why we are having 6-day counts, one days counts, 3999s, and an uptick in street supervision.

Most of the problems in the San Diego study are an easy fix, but Management is to blame because they don't or won't do their jobs. We Carriers know that! The study found that Management should be on the street more even though the study did not indicate anything done wrong on the street. Supervisors used the excuse that they have too

continued on page 6

*"What the Service is trying to do overall is squeeze Letter Carrier street times."*



# I'M STICKING WITH THE UNION

By Ray Hill, Executive Vice-President

One of the many negative "side effects" of the USPS's current financial woes that you have all

read and heard about for the past several years, ad nauseam, is the drastic drop in the total number of career Letter Carriers employed by USPS. In the Post Offices represented by Branch 2902, no career Letter Carrier has been hired since the end of Year 2006.

Nowadays, when career Letter Carriers leave the employment of the USPS for whatever the reason may be (retirement, resignation, removal etc.), the USPS does not hire a career Letter Carrier to replace them. Consequently, the career Letter Carrier "complement" (i.e. the total number of career Letter Carriers) has been **drastically** reduced in the past 6 years.

We can use my "home office" of North Hollywood's career Letter Carrier complement numbers to illustrate this point.

In January of 2007 the North Hollywood Installation's career Letter Carrier complement consisted of 214 regular carriers and 29 Part-Time Flexibles (PTFs) for a total of 243 career carriers.

In January of 2008 North Hollywood's complement consisted of 221 regular carriers and 22 PTF's for the same total of 243 career carriers.

In January of 2012 North Hollywood's career Letter Carrier complement consisted of 184 regular carriers and 16 PTFs for a total of 200 career carriers. When we do the math we see that from January of 2008 through January of 2012 North Hollywood had a loss of 37 regular carriers and 5 PTFs for a **total net loss of 43 career letter carriers**. That's a hell of a lot of carriers that we have lost in North Hollywood in the past 4 plus years.

This drastic drop in the number of career Letter Carriers employed in North Hollywood has had a negative effect on the number of carriers allowed off on annual leave each week in Year 2012 in two of the zip codes in North Hollywood, 91602 and 91607. If the decline in complement continues, as it probably will, all of the zip codes will eventually suffer this same negative effect. The North Hollywood Local Agreement determines the number of carriers allowed to take annual leave each week and reads as follows:

*Sec. 8. Number of employees off on annual leave per week, per bidding unit, will be 11%.*

**The number of career letter carriers employed as of**

**November 1st will determine this number.** Any fraction at or above .50% shall be rounded up; any fraction below .50% shall be rounded down.

Bear in mind that this Local Agreement covers North Hollywood only and that each city in the Branch has their own Local Agreement that determines the number of Carriers allowed off on annual leave per week, using a formula that is similar to this.

Because of the drastic drop in career Letter Carriers, both the 91602 and 91607 units of North Hollywood lost one annual leave slot per week. Other stations in other offices in the Branch also lost annual leave slots due to similar drops in the number of career Letter Carriers employed in those offices. The Porter Ranch Office of Northridge comes to mind where they also lost one annual leave slot for Year 2012.

When the Carriers were signing up for their 2012 annual leave this past November, they became upset (or should I say "pissed off"?) when they realized that they had lost an annual leave slot. I bring this topic up now, 7 months later, because we received a phone call today at the Branch Office from someone requesting the Union Anniversary date of a North Hollywood Carrier that apparently wants to get out of the Union. It wasn't the Carrier himself calling to get this information; it was someone else calling on his behalf. Today's phone call reminded me that I had heard last November that this Carrier was **angry at the Union** because, due to the reduction in career Carrier complement, his bidding unit lost an annual leave slot for Year 2012 and that he was going to get out of the Union for that reason.

Believe me, I don't blame any Carriers for being pissed off about losing annual leave slots in their bidding units and I fully understand how important the scheduling of annual leave is to Carriers. If the annual leave board fills up before you get to schedule all of your annual leave for the year, you're basically screwed. I get it, I don't like it and I wish I could change it. But I can't change the career Letter Carrier Complement in any of the Post Offices we represent and it is certainly not the Union's fault that, due to the **drastic drop** in career Letter Carrier complement, we have lost annual leave slots in a few of our offices. I find it hard to believe when I hear that someone plans to get out of the Union because his bidding unit lost an annual leave slot due to the drop in career Letter Carrier Complement, as though it were the Union's fault.

Almost everyone has an opinion about Unions, some of

*continued on page 9*



# WHAT IS MANAGEMENT'S AGENDA?

*By Ernestine Hernandez, Vice President*

To hear management tell it, they just want to fix everything. But when you watch them in action, you can see that their intent is to break everything and everyone they choose to torment. Right now there have been changes again of Supervisors for each zone. Keep cool everyone; avoid falling into the discipline trap! If you don't agree with the daily expectations given to you by management, then fill out a 3996 and list your reasons for requiring assistance. Keep in mind that there are a number of things that have changed that we now have to do on street time; for example: the mail that used to come in the 99 mail is now in the DPS mail and may take longer to sort out, but should be sorted out on the street. If you have been filling out your 3849's (peach slips) in the office, you have been adding office time that is not actual office work, that should be done on the street time. If you get a lot of accountable items that need to be written up, put the time needed on the 3996. Don't put yourself in any unauthorized overtime situation; list your reasons and estimated time needed on the 3996 and give it to your Supervisor in the morning. If they are not around in the morning, leave it on their desk with the time you left it there and write Supervisor not around. If management only authorizes part of the time you needed, and you find you still need more time when you are on the street, then call in to the office (not their cell phone) and let a Supervisor know you need more time.

Targeting people is management's favorite pastime. What do they care if an employee has been working for more than 25 years, (or maybe that's what is bothering them, hmm, you think?), well, if they don't like you then you become their favorite target. They try to throw everything they can at you and blow everything out of proportion and out of context whether it is valid or not. Bogus charges are brought up against you to issue you discipline disregarding the fact that the alleged violations are overlooked for all other employees and Supervisors, mainly because the alleged violations really don't affect operations at all, but if management wants to get you, then the alleged violations become so-o-o-o important.

Take MSP scanning for example; it's never been used for anything but to issue discipline. No route has ever been fixed by using MSP scanning records although it shows consistently how long street times are taking. Instead people get disciplined for occasionally missing them even though their street times remain the same. And what about treating employees with dignity and respect? That seems

to go out the window as soon as someone goes into management. Employees are no longer seen as human beings but as beasts of burden who are to be forced into submission by unreasonable managers who laugh with each other about how they mistreated certain employees each day. They do not think twice about using profanity, humiliating and/or upsetting employees to the point of disrupting their performance for the whole day. Then management wonders why they are not trusted.

Why don't they just do the job they are supposed to be doing which is making sure the operations run smoothly? For example: getting vehicles repaired and washed; why should employees have to drive vehicles that are unsafe, dirty, and full of graffiti after it has been reported? Vehicle repair tags are not being submitted to VMF (Vehicle maintenance facility) although the Supervisors are in the office for the majority of the day. How hard can it be for the Supervisors to pick up the phone and call VMF, or to walk across the parking lot to give it to them so they can work on it as soon as possible? And what happened to the automatic maintenance checkups of vehicles? Did they have to do away with the vehicle mechanics Overtime equitable distribution? Why is that so hard for managers to figure out? Because none of them want their zone to incur the overtime hours; but since 93030, 93036, and 93035 Carriers are all on the same overtime desired list, then they can be used in all three zones to work the overtime.

Well, enough on that for now. Let's see what we as Carriers, can do about saving the Postal Service. Remember that we have a Political Action Committee (PAC) called COLCPE that we can contribute to in order to allow our voices to be heard in Washington, D.C... Sign up to contribute if you haven't done so already. Right now the Postal Service has delivery protections which are still protecting our jobs. Don't be fooled into believing that 5 days would be nice; it would only allow the protections to be abolished and open the door to privatization. That would mean the end of a job with nice benefits that was fought for by this union for over 100 years. Say YES to COLCPE!

*There are two days in the week about which and upon which I never worry. Two carefree days, kept sacredly free from fear and apprehension. One of these days is yesterday...And the other...is tomorrow.*

**—Robert Jones Burdette, American Clergyman  
and Author (1884-1914)**



# 20th ANNUAL FOOD DRIVE

By *Sandy Gaunce, Food Drive Coordinator*

This was the most successful food drive we have ever had, and it deserves THANKS to almost everyone involved. I want to say how much I appreciated Eileen O'Reilly, District Liaison at the Santa

Clarita Plant for getting the necessary equipment we needed such as BB's etc. when we had to re-route our food drive cards from the plant to the designated Post Offices. Thank God, Eileen was there for us as Michael Madrigal, Manager of Retail not only refused to supply us with what we needed, he told me it was too soon before the drive and to leave them at the plant. As if that wasn't enough, he then informed the people in the bulk mail entry where our cards were being held for us that the cards were NOT to go out that day. It's pretty obvious Mr. Madrigal doesn't care about anything except his own ego.

Back on the positive side, our food drive was such a huge success because of people like Don Minster, Sonny Castellano, Jim Dearborn, Ernestine Hernandez, James Perryman, Bev Sucich and Dan Gorman for all your help with the distribution of the food drive cards. They are a great crew and are there for me every year.

I also want to thank Janette Dolabson from branch 2462 for all of her hard work in getting us the food drive bags. They really made a big difference.

I also want to thank Ralphs Super Market for provided

the printing on over a million bags. A thank you goes out to Ray, Matt, Sue, Jim, Ryan, and Alex for transporting over 300,000 bags from the branch 2462 Van Nuys union hall to our union hall. Also, to the Shop Stewards for taking the bags from our union hall to their respective Post Offices. We also had Albertsons Grocery Stores in selected areas set up displays in their markets encouraging customers to purchase food for our event.

Again this year we had Stephanie Madina Rodriguez from KTLA Channel 5 with the 2012 Food Drive kickoff on May 8th at the MEND food bank in Pacoima.

A lot of volunteer work goes into making this food drive such a successful event. Most of all I want to acknowledge all the Carriers that picked up the food on their routes under the pressure of time restraints while doing their regular job once a year for the past 20 years; I hope they know how much they are appreciated. THANK YOU.

Nationwide we collected approximately 70 million pounds of food; our Branch Offices collected the following:

Agoura Hills	13,985
Fillmore	2,460
LCCA/Valley Village	13,570
Studio City	6,104
Ojai	4,200
Pacoima	10,266
Reseda	14,000
North Hills/Sepulveda	9,500
Santa Paula	4,350
Mount McCoy	28,980
Newbury Park	9,500
East Ventura Station	35,760
Chatsworth	21,555
Moorpark	9,000
Chandler	22,500
Northridge Main Office/Porter Ranch	22,000
Oxnard/Saviors Station	31,965
Port Hueneme	6,135
San Fernando/MCA	16,346
Sylmar	27,481
Simi Valley Main	23,260
Thousand Oaks	42,110
Ventura Main Office	11,280
Woodland Hills	26,316
Last collection from Albertsons stores	735

**Grand Total for  
Tri-Valley Branch 2902 413,358**



*As usual, Carriers do the extra work required on food drive day and come back with a smile on their face!*



# INSURANCE IS IMPORTANT

*By Chris Alessi, Branch 2902 MBA/NSBA Representative*

security for the ones you love in the event that you or the breadwinner or both are taken away.

**MBA Universal Life Insurance** provides a death benefit for the NALC member, his or her spouse, and children, grand children, and even great grandchildren. This plan combines the low cost of term insurance with savings component. It is a flexible plan that allows the policy holder to increase or decrease the insurance protection; make withdrawals; and increase, or decrease, or temporarily stop the premium payments, while the insurance stays in force.

**MBA 10-Year Renewable and Convertible Term Insurance-** This plan is a 10 year renewable and convertible insurance policy. Term insurance provides members with death protection for a specific term of years, in this case 10 years. This plan is guaranteed renewable every 10 years or until the insured reaches age 80. With this plan, a policyholder does not accumulate a cash value: it is pure insurance for a given term. This low-cost coverage is ideal for young families and policyholders in the prime of life.

**MBA Whole Life Paid Up at Age 90-** This plan is a limited payment whole life insurance policy. This is a very affordable whole life insurance policy backed by the NALC. This plan provides a way to give your family financial security both during your lifetime and beyond. In the event of your death, your survivors receive the full amount of your policy. While you are alive you are setting aside money you can use as a nest egg for your family. Premiums stop at the age of 90.

**MBA Whole Life Paid Up at Age 65-** This plan is a limited payment whole life insurance policy. It is ideal for all Letter Carriers and their family members. The plan offers lifelong insurance protections without lifelong payments. Your premiums end on the policy anniversary date following the insured's 65th birthday. This allows the insured to reduce their financial obligations upon retirement while maintaining their insurance coverage throughout the insured's lifetime.

**Independence-Single Payment Plan-** This plan is a convenient, whole life insurance policy. A once-in-a-lifetime premium pays off the policy at the time of purchase. In the event of the insured's death, the Independence Plan pays the survivors the full amount of the policy. This plan also helps with future needs by building cash value at current

dividend rates. In times of need, a policyholder may borrow against this value or surrender the policy for the entire value.

**MBA 20 Pay Whole Life-** This is a limited payment life insurance plan especially suited for Letter Carriers with young children. The policyholder pays the premiums for 20 years. In the event of the insured's death, the policy pays the survivors the full amount of the policy. The policy also builds cash value for the future, which policyholders may borrow against during cash emergencies. After the 20 years are paid up, the policyholder can elect to continue coverage at no cost. In that event, death benefits remain in force and the cash value continues to build up at current dividend rates.

In closing, I wish all our Brothers and Sisters and their Families of Branch 2902 to think seriously about protecting your family and to have a summer ahead filled with lots of fun, peace, and happiness.

God Bless You, in Solidarity.

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT...

*Continued from page 2*

many office duties, and can't get out on the street. If you get more Supervisors on the street, I guarantee that the Service will just run up costs and get less work done by the Supervisors, and, who will be watching the Supervisors? 99.9% of our men and women do their job. The study also found that Managers did not set daily expectations nor did they follow-up on the previous day's performance. Hell, if you read a Carrier's PS Form 3996 or listened to their call from the street, you got the story. Otherwise, the Carrier is back in 8 hours.

The study also found that Management didn't properly stage the DPS mail to the point that Carriers had to move trays around to get to the trays they needed. Management failed to get the mail to Carriers early causing Carriers to wait around for mail and parcels. Management failed to have current 3999s, and that Management failed to discuss and investigate performance issues with Carriers. In my experience, most (not all) Managers don't want to discuss anything with Carriers because (1) they don't care, (2) they don't want to hear it, (3) they are incompetent, (4) they don't have the skill sets, and/or (5) they don't want to fix the problems, because it takes too much time and very few above will help them. On the Carrier side, the OIG found that Carriers had to be more efficient in loading, to use the satchel, finger mail between deliveries, and to make fewer

*continued on page 9*



# If You Don't Read This, It Could Cost You Thousands of Dollars!

*By Mary Stanley, Assistant Health Benefits Officer*

The following story is true. Only, the names have been changed to protect the innocent.

About four weeks ago, a friend of mine named "Art" was told by his doctor to get an MRI. Art searched around and found a convenient facility (West Hills Hospital) that is part of our NALC medical insurance network (CIGNA network) and has an "open" MRI which is what Art wanted. West Hills could give Art an appointment at any time. They told Art that first he would have to get pre-authorization, which Art's doctor had to arrange.

Art called the NALC and got the information necessary for the doctor, including the telephone number for pre-authorizations. Art passed this information on to his doctor, who is also Art's personal friend. A couple of hours later Art's doctor called him to tell him that the procedure had been approved and gave him the preauthorization number. Because they were friends, Art and the doctor had a pleasant conversation for a couple of minutes. Just before Art hung up, he told the doctor that he was going to schedule the procedure at West Hills. The doctor told Art that he had told the insurance company that the facility would be Alamo Advanced Imaging in Simi Valley, rather than West Hills. Art replied that everything should be OK because West Hills is also a participating facility.

That afternoon Art called West Hills and talked to Birdie to make an appointment to have the MRI conducted two weeks later, on a Thursday. He could have made the appointment for the next day, but Art wanted the MRI to be conducted two weeks later. The next morning Art called the NALC and explained that the facility for his pre-authorized MRI would actually be West Hills rather than Alamo Imaging. Art was told that any facility would be OK, as long as it was a member of the network.

