



THE VOICE



OF THE GOLDEN GATE LETTER CARRIERS

BRANCH #214

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS, AFL-CIO

September/October 2010

Award-winning newspaper

Vol. XL, No. 5

NATIONAL CONVENTION ACTIVITIES

- T-shirt sales for MDA
 - Floor debate
 - Workshops



Photo: Ivars Lauersons

Arnold Jones, Corte Madera steward, wearing a food drive T-shirt, urges delegates to buy food drive T-shirts at Branch 214 booth to benefit MDA kids. See page 16.



Photo: Ivars Lauersons

Dave Welsh, at microphone, argues on behalf of resolution condemning Arizona law on immigrants. Tony Gallardo, left, waits to speak. His argument is printed elsewhere in this issue.

PUBLICATION AWARD WINNERS

Branch 214 won two awards at the 2008-2010 Branch Publications competition at the 67th Biennial Convention, Anaheim, California.

The Voice won second place (in a tie with the “New Hampshire Association of Letter Carriers”) for General Excellence for large branches (1,500+ members) and state associations. This award is made possible by the writers, photographers and cartoonists. We thank Edwina Wu, our Associate Editor. And we acknowledge the skilled efforts of Frank Brayton and staff at DC Typography for the polished final look.

A contest for Best Website was held for the first time. Our webpage, www.nalcbayarea.com, won third place among branches of all sizes. Congratulations to web-

master Ron Caluag, Cherry Vargas and Juan Dominguez who were responsible for the creation and modifications of the site. During the workshop, which featured various websites, Branch 214 received a large number of favorable comments from the floor about the layout, information and ease of navigation.

The awards were presented at the “Effective Branch Communications” workshop Monday morning, August 9, 2010 by members of the NALC Communications Dept.

Congratulations also to the “Greater East Bay Branch 1111 News” editor John Jekabson who won an individual award, a third place for Best Photo. Their paper also won Honorable Mention for General Excellence, continuing their string of awards.

Branch 214 notes:

Welcome new stewards: Carlos Pellecer, Zone 9, at Pine Street, San Francisco.

Welcome new alternate stewards: Alfonso Alvarez, Zone 8, at Pine Street, San Francisco.

* * *

Congratulations to President Fred Rolando and all of the resident officers – EVP Timothy O’Malley, VP George Mignosi, Sec-Treasurer Jane Broedel, Asst. Sec-Treasurer Nicole Rhine, Director of City Delivery Lew Drass, Director of Life Insurance Myra Warren, and Director Health Benefit Plan Brian Hellman – who were elected by acclamation at our national convention in Anaheim, California. Special congratulations goes to our national business agent Manny Peralta, elected to national as our new Director of Safety and Health, and to Region One Regional Administrative Assistant Chris Jackson (from Branch 1100), who was also elected by acclamation as our new national business agent. Good luck to all in the upcoming term!

—Lili Beaumont

Branch 214 Hero

180 Napoleon Street/Stonestown Station Carrier Al Jew was recognized in the Summer 2010 issue of “Pacific Area Update” for coming to the aid of a disabled customer on his route who fell as he delivered the mail to her. Al has been a carrier for 31 years and a member of Branch 214. Branch 214 commends Al for his efforts.

1,000,000 Mile Safe Driver Honorees

San Francisco District Branch 214 Carriers

Daly City

Rosario Altura Jr
Ruben Vega
Amy Alexander

Redwood City

Ku In
Brian Yan

Collections

Enrique Marasigan
Romero Malan

Mendell

Edgardo Santos

Townsend

Leonard Beck
Richard Steinkamp

Pine Station

Ellwyn Stribling
Gregory Isom
Anthony Johnson
Kong Ho

Napoleon

Joseph McAndrew
Michael Cronin
Octavio Deleon
Kin Luk

Parkside

Tommy Kwan
Paul Tompanos
Eddie Tang

Corte Madera

David Slopak

Mill Valley

Damian Casalnuovo
David Andreis
David Adams

Novato

Michael Casey
Brian Jordan

San Rafael

Thomas Bigone
Carol Ann Maggio
Eric Jones

Branch Officers

Lili Beaumont President
Karen Eshabarr Executive Vice-President
Bill Thornton Vice-President
Karen Schuler Secretary-Treasurer
Ron Caluag Field Director
Jun Buccat Assistant Secretary-Treasurer
Charles Gonzalez Sergeant-at-Arms
Franklin Woo NALC Health Benefits
Norma Leonardo Safety and Health
Cathy Simonson EEO Officer
Mike Callahan MBA representative
Kim Truong Director of Organization
Roberta Bojo Trustee
Sheila Gardner Trustee
Stanley Lew Trustee

Voice Staff

Ivars Lauersons Editor
Edwina Wu Associate Editor
Gerry Lee Graphics

Permission is given to trade union and labor publications to copy or reproduce any article contained in this publication, providing appropriate credit is given. Permission to others must be granted in writing by the Voice Editor or Branch President. Opinions expressed by contributors are their own, and not necessarily those of Branch 214. If possible, all articles and letters to the editor should be submitted on disk in a standard word processing program with a hard copy included. Articles typewritten or written may also be submitted.

GOLDEN GATE BRANCH
2310 Mason St., 3rd Floor, San Francisco, CA 94133
Phone: (415) 362-0214
WEB page:
<http://www.nalcbayarea.com>
Office hours: 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday

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.

T.V. 214 Schedule

SAN FRANCISCO, AT&T Cable Channel 29:
Every third Sunday of the month at 7:00 p.m.
September 19, 2010; October 17, 2010;
November 21, 2010.

Safety issues

Suicide and prevention

By Norma Leonardo, Safety and Health Officer

I have been a Safety and Health officer for about 9 months. I have just attended several seminars on safety issues. We were told that our number one cause of death is in transportation, meaning driving drunk (DUI), but today most accidents occur because of distractions such as talking on a cell phone while driving and texting on a cell phone. "Safety means you making right decisions."

