

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: LOS ANGELES FEDERATION OF LABOR, AFL-CIO

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

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Recent City Delivery Initiatives

By James Perryman, President

Do you know someone who gossips?

If so, then you probably don't tell them anything you want to keep private out of fear that they cannot help sharing whatever they know. Furthermore, you can't trust a liar once you catch them in a lie. And, if you have a friend who steals, you either avoid inviting him into your home or you make sure that anything valuable is out of sight or locked up because lack of trust.

The results for the liar and the thief are the same; they don't trust others either. They never know if they being lied to, and they are afraid of being the victim of a lie or theft. While this may describe the behavior of some supervisors, it may also describe the behavior some letter carrier's as well.

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ELECTION NOTICE

This is official notice to all members of Branch 2902 that nominations for branch officers and convention delegates for the 2024 National Convention will be accepted at the October 19, 2023 and November 16, 2023 meetings beginning at 7:00 p.m. at the Jon Gauce Union Hall, 21540 Prairie St., Ste. C, Chatsworth, CA. Ballots will be counted on December 21, 2023.

The following officer positions will be open for nomination: President, Executive Vice President, Senior Vice President, Vice President, Financial Secretary-Treasurer, Recording Secretary, Director of Retirees, MBA/NSBA officer, Health Benefit Officer, Assistant Health Benefit Officer, Sergeant-at-Arms and five Trustee positions. These officers serve a three year term. The President, Executive Vice-President, Senior Vice-President, Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer, and Recording Secretary shall be delegates to state and national conventions by virtue of their office. The number of convention delegates and compensation will be decided at the October meeting prior to nominations.

All nominations may be accepted or declined verbally at the nominating meetings, or in writing no later than seven calendar days after the close of nominations. Failure to accept nominations as stated will result in an automatic decline.

The election will be conducted by secret ballot. Ballots will be mailed to each member in good standing at their last known address. Address changes must be sent in as soon as possible to ensure prompt receipt of a ballot. Completed ballots will be accepted up to 5pm on December 21, 2023 at Jon Gauce Union Hall.

Diane Dozal, Recording Secretary



Recent City Delivery Initiatives

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In many ways, the spread of false information creates, confusion, chaos, and conflict. However, the good news is *truth and knowledge*, which can

reach letter carriers and diminish some of the harm caused by gossip, false information and inaccurate information.

In this article I want to clear up some of the gossip, lies and perception of theft by shedding light on the facts. Including, providing awareness on how management may attempt to steal the rights of letter carriers, via city delivery initiatives. I'll begin by discussing some of the current delivery initiatives that may have led to letter carriers' concerns.

Sorting and Delivery Centers

Recently, the Oxnard installation, represented by our branch, has been converted to a Sorting and Delivery Center (S&DC), and has undergone the transformation described later in this article. Additionally, the branch was recently notified that the Ventura Main Post Office, also represented by our branch, is being relocated into the Oxnard Sorting and Delivery Center.

The Postal Service announced its long-term strategic plan to stabilize mail delivery. This plan, called the Delivering for America Plan, involves the reorganization of the Postal Service's processing, transportation and delivery networks. Under the plan, USPS intends to reverse an estimated \$160 billion loss over the next 10 years. To accomplish this, the Postal Service has listed five objectives to meet and realize these cost savings. The first objective is to modernize the Postal Service and make it capable of providing world-class service at affordable prices. The second objective is to maintain universal six-day mail delivery and expand seven-day package delivery. The third is to stabilize the workforce and invest in strategies to empower employees and put them in a position to succeed. The fourth is to grow revenue through innovation and meet the changing needs of the market place. The last piece of the plan is to become financially stable so that the universal service mandate is met. Part of this plan includes the creation of large delivery units called Sorting and Delivery Centers (S&DCs) across the country. The establishment of these S&DCs involves moving city letter carriers and their assignments from their current work location to larger facilities, most of them located in former processing plants.

Initially, the Postal Service selects markets where there is thought to be potential growth in package delivery. Under the plan, USPS intends to use three strategies regarding the parcel delivery market. One is to expand local access for same and next-day delivery. Another is to improve ground delivery in one and two-day package delivery. The third is to move First Class package delivery to an expanded ground network

to help reduce the reliance on air transportation. Overall, the Postal Service maintains that reducing the number of steps between collection and delivery from the current number of 11 down to five will help grow parcel volume.

When the S&DCs are selected, the Postal Service remodels the buildings so that each facility is structured the same as the others. Letter carriers working in the S&DCs will see renovations that include remodeled bathrooms with new fixtures, new water fountains that include bottle fillers, and remodeled break rooms with ice machines. Each S&DC also receives new carrier cases, which are blue instead of the traditional green case. All of the S&DCs also are equipped with a package-sorting machine called a Small Delivery Unit Sorter (SDUS), which can sort parcels by carrier route.

While I have some concerns about the Oxnard S&DC transformation, such as safety, sufficient office space, parking, and route adjustments for the increased travel distances; local management ensures that the National Agreement will be observed and followed throughout the transition. Nevertheless, the union is prepared to challenge inappropriate action through the grievance procedure for any contractual violation that may occur from this move. Well done is better than well said and the only way to ensure that letter carriers rights are not violated is to stay on alert and be ready.



Pictured above Fred Shaw and Lisa Guravitz meet with 2023 Scholarship recipient Henry Valdez. The Guravitz-Shaw Scholarship is for a CSUN student whose parent is a mail carrier. Henry's mother has been a Letter Carrier for over 20 years. Congratulations Henry and good luck in your college career.