A week and a half went by with no further activity. Then on the Saturday before the scheduled MRI, Art received a letter that he almost discarded because it looked like "junk" mail. However, Art opened the letter, which was a confirmation of his authorization for the MRI, at Alamo Imaging. Art smiled, because if he had not delayed the scheduled date for the MRI, the test would have been completed a week earlier. Then Art noticed that at the bottom of the letter it said that if the location was to be changed that he should call the number listed.

Even though Art did not think it was necessary, he called the number at 8:00 AM on Monday morning. THAT

IS WHEN ALL OF THE FUN STARTED!!! During the next three days Art was involved with numerous telephone calls to the insurance company, the doctor's office, the NALC, and West Hills hospital. At one point Art was told that West Hills was not a participating facility. Finally, late Wednesday afternoon, preauthorization was confirmed in a three way call that included the insurance company and West Hill hospital.

There are some important lessons to learn from this:

1. Art gained some insight into why medical costs are skyrocketing.
2. Art learned that the pre-authorization process is not something to be trifled with.
  - a. Art was able to handle this from his office over a period of three days by placing many, many telephone calls.
  - b. A hard working Letter Carrier, delivering mail out on the route, would probably not be able to place all of the telephone calls and handle the problems.
  - c. Art understands the problems that Carriers have because his wife is a carrier (that is why he has NALC insurance) and she frequently asks him to put in telephone calls to help her.
3. Art learned that all of the details of the pre-authorization process have to be worked out.
4. Art learned the office personnel in the NALC office are very knowledgeable and helpful.
5. Art has learned that the NALC insurance is very good.



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# Union Meeting

**April 17, 2012  
Chatsworth**

The meeting was called to order at 7:08 by President Salazar. The pledge of allegiance was led by Sgt. @Arms, Bob Golden. Roll call of officers was done. Members asking to be excused were Sonny Castellano, Alex Lopez, Joe Gutierrez, Joe Vedder, Chris Alessi and Laura Rowe. Fred Shaw made a motion to excuse these members, S/C. Members are reminded to sign the attendance book and purchase raffle tickets. President Salazar asks the members to review the minutes from the March 20 meeting. Brother Shaw makes a motion to accept the minutes as printed, S/C.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Contract Negotiations-* We are now going to arbitration. No agreement was reached in mediation. Arbitrators will be selected.

*Food Drive-* Cards should go out to the public no later than Thursday May 10th for the May 12th drive. This is the 20th anniversary of the food drive.

*Bingo Night-* Saturday June 23, 6:00PM. This is a fundraising effort to benefit MDA. 50/50 payouts.

Member Appreciation Night at Dodger Stadium, 6:10 PM Saturday, September 15, 2012, Dodgers vs. Cardinals. Right field pavilion, all you can eat Dodger dogs, peanuts, etc. Cost is \$26.00 per person. David Hyman is selling the tickets.

## COMMUNICATIONS

S.1789 is discussed by the members. Members are urged to call and write their senators to vote against this bill as it currently stands.

President Salazar gives a report on the nationwide 1789 rally. Members of the branch were in attendance at both rally sites in Los Angeles.

President Salazar gives an update on S.1789 as it comes to the senate floor. Several amendments are being attached to the bill. An NALC factsheet about S.1789 is included in tonight's handout.

President Salazar met with CSALC President John Beaumont to discuss candidates running for the new 26th Congressional District. Ernestine Hernandez made a motion for the branch to adopt an E-Board recommendation to endorse Julia Brownley for the 26th District, S/C.

President Salazar gives a report from the Committee of

Presidents meeting he attended in Chicago.

## COMMITTEES

*Food Drive-* Sandy Gaunce announces that food drive bags are here at the hall tonight. Stewards should pick up enough boxes for their offices.

*Recreation-* Paulette Dyer has ? price discount tickets tonight for Madame Toussad's that she donates for the 50/50 raffle.

*Retirees-* Bev Sucich announces that the Hometown Buffet in Simi has closed. She has arranged for a new lunch location at the Sea Horse Buffet in Simi. The Canoga Park Hometown

Buffet will remain open, and luncheons will held as scheduled. A 60 year membership pin was presented to Bill Everett from Santa Paula at the last luncheon.

*Health Benefits-* Asst. HBR Mary Stanley informs the members of the new web tools for NALC Healthplan members on their website. Claims can be reviewed, along with maintaining health records. The plan covers chiropractic care, physical therapy and acupuncture.

*COLCPE-* Ernestine Hernandez reminds members that elections are coming and we need to get our friends elected. Donations to COLCPE go to those representatives that support letter carrier issues.

*Legislative-* David Hyman announces a May Day Rally 5/1 and Anti Wal-Mart demonstration on 6/30 put on by LA Federation of Labor. Info on LA Fed index fund.

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS- None

## NEW BUSINESS

Fred Shaw makes a motion to adopt an E-Board recommendation to send Ernestine Hernandez and David Hyman to the Labor Campaign school put on by the State Assn. in San Bernardino June 22-24. The branch to pay two days lost time, three days per diem at the 1/2 rate, two nights hotel, and \$95.00 each registration fee, mileage (per by-laws), and parking fee.

## GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION-

Know your rights

The use of DOIS is discussed. Form 4584 is reviewed. Safety while fingering mail is discussed. Sick leave documentation provisions are reviewed. T-6 agreement is re-

*continued on page 9*

## CHATSWORTH...

*Continued from page 8*

viewed.

Ernestine Hernandez makes a motion to accept the Treasurer's report as printed, S/C.

Fred Shaw makes a motion to pay two bills, one from Ernestine Hernandez for \$121.77 for ink cartridges, and one from Lori Stewart for \$5.30 for postage, S/C.

Rosalyn Kahn gives a presentation on the California schools budget initiative petition.

Ernestine Hernandez makes a motion to adjourn (in memory of Marva Golden), S/C.

Paul Drapkin wins the 50/50 raffle for \$21.50. John Braden and Ed Ornelas won door prizes. The membership drawing was worth \$1374.00. Lisa Lafferty from Agoura was the name called. She was not present to win.

Respectfully submitted by Susan Degenhardt, Recording Secretary

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## STICKING WITH THE UNION...

*Continued from page 3*

those opinions good, some of those opinions bad, and some of those opinions ugly. I respect everyone's right to have an opinion about Unions, I just don't happen to agree with some of those opinions. Whether you love Unions or hate Unions, you have to know that Unions were greatly responsible for the decent middle class wages that more United States workers used to enjoy and that we as NALC members currently enjoy. As Union membership steadily decreases in the United States, middle class income also steadily decreases. The two go hand in hand, absolutely.

We have more than a few long-time NALC members that get upset from time to time about a variety of workplace issues, some of which they blame the Union for. However, after speaking their peace to me or another Branch Officer and getting their gripes out of their systems, they remain NALC members and they don't threaten to jump ship and get out of the Union just because the waters are getting a bit rough and they don't like something going on in the workplace that the Union cannot control.

Times are tough right now, Brothers and Sisters, as you all well know. Lord knows you've all suffered through enough USPS "doom and gloom" stand-ups over the past 6 years to last an eternity. But the tough times weren't caused by you hard working Letter Carriers nor were the tough times caused by the Union. We all need to stand together instead of grasping for highly questionable reasons to jump ship. We have Branch Meetings at the Jon Gaunce Union Hall in Chatsworth on the third Tuesday of every month and you are all invited to attend and voice your opinion on all issues related to the workplace or the Union. Come on Down! Until next time, enjoy your summer.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT...

*Continued from page 6*

trips to cluster boxes. Like I said, on the Carrier side, these are easy fixes. All you need is a little instruction. Or, there is a good reason why the Carrier acted in a certain way. However, the OIG blew these issues up into a big, time wasting, witch hunt. The OIG is basically saying get the Letter Carrier and you will get the savings. In the future, look for increased street supervision, needless challenges and harassment over your 3996 estimate, harassment on your overtime usage, and numerous attempts to speed you up on the street. The OIG just painted all of us with a broad brush. All for now back in two.

P.S. News Flash: NALC & USPS select Shyam Das as the neutral arbitrator of the 3 person panel that will decide our next contract. According to the NALC website, "*Das is a member of the American Arbitration Association's labor panel and has been a full-time labor arbitrator since 1977. He has served on national arbitration panels involving postal workers since 1996 and has chaired arbitration proceedings involving United Steelworkers and the Major League Baseball Players Association.*"

I just wrote a branch item article for the next issue of the Postal Record where I commented on the lack of information concerning the status of interest arbitration. And, lo and behold, we get some news. Thank You NALC HQ for the information.



***California State Association of Letter Carrier President John Beaumont speaks at the May union meeting on what some of the political strategies are for us as a union in the upcoming political season.***

# Have We Met Yet?

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## RETIREES LUNCH

RAFFLE AT 12:30

**Where:** Sea Horse Buffet  
2022 First Street  
Simi Valley

**When:** Thursday,  
July 19, 2012

**Time:** 11:00am to 1:00pm



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

**When:** Thursday,  
August 16, 2012

**Time:** 11:00am to 1:00pm



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### SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT

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### VICE PRESIDENT

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### TREASURER/FINANCIAL SECRETARY

- Dan Gorman

### RECORDING SECRETARY

- Susan Degenhardt

### DIRECTOR OF RETIREES

- Bev Sucich

### MBA/NSBA REPRESENTATIVE

- Chris Alessi

### HEALTH BENEFIT OFFICER

- Joe Gutierrez

### ASSISTANT HEALTH BENEFITS REPRESENTATIVE

- Mary Stanley

### SGT.-AT-ARMS

- Bob Golden

### TRUSTEES:

Debbie Riggs  
James Perryman  
Sandy Gaunce  
Greg Gaddis  
David Hyman

*Management that wants to change an institution must first show it loves that institution.*

**—John Tusa, in the observer,  
February 27, 1994**

## SHOP STEWARD LIST

Agoura Hills Chief S.S.	Greg Gaddis
Chatsworth Chief S.S.	Angel Hale
Fillmore Chief S.S.	Call Office
Moorpark Chief S.S.	Robbie Elsaleh
Alternate	Lori Stewart
North Hollywood Chief S.S.	Steve Leyton
	Louie Rodriguez
Chandler	Greg Gaddis
Laurel Canyon	Steve Leyton
Studio City	Greg Gaddis
Valley Village	Steve Leyton
Northridge Chief S.S.	Onofre Varela
Shop Steward/ Webmaster	Larry Orcutt
Porter Ranch	Larry Orcutt
Alternate	Kurt Whitesell
Ojai Chief S.S.	Philip Navarro
Oxnard Chief S.S.	Ernestine Hernandez
	Johnny Boyd
	Pablo Galvan
Pacoima Chief S.S.	Steve Dickerson
Alternate	Frankie Mercado
Alternate	Rocio Fraire
Alternate	Lorie Moore
Port Hueneme Chief S.S.	Kathi Albritten
Reseda Chief S.S.	Jeff Hastert
San Fernando Chief S.S.	James Perryman
	Albert Reyes
M.C.A.	James Perryman
North Hills	C.C. Flatts
Sylmar / Main Office	James Perryman
Santa Paula Chief S.S.	Laura Rowe
Simi Valley Chief S.S.	Sandra Gaunce
Mt. McCoy Station	Sandra Gaunce
Thousand Oaks Chief S.S.	Jim Mette
	Alex Lopez
	Walter Williams
Alternate	Mary Stanley
Newbury Park	Jim Mette
Ventura Chief S.S.	Laura Rowe
East Ventura	Laura Rowe
Woodland Hills Chief S.S.	Joe Vedder
	Paul Drapkin

## RECREATION NEWS

### SEA WORLD:

Adults: \$48.00 (Gate price \$73.00)  
Child: \$48.00 (Gate price \$65.00)

### SEE'S GIFT CERTIFICATE:

\$14.00 (Retail Value \$16.90)  
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At the monthly meetings (every third Tuesday of the month) coupons and flyers for various venues are available.

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**PAULETTE DYER**

# THE MAIL BAG NEWS

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## DINNER

At the July  
Union Meeting

**DINNER starts at 6pm**

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**JUL 3** Executive Board Meeting 6pm  
Executive Council Meeting 7pm

**JUL 4** Independence Day-Holiday 

**JUL 17** Regular Branch Meeting 7pm  
Union Hall-Chatsworth  
Dinner served 6 pm


**JUL 19** Retiree Lunch 11:00am  
Sea Horse Buffet-Simi Valley

**JUL 23** NALC National Convention-Minneapolis

**AUG 7** Executive Board Meeting 6pm  
Executive Council Meeting 7pm

**AUG 16** Retiree Lunch 11:00am  
Hometown Buffet-West Hills

**AUG 21** Regular Branch Meeting 7pm  
Union Hall-Chatsworth

**SEP 3** Labor Day-Holiday 

**SEP 4** Executive Board Meeting 6pm  
Executive Council Meeting 7pm

## TRI-VALLEY BRANCH 2902 ANNOUNCES

MEMBERSHIP APPRECIATION  
NIGHT AT

## DODGERS STADIUM

VS. THE ST. LOUIS CARDINALS  
SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 15, 2012  
6:10PM

TICKETS ARE IN THE RIGHT FIELD  
PAVILION AND INCLUDE  
ALL YOU CAN EAT DODGER DOGS,  
PEANUTS, NACHO'S, POPCORN &  
SODA

TICKETS ARE \$26 EACH  
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(818) 893-8613 or at  
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# National Award Winner



## THE Mail Bag NEWS

★ SOLIDARITY

★ EDUCATION

★ ORGANIZATION



OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF TRI-VALLEY BRANCH 2902,  
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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# Our Fight!



# Our Future!

By Frank Salazar, President

The 68th biennial convention in Minneapolis, MN was held at a vital turning point in our current NALC history. Our future began in Anaheim, CA back in 2010 and our turning point is happening now! Postal Service Management is visionless, first class mail continues to decline, the onerous pre-funding of future retiree health benefits is crushing the Postal Service at a rate of \$5.5 billion annually, and the Great Recession is just making things worse at a faster pace. All these elements have come together to greatly weaken the Postal Service. As we convened in Minneapolis, many of us were very interested in the current condition of the service as evaluated by our National leadership and our plans to the Save America's Postal Service.

I usually give a brief description on some of the highlights of the convention such as which politicians were present and what they said. Who some of the labor speakers were, what resolutions and amendments were argued and discussed, etc. But, this time, I just wanted to focus on



**Pictured above are your 2012 Tri-Valley Branch 2902 convention delegates.**

the key note address of our National President, Fred Rolando and the analysis of Ron Bloom a "trusted advisor" to the NALC.

### Opening Remarks

The theme for this year's convention was "Delivering for a World of Change." I thought a better theme should have been "Our Fight! Our Future!" The slogan taken from the red shirts we wore on Thursday signifying our unity in giving to COLCPE, our political action committee, because this convention

was primarily about our fight to save the Postal Service and our jobs into the future.

The words and phrases I'm using here are primarily of our National President Fred Rolando. I'm using Fred's words, because I can't improve on what he said. He said it clearly and succinctly. Here is the gist of what President Rolando said in his own words. In his opening remarks, Fred stated that "If we don't save the USPS, no one else will." "We have to fight for each other." "Our primary task

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT...

Continued from page 1



will be to determine the future of the Postal Service.” “The future of the Service is too monumental a task to leave to the hopeless management running the agency, or to this deadlocked Congress, or this disengaged White House. If we, the National Association of Letter Carriers do not seize the moment, show the way, and demonstrate that the Service can be saved and how, the sad

fact is that no one else will do it, Period.” And, this is how the convention opened on a very serious note!

President Rolando went on to state that it is easy to criticize the Postal Service, but what we must do is find solutions. “Business as usual will mean ‘no business.’” If nothing is done, “We won’t be fighting five day delivery; we’ll be fighting three day delivery or worse. And, we won’t be fighting for a better contract. We’ll be fighting to keep any kind of contract!”

President Roland asked the question, “Will we be the agents of change, or the victims of it?” “The Postal Service must innovate to survive, but it cannot innovate if it dismantles itself. That’s why we have to keep working in Washington and across the country to stop our political enemies from dismantling the Postal Service before we can help reinvent it.” This is why the NALC went out and acquired the services of Ron Bloom.