There are other issues which we don't notice and affect all of us. On August 13, 2010 while I was at my last day of the National Convention in Anaheim, I attended a seminar about safety and the topic was "Suicide Prevention: Saving Lives One Community at a Time". Did you

Take all talk of suicide seriously.

know that suicide is considered to be the second leading cause of death among college students and for people aged 24 – 34 and the fourth leading cause of death for all adults between the ages of 18 and 65. This is shocking! And this applies to active letter carriers as well. The facts are: approximately 33,000 people commit suicide every year; this means one person every 15.8 minutes.

Warning signs

The EAP (Employee Assistance Program) is aware of 25 suicides in 2009, but this number is probably lower than the actual amount, because not all are reported. Many people who die by suicide have given definite warnings to family and friends or co-workers of their intentions. Most suicidal people are undecided

Engage them by asking questions.

about living or dying. A part of them wants to live, however death seems like the only way out of their pain and suffering. Men complete suicide more often than women. However, women attempt suicide three times more often than men.

Risk factors

The most common emotional risk factors resulting in suicide are: depression, drugs/

alcohol abuse, and/or dependence. Some other risk factors are Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, eating disorders, chronic physical pain, being separated, widowed or divorced, living alone and isolated.

All of these factors can be treated and a person can help prevent suicide by showing that you care. Take all talk of suicide seriously, listen to them carefully and

Reassure the person that help is available.

repeat what you hear. Secondly, engage them by asking questions such as "are you thinking about suicide, what thoughts or plans do you have?" and ask about any treatment they are in with a therapist or doctor and ask about their medications. Thirdly, reassure the person that help is available and that you will help them get help and find other people in their lives who can help.

Our tasks

We can help save lives. If you know of anyone at work or anywhere else, we can tell them of our program such as EAP (Employee Assistance Program). This program is available to us, family members, and friends. 1-800-EAP-4-YOU or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK, www.suicideprevention/lifeline.org or in a crisis, call 911.

Remember: Safety is not an expense; safety is an investment for all of us!



Photo by Ivans Lauersons

Norma Leonardo on Convention floor. From left, Rafael Rodriguez, Danny Uriiaga.

*Debate at the NALC National Convention
on Arizona's SB1070 Law*

To oppose racial profiling is to build worker solidarity

By Dave Welsh

This year Arizona passed a law legalizing racial profiling, and making it a crime if you don't have your papers with you everywhere you go. This law – SB 1070 - gave the police broad powers to racially profile, harass and detain people – if the arresting officer takes one look at you and even SUSPECTS you might be here without papers. And believe me, they're not looking to round up and deport undocumented immigrants from Europe!

Immediately the mayors of Phoenix, San Francisco, Los Angeles and dozens of other cities denounced the bill. Arizona Congressman Raul Grijalva, the AFL CIO, the Phoenix Suns basketball team and the Major League Baseball Players Association all denounced it. Giant labor unions like the SEIU and United Food & Commercial Workers condemned the law, seeing that down the road, many thousands of their own union members, in many states, could be profiled, harassed and fired from their jobs.



A million people marched on May Day in over 100 cities—against this law. On May 29th, 200,000 people marched in Phoenix for four hours in the 110 degree sun—mostly families with children carrying homemade signs, against this law. I was there, with my son, and I heard AFL CIO President Richard Trumka condemn SB

Our freedoms are being chipped away.

1070 as “a racial profiling law.” On July 29th, the day the law went into effect, militant demonstrations including civil disobedience took place in the Phoenix area against the racist sheriff Joe Arpaio, as well as in Tucson and other parts of the state.

In response to this storm of protest, a federal judge ruled against much of the SB 1070 law. But this is only a temporary court order. This and other racially divisive laws need to be repealed outright! – before the contagion spreads to the 21 other states that are considering similar laws.

Racial profiling is a Letter Carrier issue – whether it's carried out by police, ICE (immigration cops), or private vigilantes. A few years ago a Filipino-American letter carrier, Joseph Iletto, was killed in a hate crime while delivering the mail in southern California. A letter carrier delegate to this convention told me his own grand-nephew was visiting Arizona, minding his own business when police stopped and asked for his papers – making this **13-year-old boy feel like a criminal in his own country.**

Racial profiling is a Civil Liberties issue. Our freedoms are being chipped away at, little by little. They gave us the so-called War on Drugs, and what did we get? – an epidemic of stop-and-frisks by police in many cities, and the shuttling of so many unemployed youth

The unions must rise to the defense of any sector of the working class that's under attack.

into the prison system. They gave us the so-called War on Terror, and what did we get? – the Patriot Act and the surveillance society. Now it's the War on Immigrants, and they're talking about a National I.D. card. Police sweeps, checkpoints and workplace raids are proliferating, often far from the Mexican border – further eroding our most cherished rights and values.

Racial profiling is a Labor issue. AFL-CIO President Trumka said in Phoenix the labor movement had to fight for all workers – whether they were born here or came here from somewhere else, “whether they are documented or undocumented.” He said, “When any group of workers can be threatened with deportation if they dare to organize or speak out against abuse – every worker suffers.” Trumka said that **“the problem is that privileged and powerful people are using the same dirty tricks of division...to make people blame [the immigrant community].”**

In this time of severe economic crisis, when employers are laying off, speeding up and trying to squeeze more and more profit from their workers – while their bought-and-paid-for politicians are working overtime trying to pit one group of workers against another – **unions and all workers must rise to the defense of any sector of the working class that is under attack, as immigrant workers are today, so that the working class can be united in our struggle with these powerful adversaries.**

That is why the NALC should join the AFL-CIO and unions across the country in denouncing SB 1070 and other racially divisive laws being pushed by anti-Labor forces nationwide, and demanding their repeal.

(See other arguments on the resolution to oppose the Arizona law on the next page.)

