



THE VOICE



OF THE GOLDEN GATE LETTER CARRIERS

BRANCH #214

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS, AFL-CIO

March/April 2011

Award-winning newspaper

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WHAT'S NEW IN THE BRANCH

By Lili Beaumont, President

(Each monthly meeting has a President's report on what has happened and what is about to happen. Here is an edited version of the March report.)

GPS is coming to a vehicle near you

Both Bay Valley and San Francisco Districts say that no GPS devices have been installed in postal vehicles yet. Please contact your shop steward and/or the union office if you are made aware that GPS will be implemented in your office.

Pursuant to M-01705, it was agreed by the parties at the national level that advance notice shall be given to carriers when GPS will be installed in their postal vehicles. The following offices are on the schedule to get GPS: 94117 (18); 94127 (11); 94132 (10); San Rafael Main (20); San Anselmo (10); Corte Madera (10); Daly City (16); and Redwood City (13).

Office time is significantly reduced with FSS implementation.

Those routes that have a big variance between the actual street time and the base route street time seem to be candidates for the GPS devices.

Flat sorting machines

The Flat Sequenced Sorting machine(s) in San Jose have been turned on and implemented in several of the cities in San Jose Branch 193, and Greater East Bay Branch 1111. Feedback from those branches states that office time is significantly reduced within the first week of implementation because the FSS machine's accuracy is much better than DPS. Carriers begin tour at 0730 and some are pulling down by 0815 if all the mail gets to them.

The FSS machine assembled in San Francisco's P&DC will be up and running in July 2011. **As of right now, no Branch 214 stations are on the FSS implementation schedule.**

Changes in San Francisco

94103 has been approved by USPS Headquarters to be mounted on March 12, 2011. Four combo routes will be abolished which will invoke in-house bidding.

Golden Gate station was moved to Steiner Station on the weekend of February 19. (It was suggested from the floor that the new station be called SteinerGate.)

Management is assessing the possibility of moving Bayview station into 180 Napoleon, but no confirmation has been announced yet.

Personnel moves

Cherry Vargas, former full-time officer, stepped down as one of the NALC back-ups for the Step B Team. However, Tony Gallardo, past president of Branch 214, was recommended and selected to replace her.

Kim Truong has been selected by State President John Beaumont to serve on the Election Committee at the upcoming State Convention in San Diego in April.

James Henry from Branch 1100 was selected as Regional Administrative Assistant to Chris Jackson filling the RAA vacancy left when Chris became our national business agent.

Honor to letter carrier

On Saturday, March 5, 2011 at 4:00pm, the Westgate Post Office in San Jose will be renamed the Tony Cortese Post Office by Congressional decree. All letter carriers are invited to this historic occasion. This is the first post office in the nation named after a letter carrier. Tony Cortese was a president of Branch 193, and his branch had a food drive one year before the national union took up the idea.

Pension funds are safe

There has been a lot of discussion going on across the workroom floor caused by the continuing loss of retirement pensions and benefits of fellow union workers across the country. The main controversy arising is

(continued on page 3)

Branch 214 notes:

Letter: CC to Voice

“Dear Lynda,

My sister Emily sent me a copy of the piece you wrote about my Dad in **The Voice**.

Thanks so much! He would have been so moved to know the good esteem in which he was held.

Sincerely,

Teresa Yragui”

(Teresa Yragui is Bob’s eldest daughter. The tribute to Bob Yragui by Lynda Beigel appeared in the November/December 2010 Voice, page 12. It is available online at nalcbayarea.com)

* * *

Mike Williamson’s article, “Gift to America”, was reprinted in the January, 2011 issue of *The Parlor City News*, Branch 373, Cedar Rapids, IA. It is available online at nalcbayarea.com

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Photo by Winnie Wong.

Juliette Chen, former Associate Editor of The Voice, receiving the NALC Branch Publications Award First Place plaque for “Best Editorial or Column” for 2006-2008 from Editor Ivars Lauersons. The delayed presentation took place at the Clayton, CA Arts Fair on March 7, 2011 where Ms. Chen was exhibiting her art work. The article, “Dealing with bullies,” appeared in the Sept./Oct. 2006 issue.

* * *

Herb Mitchell announces that the **4th Annual Last Bus Trip to Reno** event will be held this year over the Columbus Day weekend, October 9 – 10, 2011, leaving Sunday and returning Monday.

* * *

Executive Vice-President Karen Eshabarr’s article, “The Making of a Good Steward” from the July/August, 2010 **Voice**, was reprinted in the March, 2011 issue of *The Parlor City News*, Branch 373, Cedar Rapids, IA. It is available online at nalcbayarea.com

WEB NEWS, www.nalcbayarea.com

Visit our award winning website. Get forms, check manuals, link to national NALC website, see photos of Branch 214 stations, and more, more, more. Some areas are limited to shop stewards and union activists.

* * *

New to site – We have a link to Facebook for our members. See Cathy Simonson’s article on page 12 for all the details. We also have an NALC Activist newsletter section which links you to the current and previous issues. Your feedback is appreciated.

The heroes in Wisconsin/Why Wisconsin matters

Right wing attack on collective bargaining and social safety net

By Bill Thornton, Vice President

The attack on collective bargaining is not just an attack on labor unions but an attack on all workers and the social safety net that benefits help provide.

Milestones in public sector collective bargaining

The Wagner Act of 1935 protected the right to organize unions and bargain collectively for many private-sector workers, but it did not cover local, state, or federal workers.