Certified Mail at Mail Processing Facilities

I personally think that the concept of processing Certified mail through the Delivery Point Sequence (DPS) sucks! Carriers are not aware of the number of Certified letters in the DPS when providing an estimated time to complete the route prior to leaving for the street. And, if excessive accountable mail is found during delivery of the DPS, it may take longer than expected to complete the assignment, which may lead to confrontations with supervisors regarding the need for additional time. However, there is no contractual violation for this initiative, at least not at this moment. In the meantime, carriers should continue to do their best to follow management's instructions while servicing our customers. I've provided information to further explain the carriers' rights under this initiative.

In late March, the Postal Service announced a change to the procedures for Certified mail at mail processing facilities. Over the years, in many locations, USPS has routinely been including Certified mail pieces in the Delivery Point Sequence (DPS) automated mail. However, in other locations Certified mail was still being held out and separated from the DPS. With this recent change, USPS hopes to standardize the processing of Certified mail. So, in those locations where Certified mail still was being separated, the Postal Service now is including Certified mail with the DPS. With this change, it has been reported in some areas that local management has been informing letter carriers that Certified mail no longer is an accountable item; this could not be further from the truth. Whether management is processing Certified mail into DPS mail or separating and issuing it in the office, it is still a special service mail product and considered an accountable item. Sections 122 and 261.11 of Handbook M-41, City Delivery Carriers Duties and Responsibilities specify that Certified mail is an accountable, special service item and how it should be treated.

These sections read, in relevant parts, as follows:

122.22 Deliver and obtain date, time of event, and signature receipts for registered, certified, Priority Mail Express, insured, and other special services mail. Use scanning device where appropriate.

261.11 Accountable items are keys, postage due, customs duty, and special services mail.

262.1 Use PS Form 3849, Delivery Notice/Reminder/Receipt, for each accountable piece and numbered insured parcel or other special services item. Usually prepare PS Form 3849 as you make delivery. However, enter the address in the Delivery section on the barcoded side of the form, for identification, in the office at the time articles are issued.

Certified mail found in the DPS mail should be handled on the street and upon returning to the office, as outlined in M-41 Sections 335.16 and 432 below.

335.16 Certified mail mixed in with Delivery Point Sequence (DPS) mail and identified while performing street duties is to be handled in the same manner as Certified mail that is issued in the office by the accountable clerk. Customers must sign for this mail on the data collection device at the delivery point. If for any reason the customer cannot sign on the collection device, PS Form 3849 must be completed at the delivery point and delivery should be attempted. Receipts are to be turned in and the collection device presented to the accountable clerk along with receipts for any other Certified mail.

Registered and Certified 432.1 Give finance clerk all undeliverable articles, present the data collection device showing each item delivered, all PS Forms 3849 for items unable to be signed for on the device, and/or PS Form 3811 for each registered and certified delivery. The supervisor may print an electronically generated report showing all items signed for on the data collection device. **432.2** Complete PS Form 3821 showing the number of receipts and undeliverable articles returned to the clerk. Ensure that any accountable items found in the DPS mail are added to the total accountable pieces included on the form. If form is properly completed, clerk will sign and return it to you.

This is your receipt, keep it for a two-year period. If you are instructed to treat Certified mail in violation of these provisions, notify your Shop Steward immediately to investigate, and file a grievance if appropriate.

Handling of Small Parcels and Rolls

Another recent concern regards a recently released update to a standard work instruction (SWI) for the handling of small parcels and rolls (SPRs). The update, released in March by the Postal Service, seemed to raise questions about existing procedures and appeared to create new responsibilities for city carriers. The SWI includes sections on start times in relation to management's Distribution Up Time (DUT), SPR sortation and distribution, the Load Truck feature, and implementation of an average load time.

I want to clarify some of the items on the SWI. Carrier start times are still determined by management in accordance with Section 122 of Handbook M-39, Management of Delivery Services. Proper sortation and distribution of SPR's is not the responsibility of city carriers. While sometimes city carriers are used for sorting and distributing SPRs and parcels, there are no handbook or manual requirements for city carriers when performing these activities. The SWI also seems to imply an average vehicle load time of 22 minutes for all city routes. I want to remind city carriers that there is no set vehicle loading or unloading time. Load time is determined by the letter carrier following the Handbook M-41 guidelines.

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Fighting for Overtime

By Albert Reyes, Executive Vice President

First, I want to acknowledge the many Carriers who stay on the Overtime Desired List (ODL) throughout each quarter, especially during the summer months. The

daily, weekly, and monthly grind carrying extra can take its toll. So thank you for everything you do.

Article 8.5 gives Letter Carriers the right to sign the ODL before each quarter. This sign-up list should be posted in advance before each quarter. If a full-time Letter Carrier chooses to sign the ODL, they can work up to 12 hours per day and 60 hours per week.

It is up to management to schedule these hours accordingly. If you are an ODL Carrier and see Non-ODL Carriers working off their assignment, see your Shop Steward. Management has mandated Non-ODL carriers on and off their assignments, including non-scheduled days. At the same time, ODL and CCA Letter Carriers were available to work the overtime at the overtime rate. This is a violation of the Article 8.5 provisions of the National Agreement.

When management instructs Non-ODL Carriers to work overtime on and off their assignments, all ODL Carriers are to work the maximum number of hours for that day. Management should schedule CCAs and ODL Carriers on their non-scheduled day or utilize the CCA and ODL Carriers already working to perform the overtime on each day in question. I have heard many arguments from management that a Non-ODL “volunteered” and therefore not a violation.