Statement in opposition to the Council's recommendation of disapproval.

Mr. President, members of the Executive Council, and fellow convention delegates, it is my honor and privilege to speak in opposition to the Council's recommendation of disapproval of General Resolution number 6.

I speak in opposition not only as a letter carrier of Hispanic decent, but also as an American citizen. About a month ago, one of my fellow union members decided to take three weeks of well-deserved annual leave to visit her relatives in the great Lone Star State of Texas. She decided that she would drive herself and her mother to Texas,

One of my fellow union members was stopped in Arizona and asked for proof of citizenship.

and the route that she planned to take took her through the beautiful Grand Canyon State of Arizona. Unfortunately, this is where the time that she took off from work—a time that should have been a pleasurable time spent with family—took an ugly turn. While driving through the state of Arizona, she was stopped by the local law enforcement agency and told that she needed to produce proof of legal citizenship. Fortunately she had the foresight to pack her U.S. passport, and upon reviewing the document the officer let her go without citing her with any infraction. I find this abuse of authority particularly offensive due to the fact that this piece of legislation gives law enforcement agencies the right to stop and question a legal citizen's immigration status based solely on their ethnicity, or the color of their skin. And this is racial profiling, pure and simple.

Not only is this unjust and divisive law offensive to me as a Hispanic American, it should be offensive to any American who cares about the rights that have made our great country the bastion of freedom that it is. Anyone who does not see a problem with a law that discriminates so openly has obviously become all too comfortable with their Americanism. These individuals should remember that their parents and grandparents were at one time

accused of taking away jobs from Americans, and ridiculed for their broken English.

We have had leaders of trade organizations from European countries speak to our delegates about the rights and privileges that are basic and fundamental. These rights include dignity and respect, and we praise them for standing with us in our battle to preserve these rights for all citizens. However, not one of these European citizens would be stopped and questioned in regard to their immigration status if they were walking down the streets of Arizona, or any other state, because they don't fit the profile.

I urge every delegate to think long and hard on this issue, and to not let this divisive and offensive law harm your friends, family and coworkers.

Charles Gonzalez, Branch 214, San Francisco, CA



Photo by Ivars Lauersons

Charles Gonzalez, third from left, with Franklin and Connie Woo, outside the Anaheim Convention Center.



Photo by Ivars Lauersons

View from floor, as 7253 delegates listen to National President Fred Rolando presiding over convention.

A number of speakers did not get a chance to address the convention when the question was called after a few speakers. Below is an argument by Tony Gallardo.

I rise in opposition to the recommendation of disapproval issued by the Executive Council.

SB 1070 is wrong headed. It exploits and encourages fear and hate.

It reminds me of something that happened to my father when I was a kid.

My dad was a kid in Spain during and after the Spanish Civil War. My mom's parents were born in the same village as my father, but they emigrated to the United States, New Jersey actually, before the war broke out.

My mom was born in the United States. When my dad married my mom, he emigrated and became an American citizen.

On one of our family visits back to Spain, a couple of Guardia Civil (that's Spain's version of State Police)

We must stop wrongheaded laws the minute they show up.

pulled him over. One Guardia asked to see his papers. He handed my father's American passport to the other Guardia, turned back to my father and asked to see his papers. Without his passport, my father was arrested and disappeared.

Lucky for me, my grandfather still had good connections with the Franco regime and my father was released. I was 5 years old.

Things changed. Spain is now one of the most progressive and democratic countries in the world. People remember stories like mine and defend their freedom vigorously.



Photo by Ivars Lauersons

Mike Callahan argues for resolutions affecting PTR work.

Well, not everyone, but a strong and vocal majority.

I still have older relatives that fondly remember Franco and fascism. They have a derisive word to describe me, "Sindicalista".

I and a younger cousin use the word with pride. It means union activist. And we don't disappear today.

Fascism can happen anywhere. To prevent fascism, you have to be able to recognize its seeds.

Whenever decisions are made out of fear or hate, when we scapegoat people who look or sound different, these decisions are wrong, and we have to say "No" loud and clear, every time. We must stop these wrong headed laws the minute they show up, and stop the oppression of the scapegoat.

We can't always count on an Obama in the White House, nor can we afford to assume that a Supreme Court will always rule wisely.

I am reminded of two sayings that I have found to be true.

The first is that the price of freedom is eternal vigilance.

The second is that for evil to triumph all that it takes is for good people to do nothing.

Sisters and brothers, I urge you to vote now to overturn the recommendation of the Executive Committee.

Thank you.

Tony Gallardo, Branch 214, San Francisco

Betty Nash of Branch 82, Oregon, spoke in favor of the resolution, and sent us a copy of her speech supporting the Branch 214 resolution.

To: Dave Welsh

From Betty Nash/Branch 82

Re: Support of Resolution #6

The National Association of Letter Carriers is a well respected Union, and they should not remain silent on this issue. This is a Letter Carrier issue. Recently in Portland, Oregon a City Letter Carrier, in uniform, on the clock was questioned by a customer, "Are you legal? Do you have papers?"

I know that if I were walking in Arizona, I would be stopped and questioned. We need to stand up and say we won't accept this kind of treatment for anybody.

When good people remain silent, divisive laws such as this empower bigots to act on their racist views. This is not a social issue, this is a civil rights issue. We need to stand up for all Carriers and all citizens

Doing nothing is easy. Standing up for what you believe in takes courage and strength. I ask this membership to overturn the committee's recommendation.

Beatrice Nash, Letter Carrier and Convention Delegate, Portland, Oregon Branch 82

Labor Day

Not much to celebrate?

By Bill Thornton, Vice-President

While Labor Day is considered a celebration of labor, the labor movement and those who have contributed, any realistic assessment is that things are not good.

At the risk of sounding unpatriotic, America seriously lags behind other industrialized countries in many indices of well being.

State of American labor

The percentage of unionization is only 12% today. It was 20% in 1983.