The NALC needed a current and honest opinion of the state of the United States Postal Service and viable ideas to turn it around; enter Ron Bloom.

### Who is Ron Bloom

In brief, Ron Bloom is currently a Vice President for U.S. Investment Banking at the Wall Street investment banking and consulting firm of Lazard Frères & Company. Bloom is about 57 years of age, born in New York City and raised in Swarthmore, PA. His mother was an educator and his father was President of the Franklin Institute Science Museum. “As a boy, Ron Bloom spent summers at Habonim camps, Jewish youth programs modeled on Israel’s kibbutz’s that stressed the value of manual labor and social justice. As a teen he boycotted green grapes in support of

Cesar Chavez, the farm workers’ union leader.”

Bloom graduated from Wesleyan University in 1977 and moved to Boston where he worked for the Jewish Labor Committee and later as an organizer for the Service Employees International Union after he met a SEIU organizer. Bloom got involved in a strike with SEIU and Boston Hospital. From that experience, he learned that Union’s lacked business knowledge so he applied to Harvard Business School, got accepted, and earned a MBA in 1985. After graduating from Harvard Business School, Bloom went to work for Lazard Frères & Company doing mergers and acquisitions and working with unions whose members were involved in corporate bankruptcies and restructuring transactions.

In 1990, Bloom formed his own investment banking firm with a business partner from Lazard. Bloom and Company worked with the Air Lines Pilot Association to save United Airlines by utilizing an employee stock ownership plan (ESOP) to take control of the company. Bloom also worked with the United Steelworkers as Special Assistant



***Pictured above is Ron Bloom as he addressed the delegates at the Minneapolis convention.***

to the President of USW. Bloom directed or assisted in corporate business restructuring, investments, bankruptcies and mergers. At that time, American steel companies were moving manufacturing out of the United States, fighting heavily subsidized foreign competition and going out of business due to a lack of vision and a fighting spirit. During the start of the Great Recession, President Obama tapped Mr. Bloom to save Chrysler and GM from bankruptcy. Bloom assisted in restructuring both companies.

In both companies, Bloom convinced the management structure and the Union’s to make hard cuts under the mantle of shared sacrifice in order to save the companies and good Union jobs. He was affectionately known as the “Car Czar”.

### Why was Ron Bloom & Lazard Hired

In President Rolando’s words, “They have experience in analyzing large, financially complex institutions and crafting creative solutions.” They were hired to... analyze the business potential of the USPS”. The NALC wanted a detailed review of the Postal Service and then his “honest and unvarnished opinion” of whether the USPS was able to be salvaged and, if so, how? What we do with Mr. Bloom’s ad-

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# USPS Management Eats the Menu, not the Meal

By Ray Hill, Executive Vice-President

**B**ack in the early 1970's, when I was much younger and wiser (or so I thought) and actually used to read books (instead of spending my free time watching sports and Poker Tournaments on television), I enjoyed reading books written by Alan Watts. In one of his books Watts wrote at length about misguided people (like most of us) that are preoccupied or obsessed with either the past or the future, or both, and consequently are incapable of enjoying the present or "**The Now**" as he called it. Watts wrote that if we are incapable of living in **The Now**, we will never be truly happy because we will always be obsessing about something that happened in the past or looking forward to something that may or may not happen in the future. In the meantime life passes us by. John Lennon summed it up perfectly in one of his songs with the following lyrics: "*Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans*". Amen to that, brother and sisters.

In case you're wondering why in the hell I'm "waxing philosophical" here, it is because I was thinking about a line that Alan Watt's wrote in his discussion of those of us that are incapable of living in **The Now**. Watt's wrote that we tend to "Eat the Menu, not the meal". If you haven't stopped reading this yet due to extreme boredom, think about that for a minute. I feel that this perfectly sums up the USPS and their misguided management of our nation's precious Postal Service.

For example, a few years back USPS Management came up with the goal of having Carriers complete their street deliveries by 5:00 PM. In principle, this is an excellent goal! Our patrons like to receive their mail as early as possible and many of us remember the horror stories about Carriers making deliveries as late as 7:00 PM or 8:00 PM or sometimes even later than that. Carriers should not have to wear miner's helmets with flashlights attached in order to deliver the mail, like we often used to. So, like I said, the 5:00 PM goal was a good one.

Leave it to the misguided USPS Management to take a goal that is good in principle and then screw it up. The goal was, or should have been, to **complete deliveries** by 5:00 PM, right? No, USPS Management decided that the goal must be to have all Carriers **clocked off of the Street** by 5:00 PM (or 1700 on the time clock) and may the Lord help them if they clock in at 1701! This is deemed a **FIVE O' CLOCK FAILURE** and like Colonel Klink used to say, **HEADS WILL ROLL!** If all deliveries are completed by 5:00 PM (1700) then why is it so damned important for the

Carriers to drive like maniacs in order to get back to the Post Office and run inside so that they that they will clock in no later than 5:00 PM? I'll tell you why, it's because USPS Management eats the menu, not the meal.

A few months ago the Sierra Coastal District's Manager of Finance, Ralph Tapia, went to many of the Stations represented by Branch 2902 to give stand ups about the financial woes of the USPS. Although I don't know Ralph Tapia personally, from all accounts I've heard he's a "good guy" and it is not my intention to slam him here because he was only the "messenger" for these stand ups and I'm usually not one to "shoot the messenger".

My question is why in the hell was he tasked with giving these stand ups and what was their purpose? Sierra Coastal District Management is hemorrhaging red ink just like every other USPS District in the country. The District is losing money hand over fist. So, what do they decide to do in their infinite wisdom? They decide to send the Manager of Finance (who makes a fairly decent salary) on daily road trips to many of the offices in the District to give stand ups about the dire financial straits that the USPS is in. Once Mr. Tapia arrived at the Post Offices, Management gathered all of the Carriers around for a 30 minute stand up to tell them that the USPS is going broke and that we've got lots of reasons to be **worried about our futures**. It really is hard to live in **The Now**, isn't it?

After these 30 minute financial doom and gloom stand ups, most of the Carriers used 30 minutes of overtime that day just because of the stand ups. So, Management pays the Finance Manager and the supervisors their regular salary and all of the carriers 30 minutes of overtime so they can give us a 30 minute stand up telling us that the USPS is broke! Are you kidding me? Once again, USPS eats the menu, not the meal.

Here in this area of the Sierra-Coastal District, Management has daily teleconferences during which the Manager of Post Office Operations (MPOO), Postmasters, Managers and some Supervisors go over all of the performance numbers and talk about the vital few (the 5 or 10 "worst" Carriers in the office, numbers wise) and other such topics of interest. If a Carrier misses MSP scans they want to know what local Management is doing about it. Lord knows those Carriers are up to no good if they miss an MSP Scan!

So, let's see, the highest paid Postal employees

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# What are you going to do to fight for your job?

*By Susan Degenhardt, Branch 2902 Recording Secretary*

The devil is at our doors, brother and sisters and we better gear up for a fight. First in your arsenal should be the almighty pen. You should use it to write to your Senators and Congressmen. They work for you, and you need to remind them of that fact. Tell them how you want them to vote on issues affecting your job. Don't get nasty, just remain respectful, but remind them that you can also use that pen to vote them out of office when it comes time for elections. The next weapon is the phone. Call the representative and verbally tell them how you want them to vote on the same issues you have written to them about. Make sure they understand the issue and how important it is for them to vote the way you want them to. Let them know that you are watching their voting record.

Moving on down the weapon list, the computer is next. Have you signed up to be an e-activist with the NALC? If not, why not? It is **FREE!** It costs you nothing, nada, zero. Yet it can be the most important tool that you will use. You will be notified immediately when action on the Senate floor is going to affect the Postal Service, and receive information on how the NALC needs you to act. Last, but certainly not least, is the weapon that is not utilized nearly enough...COLCPE. Yep, there it is again. (Oh, there they go again, asking for money) Well that brothers and sisters, is a battle unto itself. Big business is pouring money into the devil's coffers, and the devil is working on dismantling the Service and doing away with jobs. We have to fight fire with fire, and take the money and power that our members can generate to fight for the middle class jobs that we have. COLCPE **cannot and is not** funded with your dues money. It can only be funded **with donations** from NALC members. **Yes, donations.** Isn't your job worth \$5.00 per pay period? Are you going to strike out without even swinging a bat?

Where would you go to look for work if the Postal Service closed its doors? Think about it. If the service goes to five days, where are 1/6 of you going to go? We can't all work at Mc Donald's. If the issue of the pre-funding of future retiree healthcare benefits does not get resolved by Congress, there are going to be dire consequences. Postal service business will not grow by cutting service and convenience. That is plain common sense. Business will only grow if you give the customer more than your competitor gives them at a better price. We already do that. We give universal service by going to every address in America 6-days a week for less than UPS and FedEx.

As we were reminded by President Rolando at the NALC convention in Minneapolis, our employer, the United States Postal Service has "no strategy-zero, no business plan-zero". It's not very comforting is it? But instead of just criticizing the USPS, the NALC has hired Ron Bloom (the guy who Obama hired to save the auto industry) to look at ways to save the Postal Service, and in turn save our jobs. If you get a chance, go to the NALC website [www.nalc.org](http://www.nalc.org) and read the chronicles from the convention. Ron Bloom spoke to the delegates and explained what he sees that is wrong and what can be done to keep the Postal Service alive.

I would like to take this time to commend the delegates that you elected to represent you at the convention. These delegates attended classes before and after the convention sessions to bring knowledge and expertise back to the branch for your benefit. It made for some pretty long days, but the classes that were put on by National were informative and interesting. Every one of your delegates worked hard, listened intently and voted on resolutions for your benefit. I am very proud to be part of this branch and this delegation. Thank you for allowing me to represent you.

And lastly, thank you to Branch 9, Minneapolis for putting on a great convention. You have a beautiful city with warm, friendly and very hospitable citizens.



*Pictured above is new retiree, Bob Avery, from Woodland Hills accepting his well deserved retirement watch at the July union meeting. Good luck Bob and enjoy that retirement!!!*

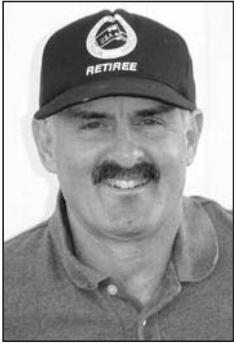


# RETIREEES CORNER

By Fred Shaw, The Roaming Retiree



## Where do we go from here?



**W**ith the sound of a gavel NALC President Rolando called the 68th Biennial Convention to order. Make no mistake we were told the USPS is in trouble. The situation is serious but not hopeless and is one largely created by Congress in 2006 with its prefunding mandate. The good news is that with a forward looking business plan the USPS can survive and prosper even in the digital age.

The bad news is that our Postmaster General and his bosses on the Postal Commission don't have a plan. And the head of the Postal Subcommittee in the house, Darrell Issa, wants to dismantle the USPS altogether and sell off its assets. As long as the Republicans control the House, Issa gets to decide what resolutions see the House floor. Currently there are several good bills languishing in this committee (i.e. HR 137) with little hope of seeing the light of day. The Issa/Ross bill- HR 2309- would quite literally destroy the USPS, something to think about when you vote for your Representative in November.

So what can we do? I attended a seminar at the Convention to address this issue. There are actually a lot of new, exciting ideas. Despite the precipitous loss of 1st class mail revenue (and the Post Offices of the world are all facing similar drops) the USPS still has the monopoly on the last mile of delivery. And we work 6 days. We need the USPS to have a new focus. We need to seek new area of growth like banking. Most of the industrialized world uses its Post Offices for simple forms of banking (i.e. deposits, withdrawals, bill paying). Japan's Postal Service was near fiscal collapse until they became the nation's largest bank. Now they're in the black. Brazil has a similar story. Here in the U.S. if we could step away from just delivering mail to other services we could help rescue the USPS. How many small towns and outlying areas have Post Offices but not banks? We have the presence; why not use that presence in these communities.

There is a business called Endicia that many companies already use to create the scanning labels for parcel post.

Why can't the USPS partner with them to capture more parcel business? Right now the USPS only has 15% of the parcel market, despite owning the last mile. We used to have the entire parcel market! Imagine working with Endicia to supply retailer Amazon.com with labels for all their mailings. Our parcel rates are lower than UPS or FedEx, we deliver on Saturdays, and there aren't the hidden fuel and rural delivery costs. If we could take back the lion's share of parcel post it would definitely increase our financial position. Endicia is also working on a 3rd generation scanner, one that has a 98% reliability in testing and can deliver almost minute by minute tracking. We're also the company with the largest international network including the Armed Forces.

Another avenue where we can grow our business is in delivery of pharmaceuticals. We currently deliver 2% of Medicare Part D drugs through Caremark (the largest mailer of prescriptions). There is the potential through directly working with companies like Caremark to gain another 25% of the pharmaceutical market, and again remember we own the last mile and we deliver on Saturdays.

For years the USPS is where you've gotten your passport. Why not expand that service to include identification services for other legal documents? Currently many IT companies ship through FedEx and UPS. Rather than have those products stored overseas why not have them stored here in our brick and mortar buildings? This could create quicker turn-around and grow the service end of our business. The USPS has a far greater ability to store product than FedEx or UPS.

Lastly, we are the contact point for home industry and in-home artisans. To send a package through FedEx or UPS, a customer has to set up a pickup time or go to a storefront. The USPS goes to those addresses 6 days a week. Let's take advantage of that customer connection.

The USPS might be in trouble but with sound planning and our inherent delivery advantages we CAN turn it around. Remember the USPS is older than the Constitution that made it a national service. With hard work and innovation the NALC can lead a flourishing USPS into the digital century and beyond.



# IF IT'S NOT BROKEN DON'T FIX IT

*By Angel Hale, Chatsworth Chief Shop Steward*

we have yet another OIC!!! Is this a game to all the people in management?? Just pick one person, and leave them there until the regular Postmaster returns. Do any of these people have the qualifications for managing people? Do they have any people skills at all? The last two people were not bad, but you took them away, and sent another one who just is thinking of herself and how she can make some points. Does everyone from "the program" get to be an OIC? Shouldn't they have to be educated before they are given a group of people to manage?

Then, there is the speech. You know, the one that says "If its not broken, then don't fix it". Are you kidding me? Then we go into 9 million changes. We don't know what's going on because it changes every two weeks. Structure is the name of the game. I 'm sure that management is not on the same page as we are. I'm not sure why either, because their jobs are at risk also. Hey, I'm just thinking that what would happen if we didn't have a Postmaster? Maybe we don't need one? I believe our operation would keep going!

President Rolando has referred several times to the rough ride Letter Carriers will face in the coming weeks and months. "Fasten your seat belts, brothers and sisters, the future of the service is too monumental a task to leave to the hopeless management running the agency, or to this deadlocked Congress, or this disengaged White House. We, the National Association of Letter Carriers, must seize the moment, show the way and demonstrate that the Service can be saved and how the sad fact is that no one else will do it...Period."

At the National Convention recently held in Minneapolis, President Rolando introduced Ron Bloom, and he made it clear that we might not like what he had to say. For those who don't know the name, he is the man that restructures companies. "The history of the Postal Service, he said, teaches us that we need three things to succeed: A leader with vision who wants the Postal Service to win; a Congress that sees the value of the network; and Letter Carriers who stand up for themselves and this institution. If they don't, he said, nobody will, but if they do, extraordinary things can happen. The basic facts of the Postal Service are dire and dramatic: Congress created it, and whether by action or inaction, indifference or malice, many people are prepared to see it fade away."

He said there are three elements behind this reality: "#1 the core product that the Postal Service uses to sustain itself-first class mail-is in decline, and nothing will arrest that. #2 then there's Congress, composed of people who either don't understand the situation, don't care, or understand it all too well and want USPS to fail. #3 and finally, there is a management team that is good at many things, but on the issue of re-imagining and reinventing the institution, and fighting for it, has thrown in the towel."

In closing, I need to tell you all about COLCPE, one more time. We need all the help we can get, so please, please "Gimme 5 for COLCPE"...OUR FIGHT, OUR FUTURE!