As a reminder, no employee can “volunteer” to violate the National Agreement. This should still be investigated, so see your Shop Steward. Article 8.5.C.2.a provides that when the need for overtime during the quarter arises, Letter Carriers on the ODL will be selected to perform the work. Therefore, an ODL Carrier can work overtime on regularly scheduled and non-scheduled days. ODL Carriers also have a right to work overtime before Non-ODL Carriers are assigned to work overtime except in a few limited situations.

If management claims that a Carrier worked overtime hours, which was unknown to them, they would need documentation to prove this claim. For example, some Carriers are expected to be in eight hours for the day and end up working nine hours. If this hour of overtime is not approved in advance, then management can place the Carrier in an unauthorized overtime status on PS Form 1813 for that day. Always get your supervisor’s authorization before going into overtime. I recall when management had an imaginary goal for every Carrier to be off the street by 5 pm. They would ensure all Carriers would be back in the office by a set time. It is a great concept; however, this imaginary goal sometimes violates the Article 8 provisions. Giving an hour to a Non-ODL instead of an ODL to circumvent this goal is a viola-

tion. Although overtime is not guaranteed, the provisions of Article 8.5.C.2.a are. It is only a matter of time before this imaginary goal resurfaces in your office.

Two issues must be addressed when a Non-ODL Carrier is mandated to work unwanted overtime. First, investigating the Non-ODL Carrier required to perform unwanted overtime, resulting in lost time with their family or other personal matters, and second, investigating the ODL Carrier that could have worked overtime. Management’s action resulted in a monetary loss. The ODL Carrier has lost its bargained right to earn the extra overtime hours.

The appropriate “make whole” remedy for this type of violation is an additional 50% at the straight-time rate to the Non-ODL Carrier for the Article 8 violation. Overtime pay for the missed overtime opportunity for the ODL Carrier, who was deprived of their contractual right to work overtime. If this is happening in your office, see your Shop Steward. Fight for your overtime. Do not allow management to tell you otherwise. Hold them accountable.

If you are mandated to work unwanted overtime, follow management’s instructions, then grieve it later. Article 8 of the National Agreement specifically protects the rights of both employees. Article 8.5 provides that carriers on the ODL will be worked before those, not on the list. Article 8.5.G provides that Carriers not on the list shall be required to work overtime off their assignments only if all full-time ODL Carriers are scheduled to work **12 hours per day or 60 hours** in the service week.



Pictured above is Branch 2902 MBA Representative Chris Alessi, Simi Valley Carrier as he accepts his 35-year Union Membership Pin at the July Union Meeting.

Tri-Valley Branch 2902 Muscular Dystrophy Bowl-A-Thon

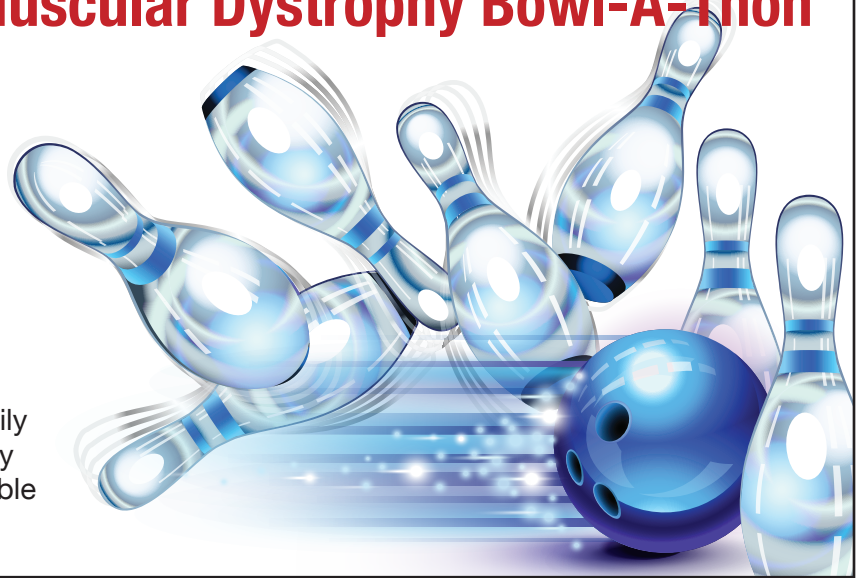
October 8, 2023

9 - 11 am

Harley's Bowling Alley

480 E. Los Angeles Ave.
Simi Valley

This will be a fundraiser for MDA, the official charity of the NALC. Bring your friends and family for a fun morning of bowling to help raise money for a great cause. Sponsorship forms are available by texting Mary Stanley at (805) 341-8535.



No full-time Carrier can work more than 12 hours per day or 60 hours in a service week. This Article 8 provision is an “absolute.” If management requires you to work more than 12/60 in a day or service week, follow management’s instructions and see your Shop Steward immediately. I have heard Carriers giving misinformation from social media websites instructing each other to bring back the mail, clock out, and go home. Although I disagree with management violating this provision, delaying mail is not the alternative.

The remedy of 50% at the straight-time rate also applies for each hour a full-time Letter Carrier works more than 60 hours in a service week. Management is then responsible for instructing the Carrier to “clock off” and go home when the sixtieth hour is reached. The full-time Letter Carrier would then be paid any applicable guaranteed time for the remainder of the service day. In those circumstances where the same work hours violate the 12-hour and 60-hour limits, only a remedy of 50 percent of the base hourly straight-time rate is applied.