But in a sense it's even worse. There are more union members in the public sector than private sector even though there are 5 times as many private sector workers as public. So there are obviously problems organizing the private sector, which of course is to a great extent part of globalization.



The German recovery: While many credit the German economic recovery to frugality, Nobel Prize winning economist Paul Krugman has pointed out that Germany didn't have a housing bubble, used a big stimulus and that the typical European social safety net and strong unions have prevented the unemployment debacle America has had.

Democratic Party as part of problem

The repeal of Glass Steagall Act happened under the Clinton administration and laid the groundwork for the great recession of 2008. (Many Clinton people are prominent in Obama administration).

Ties to Goldman Sachs and AIG bailout. AIG going under was a reportedly a threat to Goldman. Then there are the Democratic Party ties to Goldman Sachs (the Obama administration is full of Goldman people, including Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner and Henry Paulson, the administrator of the bailout. This may answer why Wall Street was bailed out and not needy homeowners.

We were told the bailout was necessary by some of the same people that caused the problem. Meanwhile, there is the reported sabotaging of the progressive Elizabeth Warren as head of the new Consumer Agency by among others, Rahm Emanuel.

Whatever happened to Employee Free Choice?

Given the other stuff that Obama and the Democrats have to deal with, it is understandable that it would be on the back burner for a time. But how long? A union-

ized America would go a long way to resolving many economic issues, even including issues surrounding immigration.

2010 Congressional election

Democrats could lose 40 to 60 seats and control of Congress. Does it matter? Of course. Despite the fact that labor's dependence on the Democratic Party has been inadequate, it is clear that the Republican alternative is worse. 8 years of Reagan resulted in a terrible redistribution of wealth to the higher incomes. One wonders what people are thinking, showering praise on a semi-literate Palin. But we should be careful. People initially thought Reagan couldn't be elected.

People laughed at Reagan. But in the debates with Carter, after a long reasoned explanation by the beleaguered Carter, Reagan would reply, "There you go again" and people would be in awe of how wonderful Reagan was. (Like an uproarious Tea Party approval of a Palin wink.)

Irrationality is almost a given. The thought of somebody like Sharron Angle beating Harry Reid in Nevada is almost beyond comprehension.

Nativism and its history

In times of economic downturns people sometimes blame people that "are different": immigrants, Catholics, Jews, and Mormons. It's a long list.

The Know Nothing movement of the 19th century scapegoated Catholics, accusing them of helping the pope take possession of parts of America.

Similarly, Jews were and continue to be scapegoated, significant portions of the country blaming Jews for the financial crisis.

Craziness abounds, including assertions that Obama is a Muslim and is not born in the US. Some people love this stuff and it continues. It's the silly season but it can have terrible effects on elections.

There is the temptation for people to forget their real interests, particularly economic, and vote their emotions on some weird issues. Republicans will appeal irrationally to voters with hot button issues like the Arizona border and the proposed mosque in NYC.

Reagan Democrats helped Reagan get elected. It's a dangerous time. The Democrats, even with their divided loyalties (Goldman etc.), blue dog Democrats, and progressive disappointments with the Obama administration, remain a far better alternative.

The Branch 214 resolution against the Arizona law was shot down at the NALC convention. And many in the NALC regard this kind of a resolution condemning the Arizona law as not relevant to letter carrier interests and divisive. But the Branch resolution continues a long proud 214 history of taking principled if unpopular stands. It had to be done.

Last Punch for Dan Price



Photo: Nery Montano



Photo: Nery Montano

Norma Leonardo and Bill Thornton honoring NALC retiree Dan Price by presenting him with a cap, a check and an outstanding member certificate.

Last punch at Station "G" for carrier Dan Price, route 1427. We'll miss him. He worked 39 years for the U.S. postal service. Dan retired on June 31, 2010.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Willy Tatlonghari (180 Napoleon)

IN MEMORIAM

Maurice Adjuria (62 year member)
Wallace Curtis (58 year member)

Branch 214 Meetings

Branch meetings, 7:00 P.M.

October 6, 2010 ILWU Hall, 400 North Point, SF
November 3, 2010 ILWU Hall, 400 North Point, SF
December 1, 2010 ILWU Hall, 400 North Point, SF

Steward meetings, 4:30 P.M.

October 6, 2010 Union Office, 2310 Mason St., SF
November 3, 2010 Union Office, 2310 Mason St., SF
December 1, 2010 Union Office, 2310 Mason St., SF

Retiree social meetings, 12:30 P.M.

October 4, 2010 740 Del Monte Ave., South SF
December 6, 2010 740 Del Monte Ave., South SF
February 7, 2011 740 Del Monte Ave., South SF

Branch 214 Delegates for the National Convention Anaheim, CA August 9-13, 2010

John Beaumont <i>(CSALC President)</i>	Arnold Jones	Vickie Sawicki
Lili Beaumont	Kaming Lau	Karen Schuler
Roberta Bojo	Ivars Lauersons	Cathy Simonson
Jun Buccat	Norma Leonardo	Eduardo Sobalvarro
Mike Callahan	Gwen Lew	Andrew Taylor
Ghan-Gee Chang	Stan Lew	Bill Thornton
Ollie Cruz	Don Limin	Arnold Tiletile <i>(non-compensable delegate)</i>
Simon Dang	Bradford Louis	Kim Truong
Karen Eshabarr	David Mabalatan	Bobbie Turner
Ray Fong	Steve McCaffree	Art Ubungen
Tony Gallardo	Herb Mitchell	Dennis Urtiaga
Sheila Gardner	Alex Munguia	Dave Welsh
Larry Gerigk	Eldridge Pooler	Franklin Woo
Charles Gonzalez	Rudy Rimando	
Luis Herrera	Rafael Rodriguez	

BRANCH 214 DELEGATES AT THE NATIONAL CONVENTION



Photo by Ivars Lauersons

Delegates from Branch 214 at national convention. Delegates not shown were attending to other convention business. A complete list of delegates is on page 8.