*Save the Date*

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*Deliver the  
Cure*

**Bowl-A-Thon**

**Sunday, Nov. 4, 2012**

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details to  
sign up  
or see your  
Shop Steward





# 68th National Convention ... Minneapolis

*By Chris Alessi, Branch 2902 MBA/NSBA Representative*

I can sum up the goal of this convention which is, we need to get busy now to preserve this great institution that we work for and to get the word out to not only our co-workers but to all our friends, family, business owners, and all who could be affected by the downsizing of the Postal Service. If we just sit back and let top management have it their way, we will not have a Post Office by 2020!!

In President Rolando's key note speech he stated "The future of the Postal Service is too monumental a task to leave to the hopeless management running the agency or to the deadlocked Congress, and the disengaged White House. We as the NALC must show the way and demonstrate that the Postal Service can be saved...and how. (No one else will do it).

The Postal Service must innovate to survive, but it cannot innovate if it dismantles itself. That's why we have to keep working with Washington and across the country to stop our political enemies from dismantling the service before we can help "reinvent it."

Among the many speakers at the convention there were two that stood out to me, first were Representative Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL), chairwoman of the DNC. She was very passionate about Letter carriers and said that we are the lifeline to so many Americans on every street in every city and every town and that Letter Carriers provide a service that we simply could not live without. Second was Ron Bloom, Vice President of U.S. investment banking at the consulting firm "Lazard". Ron was hired by the NALC to analyze the business potential of the Postal Service. As a Harvard Business School graduate he comes to the NALC as a union organizer for (SEIU) but more importantly with a good reputation in successfully restructuring the steel and automotive industries. Bloom says that from the history of the Postal Service it teaches us three things to succeed: a leader with a vision that wants the Postal Service to win, a Congress that sees the value of the network, and Letter Carriers who stand up for themselves and for this institution.

There were many good workshops before and after the convention with the directors and their assistants of the departments of the NALC that gave the delegates up to date information on current plans and other important classes on the survival of the Postal Service. All of our delegates deserve sincere thanks for getting up early and attending these important workshops.

I want to congratulate Frank Salazar for his award winning idea which resulted in the top award for "Best Cartoon" in our Mail Bag News. Also big congratulations to our Editor Paul Drapkin for the "General Excellence" award for the small branch publication, and to our Webmaster Larry Orcutt, congratulations for an Honorable Mention on the branch's web site. And nice attempt for our branch trustee David Hyman being nominated by me for AFL-CIO delegate receiving 1,479 votes, just two positions from being elected. And last but not least a big thank you to Susan De-genhardt who did a fantastic job at putting this whole operation together for the delegates with the hotel reservations, airline travel and all the paperwork involved.

Take care and God Bless You.

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT...**

*Continued from page 2*

vice and recommendations are up to us."

### **What did Bloom Discover**

The USPS is in a crisis. In Blooms words, "We are going out of business, but not today... If nothing is done, in 10 years the Postal Service will be down to 2-3 day delivery and people will have to come to get their mail."

Our core product of first class mail is in a long term decline, and there is nothing to stop it. Electronic communications is relentless in growth. Congress created and is responsible for our crisis and many members of Congress may want it to fade away. The mood of Congress is that (1) Some members of Congress don't understand. (2) Some don't care or want it to fail, and, (3) A significant minority in Congress want to kill the Post Office.

USPS Management has thrown in the towel. The Postal

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# For the Good Life

*By Bev Sucich, Director of Retirees*

Hi All, I'm back again. I am going to give you a run down of our last 3 luncheons. I will just mention the winners not the prizes.

Our April 19, 2012 luncheon was held at Hometown Buffet in Canoga Park. We had 24 members and 17 guests. The winners were John Roundtree, Sonny Castellano, and Beverly Anderson receiving \$10.00 gift cards.

Our May luncheon on May 17, 2012 was held at our new location in Simi Valley called the Sea Horse Buffet. We had 21 members and 14 guests. The winners were Rudy Hernandez, Joe Majzel, and Louis Henschel.

All the retirees that have attended our luncheons are very pleased with the addition of the new restaurant, the Sea Horse Buffet. I have had no complaints from anyone. I think that going to Hometown Buffet every month was getting a little boring for our retirees. I was happy that I was able to find a restaurant that was within our budget and different food. Dave Perez and Don Esterman gave me a few names of restaurants and the Sea Horse was one of them. Thanks fellows, much appreciated.

As usual, we were dark for the June lunch. Our July 19, 2012 luncheon was held at Sea Horse Buffet in Simi Valley with 21 members and 12 guests. We had quite a few winners because Joe Gutierrez, our Health Benefits Representative and retiree from Woodland Hills donated quite a few door prizes again. Thanks Joe. The winners were Al Cox, John Mendez, John Decareau, Bill Everett, Sonny Castellano, Ronald Erb, Joe Majzel, Ed Smith, Jim Stevens, Dan Gorman and Scott Campbell. Congratulations to everyone.

I attended the National Convention in Minneapolis, Minnesota in July. The Postal Service is in financial difficulties so the issues at hand do not just pertain to active Letter Carriers, it could affect retirees also. One of the problems is that they want all Carriers and retirees to be on the same health plan which would help to lower the cost to the Post Office. This is just one of the many reasons why we must donate to COLCPE, so that our representatives who are in favor of Letter Carriers and retirees will fight for our rights. We have about 1610 active & retired members in our branch and only 6% donate to COLCPE. THAT IS SAD!!! We all know that they want to privatize the Post Office and we can not let that happen. We are retired but even our benefits are in jeopardy. Donate something!!! Ernestine Hernandez is our coordinator for COLCPE. Her phone number is in the Mail Bag News and she can help to get you signed up.

For those of you, who are planning to retire now or in

the near future, please stay in the union. Your dues are only \$2.00 a month not \$24.21 per pay period (Not many Carriers know that). When you are ready to retire, just contact the union office and they will have you fill out the forms. There are benefits to staying in the union. #1. The officers and I are always there to help you. #2 A free lunch for you & one guest every month. #3 If you maintain the NALC Health Plan you must continue to be a union member.

I Hope you all had a nice and safe summer. If anyone has anything they would like to share with us, a wedding, a new grandchild or even great grand kids, please let me know. I would love to hear from you.

Until next time, stay safe.

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## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT...**

*Continued from page 7*

Service needs a new path, and it needs to reinvent itself. Basically, the Postal Service plan is "Shrink to Survive". The Postal Service is degrading the network by selling off its assets and closing its plants. It's degrading their contracts and inconveniencing customers. The USPS will lose billions of dollars delivering the mail, but most of the loss will stem from the pre-funding of future retirees health benefits. The Postal Service crisis is manufactured, and is causing people to act and accelerate the decline. Cutting fast and hard and then praying won't save the USPS. Basically, the "Shrink to Survive" strategy of the Postal Management will not work. The future is bleak.

### **Is There Opportunity**

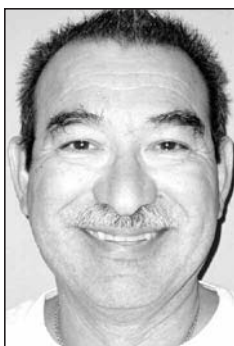
Mr. Bloom stated that the Postal Service has an "extraordinary network" and the "densest Postal Service in the world". We deliver to over 150 million addresses 6 days a week. Bloom states, "Why can't the network be filled with other items?"

Moreover, Mr. Bloom also stated that e-commerce is the biggest opportunity for growth (i.e. Amazon, E-Bay, etc.). Shipping services were up over 21%. And, the Post Office has us-the NALC and Letter Carriers.

### **What Does Bloom Suggest**

Mr. Bloom suggests that the Postal Service can be restructured. What would a restructuring look like? Well, first of all, Mr. Bloom suggests that one component must be financial. He would urge a hard look at collective bargaining, because our employer is going out of business. If we don't cut, things will be worse. Bloom then spoke of "shared sacrifice". He spoke about major sacrifice, and that the NALC

*continued on page 10*



# Open Season...Is there really any choice?

By Joe Gutierrez, Health Benefits Representative

**H**ello everyone. By the time you read this in the Mail Bag News, open season will be right around the corner. Every year I ask all of our members to look at their health benefit plans and compare them to the NALC Health Benefits Plan. A few of you do and then make the switch to the NALC plan as you find out that the plan has benefits as good or better then the plan you currently have, and at a better rate. I urge all of you to please compare plans and you will not be disappointed.

I was unable to attend the National Convention so I am not sure of what the plan will look like for the next contract or how the new health plan will affect existing plans. Our president should be able to shed some light on it at the next union meeting.

All of you should be aware of the problems that the union and our country will face if the Republicans win in November. The Post Office will change dramatically...if it exists at all. Your health plan will change...if it is retained

at all. I urge all of you to go to the polls in November and cast your vote for the Obama team and make your voice heard.

I still get a lot of calls from our members as about Medicare. I know what it is but I'm not allowed to give advice, I can explain the benefits of Medicare and how it relates to the NALC plan but not if you should join or not. I will say that if you decide to join Medicare and want to drop your health plan and have the family plan your family will no longer have medical coverage unless they belong to Medicare also.

I want to thank Mary Stanley for an excellent article on following the rules that the health plan has on precertification and making sure you have been approved before any procedure that needs pre-approval.

I want to close this article with a final plea for all of you to remember to go to the polls this November and protect the rights that you have. This may be the most important election that we will face that could change the way we live and work so please get out and vote.

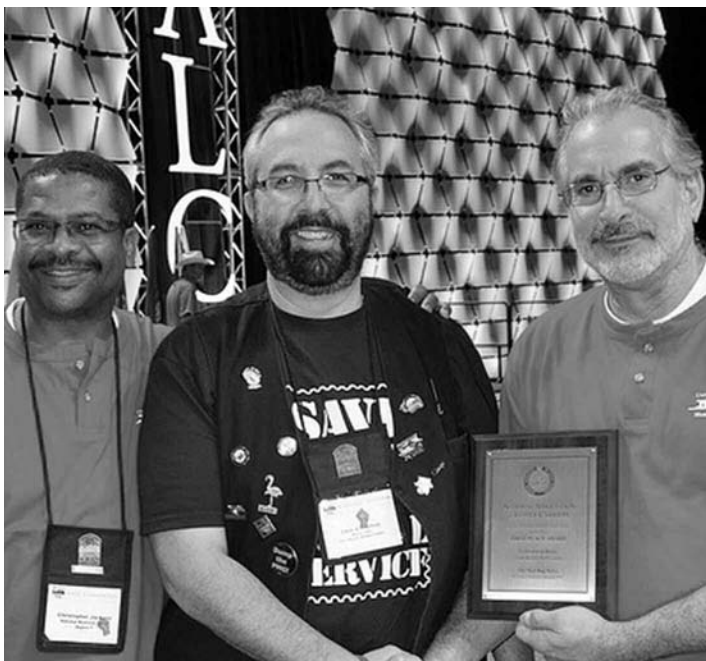
## USPS MANAGEMENT...

Continued from page 3

(MPOO, Postmasters, Managers, Supervisors) have daily teleconferences (totaling at least a couple of **hours** per week) to discuss squeezing some more **minutes** from those damned non-productive Letter Carriers. Anyone want a bite of the menu?

Here's a topic for Management's teleconferences if they are serious about saving the USPS money: How about instructing the Supervisors, Managers and Postmasters to quit violating the contract and thereby reduce the cost to the USPS in grievance handling time and grievance payouts? Also, how about instructing them to make at least a half-assed attempt to settle the grievances they generate with their repetitive contractual violations at the lowest possible level instead of merely saying "send it up" and adding more to the cost of handling the grievances? Management nit-picks the Carriers to death over seconds or minutes but their contractual violations can cost the USPS thousands of dollars in grievance handling time and grievance payouts without them facing any repercussions whatsoever. Why?

That's right, you've got it, USPS Management likes to eat the menu, not the meal. Until next time, hang in there. We will survive.



**Pictured above is Branch 2902 Senior Vice President Paul Drapkin accepting the first place award for General Excellence for our newsletter, the Mail Bag News. Yes, the newsletter you are reading right now! Paul is flanked on the left by Region 1 National Business Agent Chris Jackson and on the right by National President Fred Rolando.**

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT...**

*Continued from page 8*

needed to give for others to give. Everyone needs to give. Management needs to give. The crafts need to give. The customers need to give, etc. He stated that "If we don't lead this, it will not happen. If it's not part of a bigger package of shared sacrifice, it is completely in vain."

However, it would not be just "shared sacrifice". Second, Congress needs to act to save the Postal Service by repealing the 2006 mandate to pre-fund 25 years of future retiree's health benefits in 10 years at the cost of about \$5.5 billion a year. It's not just that, but also the refunding of our overpayments into the Civil Service Retirement and Federal Employees Retirement Systems.

Third, the regulatory structure of the Postal Service needs to change. The Postal Service "needs to be allowed to act like a business". And, finally, we Letter Carriers and the NALC have to stand up and save the USPS and "write our own history".

### **Criticism**

Many delegates on the convention floor feel that our leadership has sold out to Wall Street, because Mr. Bloom is a very rich man, who has worked and continues to work for Wall Street. Bloom has been primarily involved in bankruptcies, mergers and acquisitions, and restructuring. Wall Street got us into this economic mess that is helping to destroy our country and the Postal Service, and now we are going to get advice from the very people (Wall Street) who helped get us into this problem. None of the "banksters" on Wall Street have gone to jail. We the taxpayers have bailed out Wall Street and we the taxpayers continue to clean up the mess. Wall Street corporations and investment houses love to privatize the profits, but socialize the losses.

### **My Opinion**

I have heard Ron Bloom speak twice and have done some research on his background. Mr. Bloom seems to be a sincere man with a good labor background. Mr. Bloom is very skilled at what he does and he knows how to turn a company around and restructure it, so it can survive and save good paying jobs. There is a verse in the bible that reads "Be as wise as a serpent, but as harmless as a dove" (Matthew 10:16). In my opinion, Mr. Bloom went to Harvard Business School, just as he said to learn about business and finance to help out Unions.

The Postal Service is in a mess, and to get an idea of how bad things are, our National Leadership has to get some kind of qualified analysis on its true condition. We can't go in front of an arbitrator or help rebuild America's Postal Service without the facts. We sure aren't going to believe the Postal Service Managers at L'Enfant Plaza.

Who better to go to for an honest analysis than a guy like Ron Bloom?

I didn't expect Mr. Bloom to give any specifics, but the "shared sacrifice" statement got my attention. And, so did the part about changing regulations to let the Postal Service act more like a "business". There could be some pitfalls here. In addition, in regards to the GM restructuring, Mr. Bloom utilized a Voluntary Employee Beneficiary Association (VEBA); a form of trust to provide employee benefits, most notably health benefits. This could be a high possibility type bargaining chip that could save the Postal Service literally billions of dollars over time. Otherwise, as President Rolando stated, "What we do with Mr. Bloom's advice and recommendations is up to us", so stayed tuned.

### **Convention Dislikes**

Overall, the 68th biennial convention was a smooth running affair. However, there were a few things that got to me. The first thing was the abuse of the privilege sign. President Rolando is a fair and tolerant guy, but when delegates start getting up and wishing people a happy birthday and such, and get off on personal rants it slows down the convention and changes the momentum. I think Fred needs to curb this a little.

Secondly, when President Rolando asked for suggestions on how we could reduce costs for the NALC, delegates got up to the mike and spoke off topic. I would suggest that President Rolando keep the speaker on the topic or rule them out of order, but like I said, he is a tolerant man

*continued on page 11*



***Pictured above is President Salazar accepting our first place award for the Best original cartoon in the newsletter competition from National President Rolando at the Minneapolis convention.***

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT...

*Continued from page 10*

to a fault I think.

Thirdly, while I have nothing against the "The Strike at 40", the video played at the national convention about the Great Postal Strike, I do have an issue with its historical validity, accuracy, and lack of record. The membership voted to have it played at all national conventions, but it's sadly missing an important component and it's a travesty and a shame.

James H. Rademacher our 14th President of the NALC was National President at the time of the strike. Why don't we have his recollections on record? He was in fact the National President at the time, and spoke to President Nixon and negotiated with the President's staff on a national level. Those members who struck in 1970 knew that they could go to jail. But they were fed up with the Postal Service, and they knew that President Rademacher had their back. If it wasn't for President Emeritus Rademacher, all those who went out on strike could have gone to jail, lost their jobs or been heavily fined. But, President Emeritus Rademacher got them all exonerated and no one went to jail. Can you believe that! No Letter Carrier in the nation went to jail! It wasn't by luck. It was by Rademacher's bargaining behind the scenes.

