



THE Mail Bag NEWS

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USPS Kicks Rehab, Limited Duty, and Light Duty Carriers to the Curb

By Frank Salazar, President

The Postal Service under severe economic distress has seemingly used the current economic crisis to jettison its injured employees in an attempt to save hours. As we have described for months, management had unilaterally concocted the National Reassessment Process (NRP). This process was developed to supposedly follow all applicable laws, rules, regulations, and contractual provisions protecting injured employees. Basically, the Postal Service asserted that it was trying to match injured employees with work within their defined medical restrictions. However, the exact opposite is happening. Injured carriers are being given less work and are being sent home in less than 8 hours or not worked at all.

Under the NRP, injured carriers who are permanent and stationary (reached maximum medical improvement-MMI), are being sent a letter with the subject: Rehabilita-



tion Modified Position Meeting. The letter states:

As part of the National Reassessment Process, all rehabilitation modified positions and limited duty assignments in the Sierra Coastal District have been re-assessed. As a result of this reassessment you are scheduled to attend a meeting at the [specified location at specified date and time] to go over the status of your rehabilitation assignment. During this meeting the steps involved in the National Reassessment Process will be explained and discussed with you.

You have the right under the Collective Bargaining Agreement to have a Union representative present during this meeting.

When the day arrives, a Union representative meets the injured carrier at the office. The meeting is scheduled for 1 hour and in attendance are the NRP Operations Team

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT...

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Leader, the Manager/Specialist of Health & Resource Management (HARM for short), and the Manager/Specialist of Labor Relations. The NRP Team briefly explains the NRP to the injured employee, gives them some rights, and informs the employee that they can file a grievance, MSPB, EEO, etc., if they so choose. Then the team presents the injured employee with a copy of their current medical restrictions,

and then offers the employee a new job offer. And, this is where the problems begin.

Some employees are lucky and they get the same job offer they currently have. In this situation, it's usually an injured carrier working his/her own assignment (route) within his/her defined medical restrictions. In the other scenario, the injured carrier is given less than an 8-hour assignment. In this situation, the carrier is given anywhere from 1-6 hours, and told to bill OWCP using form CA-7 & CA-7a. Of course, carriers get upset and, rightfully so! In some instances, injured carriers have been doing the same accepted job offer for over 10 years, day in, day out, 8 hours a day, 40 hours per week. Don't worry about your job. You're not fired or laid-off, although it may feel like it.

Please be aware that OWCP pays only once a month at 66% (no dependents) or 75% (with dependents) of your pay. The harm is obvious. When using LWOP, a carrier loses annual and sick leave benefits. In addition, those on long term LWOP lose FERS benefits, and can't make payments into TSP just to mention a few problems. Whatever you do, do not reject the job offer if it's within your defined medical restrictions. Rejecting the offer may subject you to a loss or denial in compensation benefits from OWCP.

If this wasn't bad enough, the Postal Service has developed a new pilot project called the Limited-Duty Pilot Program, which was introduced in the Los Angeles, Santa Ana, and Sierra Coastal Districts out here in California and in one district out in New Hampshire. The Postal Service probably thought that their NRP was too slow. You know it takes time to try and follow the rules and do things right, which you know Management can't do. In response, it seems the Service developed this unilateral process to circumvent their other unilateral process, the NRP.

The Limited Duty Pilot Program works something like NRP, but Management is violating all of a carrier's rights. First of all, Management is denying the injured carrier a right to have a Steward attend. If this happens to you, contact your Steward to file a grievance. Second, Management is issuing new job offers without any prior notice. If Management offers you a new job offer, even if it's for less than 8 hours, do not reject the offer if it's within your de-