Photo by Ivars Lauersons

Luis Herrera, foreground, taking notes during convention session. Behind him on left, Franklin Woo, on right, Bill Thornton.



Photo by Ivars Lauersons

Brad Louis, Pine Street steward, speaks from floor at national convention.

A continuing irritant

No free rides

By Rich Cairo, 180 Napoleon Carrier

Topic: The problem of non-member Letter Carriers receiving the same benefits as paying members! This is a follow up to an article from the July/August 2009 Voice.

To my Brothers and Sisters who not only carry the US MAIL, but also pay their fair share of dues at Branch 214:

Before I begin, I would like to emphasize that I don't mean to offend anyone and this is just my opinion on a policy I feel to be an intolerable injustice that divides us right at the frontline, on the workroom floor. Management feeds on this division and it shows a great weakness in our great Union. My goal is to make our Union stronger by bringing attention to a policy that should have been eliminated decades earlier. I will show you some interesting statistics and other Union solutions that make sense. Here we go!



Changing opinion on non-members

There was a time in the past when I felt that all non-member letter carriers were selfish and miserly. After speaking to some of these non-members, it seems that some felt they had a legitimate complaint with how they were mistreated or misrepresented in the past. They had a grievance gone wrong, a misunderstanding with a Union official or steward. They were dissatisfied with the service while others felt they didn't need the Union and even went as far as expressing their discontent with a hand

An intolerable injustice divides us on the workroom floor.

gesture – screw the Union! In their minds, they could justify not paying dues; however, it is never justified for working letter carriers whose wages, benefits, and rights are protected by a Union contract.

Free benefits problem

The non-members certainly don't refund to the Union their share of any benefit they receive (including ones they never think of; such as the Union's campaigns over the years to save the Postal Service and postal jobs). Also,

the Union has democratic procedures that are in place for elections for all officers and station shop stewards, meetings that any member can come to and raise issues in front of his/her fellow carriers, publications that allow members to get their views known by the rest of the membership. These are all ways of correcting what the Union might have done wrong.

I feel that what makes our situation so special with our Union and our great country is the freedom to make a choice. Just like with any other choice, there is the reality of consequences; please continue reading the following analogies:

1. In 2009, I used car insurance for an example. If one chose to operate his car without insurance and was involved in an accident with injuries, not only would

Non-members don't refund their share of benefits gained by the union.

it be illegal but they would also be liable for expenses. Rightfully so! Whatever his logic was, he chose to take a shortcut to save a few bucks to beat the system, or maybe it was ignorance. Whatever the reason was, he put himself in a life-threatening situation. If the insurance company came to his aid, not only would it be a foolish and an impossible business practice, it would discriminate against the drivers who paid their premiums. Union dues are very similar.

2. Another example, the welfare system, which was originally designed to help those going through hardship. However, this system is always accustomed to change. Although there are legitimate recipients of welfare, there are those who take advantage of the system and make a living by it. Non-member carriers can be compared to those who take advantage of paying members. Just as taxpayers should not have to front the bill indefinitely, Union paying members should not have to pay for the benefits of non-member carriers. **The current policy clearly discriminates against those who pay their Union dues.**

Suggested consequences

I propose tough and swift consequences for non-member carriers. After a brief amnesty period (about 30 days), these individuals should be cut off from receiving any benefits the Union provides to paying members. This would include collective bargaining and representation at any level. Another area would be the Union's website. There should be an access code. Currently anyone can download very important and current information on topics like retirement, health care insurance, injury compensation, scholarships, and other numerous essentials. The "something for nothing" concept has got to go!

(continued on page 11)

Cairo (continued from page 10)

Current numbers at 180 Napoleon in the city of San Francisco: There are a total of 19 carriers who choose not to pay their dues. This equals \$14,541.84 per year in lost revenue. Which computes as \$63.78 multiplied by 12, equals \$765.36, then multiplied by 19, and totals \$14,541.84. There is one carrier in San Francisco who hasn't paid dues in twenty years. This carrier has saved over \$15,300 in dues while riding on our backs. Something does not sound right here?!

In the entire city of San Francisco, there are 122 non-paying members. This equals \$24,519.56 in lost revenue for national, \$1,237.08 lost revenue for the state, and \$75,398.44 for our beloved local Branch 214.

We're talking real money

However you look at it, this is a lot of money! Just think of the ways the Union could have invested this money to benefit all of us? The money could have been used for more education programs and grievance classes to help better prepare our stewards. We could have purchased faster computers and other devices needed to keep pace with management. In 3.6 years, we could have even paid off our mortgage of \$261,887.60 on the Union's building. **It is pretty amazing the strength we could have if every single carrier paid his/her fair share!**

Hardship argument

Some individuals claim they just cannot afford to pay their dues. I can personally relate to these circumstances. The great recession has been brutal for most of us with

If you had no car insurance, would you expect the insurance company to help you?

job loss, cut-backs, work furloughs, and property values in San Francisco that dropped by 25%-30% or more. As our former President, Richard Becker, would say, "All letter carriers should join the Union and we should all pay our fair share even if it means sacrifice." As I would say whether it's bagging our lunches, drinking less coffee, or buying fewer lotto tickets, we must all pay our fair share because we all benefit.

I believe that if a non-member can show a verifiable hardship, perhaps the Union can offer a discount or even a waiver to the select few who can demonstrate and prove a hardship. A hardship applicant would have to submit an application to the Union. The Union would appoint a committee to review each case individually. Of course, each case would be fairly reviewed without any guarantees, just consideration. The application would be considered much like a modification (loan) or short sale on a home.

Here is my favorite part...possible solutions that make sense!