Did we also forget that President Emeritus Rademacher also helped write out first collective bargaining agreement? Most of the Articles are still in use today. And, who do you think negotiated the "no lay off" provisions and COLA agreements. It wasn't Vince Sombrotto!

It's a shameful travesty that our National Leadership hasn't yet videotaped such an important figure in NALC history. For God's sake, the man is still alive living in Roanoke, VA. If we don't get this man's recollections on record, it's a loss for the NALC membership and its historical record. If we don't get Mr. Rademacher's memories on record, this video "The Strike at 40" will just be a tribute piece commissioned by our 17th President of the NALC (William Young) to honor the 16th President of the NALC (Vince Sombrotto) who put him in office. It's an embarrassment to the NALC legacy to leave President Emeritus Rademacher and any other National Officer of the time (and still available for comment) out of the NALC historical record.

## Award Winners

Don't want to blow our horn, but I will; Tri-Valley Branch 2902 won four awards for Branch Communications. Our first award was for our newsletter, The Mail Bag News, which tied for first place for General Excellence for small branches. We tied for first place with Branch 916, Eugene, OR, The Relay Box. It is an honor because we were rated BEST in the nation.

Our second award was also first place for the Best Cartoon or Photo. The cartoon was drawn by NALC member Paul Bogle of Porter Ranch Station, Northridge. The idea was by yours truly. Again, we won for BEST cartoon in the nation. I also won an honorable mention for an article I wrote after the Anaheim Convention in 2010 entitled, "The Future Begins In California". And, lastly, our Branch also won an honorable mention for our Branch website, which was created, developed, and maintained by NALC member Larry Orcutt of Porter Ranch Station, Northridge.

I want to say thank you to our editor Paul Drapkin of Woodland Hills. I've been ragging on Paul for years as to why we haven't won any awards for General Excellence, because I feel we put out a good and informative newsletter. Well Paul, we finally did it! Congratulations! I also wanted to thank Paul Bogle for drawing such an excellent cartoon, and for his willingness to draw for the Mailbag News. I knew it was a winner, when I first saw it. And, I want to thank Brother Larry Orcutt for doing such an excellent job on our website. Lastly, I wanted to give a big thank you to all those who write and contribute to our newsletter. Without you, we would never have won for General Excellence. All in all, it was a good, interesting, and sobering convention. All for now back in two.



***Pictured above is Branch 2902 MDA Coordinator Sandy Gaunce as she makes a donation of \$2,902 at the National Convention in Minneapolis in the name of our past local president's Jon Gaunce and Bev Mattes.***

# 2012 California State Association of Letter Carriers General Election Endorsements

## Ballot Measures

**Proposition 32** Special Exemptions Act  
Recommend: **Vote NO!**

## United States President

**Barack Obama**

## Vice President

**Joe Biden**

## United States Senator

**No Endorsement**

## United States Representatives in Congress

1	No Endorsement	29	Tony Cardenas (D)
2	Jared Huffman (D)	30	Dual / Howard Berman (D)
3	John Garamendi (D)		Brad Sherman (D)
4	No Endorsement	31	No Endorsement
5	Mike Thompson (D)	32	Grace Napolitano (D)
6	Doris Matsui (D)	33	Henry Waxman (D)
7	Ami Bera (D)	34	Xavier Becerra (D)
8	Paul Cook (R)	35	Joe Baca (D)
9	Jerry McNerney (D)	36	Dr. Raul Ruiz (D)
10	Jose Hernandez (D)	37	Karen Bass (D)
11	George Miller (D)	38	Linda Sanchez (D)
12	Nancy Pelosi (D)	39	Jay Chen (D)
13	Barbara Lee (D)	40	Lucille Roybal-Allard (D)
14	Jackie Speier (D)	41	Mark Takano (D)
15	Pete Stark (D)	42	Ken Calvert (R)
16	Jim Costa (D)	43	Maxine Waters (D)
17	Mike Honda (D)	44	Janice Hahn (D)
18	Anna Eshoo (D)	45	Sukhee Kang (D)
19	Zoe Lofgren (D)	46	Loretta Sanchez (D)
20	Sam Farr (D)	47	Alan Lowenthal (D)
21	John Hernandez (D)	48	No Endorsement
22	Otto Lee (D)	49	Jerry Tetelman (D)
23	No Endorsement	50	No Endorsement
24	Lois Capps (D)	51	Juan Vargas (D)
25	No Endorsement	52	Scott Peters (D)
26	Julia Brownley (D)	53	Susan Davis (D)
27	Judy Chu (D)		
28	Adam Schiff (D)		

**Be Sure To VOTE**

## California State Assembly

1	No Endorsement	41	Chris Holden (D)
2	Wesley Chesbro (D)	42	Brian Nestande (R)
3	Dan Logue (R)	43	Mike Gatto (D)
4	Mariko Yamada (D)	44	Jeff Gorell (R)
5	No Endorsement	45	Bob Blumenfield (D)
6	Beth Gaines (R)	46	Adrin Nazarian (D)
7	Roger Dickinson (D)	47	Joe Baca Jr. (D)
8	Ken Cooley (D)	48	Roger Hernandez (D)
9	Richard Pan (D)	49	Ed Chau (D)
10	Michael Allen (D)	50	Betsy Butler (D)
11	Jim Frazier (D)	51	Jimmy Gomez (D)
12	No Endorsement	52	Norma Torres (D)
13	No Endorsement	53	John A. Pérez (D)
14	Susan Bonilla (D)	54	Holly Mitchell (D)
15	Nancy Skinner (D)	55	No Endorsement
16	Joan Buchanan (D)	56	V. Manuel Perez (D)
17	Tom Ammiano (D)	57	Ian Calderon (D)
18	Rob Bonta/ Abel Guillen (D)	58	Cristina Garcia (D)
19	Phil Ting (D)	59	Reggie Jones Sawyer (D)
20	Bill Quirk (D)	60	Jose Luis Perez (D)
21	Adam Gray (D)	61	Jose Medina (D)
22	Kevin Mullin (D)	62	Steven Bradford (D)
23	No Endorsement	63	Anthony Rendon (D)
24	Rich Gordon (D)	64	Isadore Hall (D)
25	Bob Wieckowski (D)	65	Sharon Quirk-Silva (D)
26	Connie Conway (R)	66	Al Muratsuchi (D)
27	Nora Campos (D)	67	No Endorsement
28	Paul Fong (D)	68	No Endorsement
29	Mark Stone (D)	69	No Endorsement
30	Luis Alejo (D)	70	Bonnie Lowenthal (D)
31	Henry T. Perea (D)	71	Patrick Hurley (D)
32	Rudy Salas (D)	72	No Endorsement
33	John Coffey (D)	73	No Endorsement
34	Mari Goodman (D)	74	No Endorsement
35	Katcho Achadjian (R)	75	Matthew Herold (D)
36	Steve Fox (D)	76	No Endorsement
37	Das Williams (D)	77	No Endorsement
38	Edward Headington (D)	78	Toni Atkins (D)
39	Richard Alarcon (D)	79	Shirley Weber (D)
40	Russ Warner (D)	80	Ben Hueso (D)

## California State Senate

1	No Endorsement	21	Steve Knight (R)
3	Lois Wolk (D)	23	Melissa Ruth O'Donnell (D)
5	Cathleen Galgiani (D)	25	Carole Liu (D)
7	Mark DeSaulnier (D)	27	Fran Pavley (D)
9	Loni Hancock (D)	29	Greg Diamond (D)
11	Mark Leno (D)	31	Richard Roth (D)
13	Jerry Hill (D)	33	Ricardo Lara (D)
15	Jim Beall (D)	35	Rod Wright (D)
17	Bill Monning (D)	37	No Endorsement
19	Hannah-Beth Jackson (D)	39	Marty Block (D)



# Proposition 32...Another Whack at Working Families

By David Hyman, Trustee, Political Liaison

**G**reetings Brothers & Sisters, Martin Niemöller an anti communist Protestant Minister and

later anti-Hitler foe is perhaps best remembered for the quotation:

*First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out—Because I was not a Socialist.*

*Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out—Because I was not a Trade Unionist.*

*Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—Because I was not a Jew.*

*Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.*

We have a proposition on this fall's election that the above quote also describes. Proposition 32 on the ballot attempts to level the playing field between Unions & Corporations but does it really? Union members pay dues through payroll deduction, a portion of which is used for politics. Corporations almost NEVER use payroll deduction for politics; they use their massive profits. Corporate special interest will be able to spend with NO LIMIT on political campaigns through powerful Super PAC's. In reality this is just the 1% trying to prevent union members from having a voice in the political process while allowing the rich corporate interest to buy elections. If you keep promoting the big lies enough **times**, some folks will buy into them. Although this is a state issue and we are Federal employees, an injury to one is an injury to all working families. If our Brothers & Sisters are marginalized on the state level, who will be there to support us on the national level? We are all aware of the efforts Darryl Issa & the Postmaster General have taken in trying to destroy both the USPS and the NALC.

The Branch is planning to do Outreach to our members as well as other Union members. We will be hosting several phone banks on either a Wednesday or Thursday night at the Branch office or in Ventura County. If you are interested, call me at (818) 893-8613 or e-mail me at davidhyman@aol.com to sign up and I'll let you know what those dates are. Plan on helping out for one to three hours to help defeat Prop 32 and elect Julia Brownley to Congress in Ventura County.

Labor also supports Governor Brown's Prop 30 to support our public education system. As for the Presidential

race, we know which candidate is more in tune with the 1% and which one is more concerned with working folks. Thanks for your time and make sure everyone is registered to vote.

## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

### 442 Completing Form 1571

442.1 After return from trip, obtain Form 1571, *Undelivered Mail Report*, (see exhibit 442.1) from unit manager.

442.2 Add any mail which was not delivered but was returned to the office.

442.3 Sign the form and give it to a unit manager.

### 3996 for Christmas Period

#### M41-28

d. *Item J*. Show the reason in detail for requesting assistance. The phrase "Heavy Mail" is not suitable explanation. (Omit reason for requesting assistance during the Christmas period.)

### M-00016 Pre-arb, NC-NAT-8581

Letter carriers temporarily detailed to a supervisory position (204B) may not bid on vacant Letter Carrier Craft duty assignments while so detailed.

### M-00552 Step 4

#### October 24, 1983, H1N-4B-C 16840

While an employee is in a 204B supervisory status, he or she cannot exercise a bid preference for a temporary assignment available under Article 41, Section 2.B.3 or 2.B.4.

### August 23, 1977, NCC 7450

Management should inform employees prior to placing them on restricted sick leave that their usage of sick leave demonstrates a pattern of abusing the use of sick leave.

### Art 11.5 Holiday on Non-Work Day

A. When a holiday falls on Sunday, the following Monday will be observed as the holiday. When a holiday falls on Saturday, the preceding Friday shall be observed as the holiday.

B. When an employee's scheduled non-work day falls on a day observed as a holiday, the employee's scheduled workday preceding the holiday shall be designated as that employee's holiday.

# Have We Met Yet?

## We are the U. S. Postal Service Federal Credit Union

You may not know us, but we've been serving USPS employees and their families for over 75 years. We're the only federally chartered credit union serving all levels of Postal employees nationally. That means your interests always come first.

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## RETIREES LUNCH

**RAFFLE AT 12:30**

**Where:** Sea Horse Buffet  
2022 First Street  
Simi Valley

**When:** Thursday,  
September 20, 2012

**Time:** 11:00am to 1:00pm



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

**When:** Thursday,  
October 18, 2012

**Time:** 11:00am to 1:00pm



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### ASSISTANT HEALTH BENEFITS REPRESENTATIVE

- Mary Stanley

### SGT.-AT-ARMS

- Bob Golden

### TRUSTEES:

Debbie Riggs  
James Perryman  
Sandy Gaunce  
Greg Gaddis  
David Hyman

### There are three kinds of men:

The ones that learn by reading. The few who learn by observation. The rest of them have to pee on the electric fence and find out for themselves.

—Will Rogers

## SHOP STEWARD LIST

Agoura Hills Chief S.S.	Greg Gaddis
Chatsworth Chief S.S.	Angel Hale
Fillmore Chief S.S.	Call Office
Moorpark Chief S.S.	Robbie Elsaleh
Alternate	Lori Stewart
North Hollywood Chief S.S.	Steve Leyton
	Louie Rodriguez
Chandler	Greg Gaddis
Laurel Canyon	Steve Leyton
Studio City	Greg Gaddis
Valley Village	Steve Leyton
Northridge Chief S.S.	Onofre Varela
Shop Steward/ Webmaster	Larry Orcutt
Porter Ranch	Larry Orcutt
Alternate	Kurt Whitesell
Ojai Chief S.S.	Philip Navarro
Oxnard Chief S.S.	Ernestine Hernandez
	Johnny Boyd
	Pablo Galvan
Pacoima Chief S.S.	Steve Dickerson
Alternate	Frankie Mercado
Alternate	Rocio Fraire
Alternate	Lorie Moore
Port Hueneme Chief S.S.	Kathi Albritten
Reseda Chief S.S.	Jeff Hastert
San Fernando Chief S.S.	James Perryman
	Albert Reyes
M.C.A.	James Perryman
North Hills	C.C. Flatts
Sylmar / Main Office	James Perryman
Santa Paula Chief S.S.	Laura Rowe
Simi Valley Chief S.S.	Sandra Gaunce
	Sal Lopez
Mt. McCoy Station	Sandra Gaunce
Thousand Oaks Chief S.S.	Jim Mette
	Alex Lopez
	Walter Williams
Alternate	Mary Stanley
Newbury Park	Jim Mette
Ventura Chief S.S.	Laura Rowe
East Ventura	Laura Rowe
Woodland Hills Chief S.S.	Joe Vedder
	Paul Drapkin

## RECREATION NEWS

### SEA WORLD:

Adults: \$48.00 (Gate price \$73.00)

Child: \$48.00 (Gate price \$65.00)

### SEE'S GIFT CERTIFICATE:

\$14.00 (Retail Value \$16.90)

For each See's Gift Certificate purchased received one \$5.00 Gift Card. (While supplies last)

Additional Gift Cards can be purchased for \$5.00 each.

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

**My famous homemade oatmeal chocolate chip cookies are 4 for \$1.00.**

**PAULETTE DYER**

# THE MAIL BAG NEWS

NALC BRANCH 2902  
21540 PRAIRIE STREET, #C  
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## BEV SUCICH



Will be serving

## DINNER

At the **September**  
Union Meeting

**DINNER starts at 6pm**

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- SEP 3** Labor Day-Holiday 
- SEP 4** Executive Board Meeting 6pm  
Executive Council Meeting 7pm
- SEP 18** Regular Branch Meeting 7pm  
Union Hall-Chatsworth  
Dinner served 6 pm
- SEP 20** Retiree Lunch 11:00am  
Sea Horse Buffet-Simi Valley
- OCT 2** Executive Board Meeting 6pm  
Executive Council Meeting 7pm
- OCT 8** Columbus Day-Holiday 
- OCT 16** Regular Branch Meeting 7pm  
Union Hall-Chatsworth  
Snacks served 6 pm
- OCT 18** Retiree Lunch 11:00am  
Hometown Buffet-West Hills
- OCT 31** Halloween 
- NOV 4** NALC/MDA Bowl-A-Thon  
Daylight Savings Time ends 
- NOV 6** Executive Board Meeting 6pm  
Executive Council Meeting 7pm  
**ELECTION DAY-VOTE\*VOTE\*VOTE** 
- NOV 11** Veterans Day 
- NOV 12** Veterans Day-Holiday

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



The USPS is a Corporate sponsor and  
encourages all members to participate by ei-  
ther 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](http://www.aidswalk.net)

# Happy Holidays

## THE Mail Bag NEWS

★ SOLIDARITY  
★ EDUCATION  
★ ORGANIZATION



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

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

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## We Can Do More

By Frank Salazar, President

**H**appy Holidays and Happy New Years! This is a difficult article to write, because I am writing it in advance of the November 6th elections. Members of our Branch have been phone banking and precinct walking against Proposition 32 and for Congressional Candidate Julia Brownley in the new congressional district CD#26, and for the re-election of President Barack Obama. This proposition and candidates are so important for labor and the NALC that our National leadership authorized the release of Brother David Hyman of North Hills and Sister Ernestine Hernandez of Oxnard to work full-time on the campaigns reaching out to members in labor to get the vote out. If you are a Union member and live in Ventura County, there was a good chance that David or Ernestine visited



### Fighting the good fight!

***Pictured above are members of NALC Van Nuys Branch 2462, Canoga Park Branch 4006 and of course Tri-Valley Branch 2902 working for the greater good in the no on proposition 32 campaign.***

your home.