On the other hand, management does not have to use ODL carriers to provide auxiliary assistance if such an assignment would mean that the ODL Carrier would be working penalty overtime. Suppose no auxiliary help is available without going into penalty overtime. In that case, management can require full-time Carriers not on the ODL to work overtime on their routes on a regularly scheduled day. This limited exception applies only when a full-time Non-ODL Carrier is required to work overtime on their assignment on a regularly scheduled day.

Additionally, management must seek to use part-time flexible/CCAs at the straight-time or regular overtime rate. Also, available full-time Carriers such as unassigned or reserved regulars at the straight-time rate to provide

auxiliary assistance before requiring a Non-ODL Carrier to work overtime on their assignment on their regularly scheduled day. Again, see your Shop Steward if this is happening. Those ODL Carriers I hear from daily continue to set the example.

Management is still responsible for the proper distribution of overtime. This has stayed the same. Daily grievances were filed for work assignment Carriers and Non-ODL Carriers working off their assignment. Fighting for your overtime should not change. Continue to stay the course and have your Shop Steward investigate your concerns.

Continue to watch out for one another. Properly educate each other. If you still need to do so, download the NALC app, and as always, be safe out there!



Pictured above is Don Arnold, Northridge Carrier as he is presented with his Retirement Watch at the July Union Meeting.



NALC National President Brian Renfroe Charged with Criminal Misconduct and Wrong Doing

By Frank Salazar, Jr., President Emeritus

Recently a member gave me a call and asked if I heard that charges had been filed against the NALC National President, Brian Renfroe. I stated, "No." I've been retired for six years now and I'm out of the loop and don't follow NALC issues as closely as I did when I was Branch President. This call got my curiosity up, so I got on the internet and started doing some research. In an NALC News & Information posting dated July 14, 2023 toward the bottom of the page, the article states the following:

"On July 14, 2023, the NALC Executive Council received charges proffered against President Renfroe by another member of the Council. The charges will be addressed in accordance with Article 10 of the NALC Constitution. This process will not distract from our efforts to achieve a collective-bargaining agreement or our preparation for binding interest arbitration. The NALC Executive Council is committed to following our constitutional process, and will not be deterred from our duties and responsibilities to fully and vigorously represent the interests of the nation's city Letter Carriers."

So, I started to dig in and found a website that had a copy of the charge letter and exhibits that support the charges. The charge letter is dated June 28, 2023 and signed by Christopher Jackson our Director of City Delivery. Among the allegations is that President Renfroe is an alcoholic, which Renfroe allegedly admits to in a letter posted on Facebook On June 24, 2023. I couldn't verify this allegation, because I don't have an account for Facebook or any other type of social media. Among the other allegations are Renfroe being absent from national negotiations and spreading lies and unfounded allegations about Vice President James D. Henry that were found to be baseless and not based on any facts. These are just a few of the allegations. But wait there's more! There are actual charges that are substantiated with exhibits. I'll just give a quick summary of the charges (and my opinion) and I will include a website address where you can read the actual charge letter and examine the exhibits, if you so please.

Charge #1: Abandoned Position and Dereliction/Neglect of Duty

It is alleged that President Renfroe failed to show up at regional rap sessions as scheduled. And, he wasn't just AWOL or a no call/no show just once; he did it three times.

He missed the regions 1,11 and 14's rap sessions. The NALC (the membership) is paying this man's salary and travel expenses and he does not have the decency or respect to call and inform the membership that he's not coming. How embarrassing for the NBAs of the region and the membership who attended to hear the man speak. I could say more, but I want to keep this article civil and informational.

Charge #2: Conduct. Impaired driving after hours in a NALC owned vehicle

In my opinion, this is the most serious charge and it's well documented with a police report and criminal court records. It is well documented that President Renfroe was driving an NALC vehicle after hours in an intoxicated state. In other words, he was drunk driving in an NALC vehicle. This happened at 10:49 pm on September 12, 2018, before he became President. In short, the police officers witnessed Renfroe swerving on the road and they were flagged down by a woman stating that the driver of the vehicle (Renfroe) may be intoxicated. In addition, two bicyclists who were being honked at by Renfroe could have been involved, but fortunately nothing came of it. Talk about poor judgement (driving drunk) and a possible huge liability to the NALC. Like I said, I could say more, but I want to be civil. You will have to read the police report to believe it. The question I get most is, "Did Fred (Rolando) know?", "Why didn't Fred do anything about it?", "How could Fred let him (Renfroe) become President?" I can't answer those questions. Although this incident happened years ago, Renfroe appears to have refused treatment or failed it. According to his most recent article in the Postal Record (August 2023), Renfroe states, "...I sought treatment for alcoholism a few months ago..." What took him so long? The DUI charge was almost five years ago, and he's getting help now? Or, did he fail previous rehab attempts, if any? I don't want to kick the man when he's down, but this isn't showing good judgement and it doesn't make me feel confident about his leadership.

Charge #3: Conduct, Misuse of Union Funds

On March 13, 2023, it's alleged that President Renfroe and his Chief of Staff left a Committee of Presidents Meeting (COP) in Detroit and flew to New Orleans and stayed at the

Ritz Hotel, which is alleged to be non-union establishment. It is also alleged that there was no union business in New Orleans at that time. I personally have a lot of questions on this charge, because I would have to see some documentation. I would have to see flight details and billing along with travel receipts for hotel and other travel expenses. Plus, why did the Chief of Staff have to go along, if there was no union business as alleged. I would love to hear the answers.