In my study, I interviewed other open shop Unions (meaning that joining is voluntary and not mandatory) and the problems associated with nonpaying members. Here is what I found:

Example #1: 3 independent police departments
City of Belmont: 96% of the officers pay their dues.
City of Concord: 100%
City of San Francisco: 87%

Nonpaying member consequences: No legal representation and expenses on collective bargaining (total cost divided among employees – nonpaying officers receive a bill).

Example #2: ATT Communications
Subs under contract.

Everyone pays their fair share with no exceptions. However, members have the option to receive a refund for any political contributions.

Example #3: my favorite

San Francisco Park and Recreation Dept. Union members who choose not to pay their dues must pay the equivalent to a charity that is on a list that the Union has approved beforehand.

Example #4: Another one of my favorites
CTA – California Teachers' Association

This is specifically the San Jose school district. Teachers must donate 100% of the equivalent of their dues to a pre-approved Union charity.

In short, if one chooses to continue not paying his/her dues after a brief amnesty, there should be a reinstatement fee passed by the entire Union body, a fairly sizable amount. In this example, it's unfortunate, but there will be some left-behind-to-hang who chose to put themselves into a corner. Since most of us truly enjoy helping people, it won't be easy to witness someone in need, but we'll get over it.

In conclusion, I don't like the idea of posting the names of nonpaying individuals for all to see (we all know who they are anyway). The current policy alienates all of us and management feeds off our weakness and division right on the frontline.

Let's do something about it! I welcome your ideas, concerns, encouragement, and criticism too. I'd like to hear from you.

For Union solidarity and no freeloaders.

Richard Cairo

rjcairo@aol.com

(Author's note: All information is deemed likely to be correct and obtained by reliable sources, but it cannot be guaranteed.)

Valhalla

Norway's society as a model for our future

By Roland Garshol, Past President Branch 214

Well, my brothers and sisters, my head is swimming with things I think I need to say and you might be relieved that I really don't have anything to say about the Post Office. After all, until they stop running the PO like the Titanic and flush the current management staff down the toilet like they were drugs and the cops are knocking at the door, working postal employees will continue to be in deep yogurt.

I want you all to know that since I retired I have not been sitting around idly. No, I found Facebook. Yes, I will admit that Facebook is mostly an enormous waste of my time, but by using it I have found a couple dozen cousins

Until they flush current management down the toilet, postal employees will continue to be in deep yogurt.

in Norway. Recently one came to the USA on vacation with her boyfriend and she took up my offer to tour them around what we, as members of Branch 214, all know to be one of the most beautiful cities in the world, San Francisco.

A US vacation

As my wife and I drove them around we took the opportunity to try and figure out how two twenty-somethings could afford a 4 week USA vacation that included San Francisco, New York, Las Vegas and Los Angeles. They frosted their vacation cake with an eight-day stay in Maui. Neither Sue nor I could imagine how these young kids could possibly afford such an adventure. The answers left me feeling a little chagrined concerning how my country is run and slightly embarrassed to find out that the country I call home is doing a second rate job taking care of its citizenry. I have done a little research since my cousin left for Maui and discovered many countries in Europe (Scandinavia in particular) really knew how to take care of their folks. And they do it with a purpose. They want to protect their country by keeping the middle class strong.

Health care and retirement

When Norwegians pick up their paychecks there are no deductions for health care or retirement. Could you

imagine what your paycheck might look like if you got your retirement and your medical care fully paid for by the government? But why stop there? How about every working person in Norway getting at least 5 weeks paid vacation? Or how about finding out that instead of having to pay \$15,000 to \$20,000 dollars a year for a college education like our kids, in Norway that is also free. So it suddenly didn't seem so unthinkable that these youngsters were over here having the times of their lives.

Two twenty-somethings from Norway could afford a four week U.S. vacation.

They have no medical expenses, student loans and they know that they will have a decent retirement that they do not have to contribute to. If you lose your job, the average worker in the United States typically exhausts their unemployment benefits in six months. There are many countries in Europe where unemployment benefits continue for two to three years and a few countries keep these benefits flowing for up to five years.

College tuition and student loans

My kids, who are slightly older than these visiting kids, are still paying college loans. My son's retirement is comprised of 401k's and whatever he saves up. A recent Kaiser Family Foundation study found that an employer-provided family health plan costs nearly \$4000 per year, up 14% from last year. Medical is definitely a monthly expense for my son and his wife. My daughter who just joined the Peace Corps was unable to afford monthly health care. I suppose that when she returns from Togo, West Africa the US system here will seem better, by

Some European governments protect their country by keeping the middle class strong.

comparison, but in most European countries health care is every bit as good as in the USA and it's free!

My kids get a couple of weeks paid vacation but nowhere near the 5 weeks in Norway. The final bit of information that really astounded me was that a Norwegian mother gets to take one year of paid maternity leave. My daughter-in-law is returning to work after a three month stay at home. Since I began putting down these thoughts, I found out that Sweden provides 36 months paid maternity or paternity leave per child. With a couple of kids and a little family planning a Swedish parent could have a six, nine or twelve year paid vacation!

(continued on page 13)

Garshol (continued from page 12)

Factual and nonbiased

Before I wrap this up and tell you where I am going with this, our editor demands that the information here be factual and nonbiased. The problem is that I am a little lazy so what needs to be said at this point is that there are a number of countries in Europe that are not doing as good as most of the Scandinavian countries. The economies of Greece, Portugal and, to a slightly lesser extent Spain and Ireland, are in the dumpster and those places are being forced to cut back the benefits they provide their citizens. But I also read an article lately that stated that a college educated man or woman who made the

In Norwegian paychecks there are no deductions for health care or retirement.

equivalent salary to a college educated man or woman in the USA would economically be far ahead in Europe with the combination of paid education and the medical and social benefits that are bestowed on them by their respective governments.



Photo: Roland Garshol archives

From left, Roland Garshol, Sue Garshol, Elin Brungot and Geir Tildahl at the Buffalo enclosure at Golden Gate Park.