I also wanted to take this opportunity to thank Brother Chris Alessi-Active Carrier Simi Valley, Bob Golden-Active Carrier Mission Hills, Paul Hopkins -Active Carrier Simi Valley, Richard Ribota-Retired Carrier Oxnard, and Sister Mary Wallin-Retired Carrier Thousand Oaks for either phone banking after hours, coming out on a Sunday afternoon to precinct walk or both. I especially want to thank Brother Bobby Golden, who travelled over 150 miles roundtrip on a Sunday afternoon to precinct

walk in Thousand Oaks. There are others that I would like to mention, however, this is mid-October and we are still walking and phone banking.

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT...

Continued from page 1



Brothers and Sisters, the election that just transpired is important for all of us. No matter how the election turned out, if we want to protect our jobs and our benefits, we have to get more members involved in the political process. In other words, we can do more! We must, otherwise, we stand to lose precious gains we have fought for in the past.

Take for example, the recent opening of interest arbitration. In opening arguments, the Postal Service was arguing for no pay raises, no COLA's, terminating the no-layoff provisions and increasing the number of Transitional Employees to 25% of the workforce. Brothers and Sisters, we have to do more! If you can't precinct walk, can you phone bank? If you can't phone bank, can you call a Congressman or Senator's office? If you can't call, can you attend a rally? If you can't attend a rally, can you write a letter or send an email? Plain and simple, we have to do more.

In other news, I recently attended a Committee of Presidents Meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada that was also attended by National President Fred Rolando and these were the highlights of that meeting.

### Legislation

The potential for disaster is high in Congress, because there are lots of anti-labor types in Congress. What is clear is that Congressman Darrell Issa (R-CA) needs to go.

Currently, there is a delicate balance in the Senate. If we (labor) lose the Whitehouse, it could be super damaging. Nothing much is expected to happen in the lame duck session of Congress. President Rolando has had conversations with the Democratic leadership in Congress and has assurances that if there is no change in the Congress, Postal legislation is not likely. However, the NALC might go forward with a Commission idea. As in having Congress appoint a Commission to look into Postal issues. If nothing changes in Congress, PMG Donahoe will probably self-legislate until someone stops him. At this time, no one is upset about him not paying the bills. The media perception of the USPS is not good.

### Business Opportunities/Scanning

If nothing changes in Congress, the Postal Service will go after parcels from e-commerce. It's a growth area. Scanning is most important. People (Postal customers) want to know where their parcel is at every moment. The PMG has finally started talking about this issue more fre-

quently. If we don't get revenues up to expenses, we're going to have problems. We (the NALC) have to make it work. Accurate scanning and on time delivery in real time is the future. FEDX & UPS are way ahead of us in accurate real time scanning; however, they don't have our delivery network. They need us. We have to take scanning seriously. That's how we are going to get the scanning business. Scanning is here and real. We must be accurate and thorough.

### National Interest Arbitration

President Rolando is not interested in reducing the top wage of Letter Carriers down. The job is getting harder not easier. There is no interest in an APWU pattern type of bargaining. Moreover, there is no interest in contracting out. The NALC has to continue on the path of no contracting out. The NALC wants to put a halt to staffing problems, bullying on the workroom floor, and mis-management.

Furthermore, The NALC wants Transitional Employees to have a pathway for career opportunities. The NALC has to structure the workforce to survive. There has to be a higher level of flexibility. The NALC will have 3-days in October to argue our case. President Rolando will not give up negotiating even during interest arbitration.

### Memorandum of Understanding: TE/PTF Conversions

A recent MOU was agreed to by the parties at the National level that may convert almost 6000 PTF's nationwide to regular status by filling vacant CC1 (regular routes/assignments) and CC2 (T-6 assignments); And, by converting some PTF's to regular status at a 1 to 1 ratio by hiring additional Transitional Employees per the MOU.

Currently, there are approximately 1265 residual T-6 positions not withheld, and 1400 CC1 and 250 CC2 positions withheld. The USPS and the NALC will have to determine if the current withholdings are legitimate, and fill the vacancies not properly withheld. All CC2 residual vacancies should be filled. There are approximately 3507 unassigned regulars nationwide. Management cannot assign rehab employees to fill full-time assignments.

The MOU authorizes the USPS to hire 3,400 additional TE's. However, there must be one PTF conversion per additional TE hired under this memo. If Management hires all these TE's, our national workforce will consist of about 9% transitional employees.

### Recent Settlement

The parties at the National level also recently agreed to Step IV decision M-01796. In this decision, Management cannot revert vacant positions without current route inspec-

*continued on page 8*



# AND THE WINNER IS...

By Ray Hill, Executive Vice-President

By the time you read this article, the Presidential election will probably be over and we will know who is in and who is out. Personally, I am not all that enthusiastic about politics and I am sorry that politics have become the most important component of the survival of our employer, the USPS, and the survival of our jobs as Letter Carriers with the USPS. These days, in order to properly represent the interests of Letter Carriers, the NALC must play an active role in the political process and work towards electing people that support the USPS and our middle class jobs as Letter Carriers.

In the September issue of the **Postal Record**, NALC President Fred Rolando's article was titled "**Follow NALC's lead if job, pay and benefits matter the most**". In his article President Rolando wrote about the NALC's endorsement of President Obama in the presidential race, despite NALC's disappointment with his position on Saturday delivery. Referring to the NALC National Convention concluded this past July, Rolando wrote that "...the majority of delegates did vote to endorse and to work for President Obama's reelection anyway because Mitt Romney embraces the Paul Ryan Budget that would slash our health and pension benefits, and he has employed a chief economic advisor who supports deregulation and privatization of the Postal Service..."

President Rolando's article continued "...our endorsement is made with the understanding and acceptance that not all city letter carriers make their voting decisions based on their workplace or basic economic interests. We understand and respect that other issues may be more important to some of our members-whether it's abortion or gun rights or climate change or same-sex marriage. All members have the right to vote as they please. But for those of you who care most about your job, your standard of living or the future of the Postal Service, we urge you to follow the NALC's lead and work to elect the candidates we endorse this month..."

President Rolando was **extremely tactful** in his article because in his position as our National President, he cannot disrespect any NALC member's particular political views or philosophies. I should probably follow his lead and write tactfully here but I'm sorry, I just can't. I find it impossible to understand how anyone can vote for candidates that intend to vigorously attack their jobs and their standard of living if elected.

When I turned 18 and first registered to vote I checked "**Decline To State**" for my "party preference" because

back then I thought **all political parties** were basically full of s\_\_t. About 16 years ago I officially changed my party preference to Democratic because as a Decline to State voter I was excluded from voting for candidates in the Primary elections. I didn't register as a Democrat because I think that the Democratic party is perfect, I registered as a Democrat because the Democratic party is in my opinion **by far** the lesser of two evils and represents us working class folks so much better than the Republican (or "Rethuglican" as Bob Czarkowski calls them) Party does. I still think all Political Parties are pretty much full of s\_\_t, but I vote as a Democrat because for me, **job, pay and benefits matter the most**.

If you are not a greedy bastard like me and other issues are more important to you than your job, pay and benefits then by all means vote your conscience. After all, job, pay and benefits aren't everything and when your USPS job and corresponding pay and benefits disappear with a few extra "yeas" on the right side of the congressional aisle, who knows, you just might get lucky and land a job delivering "mail" for some private contractor (maybe Darrell Issa's brother). Oh sure, you'll only be making about \$10.00 per hour without any benefits, driving your own vehicle, paying for your own automobile insurance, but money isn't everything, right? Or, if you're unable to land one of those plum \$10/hour Issa Delivery Jobs, you can always become a telemarketer and work from the comfort of your own home (if you still have a home). Hell, you can set your own hours and work from the couch while wearing only your underwear. Sounds great, doesn't it? After all, money isn't everything, right???

As I wrote above, the election will probably be over by the time you are reading this and we will know who is in and who is out. We will also have a good idea about whether or not our jobs, pay and benefits will be even more vigorously attacked than they currently are in the next 4 years. Although President Obama is not perfect, I voted for his reelection and I hope that he won. If not, the rocky seas we are currently navigating through are going to get a hell of a lot rockier.

## **Workroom Floor Tension**

While conducting Station Visits during the last couple of months, I have noticed a marked increase in tension on the workroom floor as certain supervisors attempt to ram their **DOIS Expectations** down their carrier's throats. The Chandler Station of North Hollywood immediately comes to mind where some carriers that request 3996's are being told "you don't need one, you have down time". If you ask

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# SHOW US YOUR UNION SPIRIT

*By Ernestine Hernandez, Vice President*

I've got to say I am very proud of the Carriers from our office that came out to show their true unionism when called on during the 2012 Labor Campaign. This is a shout out to them! Let's hear it for Espy Padilla,

Cynthia Broadus, Joe Mora, Dave Lory, Rhonda Silkwood, Danny Perez (and wife Jessie), Retiree, Richard Ribota (and Theresa), and any others who volunteered and gave their time to help save our U.S. Postal Service by precinct walking in our Congressional District 26. And a special thank-you to our newest Stewards Johnny Boyd and Pablo Galvan who have been "holding down the fort" while I have been released to work fulltime on the campaign, I know it hasn't been easy. I also want to give a shout out to everyone from Branch 2902 who also came out to help with precinct walking and do phone banking including Frank Salazar, Chris Alessi, Bob Golden, Octavia O., Paul Hopkins, plus David Hyman (and wife Roz) who helped organize the events along with Jill Lemons from Branch 4006. We really appreciate all the time and help given.

It is not enough to say that you are pro-union, but then ignore the impact we can make at union events. The current events were precinct walking and phone banking for Proposition 32 and Congressional candidate Julia Brownley. The word Union means together. Together is how we have achieved all the advances in our job like good wages, good benefits, and good working conditions. It is when we are all seen together that people respond to our efforts; and it is at this time, when we are all under attack with the threat of our jobs as we know it, that a strong impact is needed. The majority of the public believes in saving the Postal Service and we need to show we believe it should be saved too. The public does not realize what is happening with the Postal Service and they are getting a lot of bad information, as are the members of Congress. But it is in Congress that the future of the U.S. Postal Service will be decided; we are, after all a Federal Agency. That is why we have been working so hard to speak to Congressional representatives to give them the correct information so they can vote wisely, and why we are working to get worker friendly candidates elected who will be voting in the House and Senate on bills that will affect our future.

We have been reaping the benefits of working with the protection of our union for many, many years. We have been able to afford nice homes, cars, and put our kids through college with the benefit of a good paying job, fought for us by our union. It is now time to stand up and fight to keep our union and our jobs. There are so many attackers out there that want to see us earning minimum wage; that

want to see us without any healthcare; that want to see us without any worker protections against unjust discipline; that want to see us without sick leave, overtime pay, paid vacations, and without guaranteed work hours. This is what corporations want so they can make huge profits when the Postal Service is destroyed. The same billionaires that have taken other jobs out of the country to be able to pay poverty wages with no benefits in third world countries want to create that kind of low paying jobs to move the mail for their own profits.

Think of what this will do to the future job prospects for our family, friends, neighbors and veterans. This may not be a glamorous job, but it is steady, well paid, union protected, and worth saving for future generations; otherwise, it will pretty much be looking like a job with slave wages, with no benefits or protections. That option will not save our economy but will further burden it with people who cannot make a decent living wage. Are we ready to let it all be destroyed because we are so busy with our own lives and refuse to make any time available to do what needs to be done to help our union save the U.S Postal Service? Management isn't doing anything to save our union or the U.S. Postal Service and seems to already have sold us out, so it is up to us to convince Congress to save the service and our worker rights as well. Make no mistake; this is not the first attack on our rights and it will not be the last. As each attack becomes more aggressive, we need to be more actively involved to hold on to what we have. This tug of war needs every member's help to succeed, not just the officers, Stewards and the few members who have understood the consequences of doing nothing.

We are also part of the public who will suffer the consequences of the total dismantling of the U.S. Postal Service if we allow it to happen without putting up a fight. How much will we have to pay under a private mailing system? We will no longer see it coming to our homes, so where will we need to go to get our private mail? Will it all be controlled by power agencies if we are all required to use the internet for all our mail? How high will access costs go? We know that if they have full control they will not make it easy for us, because for them it is all about profits. We've seen internet service crash by overload or power failures. We've seen how often hackers get into all kinds of internet accounts. And while sometimes our mailboxes are also gotten into, it is easier to catch the perpetrators in the area versus hackers who can be anywhere in the world (out of reach) who steal our identities, our bank accounts, and our privacy. And if public access is suddenly shut down, what then? This is about controlling how we live by the wealthy one percent who want to control everything and don't care who or how we pay the price.

# DOHERTY & DONELON SCHOLARSHIPS

**Deadline:** This form must be returned to NALC Headquarters no later than December 31, 2012.

## Eligibility

- Applicant must be the son, daughter or legally adopted child of a letter carrier NALC member in good standing—active, retired or deceased. Stepchildren and grandchildren are eligible if they live with the letter carrier in a regular parent-child relationship.
- Applicant's parent must be a member in good standing of NALC for at least one year prior to making application.
- Applicant must be a high school senior when making application and must submit the form provided at right, signed by the NALC member and an officer of the member's NALC branch. This form must be returned to NALC Headquarters by December 31, 2012.

## Requirements

- All applicants must take the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) or the American College Test (ACT) in either their junior or senior year. A copy of the official scores from the administering organization must be received at NALC Headquarters by midnight, March 31, 2013. (Computer-generated printouts of test scores will not be accepted.)
- All biographical questionnaires and secondary school reports must be received at NALC Headquarters by midnight, March 31, 2013.

## Regulations

- Scholarship is to be used toward pursuing undergraduate
- Doherty Scholarship awards

degree at an accredited college of recipient's choice.

- Winners may accept other college scholarship assistance in addition to the NALC award.
- Any change of schools or course of study must be done only with the permission of the NALC Scholarship Committee.
- A transcript of grades must be forwarded to the committee at the end of each school year.
- If winner suffers certified serious illness, scholarship will be held in abeyance for not more than one year.
- If unusual conditions are going to require an interruption in schooling, recipient must state reason(s) in writing to the Scholarship Committee and request that the scholarship be held in abeyance. Request(s) will be reviewed by the Committee and a decision rendered.
- If the NALC member is suspended by his/her local NALC branch or enters supervision, scholarship will be cancelled.

## Terms of awards

- The official scholarship judges will award one William C. Doherty Scholarship in each of the five USPS Regions and one John T. Donelon Scholarship. Winners are judged on the basis of secondary school records, personal qualifications and test scores. As in the past, the scholarship judges will consist of experienced persons in the educational field. Decisions of the judges will be final.

Donelon Scholarship award will be \$1,000 per year. Each scholarship is renewable for three consecutive years thereafter providing the winner maintains satisfactory grades. Award money will be deposited annually with the college. It will be credited to the winner's account to be drawn upon under the rules and regulations which the college has established for handling scholarship funds. Award money is to be used for required college fees, including room and board and transportation fees.

- Children of NALC national officers are not eligible.

In honor of NALC's president from 1941 to 1962, the **William C. Doherty Scholarship Fund** will again award five \$4,000 scholarships to children of members in good standing. The **John T. Donelon Scholarship Fund** will award one scholarship in honor of Donelon, longtime NALC assistant to the president. Applicants must be high school seniors and must meet all of the following eligibility criteria to be considered.

## SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

Date \_\_\_\_\_ (Please print clearly)

Please send instructions as to how I can compete for a scholarship award. I am a senior in the 2012-13 school year.