In 1959 Wisconsin became the first state to enact legislation recognizing the rights of government workers to bargain collectively.

Executive Order 10988 (President John F. Kennedy in 1962): Allowed federal workers to bargain over some aspects of their work (but not their pay or benefits).

Meyers-Milias-Brown Act in 1968 (signed by Governor Ronald Reagan), bringing public sector bargaining to California.

Executive Order President Richard Nixon 1969: Strengthened the bargaining rights of federal workers.

1970 Postal Strike and subsequent Postal Reorganization allowed for collective bargaining. Nixon was President and even though troops were brought in during the strike, there were no terminations.

How does denying collective bargaining rights for public-sector employees create good jobs in the private sector?

1950-1970: there was a tenfold increase in the membership of government workers' unions.

Of course these gains did not come without labor struggle and contributions of workers for almost a century. That Reagan and Nixon signed on to these changes and subsequent events indicate how far to the right politics in the US has gone.

Hanging over all of this is the haunting remembrance of the 1981 firing of the air traffic controllers by Reagan. As shameful as their union's, PATCO, support of Ronald Reagan on 1980, the American labor movement should not have allowed that to happen. Shame on all of us. It cannot be allowed to happen again.

Connecting with health care

The attack on union collective bargaining happens in concurrence with the attack on health care reform. You keep hearing that people are unhappy with the "direction"

(continued on page 4)

Beaumont *(continued from page 1)*

the rumored allegations that the government is exploring the idea of tapping into the CSRS and FERS retirement accounts. I inquired with our national and state presidents who provided me with the following feedback:

"The funds in the Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund (CSRDF), the OPM trust fund that finances CSRS and FERS annuity and benefits, cannot by law be used for any other purpose. Neither the OPM, nor the administration, nor Congress could legally tap into our funds to spend them elsewhere. In order to access the CSRDF, both Houses of Congress would have to pass a bill and the President of the United States would have to sign it into law. We don't see this happening. Rest assured, we would mount a vigorous fight if anybody tried to tamper with our pensions."

While it is unlikely that Congress would seek legislation to tap our pension funds, the danger that Congress might vote to cut our pension benefits is real. There are members of Congress that are not "friends" to letter carriers

and may falsely charge that our benefits are too generous. But again, our national office and state association will be prepared to respond to these claims and fight any legislation that cuts our benefits. However, they cannot succeed alone. They need the support of all union members across the country. Union members can help by enrolling in the "e-Activist" and "Carrier Corps" programs and enrolling in the automatic deduction program for COLCPE. E-Activist and Carrier Corp are free and will keep you informed and educated on what's going on in the union pertaining to legislation and contract negotiations. Enrolling in COLCPE and donating \$5 per pay period will help us stay educated and keep our "friends" in Congress. The threats of going to "5-day delivery" and possibly cutting our pensions are very real given the majority in Congress are not our "friends" in the House of Representatives today. In union solidarity we all have a responsibility to get involved in order to keep the benefits and the postal service intact the way union members before us had to get involved and fight to get these benefits established.

Thornton (continued from page 3)

of government and many working people have helped the right elect the so called tea party people, essentially voting against their own economic interests. Reagan was able to exploit this tendency and in subsequent year's salaries of working people declined in real terms despite "trickle down" theories.

Health care US and other countries

The Kaiser Family Foundation and the Harvard School of Public Health Poll found that 50% of Americans believe that the Health Care Reform is still not the law. (probably a result of the constant barrage of misinformation by an increasingly right wing media led by Fox and right wing think tanks financed by Koch Brothers, etc.)

What Republicans are seeking in Wisconsin has nothing to do with helping put America back to work.

While people seem to have a negative overall impression of health care reform (but only slightly), individual parts remain popular. But when you get into details, there is a contradiction between this so called concern about the direction of the country and details of those policies.

66% like the expansion of Medicaid; 79% like the law's subsidies for low- and moderate-income people to buy insurance; 85% like the law's provision for a 50% discount on drugs in the so-called Medicare doughnut hole.

It is true that Americans by a big margin oppose mandatory health insurance coverage.

But Americans (by a significant margin) trust Democrats over Republicans to handle issues of health care.

America is already behind other countries regarding the level of protection of the so-called social safety net.

Maternity Leave

Germany: Maternity leave is 14-weeks. It is one of the shortest maternity periods allotted to women in the European Union, but new mothers receive their full salary.

New Zealand: women receive 14-weeks leave on full pay; Iceland: nine months; France, Singapore, and Austria: four months maternity leave benefits; Sweden: mothers, perhaps the best off in the world in terms of maternity leave, get 480 days off and receive 80 percent of their salary.

Compare that to coverage under Family Medical Leave Act in the US that guarantees 12 weeks a year but requires use of your own leave.

Health care

World Health Organization has rated countries based on the five indicators: overall level of population health;

health inequalities within the population; overall level of health system responsiveness; distribution of responsiveness within the population; the distribution of the health system's financial burden within the population.

The US ends up as #37.

A Commonwealth Fund study compared the quality of the U.S. system with five other countries: Despite spending twice as much per capita, the U.S. ranks last or near last on basic performance measures of quality, access, efficiency, equity, and healthy lives. "The U.S. stands out as the only nation in these studies that does not ensure access to health care through universal coverage," says Commonwealth Fund President Karen Davis (BusinessWeek.com, 6/12/07).