Sadness and hope

This is where I become saddened as a parent, and now a grandparent, and wonder why we can't do more for the citizens of this country. I am as proud as anyone to live in the USA. I love my country. Although I was not

As a parent and grandparent, I wonder why we can't do more for the citizens of this country.

one of them, there are many career military personnel in my family tree. But when I read that kids in Asia and Europe are going to school for 225 days a year, on average, while here in the USA students are down to 175 days a year because of a lack of funding, I begin to question America's priorities. I begin to wonder, can we really afford to continue being the world's sheriff with military bases in 40 countries around the world? Where would we be, as a nation if we invested that money in our children instead? Are we going broke and mortgaging our future by cleaning up messes abroad while things slip away at home?

Authors are beginning to write books about how America is slipping into "third world status" and if one were to Google "America Third World" they would find plenty of reading material. I too, believe America is slipping and it is happening because, as a country Americans are not looking at the examples being set in Scandinavia and elsewhere, where a serious effort is under way to keep their countries strong by investing in their people and in turn protecting their middle class citizenry. Shouldn't we be doing more for our own future?

T-shirts (continued from page 16)

ing for items to raffle off at the Bowlathon, if you can't participate.

Covering the shifts

I would like to personally thank all the delegates that worked the booth;

Lili Beaumont, Karen Schuler, Roberta Bojo, Larry Gerigk, Karen Eshabarr, Kim Truong, Ray Fong, Stan Lew, Kaming Lau, Sheila Gardner, Jun Buccat, Arnold Tiletile, Rudy Rimando, Art Ubungen, Ghan-Gee Chang, Charles Gonzalez, Norma Leonardo, Rafael Rodriguez, Alex Munguia, Dennis Urutiaga, Cathy Simonson, Tony Gallardo, Arnold Jones, Vicki Sawicki, Simon Dang, Don Limin, David Mabalatan, Bobbi Turner, Ollie Cruz, Gwen Lew, Luis Herrera, Steve McCaffree, Bill Thornton, Andrew Taylor, and Robert Madrid, the President of Branch 1427.

Karen Schuler
Secretary-Treasurer

A brief history

Gift to America

By Mike Williamson, Retired San Rafael Carrier

There is a little-known tradition in America. There's no profit in this tradition, which is one reason so few follow it. Most of those who do follow it will never become famous, which is another reason to avoid the practice. In fact, pretty much the only reason ever given for following this tradition is that it's the right thing to do, which makes it a pretty crazy tradition.

The tradition is simple. Some people believe that when they have a completely original idea or invention, that the idea should belong to everyone. These people will refuse to enforce patents and copyrights, regardless of how clear and uncontested their rights are. In America, most of these people take the view that their inspiration is a gift from God, and should be shared with everyone. I take a different view. I think that anyone should have a right to own the products of their own imaginations. I believe that when someone gives up that right of ownership, that person has given a gift to all of us.



Benjamin Franklin

While most of these gift-givers are never heard of outside of history books, a few do become famous. Among Americans, the most famous follower of this practice is probably Benjamin Franklin. He invented (among other things) a new stove, bifocal glasses, a musical instrument (the glass harmonica), and the lightning rod (which made him world famous). Franklin never applied for a "Royal Monopoly" (the 18th century equivalent of a patent) on any of these inventions, despite being specifically offered that option for the lightning rod. As someone who had gone from sweeping floors to one of the most successful businessmen in America, he felt that he should keep the profits only from his labor – not his inspiration. Letting others use his ideas was one way that Franklin gave back to a society that had let him thrive. But, it's not the only way he gave back.

From poor man to altruistic rich man

Franklin also gave time. For years, having become one of the richest men in America, he worked at public service jobs. Some of these jobs were high profile, such as his job as America's first minister to France, but other jobs were the sort of practical jobs that require lots of work, but don't have terrific titles. For those of us who work for the

U.S. Postal Service, the most important of these would be his 1753 appointment (by the British government) as Deputy Postmaster General for North America. Note the word "Deputy." He did most of the work, and received only a portion of the credit. No part of the system that Franklin created was "inspired." It was just the product

A famous example is Ben Franklin.

of his hard work and organizational skills. Nowadays, Franklin is more famous for his 1775 appointment as Postmaster General of the new (not yet official) United States, but his first real work in creating the American postal system was done 20 years earlier. This has to be one of his greatest contributions to our society. The low-cost system that Franklin's work created became a vital part of the infrastructure of America. It remains so today.

Surviving challenges

Despite numerous alternatives and challenges, the American Post Office has survived, and even thrived, for over 250 years. America's postal service has always been the tested, reliable, method of communicating and shipping. Sometimes it's the primary method – sometimes it's the back-up method. But always, it's the method that everyone trusts and sometimes uses. The Post Office doesn't care that you're not a big business, or a "pre-

Franklin did much hard and practical work as Deputy Postmaster from 1753.

ferred" customer. It is the people's method of communicating.

In one sense, this was Franklin's vision. In another sense it was not. The Postal Service that we see today is not solely Franklin's creation or invention. Franklin did not institute home delivery. He didn't build the first LSM. He never dreamed of anything called "airmail." Each of these improvements to America's postal service (and thousands of others) is the product of some plan or invention of numerous postal employees, most of whom never received any credit or special compensation. Probably, few of those postal workers thought of themselves as following in Franklin's footsteps, but their actions contributed to our infrastructure and well-being just like Franklin's actions.

The unsung individuals

But beyond the various improvements to the service since Franklin, there is the day-to-day planning, innovation, and work done by hundreds of thousands of indi-

(continued on page 15)

October is Breast Cancer Month

In Memory of Sue Kurpinsky and Joan Castro

By Carol Maggio, San Rafael Carrier

About 10 years ago NALC Branch 214 lost our office secretary, Sue Kurpinsky, to breast cancer. Shortly after that I lost my best friend, Joan Castro, also to breast cancer. Both had stage 4 breast cancer and went through all the available treatments to the maximum extent and sadly lost their battles. I think of them often and miss them.