**Charge #4: Conduct.
Behavior to female member unbecoming of
our National President**

On March 14, 2023, President Renfro and his Chief of Staff flew from New Orleans to Biloxi, Mississippi for a region 8 Rap Session (Hmmm, makes me wonder why they didn't fly there straight from Detroit? There are flights. I looked it up.). On March 15, 2023, after the last training sessions were concluded, Renfro approached a female member at the bar and asked her why her branch did not want to merge with the Decatur branch. She gave her reasons and Renfro accused of her not being loyal to the NALC. The member stated that she was loyal; however, she reached out to another member (male) for grievance help. Renfro, then accused the female member of being so and so's "bitch." In my opinion, very derogatory and demeaning statement to be said to any member let alone a female member. Very unprofessional especially coming from our National President and I note that EEOs and sexual harassment cases have been initiated and filed over similar issues in many Post Offices. What is he thinking? Evidently, he isn't. While, he shouldn't lose his job over this charge alone I believe he should be censured.



Pictured above is Manuel DeLaTorre, North Hollywood Carrier as he is presented with his 20-year Union Membership pin at the July Union Meeting. Thank you Manuel for all your years of support.

**Charge #5:
Conduct unreliable and untruthful**

The charge indicates that the national officers pool their money together to send out campaign literature at the same time the ballots are sent out so a member can get their (national officers) campaign literature about the same time the election ballot is received. It seems Renfro messed up and blamed the printer for the delay in sending out the national officers campaign material. Upon investigation, it was discovered that Renfro messed up by failing to do a prompt review of the material and approving of the mailing. In my opinion, this charge should be dropped. This charge is really an internal matter amongst the national officers. It doesn't affect the membership as a whole. However, it goes to the conduct of President Renfro. Blame others for your mistakes.

**Charge #6:
Conduct shameful and inexcusable**

It appears that President Renfro clicked "like" on someone's social media account. And that person appears to be a supporter of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). There is not a lot of information supporting this charge in the charge letter, but I read elsewhere that he may have "liked" something else on the page and his "like" may have been taken out of context. I would also drop this charge. However, what is President Renfro doing "liking" a KKK supporters social media site. Doesn't he have more important things to do like negotiating a National Agreement? Again, I could say more, but I want to keep it civil. Although I would drop this charge, it's just another example of poor judgement and lack of self-awareness as to who you are and who you represent.

If you are interested in reading the charges and deciding for yourself, you can look here:

<https://www.21cpw.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Article-10-Charges-Pages-1-18.pdf>

So what happens now? Well, per Article 10 of the NALC Constitution, it will be up to the Executive Council to decide. See Article 10 below:

ARTICLE 10 Removal of Officers

In case of neglect of duty or violation of this Constitution on the part of any officer of this Association or a State Association, the Executive Council shall have power to remove them from office, impose such other penalty as it may deem proper, or suspend such State Association after a fair hearing, subject to appeal to the National Convention. Any member may file with the Executive Council a charge that an officer of the National Association or a State Association has been guilty of neglect of duty or violation of this Constitution. Upon the filing of such charge, the President or Vice President (or the Secretary-Treasurer if the charge is against both the President and Vice President) shall, as soon as

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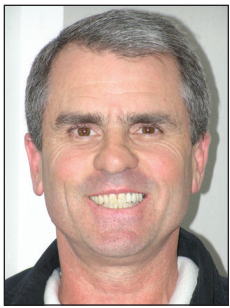
practicable: (a) send, by Registered mail, a copy of the charges to the officer or officers charged, and (b) appoint a member, who is not involved in the charge, to investigate the same and to make a report in writing within 30 days to the Executive Council on the results of their findings. A copy of such report shall be sent by mail to the charging member and to the officer against whom the charge was filed. The Executive Council shall determine whether a substantial charge is presented by the report and, if so, shall direct a hearing thereon before a panel of three disinterested members, excluding the investigator. The panel shall make a report with recommendations to the Executive Council which shall be served on the accused officer and charging member, who may, within 15 days, file with the Executive Council objections or comments thereon. If the Executive Council finds the officer guilty, it shall be empowered to remove them from office, or impose such other penalty as it may deem proper. Any member aggrieved by such decision of the Executive Council shall have the right to appeal to the National Convention. To perfect such appeal to the National Convention, the aggrieved member must, no later than sixty (60) days prior to the National Convention, file with the Chairperson of the Executive Council, by Registered mail, notice of appeal, together with a full written statement of the reasons why the appeal should be granted; if the adverse decision of the Executive Council is not rendered until sixty-five (65) days or less prior to the National Convention,



Pictured above is Paul Janzen, Pacoima Carrier as he is presented with his Retirement Watch and 35-year Union Membership pin at the July Union Meeting. He is proudly displaying his certificate of 100,000 miles walked in 36 1/2 years of service as a Letter Carrier.