The right wing attack on health care reform continually makes reference to Canada and England's health care systems which are government run but are not typical of systems that provide universal health care.

The French system is not what most Americans imagine, says historian Paul Dutton at Northern Arizona University, author of *Differential Diagnoses: A Comparative History of Health Care Problems and Solutions in the United States and France*.

"Americans assume that if it's in Europe, which France is, that it's socialized medicine," he says. "The French don't consider their system socialized. In fact, they detest socialized medicine. For the French, that's the British, that's the Canadians. It's not the French system."

France, like the United States, relies on both private insurance and government insurance. Also, just like in America, people generally get their insurance through their employer.

France relies on a mixture of public and private funding, as does the U.S.

But there are other big differences:

Every French citizen has access to basic health-care

Our health care (2005) costs us \$6,400 per person.

coverage through national insurance funds, contributions from employers and employees.

90% of the population buys supplementary private insurance to provide benefits that aren't covered.

The government picks up the tab for those out of work who cannot gain coverage through a family member.

"The French model suggests that you can have universal coverage without relying totally on the state, without restricting patient choice, and without abolishing private medical practice and the insurance industry," says Victor G. Rodwin, a professor of health policy and management at New York University's Robert F. Wagner School of Public Service.

(continued on page 5)

Thornton (continued from page 4)

In France, everyone has health care. But unlike in Britain and Canada, there are no waiting lists to get elective surgery or see a specialist, Dutton says.

Dutton says these shared values come out of a shared history. Both countries are products of Enlightenment-era revolutions.

“The French hold individual liberty and social equality very dear ... ‘liberty, equality, and fraternity’ — of course the slogan of their revolution,” he says. “And in this coun-

France, and most of Europe, spends \$3,300.

try, of course, we have similar ideals: individual liberty, social equality — equal chances for everyone.”

But the French have done a better job of protecting those values in health care, Dutton says.

The uninsured

“There are **no** uninsured in France,” says Victor Rodwin, a professor of health policy at New York University... There is no case of anybody going broke over their health costs...”

Treatment of sickest patients

The 3 or 4 or 5 percent of the patients who are the sickest are exempt from their co-payments and they pay no deductibles.

There is an almost built in hatred of things French in America but I don't see how anybody could say that the US medical system is better than that of France, or, for that matter almost any other health care system in Europe.

But in the US we get a constant barrage of nonsense about the US having the best health care system in the world. Right wing Congress people can say that but they all have access to the most socialized medicine there is.

The French are heavily taxed to pay for these benefits but Americans may end up paying more for health care when the insurance premiums and the higher out-of-pocket expenses for medicine, doctors and hospitals are considered.

Per capita (2005) health care costs: \$6,400 per person U.S. (highest in the world) \$3,300 France. (Similar to most other European countries)

France spends about 11% of gross domestic product on health care, vs. about 17% in the US.

And yet we are constantly barraged by this right wing mantra about the superiority of the US health care system. This is nonsense.

Meanwhile, members of Congress including the most rabid attackers of health care reform have access to what sounds a lot like “socialized medicine.”

Members of Congress instead can purchase private

health insurance through the Federal Employees Health Benefit Program. Members of Congress and their families also have access to medical benefits beyond the reach of the average American.

Additional health care benefits for Congress:

Priority care at military hospitals (military service not required)

On-site medical office for urgent or minor care.

Free outpatient care at Washington, D.C.-area military hospitals such as Walter Reed Army Medical Center. (Inpatient care at rates set by the Department of Defense.)

Access to Office of the Attending Physician, on the second floor of the U.S. Capitol Building, operates as an urgent care center. (Providing congressional members and the nine Supreme Court justices with primary care medical services at minimal cost. (annual fee of \$503 gets them physicals and routine examinations, on-site X-rays and lab work, physical therapy and referrals to medical specialists from military hospitals and private practices. (Don't have to pay for individual services or submit claims.)

France's system is a mixture of public and private.

Democrats challenged Republicans to forego insurance options provided by the federal government because the GOP unanimously opposed the health care reform law.

Rep. Joe Crowley, D-N.Y., offered a measure that would have required members of Congress to disclose whether they benefited from government-sponsored health care. The GOP blocked Crowley's proposal 240 to 191. (Bill Straub Scripps Howard)

Go figure.

The right to choose your own doctor when you are injured

Injured carriers have a right to choose their own doctor and be informed by their supervisor of this right. This right is guaranteed and management is obligated to guarantee these rights according to regulations contained in:

- ELM (Employee Labor Relations Manual) 543.3.
- 20CFR10.300(d) (Code of Federal Regulations)
- EL-505 3.3,3.9 (USPS Injury Compensation Handbook)

In cases of sudden and traumatic injury and a CA-1 is filed management should issue Form CA-16 (Authorization for Examination and/or Treatment) to the injured employee within (4) hours. 20CFR10.300(b), ELM 545.21.

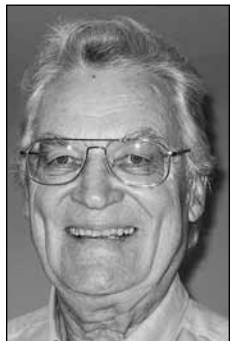
Keep an eye on our own job

Tracking events that we must know

By Ivars Lauersons, Editor

There are always distractions. Depending on your interests, it could be Libya and gas prices; American Idol and March Madness; the latest text message. If you're following American politics there is the federal budget and the federal deficit; there are doomsday scenarios about Social Security; and there is the Wisconsin governor's so far successful move to strip public unions of most of their bargaining power.