In July 2007 I was diagnosed with breast cancer, fortunately at an extremely early stage. Due to my regular yearly mammogram, they found the breast cancer and because I had been having yearly mammograms they were able to compare the newest mammogram to the previous twelve years of mammogram exams, identifying the changes.



In September 2007 I had a mastectomy and started reconstruction of my left breast. At that time, the surgery removed all the breast cancer and I did not have to complete further treatments. On September 4, 2010, it will be three years that I am cancer free. I decided to wait a while before finishing the reconstruction as I had gone through seven procedures in a nine month period and needed to regroup both mentally and physically. In 2011 the reconstruction will be completed.

Get a Mammogram

October is breast cancer month and being extremely lucky with my experience, I want to encourage every woman to have a mammogram and breast exam done by a doctor yearly and do monthly self exams at home. Breast cancer is not only a physically debilitating disease, it is

Get a mammogram yearly.

also a mentally challenging one and extremely hard on your families. Do some research with your family to see if there is a history of breast cancer. I had three aunts on my dad's side of the family who had breast cancer. Two passed away from the disease and one survived to 93. It was a contributing factor in my getting breast cancer.

Make it easy; plan your mammogram around your birthday or the birthday of a loved one, or a friend you lost to this disease. While a mammogram is usually somewhat

uncomfortable because they squeeze your breasts for the x-ray, it is well worth the short time of pain to make sure you are okay. Fortunately, a reconstructed breast with an implant does not need a mammogram. I only have my mammogram on the other breast and it makes it more important for me to do monthly breast self exams.

Lightening the load

Try to stay away from stress (big factor), eat healthy, get exercise, take vitamins, think positive, laugh a lot. What am I doing now? I'm carrying a route out of the

They caught my breast cancer early and I've been cancer free now for three years.

San Rafael Main Post Office in Kentfield with lots of redwood trees, flora and fauna. I take it one day at a time. I am a breast cancer survivor.

Williamson (continued from page 14)

vidual postal employees over the centuries. These aren't improvements themselves, but they guarantee that all of us benefit from the improvements that have gone before. This is what has given America's postal service its special status. Those hundreds of thousands of people have each chosen to follow in Franklin's footsteps. They have found that it is not necessary to wait for some Franklin-like inspiration. Instead, these postal employees have chosen Franklin's other strategy for giving. Like Franklin, they have chosen to accept some meaningless title and make a profound contribution by providing what some people see

Today each postal employee contributes hard and practical work to help communication.

as a mundane service. Whether a particular postal worker's job is sorting or delivering mail, or even cleaning the building, every employee is devoting some portion of his time on this Earth to help others communicate more accurately, more frequently, more clearly, or more easily.

Franklin might have seen this as a job that needed to be done. I, on the other hand, see it from a different angle. I see it as a recipient. I believe that Franklin and each of those hundreds of thousands of postal workers have sacrificed some small part of his or her life to provide every American with a slightly better world. I see that sacrifice as a gift.



Address service requested

A Non-Profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
San Francisco, Calif.
Permit No. 10302

Branch 214 T-shirt booth at the National Convention

For the very first time Branch 214 had a sales booth at the National Convention with the proceeds to benefit the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA). Our delegates signed up to work the T-shirt booth. We rotated 2 hour shifts, with Karen Eshabarr making a schedule and if the delegate couldn't cover it because of a class, the other delegates pitched in and covered the shift. We were selling this year's T-shirts and extras left over from previous years' contests, 2008, and 2009.

Larry Gerigk, Kim Truong, Karen Eshabarr and Robert Madrid, President of Branch 1427 drove **The Voices** and the T-shirts down to Anaheim for the National Convention.

Getting message out

This was a learning experience because we have never done anything like this before. I have to say how proud I was of all the delegates that worked so hard to sell the T-shirts. They worked the crowd; they got the other delegates to come over and look, and explained to them how the T-shirt contest works, and that the children of the letter carriers had designed them. Most of the customers were very impressed with the contest and thought it was a very good idea. We did not see any other booths that had T-shirts like Branch 214.

Arnold Jones, Corte Madera steward, went to the microphone and announced that we were selling our Food Drive T-shirts to benefit MDA. After that things got very busy at the booth. We made a total of \$1318 for MDA from the profits of the sale of the T-shirts. Way to go Branch 214!

Other MDA activities

I would also like to mention the booth we had at MDA **summer camp in Westminster Woods in west Sonoma County** on August 19, 2010. We helped the campers utilize the post office and helped them send letters home from camp. Lili Beaumont, Roberta Bojo and her daughter Kasey, and I worked at the booth.

Thank you to the members who participated in the **Jerry Lewis Telethon on Labor Day**; Lili Beaumont, John Beaumont, Roberta Bojo, Bradford Louis, Steve McCaffree, and Ollie Cruz. They covered the morning and afternoon shifts; you might have seen them on television on channel 2.

A couple of dates to keep open. Saturday October 2,

2010 there is a **stride and ride at the Oakland Zoo**, we are looking for volunteers. Sunday November 7, 2010, is the date for the second annual **National Bowlathon in Daly City**, we are looking for bowlers. Please contact Karen Schuler 415-362-0214, ext. # 11. We are look-

(continued on page 13)



Photo: Ivars Lauersons

Karen Schuler, left, and Roberta Bojo at Branch 214 booth selling food drive T-shirts created by members' children to benefit Muscular Dystrophy Association. Delegates staffed booth on a rotating schedule.

ALSO INSIDE:

- **Suicide prevention**.....—page **3**
- **Arizona law debate** —pages **4,5,6**
- **Labor Day problems**.....—page **7**
- **Non-member problems** —page **10**
- **Norway as model**.....—pages **12**
- **Ben Franklin** —page **14**
- **October is cancer month**.... —page **15**