I am the ☐ daughter ☐ son ☐ active  
☐ \*stepdaughter ☐ \*stepson ☐ retired  
☐ \*granddaughter ☐ \*grandson ☐ deceased

letter carrier \_\_\_\_\_

of Branch No. \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

My name is \_\_\_\_\_

My address is \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of NALC parent member  
(or spouse if deceased)

Signature of branch officer

NALC parent's Social Security No.

Title Date

Only official scores (SAT/ACT) from the testing agencies will be accepted. No computer-generated scores (SAT/ACT) will be accepted.

This form must be returned no later than December 31, 2012, to the NALC Scholarship Committee, in care of the National Association of Letter Carriers, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144.

\* Stepchildren and grandchildren are eligible if they live with the letter carrier in a regular parent-child relationship.



# Together We Stand

By Robbie Elsleh, Moorpark Chief Shop Steward

Forgive me Carriers for I have procrastinated, it has been 12 months since my last Article. Although I've neglected to write, I have not been idle. In the past 12 months I've served as a DEAT member under the final JARAP MOU agreement, I served on 2 details at District Safety as a DSI, I attended National & State training, participated in informational pickets and rallies, continued educating myself by reading anything I could get my hands on concerning our contract and the Postal Service, but most importantly, I continued representing you on the workroom floor. So as you can see, I constantly look for ways to increase my knowledge base that would ultimately benefit us Carriers in the future. I think the limitless NALC & Postal information available out there is my main jam-up as far as writing articles goes. The more I learn, the more I realize there's so much more I don't know. So when it comes time to compose something, I start researching a subject that leads me off topic on other issues, which causes my mind to travel in various directions, and it becomes difficult to get back on track on the subject I started with. Subsequently, time runs out and the Mailbag goes to press. But anyways, enough about me....

Today, I just heard that our memorable Postmaster might be returning from exile soon and thus, an article topic was born. If what I hear is accurate, he will be back before this article hits your mailbox. First and foremost, I realize that nobody is perfect, I surely am not, but I certainly don't hold grudges, I don't dwell on things, and I don't wish people ill; that's a waste of our precious time on earth. What's done is done. I just deal with the current events as they happen that require my attention. Having said all that, I truly hope that during his hiatus he was able to reflect on his personal attitude and wrongdoings of the past and aspired for improvement as any decent individual should. In all seriousness and sincerity, I do hope that we do not repeat history because it will only harvest the same results in the end (grievances up, morale down, and unpleasant atmosphere for all). I definitely do not want that, I know you (the Carriers) do not want that, and I hope he (the Postmaster) does not want that. But it's not up to me or you, it is Management who maintains and controls the atmos-

phere between employer and employee which assures mutual respect.

Although I'm hoping for the best, I'll be prepared to reenact history if necessary. All I can advocate for now supposing the past desires to repeat itself is that we must all look out and stand up for each other. Don't let a single instance of disrespect or unprofessionalism bestowed upon you or a co-worker go unchecked. It will only encourage more of the same. Don't get so complacent and believe that a day without feeling insulted is a day without the Postal Service. Don't try to make sense of the senseless. We are people, not numbers, and definitely not mules. Despite the boundless pressures to do more with less, be safe, take care of your customers, and take care of your fellow Carriers. If it's not you being mistreated today, it will be you tomorrow. If you don't support the mistreated Carrier today, they might not be around to support you tomorrow

when you're being mistreated. At the end of the day, nobody cares more about this institution than the people who do the actual work.

I want to share this summary of an Arbitration award with you out of Kentucky that I recently read to illustrate what I just said in my last sentence above. A Letter Carrier's LLV malfunctioned which delayed him from delivery of his route. He was driven on the

route by his supervisor's personal vehicle. At the beginning of his route, the Carrier attempted to run to make up time. The Carrier felt himself under a time constraint. (This is what management likes to refer to as, "sense of urgency," and so the supervisor watched him run) Shortly thereafter, in the course of making a delivery, the Carrier fell down the steps of a business customer, landing on and sustaining a hairline fracture of his elbow. It was a 3 step stairway and the Carrier did not use the handrail. The Carrier received medical treatment. What do you think happened next? Was the Carrier commended for his "sense of urgency"? No... The Carrier was not commended for his "sense of urgency." In fact, he was issued a letter of removal and discharged from the Postal Service for not working safely. It didn't matter that the Supervisor was there watching him work the whole time and never told him to stop running. The Postal Service stated in their removal that the weather was clear, the steps were in good condition and were dry, and a handrail was present. They also stated that the Carrier was trained when hired on the proper procedure for going up and down steps and to use the handrail, to look

*"Don't get so complacent and believe that a day without feeling insulted is a day without the Postal Service."*

continued on page 11



# HAPPY THANKSGIVING and MERRY CHRISTMAS

By Chris Alessi, Branch 2902 MBA/NSBA Representative

As we start into the holiday season it would be a good time to review your insurance needs to see if your family protection is accurate for your life now and the future ahead. It is important to make sure that if the breadwinner is not there because of death that there will be sufficient income to take care of all the family's needs. The simplest rule of thumb is the multiple of income rule. This is by far the most popular rule of thumb and it consists of a recommendation that the amount of life insurance should be 7 to 10 times your annual income. When it comes to nailing down the actual amount to purchase, your best move is to consult a fee-based financial professional.

These life insurance plans are for members of the NALC and their families. There are five whole life plans and 1 term; these plans are available for the member, member's spouse, children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, step children, step grandchildren, and step great grandchildren. The MBA offers the following:

**MBA Life Paid Up At Age 90** - This is a whole life policy that you choose coverage from \$10,000 to \$100,000. Premiums remain the same throughout the life of your policy. This plan is paid up on the anniversary after the insured's 90th birthday. You can borrow against your cash buildup and still keep policy in force.

**MBA Life Paid Up At Age 65** - This is a limited whole life policy that you choose coverage from \$10,000 to \$100,000. This policy offers lifelong insurance protection without lifelong payments. This plan is paid up on the anniversary after the insured's 65th birthday. You can borrow against your cash build up and still keep policy in force.

**MBA 20 Pay** - This is a limited whole life policy that you choose coverage from \$10,000 to \$100,000. This policy is good for letter carriers who want to insure their young children. After 20 years the plan is paid up and you can keep the coverage at no cost, or surrender your policy for its cash value.

**MBA Universal Life** - This is a whole life universal policy that you choose coverage from \$10,000 to \$100,000. You can increase or decrease your coverage, add lump sums to your cash account, withdraw cash, change or even stop premium payments while your insurance coverage stays in effect.

**Independence** - This is a whole life policy that you choose coverage from \$5,000 to \$100,000. This is the

most convenient plan with a single, once-in-a-lifetime premium payment. You get immediate real cash value, tax free interest earnings, and low interest loans, a no cancellation guarantee, and full death benefits.

**MBA 10 Year Renewable and Convertible** - This is a term policy that you choose from \$10,000 to \$100,000. Your premium will remain the same until the 10 year term has ended. You can renew for another 10 years of coverage without a medical exam. At each renewal period, your premium increases according to your age. You can continue coverage until age 80, and you can convert this term policy to a whole life policy without taking a medical exam if the insured is under the age 65.

All of these plans can be paid annually, monthly, or through biweekly payroll deductions. All plan premiums are based on the insured's age at time of purchase, and all have a 30 day review period with a full refund to decide if the plans are right for you.

In closing, I would like to say thank you to all the officers of 2902 for another great year of dedication and hard work, thanks for keeping our Union strong!! May you and your families have a great **Thanksgiving** and a very **Merry Christmas**.

In Solidarity Always, God Bless you, Chris



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After eating an entire bull, a mountain lion felt so good he started roaring. He kept it up until a hunter came along and shot him. The moral: When you're full of bull, keep your mouth shut.

— Will Rogers



# It's In Your Wallet

**By Mary Stanley, Assistant Health Benefits Representative**

For many years my family had Blue Cross/Blue Shield (BC/BS) "High Option". Some time ago, the high option disappeared and we were downgraded to the Standard Option, with reduced benefits. Two years ago we switched to the NALC insurance because we felt the benefits were better and the cost was significantly lower. Today the Standard BC/BS cost for a Letter Carrier with a family is \$152.92 per pay period and the NALC HBP cost for a Letter Carrier with a family is \$103.23. The difference will be "IN YOUR WALLET" if you sign up for the NALC health insurance plan.

We now have two years of experience with the NALC HBP. This experience has included several emergency room visits, surgeries (including eye implants and hip joint replacement), educational Psychologist support (ADD), preventive medicine events, X-rays, MRIs and visits to specialists. Based on our experiences, we believe that the benefits are much better.

- The co-pay has not increased!
- The provider network is extensive.
- Every procedure that we have encountered has been covered.
- Annual physicals are covered.
- In case of an accident, if you are treated at a PPO facility, charges from non-PPO providers for radiology, pathology, administration of anesthesia, and emergency room services will be processed at the PPO benefit level.
- Lab work performed by Quest Diagnostics is covered 100%.
- The plan pharmacy is CVS Caremark. You get the same price break at the local CVS pharmacy as you get with the mail in pharmacy.
- No referrals are required.
- Easy access to benefits administrators.

In this time of ever increasing medical expenses and economical difficulties, the biweekly cost of the NALC HBP actually decreased for 2013! Yea!! Compared to BC/BS, in 2013 we will be putting almost an additional 50 bucks in our wallet every pay period (to be exact, that will be **\$1,291.94** just in annual premium savings alone).

**THAT'S WHAT WILL BE IN OUR WALLET!!!!**

The NALC HBP is not a "flash in the pan". The NALC

began its own independent health benefit plan in 1950 with a total membership of 4,115 employees. In 1960, the NALC HBP became a part of the FEHBP. An enrollment of 30,000 Letter Carriers at that time went up to 101,503 members. The NALC HBP was created with unionism and solidarity in mind. We are a union working for a union. It's Union Operated, Union Owned, and it's a Not-for-Profit Plan.

**OPEN SEASON IS SCHEDULED FOR Nov. 12 – Dec. 10, 2012**

Wishing you and your families a very healthy and safe Thanksgiving, and a Joyous Holiday Season.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT...

*Continued from page 2*

tion data. Basically, Management can't declare that a vacant assignment is less than 8 hours and not post it for regular bid stating that it's an auxiliary route (less than 8-hours) and, therefore, not a full-time assignment. Before making such a decision, Management must conduct a 6-day count and inspection, a minor adjustment with current data or conduct a nationally jointly agreed upon route evaluation process or an authorized locally developed route evaluation process.

## Early Outs

Please read carefully. The USPS needs Carriers. However, there may be talk after national interest arbitration to offer a possible early out for Letter Carriers. Please note that I used the words "may" and "possible". Hopefully, there will be more news in the coming months.

## Please Respond

A reminder to all members with a good mailing address on file with the NALC, our National President recently mailed out a letter dated October 28, 2012. Please read and respond to the letter with the requested information. Like I stated at the beginning of my article, the elections that passed were very important. At this time, I don't know how it will turn out or how it turned out. However, regardless of the outcome, we will have to respond in mass to legislation that affects the NALC and the nation's Letter Carriers. The NALC needs the requested information to keep you informed and how to respond. Please respond to the letter. We can do more! We need to do more! All for now back in two.



# You Can't Make This Up!

By Angel Hale, Chatsworth Chief Shop Steward

**H**ello from Chatsworth, I think we may have survived the heat, outside that is! Though inside, we're still in Hell! You have to ask yourself, just how many times can you move furniture? Just how

many things that are not broken, need to get fixed? What does this say about previous OIC's or Postmasters? Their wrong and the new guy is right? Does the new guy get to do whatever they want to? Say whatever they want? Waste money as they see fit? You hear the phrase "time wasting practice", and you want to create your own phrase, "money wasting practice". Oh please someone tell this person that time is money! Like when they send you home for not getting documents that you could not get because you weren't given the authorization form to get the update. That is such a money wasting practice. Let's pay OVER TIME to someone, just to feel like you have the power!

Here lies the problem, this situation is not about OUR company, and our rules, it is about the power, or should I say, the abuse of power. This Carrier hates that they are being pushed into a corner, where suddenly once again, the people who will suffer will be the customer who's route this Carrier services, and the Carrier who will not be paid because they are being sent home. So, just keep spewing out Direct Orders as if they were nothing! Do we really need to go there? MONEY WASTING PRACTICE!!! With the way things are going, are these old school techniques really necessary? Please, do the math. This is the same person that doesn't know that we have 2 ten minute breaks a day. I have to show them where it says in writing that this person has to take a break, and why am I telling them this? I had to think about that one, because you are in charge?

I get so mad when new people come to manage us, and they make you feel like you are not doing a good job! I think it might start coming together, when we start working together. The ball is in our court, we Carriers do have a lot on our backs. We do have the fate of the Postal Service in our hands. But it is not only the Carriers fate; it is clerks, and manager's fates. If one fails, we all fail!

Recently, we were given a stand-up on a service called Direct Mailing; at least I think that's what it was called. Not a whole lot was said on it, but it sounded like it might be something that the customers would be able to use a lot. If we were only educated on this, so we could sell it to customers. How can we push a service if we don't have enough information to answer any questions that our customer might have? Do you know how stupid it feels when you are asked a question, and you have to say, I don't know? Years ago, we were told to tell them to call the

office. Well, guess what, they don't answer the phones. By the time someone does, the customer is so mad, they don't want to talk to anyone, and do they even want to do business with us, forget about it! How many more things are handled that way? Why the hell don't they answer the bloody phone anyway?

I am sure that everyone has been in that spot, and knows how frustrating it is. Can't we just be a service for the people once again? This is why we have lost a lot of our business to the other delivery services. We could be HUGE again, we just have to get back to the basics, remember our roots, SERVICE, SERVICE, and SERVICE!! Maybe they should rethink the Blue Box thing again. That was a SERVICE from the past, that might promote more people to mail their bills again, I'm just saying.

God Bless, Be Safe, and if our Postmaster happens to get a hold of this issue, PLEASE DON'T MAKE US BEG!

## AND THE WINNER IS...

*Continued from page 3*

Management for a 3996 they **must** give you one, whether they agree with your estimate or not.

USPS Handbook M39 Section 122.33 reads as follows:

*122.33 The employee, upon request, will be provided a Form 3996, Carrier - Auxiliary Control, after the supervisor has been verbally informed as to the reason for the request. The employee shall not be denied the form and, upon request, a duplicate of the completed form will be provided the employee (emphasis added).*

Management does not have to approve your request for overtime or auxiliary assistance, but **they must** provide you with a 3996 if you request one. If they don't, file a grievance each and every time your request for a 3996 is denied. "Downtime" or "undertime" is a hot topic that creates a lot of conflict and has increased the tension on the workroom floor.

When Management comes to you and tells you that you have downtime or undertime, here is the proper way to handle it.

First and foremost, remain calm. If in fact you do have undertime, then so be it, that time belongs to Management. Next comes the aggravating conflict associated with coming to an agreement with your supervisor as to exactly how much undertime you may have on any given day. Remember, Management will be estimating how much undertime you have based strictly on their DOIS numbers, which do not tell the entire story (i.e. number of accountables you

*continued on page 10*

## AND THE WINNER IS...

*Continued from page 9*

may have, parcels, thickness/sloppiness of the Red Plum coverage, etc.).

If Management tries to give you more work than you can handle on undertime, let them know that you will be unable to complete that work in less than 8 hours and that you will require overtime to complete it. If Management insists that you are wrong and instructs you to take a swing with you after you have voiced your opinion that you will not be able to complete it in less than 8 hours, don't go ballistic and get all pissed off. Take a deep breath, take the mail with you and give your best effort while giving a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. If you find later in the day that you cannot complete the work within 8 hours, call the office at the time Management wants you to call (each office seems to have a different "call in" time) and let them know you will need to work overtime to complete the deliveries. Keep brief notes and write down the time you called the office, who you talked to, what you told them and what instructions were given to you.

If Management tells you to deliver the mail on overtime, follow their instructions and complete a 3996 upon your return to the office for the overtime that you used. Request a copy of the 3996 when you turn it in to Management. They **must** give you a copy of the 3996 if you ask for it.

If you are on the 10 or 12 hour Overtime Desired List then you probably won't mind working the overtime that Management told you was going to be undertime. If you are not on the 10 or 12 hour Overtime Desired List or you are on the Work Assignment Overtime Desired List and

**you have** followed my instructions as written above, we need to file an Article 8 grievance because you should not be working overtime on an assignment other than your own. Ask to see your steward in order to file the grievance.