Core interests to letter carriers



There are also the basic interests of the letter carrier which deal with pay, job security, health care and retirement. All of these interests are subject to modification and on some of them we may be called on to make our individual and collective voices heard. In issues that Congress tackles we may be asked to write letters, make telephone calls, send emails. Part of our future will be in our own hands.

We are negotiating a new contract next year. We will try to maintain and improve what we already have. We will try for wage increases. The post office has improved its productivity per worker. As any letter carrier can tell you, we are doing more and more work for the same wages. We will try to maintain our cost of living (COLA) to protect us against inflation. And we will try to minimize any percentage increase we pay towards our health care coverage. Any increase in what we pay for health care is an effective reduction in our take home pay.

Contract negotiations unique

The national union has done an excellent job in negotiating our past contracts, and we can expect the same this time. Our negotiating team is well prepared with economic arguments. However, the environment is unique during this Great Recession. We have seen the drop in mail volume and how that has caused loss of routes and possible excessing. We are also preceded by negotiations with the post office by the rural carriers, who have gone to arbitration. And the clerks (APWU) are currently in negotiations. If either of these contracts set some low barriers or ends up in labor concessions, we will have a hard

time getting something substantially better. Be prepared to hear that we are overpaid.

Postmaster not on post office side

Our new postmaster, Patrick Donahoe has continued proposals that would harm the post office. As an interesting note, the retired postmaster was immediately hired as a consultant to the post office at a six figure salary. Donahoe continues to ask for an elimination of the six day delivery to five days, even though the economics of savings have been shown to be overblown, and a number of business organizations have come out in favor of continued six day delivery. It is ironic that on the one hand

Be prepared to hear we're overpaid.

we carriers try to generate business with the "Customer Connect" program with its implicit guarantee of a six day delivery, and at the same time the postmaster is trying to eliminate one day of delivery.

Our national union has anticipated this continual push to eliminate six day delivery and has asked carriers to help show that many, many businesses depend on six days of delivery. The President has supported six day delivery, but this policy must be renewed each year.

Do we want a part-time job

On the surface carriers have always thought fondly of a five day delivery schedule, as in "Great, Saturdays and Sundays off." But we know that the day off may not be a Saturday. It could well be a Wednesday. And we are not prepared to lose the jobs of all our T-6's, one sixth of carriers. Worst of all, and don't think it's impossible, based on what postal management has already said, we could then easily go to a four day delivery. That means letter carriers would have a part-time job, 32 hours.

Downsizing the post office

We have seen reports that Postmaster Donahoe is preparing to cut 30,000 jobs, consolidating administrative units to eliminate up to 7,500 management jobs, and possibly offer targeted early outs. This proposal is called the USPS 2011 Redesign. While we applaud the promise to eliminate excess management jobs, this seems to come with a catch where clerks and letter carriers are harmed. The proposal to shut down a lot of small post offices means less service, as well as fewer jobs. We have yet to hear what individual Congressmen will say when the post office to be eliminated is in their district.

A final announcement is to be made on March 25, 2011, so if you are reading this after this date, you may know what kind of early retirement (VER) is offered, whether there will be a reduction in force (RIF), and who will be affected.

(continued on page 7)

For the hungry and the homeless

2011 Letter Carrier Food Drive, May 14, 2011

It is nearing that time of year again where Letter Carriers all across the nation join together in stamping out hunger. This year many Americans continued to be unemployed and continued losing their homes to foreclosures. The need for food is more urgent than ever. Here at home, we all know someone who is unemployed and struggling to make ends meet. This one day effort helps friends, neighbors and customers in need. Every year our branch supports the cause wholeheartedly, and we will do so again this year.

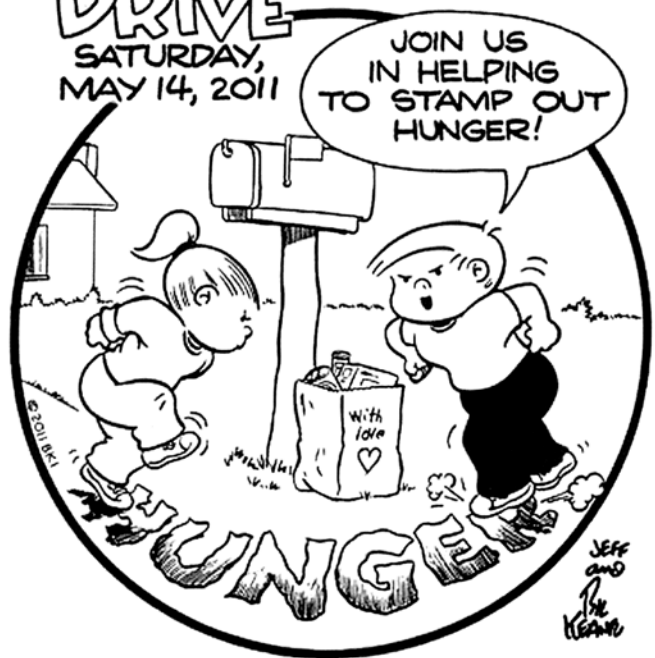
In the current atmosphere of Union Busting Politicians, this is an opportunity to show them what our Union is about. Our Union does not only talk the talk about helping people, we walk the walk and will collect over a million pounds of food across the nation for those who have little or nothing. If you are interested in helping in any way, please call the union office. We encourage and welcome new volunteers.