defined medical restrictions. Rejecting a suitable job offer may have an adverse impact on any compensation you're entitled to. Instead, accept the job offer under protest and request to see or contact your shop steward a.s.a.p.. Management is requesting that carriers sign the job offer on the spot. Failure to do so will result in withdrawal of the offer, and the carrier will be sent home. Again, do not refuse the offer if it is within your defined medical restrictions, and contact your Shop Steward a.s.a.p.. Third, if you are being sent home early or not allowed to work, beware of using annual or sick leave. If you are granted any type of leave after your claim has been accepted, you are not allowed to buy it back. Only leave used before your claim is accepted is allowed to be bought back. Fourth, Management should provide you with a form CA-7 and CA-7a. They should also be able to assist you on filling the forms out. If Management fails to provide you the forms or fails to assist you in filling them out, ask to see a Shop Steward or call the hall. Fifth, write a detailed statement listing everything you've done on a daily basis for whatever period of time. Give us a copy of all your job offers back to your first. Sixth, keep a daily diary of everything you have done or could do. Get fellow employees to tell you what work is available. Since all the rehab and limited duty people are being sent home or not allowed to work, I have received reports of Managers delivering express mail and mail to carriers on the street and Supervisors casing and delivering routes. Supervisors doing other craft work once done by limited duty carriers. Please provide all this information to your Stewards.

On to other news

EFCA: The Employee Free Choice Act was introduced in both the United States House of Representatives and Senate on March 10th. The NALC and all other Unions back EFCA as the fastest and best way to rebuild the middle class. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, corporate special interests, and other anti-Union forces will spend millions of dollars to brain wash and poison the minds of the American people to defeat the bill. The biggest myth about EFCA is that it will take away the right to a secret ballot. This is simply not true and part of the anti-EFCA propaganda.

Fact: The Employee Free Choice Act will not abolish secret ballot elections. The proposed legislation maintains the choice between majority sign-up and government supervised elections-but gives the choice to workers, not their employers. Once 30 percent of workers sign union authorization cards, they can request a secret ballot election-OR-they can seek immediate recognition for the union by collecting union cards from more than 50 percent of the workers in a workplace.

What big business and the anti-Union forces fear is immediate recognition. They can deal with the secret ballot, because they have time to intimidate and threaten workers

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LIMITED DUTY CARRIERS SUFFER THE ULTIMATE HARM

By: Ray Hill, Executive Vice-President



I'm sure you are all at least somewhat familiar with the story of Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger III, the pilot that successfully landed US Airways Flight 1549 in the Hudson River on January 15th, saving his crew and all 155 passengers on board in the process. Ever since I heard about his heroic Hudson River landing, when the word pilot comes to my mind, I immediately think of Mr. Sullenberger. On the other hand,

when USPS Management thinks about the word pilot, sadly, it isn't Mr. Sully Sullenberger that pops into their minds.

Speaking of the word pilot, the USPS has just launched their brand, spanking new "**Limited Duty Pilot Program**". No, when USPS Management thinks of the word pilot, they don't see Sully Sullenberger III; they see visions of their injured carriers being kicked in the ass as they shove them out the door.

Thanks to this particular **pilot**, many of the Sierra-Coastal District's already injured Letter Carriers are now suffering from new injuries that are being inflicted upon them by USPS Management. The good news is that this **disastrous** "Pilot Program" is only being tested in 4 USPS Districts in the entire country. The bad news is that the Sierra-Coastal District is one of them. The worst news is that USPS Management will probably embrace the havoc wreaked by the Pilot Program and eventually implement it across the nation.

Apparently the **National Reassessment Process** (NRP) was not proceeding fast enough for their liking, so the USPS came up with this Pilot Program to **hasten the harm** to those Letter Carriers that have sustained on-the-job injuries and have been working modified assignments for several years.

In Branch 2902 the Pilot Program crash-landed in the Reseda and Woodland Hills Post Offices on Friday, April 3, 2009 as Management Teams went into those offices and met with the limited duty carriers.

On Monday, April 6, 2009 the Pilot Program crashed into the North Hollywood and Sylmar offices. Throughout the weeks of April 6th and April 13th, the Management Teams have continued the meetings in Post Offices throughout the Branch.

Most of the limited duty carriers that I have spoken to say that they requested Union representation in their meeting with Management and that their requests were denied. Branch 2902 will be filing grievances in any and all offices where carriers requested Union representation and their requests were denied.