If **you have not** followed my instructions as written above, we will not be successful filing an Article 8 grievance. If Management gives you a 30 minute "undertime" swing and you take it to the street with you and complete the swing on overtime without calling the office to let them know you will be going into overtime, we have no grievance. Management will argue that they gave it to you as undertime, that you never called to let them know you required overtime to complete the swing and therefore it is not their fault if Article 8 was violated. We will not win that grievance so we won't be filing it. Not only does your failure to call the office screw up our chances of filing a successful Article 8 grievance, it also leaves you open to possibly being disciplined for working unauthorized overtime. Don't put yourself in that situation. You have to call the office if you require overtime to deliver the swing given to you as undertime. This goes for getting any overtime authorized that was not authorized before you left for the street; you have to call the office for authorization before you work that overtime.

I know that it is easy for me to tell you not to get pissed off when dealing with a stubborn, know it all, supervisor that just doesn't get it because I'm not dealing with them on a daily basis. Even though I might not be dealing with them telling me that I have undertime every day, I deal with them in the grievance procedure so I understand your frustration and I do feel your pain. Just try to remember that even though you can't change the bone-headed supervisor you have to deal with every day, **you can change the manner in which you react to their bone-headedness**. If they are rude and unprofessional, let your Steward know so that we can file a grievance. If they threaten you with discipline or they do issue you discipline based on their **BS DOIS Expectations** or "past performance" or "expansion of street time" or "poor job performance" or some other unsupported crap like that, file a grievance. Otherwise, let them be the ones to spin their wheels while you stay relaxed. Think of them like you would think of a neurotic dog that perpetually chases their tail around and around and around, all the while going nowhere fast.

There is an old adage that says "you catch more flies with honey than vinegar". A good Manager understands the wisdom behind this adage and strives to live by it. A bad Manager or Supervisor just doesn't get it and probably never will. Don't let them make you work lives miserable. Life is way too short and we spend way too much time at work to be constantly miserable while we're there. Follow all of the rules, get authorization for all overtime you use and you will remain immune to any and all of the BS the bone-heads throw at you. Until next time, enjoy the Holiday Season.



***Pictured above is new retiree Ron Erb (Woodland Hills) accepting his union retirement watch from Branch 2902 Senior Vice President Paul Drapkin. Good luck in that well deserved retirement Ronnie. Enjoy!!!***

## TOGETHER WE STAND...

*Continued from page 6*

at the step, and to place the whole foot on the step. Is this inhuman or what? The Carrier was out of work for 6 months without pay pending the grievance outcome. He probably lost his house, his wife, his sanity, or close to it.

Luckily, the Arbitrator was a "human being" and made sense of all the facts. His decision was: "The Grievant failed to follow the safety procedure of holding a handrail while descending steps, fell and injured himself. The Arbitrator finds that the transient nature of the events that occurred on those steps; the sense of urgency for the timely delivery of his mail that the Grievant exhibited; and the disruption of his normal routine that morning, contributed to the Grievant's failure to use the handrail. The Arbitrator finds that the Grievant lacked the presence of mind to grab the handrail but that, in view of these extenuating circumstances, his failure was of insufficient materiality or willfulness to constitute just cause for discharge. The grievance is sustained."

Please... Don't let yourself be pushed and rushed to the point where you are unsafe. Follow Safety Rules and take your full lunch and breaks. Everyone has their own

pace/speed at which they can perform safely, comfortably, and efficiently. Conditions consistently vary. There is no set street pace that you must work at, just be well organized, cautious and proficient. The day you have a preventable accident due to negligence, is the same day management will take the keys away and send you home to wait by the phone. It won't matter that you've been skipping your lunch and running for the Postal Service for the past 10 years, it won't matter that you've been looking the other way while they abused the Carrier next to you, all that will matter is that you were careless and God help you; especially if you injured or killed someone. Enough said on that.

Lastly, I want everyone to know that for over a year while the Postmaster has been gone, the Union has not needed to file a single grievance for our injured Moorpark Carriers not being worked 40 hours a week. Prior to that, for a period of about 2? years, we were filing grievances biweekly or monthly religiously. This ultimately resulted in settlements for the affected Carriers to be made whole for the loss of pay and benefits. What does that tell you? It tells you that the work was always, and still is, there. It shows you just how much work was performed by management at that time. Much of that work most certainly went un-grieved if no witnesses reported it to the Union. Our grievances probably only scratched the surface. Frank described it best one day when he said it amounts to "wage theft." So please, for the sake of your injured fellow Carriers, PTF's and TE's, keep an eye out for Management doing any kind of Craft work and notify the Union immediately. One day you might be the one injured on-the-job and sent home without pay when actual work exists within your medical restrictions.

If we don't look out for each other and stand up for one another, no one else will...

Have a nice Thanksgiving everyone.



***Pictured above is Branch 2902 Webmaster extraordinaire, Larry Orcutt. The Branch, due to the hard work of Larry, was recently presented with an honorable mention for our Internet website at the National Convention in Minneapolis. Congratulations Larry, keep up the great work.***



***Pictured above is Branch 2902 President Frank Salazar and Branch 4006 President Jill Lemons with California Congresswoman Barbara Boxer.***



# Union Meeting

**September 18, 2012  
Chatsworth**

The meeting was called to order by President Salazar at 7:10PM. Sergeant at Arms, Bob Golden led the pledge of allegiance. Roll call of officers was taken. Asking to be excused were Johnny Boyd, Paulette Dyer, and Joe Gutierrez. Ernestine Hernandez makes a motion to excuse the members, S/C. Members are reminded to sign the attendance book and purchase raffle tickets. President Salazar introduces Lee Rodgers, candidate for 25th district. He is running against Buck McKeon. He supports 6 day delivery and opposes plant closures. Edward Headington was introduced. He is running for Assemblyman for 38th district. Patricia Recenos from the Central Labor Council spoke to the members about Prop. 32 and the need for precinct walkers. Jill Lemons, President of NALC branch 4006 was introduced to the members.

Members review the minutes from August 21. Fred Shaw makes a motion to accept the minutes as printed, S/C.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

MDA Bowl-a-Thon, Sunday, November 4, 9-11AM at Brunswick Bowl in Simi Valley.

The new area VP will be Dean Granholm.

Sister Marian Walters from Santa Paula is requesting donations of annual leave due to a serious illness.

CSALC/NBA training will take place on Sept. 28 & 29 in Pasadena. Manny Peralta, Dir. of Safety and Health, will be speaking at the training. President Rolando is unable to attend.

Official political endorsements from the Tri-Counties Central Labor Council are reviewed.

## COMMUNICATIONS

Review of the member appreciation night at Dodger Stadium. It was a good game, all had a good time.

Negotiations opened on September 6. The Postal Service offered nothing.

Fall route inspections have been canceled. Simi Valley and Pacoima are undergoing a JARAP type of adjustment.

Streeter/Router concept is dead for now. 100% street time showed no savings.

Please vote in the upcoming election. Last day to register to vote is October 22, 2012.

Members review the article from President Rolando concerning the NALC's endorsement of Barack Obama. The Republican party platform is discussed. Members also discuss the anti-union agenda of Prop. 32.

Volunteers are needed for Las Vegas precinct walking on October 13 & 14, transportation by bus to Las Vegas. Also Reno will be targeted.

Members are informed of new test program where computers will be placed at carrier cases. New flow charts.

Legislation has passed that preserves 6 day delivery for now. Lazard's analysis of the Postal Service is reviewed.

Trustees review and approve a bill.

## COMMITTEES

*MDA*- Sandy Gaunce reports that \$2902.00 was donated at the National Convention, and reminds members about the Bowl-a-thon on Nov. 4.

*COLCPE*- Ernestine Hernandez announces that 29 carriers were released to work on campaigns in California alone, and COLCPE funds help to pay these carriers while they are off from the Post Office. We are standing up for the middle class. One-time payment envelopes are available.

*Retirees*- Bev Sucich announces that the next luncheon will be on Thursday, Sept. 20, 11-1PM, at the Sea Horse Buffet in Simi Valley.

*Legislation*- David Hyman has several flyers and bumper stickers to pass out for NO on Prop. 32, Koch Bros. donated \$4million to support Prop. 32. He is asking for volunteers for phone banking on Thurs, 9/27, here at this branch office and other volunteer opportunities to help with the NO on 32 campaign. He announces LA Fed. events and issues. He will be participating in the Aids Walk LA, if anyone would like to donate.

*Health Benefits*- Mary Stanley informs the members that open season is just around the corner, and now is a good time to compare plans. NALC offers many services at no cost.

*MBA*- Chris Alessi gives information on the status of the MBA, along with information on pension plan returns. He also provides Roth and traditional IRA comparisons.

## GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION- Know your rights

Woodland Hills' new retiree Ron Erb is presented with an NALC watch by President Salazar.

Members review a Pre-Arbitration decision about DOIS, the M-39 Section 242, and the use of Form 3996.

Members review the Treasurer's report. Ernestine Hernandez makes a motion to accept the report as written, S/C.

The members vote to pay a bill from Ernestine Hernandez for \$6.85, S/C.

Ernestine Hernandez makes a motion to adjourn, (in memory of Marva Golden), S/C.

50/50 raffle for \$25.50 was won by Edward Ornelas, and Jeff Hastert won the Dodger tickets donated by David Hyman. The membership drawing was worth \$1556.50, and the name drawn was Maria Hurtado of Oxnard. She was not present.



# As I See It

By Don Minster, Retiree

I think that in the 1980's, conservative think tanks were tasked with the issue of dismantling the Post Office and destroying collective bargaining in the Postal unions in order to increase the wealth of the 1%ers.

If the Congress and Senate were under conservative control they would be able to enact legislation that would make it easier to shift jobs to other countries in order to create more wealth to the wealthiest.

A sticking point in their craw is the fact that Letter Carriers and Clerks are earning a wage that qualifies them for middle class status versus being classified as the working

poor.

The wealthiest people in the U.S. are capable of lobbying the House and the Senate with enormous amounts of capital to influence them to vote to make the wealthiest even wealthier. They will do this by reducing the cost of labor by exporting it to third world countries, thus making two classes in the U.S., the wealthy and the working poor, harkening back to the pre 1970's when Carriers had to have food stamps and second jobs in order to survive.

In summation, the Post Office is not the major problem, but politics, which caused all the problems for the USPS in the first place, at the will of the wealthiest people in the U.S.A.

## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

**10.3.B** Care shall be exercised to assure that no employee is required to forfeit any part of such employee's annual leave.

**Leave carryover.** A letter carrier may carry over up to 440 hours (55 days) of accumulated annual leave from one leave year to the next.

See the Memorandum of Understanding at the end of this article.

(Although the memorandum refers to the 1990 National Agreement, it was renewed as part of the 2001 National Agreement.) Any amount beyond the carryover maximum is forfeited.

### Avoiding forfeiture of annual leave.

Supervisors should exercise care to assure that no bargaining-unit employees have to forfeit any part of their annual leave. For their part, employees must be sure to submit sufficient leave requests. Stewards should encourage carriers to keep a watchful eye on their leave balances and vacation plans.



*Pictured above is Branch 2902 Trustee and Political Liaison David Hyman at the finish line of the AIDS Walk LA. The money raised by David goes to a very worthy cause and we thank all those who supported David in his endeavor.*

*Happy Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas*

*From the Staff at Branch 2902*

# Have We Met Yet?

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## RETIREES LUNCH

**RAFFLE AT 12:30**

**Where:** Sea Horse Buffet  
2022 First Street  
Simi Valley

**When:** Thursday,  
November 15, 2012

**Time:** 11:00am to 1:00pm



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

**When:** Thursday,  
December 20, 2012

**Time:** 11:00am to 1:00pm



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- Frank Salazar

### EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

- Ray Hill

### SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT

- Paul Drapkin

### VICE PRESIDENT

- Ernestine Hernandez

### TREASURER/FINANCIAL SECRETARY

- Dan Gorman

### RECORDING SECRETARY

- Susan Degenhardt

### DIRECTOR OF RETIREES

- Bev Sucich

### MBA/NSBA REPRESENTATIVE

- Chris Alessi

### HEALTH BENEFIT OFFICER

- Joe Gutierrez

### ASSISTANT HEALTH BENEFITS REPRESENTATIVE

- Mary Stanley

### SGT.-AT-ARMS

- Bob Golden

### TRUSTEES:

Debbie Riggs  
James Perryman  
Sandy Gaunce  
Greg Gaddis  
David Hyman

**You must be the change that you wish to see in the world.**

**— Mahatma Gandhi**

## SHOP STEWARD LIST

Agoura Hills Chief S.S.	Greg Gaddis
Chatsworth Chief S.S.	Angel Hale
Fillmore Chief S.S.	Call Office
Moorpark Chief S.S.	Robbie Elsaleh
Alternate	Lori Stewart
North Hollywood Chief S.S.	Steve Leyton
	Louie Rodriguez
Chandler	Greg Gaddis
Laurel Canyon	Steve Leyton
Studio City	Greg Gaddis
Valley Village	Steve Leyton
Northridge Chief S.S.	Onofre Varela
Shop Steward/ Webmaster	Larry Orcutt
Porter Ranch	Larry Orcutt
Alternate	Kurt Whitesell
Ojai Chief S.S.	Philip Navarro
Oxnard Chief S.S.	Ernestine Hernandez
	Johnny Boyd
	Pablo Galvan
Pacoima Chief S.S.	Steve Dickerson
Alternate	Frankie Mercado
Alternate	Rocio Fraire
Alternate	Lorie Moore
Port Hueneme Chief S.S.	Kathi Albritten
Reseda Chief S.S.	Jeff Hastert
San Fernando Chief S.S.	James Perryman
	Albert Reyes
M.C.A.	James Perryman
North Hills	C.C. Flatts
Sylmar / Main Office	James Perryman
Santa Paula Chief S.S.	Laura Rowe
Simi Valley Chief S.S.	Sandra Gaunce
	Sal Lopez
Mt. McCoy Station	Sandra Gaunce
Thousand Oaks Chief S.S.	Jim Mette
	Alex Lopez
	Walter Williams
Alternate	Mary Stanley
Newbury Park	Jim Mette
	Debbie Riggs
Ventura Chief S.S.	Laura Rowe
East Ventura	Laura Rowe
Woodland Hills Chief S.S.	Joe Vedder
	Paul Drapkin

## RECREATION NEWS

### SEA WORLD:

Adults: \$55.00 (Gate price \$78.00)

Child: \$55.00 (Gate price \$70.00) 3-9

January 1st Seaworld Ticket price will be \$60.00

### SEE'S GIFT CERTIFICATE:

\$14.00 (Retail Value \$16.90)

For each See's Gift Certificate purchased received one

\$5.00 Gift Card. (While supplies last)

Additional Gift Cards can be purchased for \$5.00 each.

January 1st SEE'S GIFT CERTIFICATES \$15.00

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

**My famous homemade oatmeal chocolate chip cookies are 4 for \$1.00.**

**PAULETTE DYER**

# THE MAIL BAG NEWS

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## BEV SUCICH

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### DINNER

At the **November**  
Union Meeting

**DINNER starts at 6pm**

## ATTENTION ALL DIRECT DUES PAYING RETIREES!

MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE  
DUE AND PAYABLE,  
JANUARY 1, 2013

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 11** Veterans Day



**NOV 12** Veterans Day-Holiday

**NOV 15** Retiree Lunch 11:00am

Sea Horse Buffet-Simi Valley

**NOV 20** Regular Branch Meeting 7pm

Union Hall-Chatsworth  
Dinner served 6 pm

**NOV 22** Thanksgiving Day-Holiday



**DEC 4** Executive Board Meeting 6pm

Executive Council Meeting 7pm

**DEC 18** Regular Branch Meeting-DARK

There will be no December meeting

**DEC 20** Retiree Lunch 11:00am

Hometown Buffet-West Hills

**DEC 25** Christmas Day-Holiday



**JAN 1** New Years Day-Holiday

Executive Meeting's  
rescheduled for following  
week due to Holiday



**JAN 8** Executive Board Meeting 6pm

Executive Council Meeting 7pm