There is also a children's T-shirt design contest. Winners will be featured in **The Voice** and the winning design will appear on T-shirts for the food drive.

Karen Eshabarr
Executive Vice-President

LETTER CARRIERS'

FOOD DRIVE
SATURDAY,
MAY 14, 2011



PUT YOUR NON-PERISHABLE DONATION IN A BAG BY YOUR MAILBOX. WE'LL DELIVER IT TO A LOCAL FOOD BANK.



NATIONAL PARTNERS



Lauersons *(continued from page 13)*

It amazes me that the post office continues to claim that we are in fiscal trouble and continues to publicize multi million dollar deficits, when the truth is different. The multi billion dollar annual deficit that leads most people to believe the post office is on the brink of bankruptcy is mostly caused by a required annual \$5.5 billion prepayment towards retiree health costs. If we remove this requirement, we find that over a four year period, including the Great Recession, the post office has made a modest profit, in effect broken even, as it is required to do. In the proposed federal budget, a \$4 billion break is included for this year.

Secondly, according to the General Accounting Office the post office in the past has overpaid toward CSRS (civil service) retirement benefits anywhere from \$50 billion to \$75 billion. This money can be used towards the health cost prepayment requirement, but the transfer of money needs Congressional approval. Note, none of the money we are talking about comes from tax money, increases or decreases the national debt, but contributes

greatly to the financial well being of the post office. Of course, in contract negotiations the post office doesn't want to have to emphasize this point.

Letter carrier input

Since Congress is involved in our future, it is important to have members who are aware of and friendly towards letter carrier issues. Both Republicans and Democrats have fit this criterion and have been supported by our political action committee (COLCPE.) The funds for this work, which includes lobbying Congress, does not come from our dues, but from individual contributions. It is easy to contribute to COLCPE from our paychecks and it is an important contribution to our future.

We can see in the current Congress and in a number of states that there is a strong sentiment against public sector unions. Although the post office is self-supporting and uses no taxpayer money, we are likely to be seen as yet another overprivileged union. That is why it is important to vote at state and national levels. And it is important to consider our votes on the basis of our own economic interests, the core issues mentioned earlier. We must all vote in 2012.



Photo by Karen Schuler

Henry Fong retires from Pine Street Station after 25 years of service on January 28, 2011.



Photo by Karen Schuler

Pine Street Station carriers at farewell ceremony for Henry Fong

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Photo by Ron Caluag



Photo: Branch 214 archives

Daly City carrier Emperatriz Fought on her last punch February 8, 2011. She retired after 37 years of service and has been a union member for that long.

Emperatriz, center, celebrating her retirement with from left, Asst. Secretary-Treasurer Jun Buccat, steward Edward Villaflor, President Lili Beaumont, and Field Director Ron Caluag.

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Paying an agency fee

Victory and the first step in dealing with non-members

By Richard Cairo, Visitacion Station, San Francisco

At our branch meeting on February 2, 2011 we passed a resolution unanimously to eliminate the “free ride policy” and have non-members pay an “agency fee.” It works like this: Non-members who refuse to pay their fair share of dues would be forced to pay the equivalent to a charity that the union decides on. At this time our choice is the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

This solution would be easy to implement with the support of a mere 51% of carriers throughout the country. The overwhelming majority of carriers I interviewed are as exhausted with the current policy as I am. Clearly, present policy is discriminating against dues paying members.



Seeking other branches support

I will continue with Branch 214's support to recruit co-sponsors to this resolution at Branch 1280 in Burlingame on March 10, 2011. There will also be representatives from South San Francisco and Peninsula offices down to San Mateo, including Pacifica and Half Moon Bay.

Our first hurdle after that will be to pass the resolution at the State Convention in April. This will put us in a good position to be heard at the National Convention. **We can do this together!**

Personal feelings

Since the beginning of my career I have had a strong demoralizing feeling with our great union's policy to coddle non-members. I mean, let's face it. Here we are, 89% of carriers paying \$765 in dues a year and then you, the 11% skating free, get everything we get for free! Pretty disgusting.

An “agency fee” lets non-members contribute their fair share to a charity instead.

To those who gave me thumbs up at 180 Napoleon, I do appreciate the encouragement. This has been an injustice tolerated too long. The ideas that first came to mind were maybe a bit too drastic. I had thought to cut off non-

members altogether, with no benefits like information, collective bargaining, representation, etc.

Another idea had been to have non members, perhaps, do the right thing and sign a waiver of their benefits. I mean, these jokers do not pay a thing. A fair solution would be to give these individuals a chance to do the right thing. Actually, this would be a fair solution, but I highly doubt that there would be any takers.

Other solutions such as an agency fee

The real deal and answer to our open shop problem is to look at how other unions with open shop have dealt with it. The “agency fee” is how some police, fire depart-

We passed a resolution urging our union to pursue this course.

ments, and teachers deal with it. Rather than trying to change the Taft-Hartley Act, written and passed in 1947, that forces our union to support non-members, we would only be asking for a revision or a small amendment.

If this agency fee idea passes and forces non-members to contribute to charity the equivalent of the \$765 that we pay, I have hope that just maybe some people might decide to give their fair share to the union since they collect all the benefits. We shall find out.