Some of our injured carriers were offered no work at all and sent home with a Form CA-7, while other carriers were offered varying amounts of work totaling less than 8 hours per day.

Regarding the offers of less than 8 hour's work per day that were given to the carriers, it is really a mixed bag. For example, one carrier was offered 1 hour of work per day, another carrier was offered 2 hours of work per day while yet another carrier was offered 6 hours of work per day.

Injured carriers that have been carrying routes have, for the most part, been offered 8 hours of work per day.

In my correct opinion, it is really a slap in the face to offer someone 1, 2 or 3 hours of work per day. I take that back. It is more of a kick in the ass than a slap in the face.

Some of the injured carriers that were given these insulting job offers commute from long distances (i.e. Palmdale, Lancaster, Rancho Cucamonga, Inglewood, etc.) and their commutes will take them longer than they will be working. That, Brothers and Sisters, is just plain, unadulterated, Grade-A B.S.

We are advising all the limited duty carriers being adversely affected by the pilot program to contact the steward in their office to file a grievance immediately when they are given offers of anything less than 8 hours of work within their medical restrictions per day.

We are also advising these carriers to provide their stewards with a detailed statement explaining what work they have been doing since they suffered their injuries.

The work that the limited duty carriers have been doing all these years did not magically disappear when Management kicked them out the door. **Someone has to be doing that work. The question is: Who is now doing the work that our injured carriers have been doing for years?**

I carried mail in North Hollywood, where Management has a long history of doing craft work when they think they can get away with it. Supervisors have been known to case routes, pull down routes, deliver mail, deliver Express Mail, spread mail, pull the hot case for carriers, etc. When we

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CAN WE AFFORD THAT?

By: Paul Drapkin, Senior Vice President



They swept in. The same way a bat does when it fly's through the night seeking some innocent insect, unsuspecting that in an instant they would vanish from the face of the planet.

I am talking of course about Postal Management. Who else would I compare to an animal whose thirst for insects is no different than the desperation shown by the unforgiving management team that represents the NRP. The NRwhat? The NRP. The National Reassessment Process. That newfangled idea that management has to relieve injured on duty (IOD) employees of their right to work by placing them on the periodic roles and letting the Department of Labor deal with them by either paying limited duty employees to sit home or eventually decide to rehabilitate them by finding suitable work within their medical restrictions...as long as it is outside the Postal Service.

They may have some other cute name for it in your office, The National Assessment Process ("yes, let's just drop the Re part and instantaneously we have another program" as they have chosen to do in my office) or a "Pilot" program or any other complete nonsense that they can come up with. No matter what they call it, it still adds up to the same.

You see, the Postal Service is desperate. They see nothing but red ink in front of them no matter where they turn. You can see it from the top of the organization, when Postmaster General Jack Potter testifies before Congress not once but twice and asks for relief in the way of requesting the ability to go to a five day delivery when he needs to, all the way down to your supervisor asking you every day for whatever down time you have.

Management has now taken the position that they no longer have an obligation to **make every effort** to provide work to our fellow workers who have become injured while on duty and who have not fully recovered from their injuries. The Postal Service is contractually and legally obligated to **make every effort** to provide work to employees who have not fully recovered from an on-the-job injury. However in many cases the Postal Service no longer feels the need to live up to this obligation. They feel that rather than have those who can actually produce a tangible product for our customers in a limited way, it is better to simply vanquish these employees to the roles of the Department of Labor and let them fend for themselves. By simply making the statement that there is no work available, manage-

ment believes that it relieves them of the obligation that they have, and the past practice that they have shown for 3 decades of providing work to employees who have been injured on duty.

Although every document from the Postal Service on this subject states that they have every intention of complying with the rules, the recent actions taken by the Postal Service indicate that they no longer believe that they must comply with the ELM section 546 which states in relevant part that:

*When an employee has partially overcome the injury or disability, the Postal Service has the following obligation: a) Current Employees. When an employee has partially overcome a compensable disability, the Postal Service **must make every effort toward assigning the employee to limited duty** consistent with the employee's medically defined work limitation tolerance. **In assigning such limited duty, the Postal Service should minimize any adverse or disruptive impact on the employee.***

What does the Postal Service know about minimizing disruptive impact? Their goal for as long as I have been working for them is to maximize disruptive impact on employees. Management sees these people as dead weight that is causing the Postal Service to bleed red. Red ink that is.