the notice to appeal and statement of reasons must be filed as soon after receipt of the decision as is reasonably possible. I wrote this article for mostly informational purposes. I don't believe many Branches will publish the charges for fear of retaliation. However, I was really disappointed that one of our National Officers, especially the President would act in such a manner. Renfroe has a problem. He has had the problem for many many years, but apparently refused, avoided or failed treatment. Now, that his job as National President is on the line, he's allegedly getting help and wants to put it all behind him (see the bottom of page 1 of August 2023 Postal Record). In my opinion, it's too little too late. Alcoholism won't go away or disappear overnight. President Renfroe has displayed poor conduct, poor character, poor judgement and poor decision making. He is a liability to the NALC. He has also showed a lack of respect and responsibility to the NALC and its membership. I am not a fan! I understand addiction. You don't want to do a certain action, but you feel compelled. You try to resist and resist. But, you give in even though you know such conduct will hurt you in the end. But, you can't help yourself. It takes time and effort to control those impulses. But, through time and the help of God, it can be overcome. But, it ain't going to happen overnight. If he had any honor or shame he would resign, but we are in different times I guess. I say this because President Renfroe did these actions through pre-meditation. Deep down, he knew what he did was wrong, but he didn't care and he did it anyway. We can't have a person like this heading our organization. Yes, I know the Executive Council hasn't completed their work yet. However, I've seen enough documentation. And, I've made my decision. I just hope that the Executive Council has enough courage to make the right decision and not be afraid of retaliation or losing their position, salary or whatever perceived power they think they have. I know a lot of them knew what was going on, but they said nothing. By staying silent they condoned it. I have to commend brother Christopher Jackson, Director of City Delivery for bringing the charges to our attention. Brother Jackson had the courage to do what no other officer dared to do. And, believe me, what he did was no easy thing, because he is now on Renfroe's "S**T List". Chris was our Region 1 Business Agent when I was President of the branch and I found him to be respectful knowledgeable and honest. Believe me; brother Chris Jackson would not bring charges under Article 10, especially against the sitting National President, if the allegations had no credence. The charges are serious and have merit. The charges against President Renfroe should not be watered down or swept under the rug. Ok, this is enough. We will see what happens. Back to retired life. Hasta Luego....

Please Note: This article is the sole opinion of the author and does not necessarily reflect the opinions of the NALC, Tri-Valley Branch 2902 or its officers. In other words, don't hate on my brother and sister officers. This is my opinion only.



Gone But Never Forgotten

By Ray Hill, President Emeritus

There are certain events that take place during our lives that are indelibly etched in our memories. On November 22, 1963, my 4th grade classroom lesson was suddenly interrupted when our school principal's sobbing voice announced loudly on the intercom, "Our president has been shot!" Of course, she was talking about President John F. Kennedy, who had just been assassinated in Texas. I can still hear her voice making that announcement now, almost 60 years later. Likewise, I remember every detail of the many earthquakes I have lived through, and I can still see the second jet crashing into the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. I vividly recall hearing the news when both of my parents passed away and I also vividly recall more joyous occasions, like the birth of my children.

On Friday, July 6, 2018, I was working late at the branch office when Rene Anderson phoned me from the USPS Sierra Coastal District Office. It was a hellishly hot day in the San Fernando Valley and Rene was tasked with giving me some really f***ed up news: Woodland Hills' Carrier Peggy Frank had died on duty that day. Rene didn't have all the facts, but she told me what she knew: Peggy had been transported to the hospital by ambulance after suffering what appeared to be a heat-related illness that ultimately proved to be fatal. That phone call from Rene Anderson giving me the horrible news of Peggy's death remains forever etched in my memory.

It got as hot as 117 degrees in Woodland Hills that day and, to make matters worse, it was Peggy's first day back at work after a 3-month medical absence. I remember when I carried mail, many moons ago, if I had been on annual for just two weeks it took me a couple of days to get back into carrying shape. Imagine taking a 3-month medical absence and then returning to work in 117-degree heat. Peggy did just that and, tragically, suffered the ultimate penalty, death.

There was a "Celebration of Life" service for Peggy on July 22, 2018, that was well attended by her friends, family and co-workers. A few family members and co-workers shared fond memories of Peggy at the service, and it was really up-lifting, in spite of the tragic nature of Peggy's death.

I didn't know Peggy very well but enjoyed the brief conversations I had with her during station visits to the Woodland Hills' office. My conversations with Peggy often took place in the parking lot as I was leaving because Peggy began her tour of duty at 9:30 and was usually on her way into the office as I was leaving. She was always cordial, pleasant and she never whined or complained to me during our chats. Over the years I took more than

my fair share of flak during station visits and leaving the Woodland Hills' office on a positive note after talking with Peggy always lifted my spirits as I drove out of the lot. Five years have passed since Peggy's death and, although she is gone, Peggy will never be forgotten.

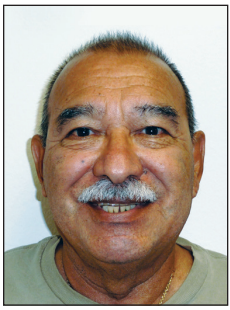
Tragedies Continue

In his August Postal Record column, NALC Director of Safety and Health, Manny Peralta, wrote of several heat related tragedies that were preventable. Manny wrote as follows, in part, regarding Peggy Frank's death: "...Just one month later, on July 6, 2018, Tri-Valley, CA Branch 2902 Letter Carrier Peggy Frank returned to work following a three-month medical absence, walking into a heat wave with the temperature reaching 117 degrees. She was not HIPP trained and she had not been given an opportunity to acclimate to the heat. She died that afternoon, and management attempted to deflect responsibility by chalking it up to other medical issues and her age. Shame on management. Management had been caught falsifying records claiming that Peggy had received the required HIPP training; she had not, as she was on medical leave when the training was conducted. OSHA failed to cite USPS for the falsification, which should have resulted in criminal penalties. Shame on OSHA... at this point I am angry. I am angry that OSHA recently withdrew the citation issued in the death of Peggy Frank in late 2018, instead of defending it before a judge. Had OSHA, under the previous administration, cited the USPS for falsification of training records in the citation issue on the death of Peggy Frank, then we would be at trial before the OSHRC prosecuting the USPS for falsification of training records...." If you have not done so already, please read Manny's August 2023 Postal Record column.