National challenges and challenges to labor

Our country is facing some challenges in the years to come. Labor is no exception. Recently, Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker proposed to scrap most of public employees' bargaining rights. These are the kinds of obstacles lurking out there.

If the cost is the same, maybe the money will go to the union which provides all the services.

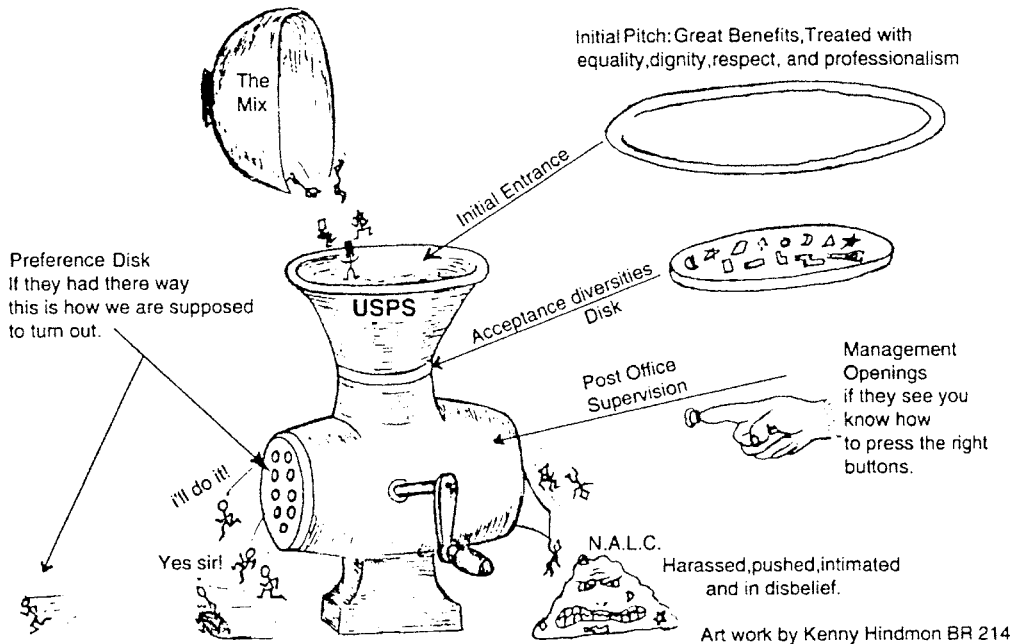
We must come together and support our union with shared sacrifices. There is a better chance to finally put this policy to an end. Many Americans will jump on board with the agency fee idea and support our union for the reform. It is not like we are asking for a bailout or increases in pay. We are asking for the opportunity for each of us to carry our fair share. Public and private corporations are cutting back. Our union is no different. Now, more than ever, we must figure out a fair solution and concentrate on DUES PAYING MEMBERS.

In solidarity.

Email: :Rjcairo@aol.com

CLASSICS

How new PTF's are processed



This cartoon first appeared in the July/August 1998 issue of The Voice. It is one of the series of classic cartoons we reprint from time to time. Ken Hindmon is currently in postal management.

Union dues to maintain benefits

Safeguarding Branch funds

There has always been an ongoing billing to recover dues from some members who have had an injury on the job, discipline, etc. and no longer automatically deduct union dues from their checks.

Our union still pays a per-capita fee of \$8.01 to the national union for each member in a non-pay status who is still on the rolls with the USPS. Some members have returned to their duty assignment but have not paid back their dues. The Secretary-Treasurer sends out a billing to those who owe back dues that are in a non-deduct status to bring the member back to "a member in good standing". A repayment schedule can be arranged.

There are members who are receiving OWCP benefits and some members are working elsewhere that still do not reply to Secretary-Treasurer billings. Those members who do not make an attempt to make arrangements and resolve this matter with Secretary-Treasurer Karen Schuler will be dropped from the union, according to Branch 214 Bylaws and Constitution. Please call Karen

Schuler at 415-362-0214 and do the right thing and pay your bill so members who do pay their dues don't have to carry you any longer.

For those members who don't know what they will lose:

- Access to an officer, loss of Officer representation
- EEO representation
- OWCP representation
- Loss of NALC Health benefits and MBA benefits
- Cannot run for shop steward or become an elected officer
- Loss of right to vote in our union elections
- May not attend union meetings or conventions
- May not attend after-work meetings or any union function
- Will not be entitled to the 2 year Branch 214 calendar
- Will not receive the *Postal Record* or the award winning **Voice**

However, you are entitled to representation by an available steward in the station that you work.

Elected Trustees of San Francisco, CA, Branch 214

- Sheila Gardner
- Roberta Bojo
- Stan Lew

The union network

NALC Branch 214 is now on Facebook groups

By Cathy Simonson, EEO Officer

“Welcome to the NALC Golden Gate Branch 214 Facebook Group. This group was created for NALC members only, anyone found to be a non-member will be removed and blocked from this group.”

Thanks to Ron Caluag, our current webmaster for NALCBayArea.com, we now have our very own Facebook group for Union members only!

Most people have certainly heard of, if not, already joined Facebook by now and it was only a matter of time before our Union kept up with this technology.



If you don't already have an account with Facebook you will have to create one to join the group, but don't worry, it's free. Once you log into your own account you can type in NALC Branch 214 in the search box on top and request to join. You can also join by clicking on the blue Facebook logo on the upper right of the NALCBayArea.com site or emailing NALCBranch214@groups.facebook.com with a request to join. Although the group is public and anyone can request to join or add their friends, this group is meant for “Union members only”, any non-members will be removed and maybe blocked.