I know that there are those of you who are thinking, yeah, they should have gotten rid of that sick, lame, lazy old Joe a long time ago. He can't case or carry mail anymore so they should just kick him to the curb. What good is he?

The problem with that thinking is that there are contractual provisions and actual laws that protect employees of the USPS from allowing our employer to just kick us to the curb whenever they feel that we are no longer productive. We work for an employer who is supposed to be a model employer. We have an employer who for the past 3 decades has always said, even in writing, that they would provide work within our medical restrictions if we are injured in the course of performing our duties.

This red ink causes them to go crazy, come up with new and innovative ways to save money.

Of course the obvious way of relieving themselves of some of the debt would be simple. Getting rid of the dead weight in management that has been bogging down the system for years would be a good place to start. Of course it would mean a disruption of the good old boy network of doing things. That would be too much of an inconvenience

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CONVERSATION WITH A SUPERVISOR

By: Steve Leyton, Shop Steward, North Hollywood



Today I had a conversation with Supervisor Marina Santaramo, who was filling in for Arnold Arreola in 91605. She was providing me with needed documents for a grievance involving the Local Memorandum of Understanding for North Hollywood. She was expressing her opinion that this particular Article in the LMOU, which was being disputed in the grievance, should not have been included

in the LMOU in the first place.

I pointed out to her that the LMOU had been negotiated by the Postmaster just over a year ago and could not have been implemented without her full involvement. She continued to protest that the Article clearly had been included without the best interests of the Postal Service, and therefore of all Postal employees, at its heart. I protested again that management was as involved in the LMOU as the Union, but she had seemed stuck on the injustice she saw. I eventually gave up and left with my documents.

After looking back at that conversation, I think I failed to make some important points to the Supervisor. First of all, no LMOU would exist if the National Agreement did not specifically make provisions for it, provisions that call for it to be as binding as any other part of the National Agreement. I could have reminded her that the Postmaster General himself as well as a generous assortment of federal helpers found this to be a good enough deal. And I could have pointed out that no LMOU gets written without give-and-take from both sides, because it is only necessary to negotiate a LMOU if local conditions make it impossible to ignore the issues addressed in the agreement. If she took the time to read the entire document, she would likely find an Article in which the carriers agreed to give something to the Postal Service that wasn't spelled out in the National Agreement. Hopefully, she would recognize it.

Second, I should have responded more effectively to the idea that most resonated with her, that the Article in dispute was wrong because it cost the USPS more money (yet another manager playing their new hit song, **"The Economy's in Trouble, and You Have to Pay for It!"**). In this case, it was more money for a regular to work instead of a TE on one particular day. What she was saying was, the regular had less of a claim to the hours because he *cost more* than the TE did.

I should have pointed out that it is very likely that

every TE would jump at the chance to be a career Letter Carrier. There's something special about doing what we do, about delivering the mail. I think it is something managers have a problem remembering, that the only reason there is a USPS is to get the mail to the customers, as safely and efficiently as possible. And no one is more responsible for executing that task than the carriers. I've worked in many different industries until I started carrying mail at 33 years old. Before that, I was in middle-management most of the time. In no other business or service did I ever encounter such a high standard of entry-level personnel than in the Postal Service, especially the carriers. They are, overall, more intelligent and more dedicated than any group I ever worked with, no matter how successful the company was.

This is as it should be. We are entrusted with some very valuable and important items that people are very anxious to send and receive. I don't know if Marina has ever carried mail in cold, driving rain, high wind or smoggy temperatures of 110 degrees or in darkness without even a street light by which to read addresses, but it surely tests your dedication. Not to mention vicious dogs. And that's just in Southern California. Somewhere in this country, carriers are delivering mail in conditions I don't even care to imagine. That's the kind of things carriers have been doing in this country for more than two hundred years. That's why we're people's favorite non-military government employees.