Pray for the Dead, Fight Like Hell for the Living!

Mary Harris Jones, AKA Mother Jones, was a champion of the working class during the late 1800s and early 1900s. The feisty Mother Jones was a campaigner for the United Mine Workers Union, she founded the Social Democratic Party and she also helped establish the Industrial Workers of the World. One of Mother Jones' most famous quotes was, "pray for the dead, fight like hell for the living." In the spirit of fighting like hell for the living the aforementioned Manny Peralta, a long-time friend and advisor to myself and the officers of Branch 2902, has preached the importance of heat related safety for a long time now. Over the past several years, Manny has sent out multiple "heat awareness" memos to our National

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Prepare Now for your Future Health Plan Needs

By Joe Gutierrez, Branch 2092 Health Benefits Representative

Hello everyone, Starting with open season 2024 the NALC will no longer be a part of the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB). This is a result of the changes that are required as part of the Postal Service Reform Act of 2022. As I understand it, all health plans must apply to the new Postal Service Health Plan (PSHB) in order to be included as a choice for Postal Service employees. This is a separate program within the FEHB program to be administered by OPM. Open season for 2024 will be the same as always. This new plan will become effective for the 2025 calendar year. I will obtain more information on this subject at this years NALC health benefits seminar being held in October.

For now nothing has changed for open season 2024 and like all other years you can review the health plans covered

by OPM and select the plan you like. Of course as always I suggest you choose NALC as your health provider. Our plan provides the same benefits as the other plans and usually at a better price. If you belong to NALC I hope you take advantage of the free benefits it provides. One thing to remember is the NALC HBP is a PPO provider. If you chose a network hospital OAP provider you can rely on the following. 100 percent coverage for maternity benefits for hospital, delivery, anesthesia and other services. A \$25 copay for office visits or consultations and 100 percent coverage for medically necessary lab work provided by LabCorp. or Quest.

Remember to chose a hospital that belongs to the OAP network, most hospitals do. If you use a hospital out of network you may be charged a higher rate for the same services. You can locate a OAP provider by going to nalchbp.org and follow the prompts.

Recent City Delivery Initiatives

Despite what management may tell you, the Union has never agreed to any time standard for vehicle loading. This 22-minute time value was developed simply as a reference time for the route evaluation and adjustment teams to use with the Digital Street Review (DSR) program in the Technology Integrated Alternate Route Evaluation and Adjustment Process (TIAREAP).

The TIAREAP guidelines document (M-01983 in NALCs Materials Reference System) specifically states that this load time average is not a delivery standard and is used only for the purpose of assisting the evaluation team in identifying potential anomalies. All city carriers know that load times can vary greatly based on routes type, mail mix and local conditions. Do not be concerned if your load time varies; just continue to be efficient and conscientious when performing your duties. As always, city carriers should perform their duties as outlined in the M-41 and follow the instructions of management. However, if the instructions you are given seem to violate the M-41, you should inform your Shop Steward immediately to investigate, and file a grievance if appropriate.

I've heard the concerns from carriers who had to request additional time from the street for excessive Certified mail found in the DPS; In addition to management's improper standard work instructions for handling small parcels and rolls. It appears that management is violating the handbooks and manuals when committing such acts. These acts should be challenged through the grievance procedure. Some may not like this approach when seeking a remedy to correct a problem, but it's the only procedure that we have that provides a solution.

continued from page 3

I hope this article helps answer some questions about these recent city delivery initiatives that may have caused unnecessary gossip, lies, and concern, including the ridiculous notion that the union is allowing management to violate the rights of letter carriers.

Thank you to all letter carriers who are members of this branch, for continuing to provide the excellent and conscientious service that makes the Postal Service the most trusted federal agency.

Farewell

Fear is a natural emotion. We become frightened of the weather, the dark, or perhaps when tragedy happens to a loved one. The list of items or factors we humans fear is endless. If we aren't careful, our concerns begin to control our behavior. Fear makes us feel trapped until we fall or fail at achieving something. However, going through adversity builds confidence and greatness in people which helps remove the fear.

I, like many others had the opportunity to work with Laura Rowe, who just recently retired as our Branch Recording Secretary and NALC advocate. Her hard work and dedication provided excellence to our branch. She conducted union business in a profound manner that demonstrated tenacity that I admired and respected.

Moreover, Laura also served our branch as a Station Chief Shop and Route Adjustment Advisor beyond her years of retirement from the Postal Service.

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Individual Disability Income

By Chris Alessi, MBA/NSBA Representative



The Insurance plan by your MBA called Individual Disability Income was rolled out in November of 2021 for our active members of the NALC. This plan has been coming for many years, the last time we had this plan was in the early 1990s.

This Insurance helps ensure that you have money you need to continue the lifestyle that you worked for if you become too sick or too hurt to work. Individual Disability Income (IDI) is available for our active members from the age 18 to 59. Unfortunately, spouses and family members are not eligible. This policy will pay a monthly benefit amount of \$650, \$1,350, or \$2,000 for a period of six or 12 months based on your choice and need at the time of purchase.

Recent City Delivery Initiatives

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Ms. Rowe was able to work through adversity. She demonstrated that if you wanted more, you have to do more. During times of challenges and frustration while doing the work as a Shop Steward, she addressed union related matters profoundly and professionally. Laura's success was result of her fearless actions.