Why a Facebook group?

Why did Branch 214 decide to create a FB group? Well as Ron Caluag said, “the NALC (national) already has one, why not us?” I for one love the fact that we can now communicate more directly with other members and share information such as updates, photos, videos, and links to other websites, documents and upcoming events.

We are keeping up with the technology.

Some of the information can be helpful and some can be just for socialization. It's easy to post after you log in, just type information in the empty space and click on “share”. You can upload pictures or links to other

websites the same way by selecting from the share menu “link”, “photo”, “video”, “event” or “doc”. For example, you can post links to important events that can be of interest to other letter carriers, post about what's going

We can now communicate directly with other members.

on in your particular station (without mentioning specific names). Or you can also just share humorous personal photos or videos. You can even chat with other members who happen to be online at the moment by clicking on the bottom right “chat” button. An important thing to note is that although you can post and upload information you should use care and common sense when doing so. “All messages made available as part of this discussion group (including any bulletin boards and chat rooms) and any opinions, advice, statements or other information contained in any messages posted or transmitted by any third party are the responsibility of the author of that message and not of NALC Branch 214.”

Be careful about “privacy” settings.

Proper conduct and privacy

The group administrators reserve the right to delete any information that violates the rules of conduct in the group (found in About Us). Although this is a union-members-only website, no one can guarantee others on Facebook will not gain access to your postings. With that in mind, make sure you have your privacy settings adjusted so that

Our website is no longer forms only.

you share information the way you would like others to access it. To do this you need to go into your account on the top right of FB, then to “Privacy Settings”. From there you can choose your privacy settings and adjust how you would like to share your information.

Join with union colleagues

So join up if you'd like to expand your circle of friends or just drop in once in a while to see if any posts are of interest to you. Who knows what you'll hear from the grapevine. If the notifications get annoying, you can always change your preferences by going into your account settings. To leave the group at anytime, click on “leave group” on the right hand side.

See you on Facebook, or not ;))



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NALC HBP has you covered

New membership numbers are looking good

By Franklin H. Woo, NALC Health Benefit Plan representative

At this time, it seems that the NALC Health Benefit Plan will have another great year for bringing in new members for 2011! The last year's Open Season enrollment figures are pouring in and as of January 30, 2011, the Plan has added 5,428 new members. New membership numbers are still rolling in! Hopefully, the final numbers will be available by the end of March.

I would like to say "thank you" to all of you who have either joined the NALC Health Benefit Plan or have remained on the Plan for 2011! It is because of union members like you that the Plan has grown and will continue to grow in the future. With your support, I am confident that our Union Owned/ Union Operated Plan will remain one of the top rated health benefit plans in the FEHB (Federal Employees Health Benefits) program for all active letter carriers and retirees.



With today's high cost of medical care for yourself and that of your family members plus the way the sluggish economy is going, it is only sensible to belong to the best health plan available for your premium dollars. And, in my mind, that plan is the NALC Health Benefit Plan.

More taxes withheld from retirees

On February 1, 2011, most retirees, including myself, have received \$20 to \$50 less on our annuity payments! Millions of retired federal workers (or their survivors) got a major shock when they checked their

The cost of the NALC Health Plan is always reasonable.

bank statements to be sure the Civil Service annuity payment they had been expecting had been deposited. It had, but ... thanks to the foot-dragging by the lame duck Congress, the retirees were hit with a surprise change in 2011 federal withholding. Although it had nearly two years to act, Congress waited until mid-December, 2010 to decide NOT to extend the Making Work Pay Act stimulus package into 2011. Therefore, the bottom line is: More money was deducted from the retirees' checks. That, coupled with higher health

plan premiums for many, and a second year without a cost of living adjustment, meant reduced take-home payments for most retirees.

What's my point, you may ask? Most recently, a retiree, after finding out that his federal withholding was \$45 higher on his take-home payment and his monthly health plan premium (not NALC HBP) was \$1100, he certainly told me that he regretted the fact that he had not enrolled into the NALC HBP during last year's Open Season! And, he is also paying for his monthly Medicare Part B premium which is near \$100. I asked him, "Did you win the lotto?"

During the open season, change to the better plan.

The NALC Health Benefit Plan continues to design a health plan with all letter carriers and retirees in mind, along with the lowest and affordable premiums possible! Therefore, all letter carriers that are considering retiring in the near future and all current retirees that are not members of the NALC HBP, compare your plan to your union one.

For retirees with the NALC HBP and Medicare Part A & B, except for the low cost co-payments for prescription, they will be covered virtually 100% between the two plans. Now, the choice is yours to make during this year's Open Season in November 2011. Enjoy 2011!

Out tHeRe



Cartoon courtesy Acado, Branch 782, Bakersfield, CA

A political commentary

Joe Tea Party

Joe gets up at 6 a.m. and fills his coffeepot with water to prepare his morning coffee. The water is clean and good because some tree-hugging liberal fought for minimum water-quality standards. With his first swallow of water, he takes his daily medication. His medications are safe to take because some stupid commie liberal fought to ensure their safety and that they work as advertised. All but \$10 of his medications are paid for by his employer's medical plan because some liberal union workers fought their employers for paid medical insurance - now Joe gets it too. He prepares his morning breakfast, bacon and eggs. Joe's bacon is safe to eat because some girly-man liberal fought for laws to regulate the meat packing industry. In the morning shower, Joe reaches for his shampoo. His bottle is properly labeled with each ingredient and its amount in the total contents because some crybaby liberal fought for his right to know what he was putting on his body and how much it contained.