And that's why not just anyone can do what we do. That was proven by the letter carriers in 1970. Luckily, it's one of the few things the contract negotiators for Postal Management still recall. That's why they recognize that we deserve to be treated with fairness and dignity and an honest regard for our value and our rights as both employees and as human beings. That's why there's a National Agreement. And that's why there are shop stewards and union officers to enforce the agreement. Not to annoy management and not to cheat the Postal Service. The union is its members. When we union representatives file a grievance, management is dealing with *all of the carriers*, not just one shop steward and one grievant. Someone has to guard *all* the carriers' rights while they are busy delivering the mail. And there aren't enough of us to go around.

And please, my fellow members please, remember that just because a shop steward is defending someone you don't like or someone you believe deserves disciplinary action, don't think it is a waste of time or hard-earned dues. First, you probably aren't fully aware of the

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Broaden Your Vision

By: **Robbie Elsaleh, Moorpark Alternate Shop Steward**



Over the past couple of months, I have spent time talking and meeting with different carriers from various stations. I've found that there's inaccurate information being spread around to younger, uninformed, and impressionable carriers, that's not only misleading, but also destructive to all of us as carriers. This incomplete and distorted information has created an undeserved atmosphere of disappoint-

ment with the Union. Some smooth talking and agenda driven senior, bitter carriers have convinced other susceptible carriers that the Union is not looking out or doing anything for them, which has in turn caused them to contemplate dropping out.

During these trying times when overtime has literally dried up, when lots of regular carriers are pivoting to do swings on under time, and when PTF's maybe struggling for hours, frustration could easily set in. When that happens, it's hard to see beyond ones immediate situation to view the overall picture of things. While these tough economic times cause anxiety, sometimes it gets misdirected towards the union. This has happened to some carriers for a number of reasons:

1. They have fallen victim to the convincing chatter of elder carriers, who spread partial and misguided information about the local union. This leads them towards the unwarranted dissatisfaction of their steward or branch president.
2. Or they're upset with a particular situation that they are not privy to all of the relevant information for, and therefore came up with a restricted viewed conclusion on their own.
3. Or they're unhappy with an outcome of a certain grievance settlement that seems unfair, but unknowingly to them, it is completely and contractually correct.
4. Or they're frustrated that there's hardly anymore overtime, when they should be thankful for still being employed and having the NALC's protection of the 6-year layoff clause.

It's only a few carriers, but these carriers cause vulnerable newer carriers to be lead down a path that focuses on their immediate wants rather than their longevity, which will only harm their future. This is a time when the only organization that's doing any hiring to keep up with the growing demand is the unemployment office.

If you truly believe in dropping out of the Union because: (1) You're listening to someone's self-serving rhetoric, or (2) You're unhappy with a particular steward or grievance settlement but wont take the time to inquire, research, and understand it for yourself, or (3) Because there's no more overtime, when other organizations have no more jobs and less benefits; then I'll suggest the appropriate action you should take at the end of this article. But first, I want to highlight a few recent and major accomplishments, that had it not been for the NALC, we surely would not have received. I want to use this opportunity to reverse the bad climate with those few drifting carriers. So let's take a look at what the NALC has recently done for us:

BENEFITS PROTECTION

February 26, 2009, President Obama released the outline of his fiscal year 2010 budget. Based upon discussions with knowledgeable Capitol Hill budget staff, the budget blueprint included that the USPS would cut its share of the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) premium from 82% to 72% of the "weighted average premium" and would reduce its contribution of the Federal Employee Groups Life Insurance (FEGLI) contribution from 100% to 33%. The Office of Management and Budget conceived this proposal during the transition between the Bush and Obama administrations. Immediately after this information was released, the NALC and other postal unions pointed out to the Obama administration that the proposal would infringe on the collective bargaining rights of letter carriers and other postal employees. Within a few days, the proposal was withdrawn from consideration and the following statement was released: Budget won't raise carriers' benefit contributions. "President Young announced today that the Obama administration **would not** pursue a proposal to raise postal employees' benefit contributions in the 2010 budget. Vice President Joseph Biden confirmed the action when he met with President Young at the AFL-CIO Executive Council meeting in Miami."