I have fond memories working with Laura daily at the branch. However, my fondest times were witnessing her reactions whenever she had to assist unreasonable and non-objective Postal employees, (mostly managers). I'll just put it like this. I heard the phrase "What the F..." quite often but it was for just cause. Needless to say, I've improved to be more objective and reasonable while working with her. For the reasons that I just stated above, I will always be grateful and thankful for Laura, and I wish her a happy and blessed retirement.

That's all for now and I'll be back with more. Stay safe and God bless you all.



There is a 14-day elimination period before benefits start, and you must have a total disability, which means you can not perform your normal material duties of your occupation and you are under a doctor's care and that you are not working for any wage or profit. There is a pre-existing condition limitation that benefits will not be paid unless you have gone for a period of one year while the policy is in force without receiving any medical advice or treatment for that condition. Some of the exclusions that this policy will not cover are; act of war, normal pregnancy, alcoholism, drug addiction, illegal occupation or activity, attempt to commit a felony, aviation other than as a fare paying passenger on a scheduled or charter flight operated by a scheduled airline, suicide or self inflicted injury or cosmetic surgery unless deemed medically necessary by a Doctor.

IDI is guaranteed to be renewable to age 65, the MBA cannot change any benefits or refuse to renew your policy as long as your premiums are paid on time. You can acquire this insurance for as little as \$8.25 bi-weekly. You can go to the NALC website and click on member services. Scroll down to the MBA and you can view and download the brochures and applications.

In closing, I wish all of our members and their families a great fall season ahead, GOD BLESS YOU. In Solidarity.



Pictured above is Vincenzo Scudieri, North Hollywood Carrier as he is presented with his Retirement Watch and 35-year Union Membership pin at the July Union Meeting.



Congress May Recess for Summer But We Continue the Fight

By David Hyman, Branch 2902 Trustee & Political Liaison

Greetings Sisters & Brothers! The hot labor summer continues with labor disputes in the entertainment industry, hospitality and other fields. After too much time getting uncomfortable, it was time for our other Sisters & Brothers to organize. Democracy is not a spectator sport.

Summer recess for the Congress and Senate should be ending around the time you receive this issue. Only one of the 12 appropriation bills passed the House before the summer recess, and the Senate has not acted on any of these bills.

When the lawmakers resume service in mid-September, they will have a couple of weeks to fund the government with these bills before the September 30th deadline. There has been very little movement on the four bills we have been following. The House version of the Social Security Fairness Act of 2023 added nine additional co-sponsors bringing it to

a total of 288. The Senate version of the bill, S. 597 remains at 44 co-sponsors. The House version of the Comprehensive Paid Leave Act, HR 856 increased by one to 36 co-sponsors. The Senate version of this bill, S. 274 remains at ten co-sponsors including our own Senator Alex Padilla. The Shipping Equity Act, HR 3721 has only 16 co-sponsors so it has a long way to go before allowing the USPS to ship alcohol. The bill to save door delivery, HR 376 increased by a couple to 25 co-sponsors including our local member, Tony Cardenas.

The Dodgers are looking good heading into the home stretch. The branch will be well represented with around 50 members, family and friends attending the upcoming LA Federation of Labor Union Night on September 23rd. If you are attending the game or watching it on TV, the group message board will include: "Dodgers Welcome NALC Tri-Valley Br. 2902."



Muscular Dystrophy Fundraiser

At the October Union Meeting at the Jon Gaunce Union Hall there will be Costco pizza & hot dogs for sale.

All proceeds from the sale of this food will go to MDA.



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sent out multiple "heat awareness" memos to our National Business Agents to be disseminated to the branch offices and to the field. These heat memos stress the fact that we need to be extremely mindful of the risks of heat exhaustion and heatstroke and to watch for their symptoms. We all know that we can't rely on Management alone to keep us out of harm's way, and it is imperative that we take care of ourselves, especially while working in extreme heat. If we need more time to deliver mail because of the heat, we need to not ask for but to demand that time from Management. I don't want to hear about USPS "preaching" the importance of heat related safety in stand ups, telling Carriers to drink lots of water and then hear about Carriers being badgered by Management when they need additional time to safely complete their daily assignment(s) in blistering heat. Heed the words of Mother Jones and pray for the dead while fighting like hell so you keep living! We can't bring Peggy back, but we can make every effort to ensure no more letter carriers die from heat-related injuries. Do your part: FIGHT LIKE HELL!



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- If you don't have a legal plan, everything **does not** automatically go to your spouse or kids. It passes via intestate law which may not be what you would want.
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Time: 11:00 am to 1:00 pm

OCTOBER

Where: Golden Panda
1825 Madera Rd.
Simi Valley

When: Tuesday, October 17, 2023

Time: 11:00 am to 1:00 pm



Calendar of Events

SEP	4	Labor Day - Holiday
SEP	7	Executive Board Meeting* 6:00 pm Executive Council Meeting* 7:00 pm
SEP	19	Retiree Luncheon* 11:00 am Golden Panda - Simi Valley
SEP	21	Regular Branch Meeting* 7:00 pm Union Hall - Chatsworth
OCT	5	Executive Board Meeting* 6:00 pm Executive Council Meeting* 7:00 pm
OCT	9	Columbus Day - Holiday
OCT	17	Retiree Luncheon* 11:00 am Golden Panda - Simi Valley
OCT	19	Regular Branch Meeting* 7:00 pm Union Hall - Chatsworth
OCT	31	Halloween
NOV	3	Executive Board Meeting* 6:00 pm Executive Council Meeting* 7:00 pm
NOV	5	Daylight Savings Time Ends

* Meetings subject to Covid-19 restrictions