Public transportation

Joe dresses, walks outside and takes a deep breath. The air he breathes is clean because some environmentalist wacko liberal fought for the laws to stop industries from polluting our air. He walks to the subway station for his government-subsidized ride to work. It saves him considerable money in parking and transportation fees because some fancy-pants liberal fought for affordable public transportation, which gives everyone the opportunity to be a contributor.

Joe's deposit to the bank is federally insured by the FDIC.

Employment benefits

Joe begins his work day. He has a good job with excellent pay, medical benefits, retirement, paid holidays and vacation because some lazy liberal union members fought and died for these working standards. Joe's employer pays these standards because Joe's employer doesn't want his employees to call the union. If Joe is hurt on the job or becomes unemployed, he'll get a worker compensation or unemployment check because some stupid liberal didn't think he should lose his home because of his temporary misfortune.

Bank insurance

It's noontime and Joe needs to make a bank deposit so he can pay some bills. Joe's deposit is federally insured by the FDIC because some godless liberal wanted to protect Joe's money from unscrupulous bankers who ruined the banking system before the Great Depression. Joe has to pay his Fannie Mae-underwritten mortgage and his below-market federal student loan because some elitist liberal decided that Joe and the government would be better off if he was educated and earned more money over his lifetime. Joe is home from work.

He has a job with excellent pay, medical benefits, retirement, paid holidays and vacation.

Rural electrification

He plans to visit his father this evening at his farm home in the country. He gets in his car for the drive. His car is among the safest in the world because some America-hating liberal fought for car safety standards. He arrives at his boyhood home. His was the third generation to live in the house financed by Farmers' Home Administration because bankers didn't want to make rural loans. The house didn't have electricity until some big-government liberal stuck his nose where it didn't belong and demanded rural electrification.

Social security

He is happy to see his father, who is now retired. His father lives on Social Security and a union pension because some wine-drinking, cheese-eating liberal made sure he could take care of himself so Joe wouldn't have to.

Talk radio

Joe gets back in his car for the ride home, and turns on a radio talk show. The radio host keeps saying that liberals are bad and conservatives are good. He doesn't mention that the beloved Republicans have fought against every protection and benefit Joe enjoys throughout his day. Joe agrees: "We don't need those big-government liberals ruining our lives! After all, I'm a self-made man who believes everyone should take care of themselves, just like I have."

Originally posted on John Gray's website in 2004

(This is an internet-circulated tongue-in-cheek item. The date posted regarding the origin seems incorrect. The subheads and drop quotes are added.—Ed.)



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April 29–30, 2011 State Convention

The time is approaching for our State Convention in San Diego California. On April 6, 2011, instead of steward training, there will be a mandatory meeting for the Compensable Delegates from 4:30 PM–5:30 PM. The steward training on the night of the Branch meeting has been cancelled. Non-compensable delegates are welcome to attend, but not required. There will be a mailing to the delegates the week of March 21–26, 2011. Watch for this in your mail. For the *compensable Shop Stewards* that are going to training, there will be a class schedule. You can pick one class you wish to attend, the officers will pick the other 2 classes. If you have any special interests let us know. The training is on Thursday, April 28, 2011. It will be in your information packet. If you are unable to make this training date, please let Karen Schuler know ASAP. We look forward to a wonderful convention in San Diego. See you there.

Karen Schuler
Secretary-Treasurer

Branch 214 Meetings

Branch meetings, 7:00 P.M.

March 2, 2011	ILWU Hall, 400 North Point, SF
April 6, 2011	ILWU Hall, 400 North Point, SF
May 4, 2011	ILWU Hall, 400 North Point, SF

Steward meetings, 4:30 P.M.*

March 2, 2011	Union Office, 2310 Mason St., SF
April 6, 2011	Union Office, 2310 Mason St., SF*
May 4, 2011	Union Office, 2310 Mason St., SF

Retiree social meetings, 12:30 P.M.

April 4, 2011	740 Del Monte Ave., South SF
June 6, 2011	740 Del Monte Ave., South SF
August 1, 2011	740 Del Monte Ave., South SF

*April 6 will be a meeting of the Delegates to the State Convention in San Diego. There will be no Stewards' meeting.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Jeffrey Sarmiento (West Portal)

Why a Union?

By Lynda Beigel

One, uno, alef, yi, isa:
A beginning, singlehood.
Unit,
A single thing of any kind
Like a station.
Unite,
To act in concert, as one.
Uniform
Conforming to one rule, mode, or standard, non-differing;
Equable, applying to all alike.
Uniformity
Conforming to one pattern, sameness.
Unify
To cease to be one, to make into a unit, unite.
Universal,
Pertaining to all without exception.
Unification,
A joining of independent elements.
Unity,
Agreement on an issue, equality of individual elements.
Union,
A league, a federation, an association of persons for
common purpose;
The joining of independents:
You are the Union!

ALSO INSIDE:

- **Collective bargaining attacked** —page 3
- **Tracking carrier interests** —page 6
- **Food drive** —page 7
- **Non member issue** —page 10
- **Website and Facebook** —page 12
- **Satire** —page 15