JOB PROTECTION

Remember when all new delivery growth was immediately going to the rural craft? Not any more. In a recent successful NALC victory, that practice has been eliminated. The agreement establishes that in offices with both city and rural delivery, new deliveries will be assigned in keeping with the following:

1. Growth will be assigned in accordance with boundaries that have been established by agreement of the Postal Service, National Association of Letter Carriers, and National Rural Letter Carriers' Associ-

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Lifelong Insurance Protection Without Lifelong Payments

By: Chris Alessi, MBA/NSBA Representative



MBA Whole Life Insurance paid up at the age of 65 is a limited payment plan. This means you get all the advantages of a whole life policy, but you stop making payments at age 65. This reduces your financial obligations as you reach retirement age, while maintaining your insurance coverage. Your premiums will stay the same amount until you stop paying premiums entirely on the policy anniversary date after the

insured's 65th birthday.

This whole Life Insurance policy provides a way to give your family financial security both during your lifetime and beyond. In the event of your death, your survivors receive the full amount of your policy. While you're alive, you are setting aside money you can use as a nest egg for your family. The MBA allots a portion of your premiums to build up the Cash Value of your policy. Your nest egg also grows as you earn tax deferred interest at above-market rates. In times of need, you can borrow against this cash value at a low interest of 8% and still keep your policy in

force. You may also decide to surrender your policy in exchange for the entire cash value.

You can receive benefits up to \$100,000 for as little as \$13.00 per pay period based on your age at time you start your policy. You have 30 days to review your policy and if you are not satisfied you can return it for a full refund.

Remembering Jon

In closing I just want to let all the members of this branch know that as I write the article today April 10th 2009 it is the 13th anniversary of bother Jon Gaunce's passing which I know most of us older members will never forget. Jon was our 1st president who fought so hard for us Letter Carriers and our working conditions. Jon would have been 54 this year on May 23rd.

My deepest condolences to the family and friends of another great Letter Carrier, and a great friend out of our office, Geogianna Slack passed away last month; she will be missed by all of us. May God Bless all of you during this time and keep you strong.

In solidarity, Chris

PRESIDENT'S REPORT...

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while a vote is being scheduled. However, if a majority request a Union, immediate recognition wipes out their schemes to keep the Unions out. It's a shame that Senator Feinstein is not onboard with EFCA. We need to put pressure on her with calls and letters to support labor.

FERS Bill

Many members have expressed interest in the FERS bill that would provide service credit to employees covered by FERS for unused sick leave when determining retirement benefits. Currently, if you are a FERS employee, unused sick leave is forfeited to the Postal Service once you retire. Basically, for FERS employees its use it or lose it. Conversely, CSRS employees get credit towards retirement for any unused sick leave. The U.S. House of Representatives approved the FERS bill, H.R. 1804, on April 1st. The bill also has a provision to automatically enroll new hires into the Thrift Savings Plan G-Fund, so they will not miss out on the tax benefits and matching funds, while maintaining the right to opt out. In addition, the bill would also mandate the creation of a Roth option for TSP contri-

butions. In the near future, the Senate is to take action on a bill similar to H.R. 1804. Stay tuned for further information on this bill. When the call comes, we all have to jump on this one with an avalanche of calls and letters. Many of us have tens of thousands of dollars riding on this legislation.

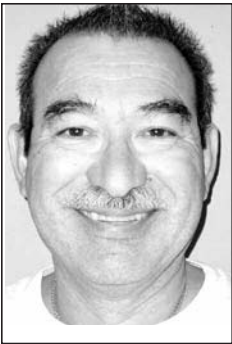
Postal Employee Pay Rates

A recent link on multiple postal websites gives information concerning the pay of postal employees. This information is public and was probably gained through the freedom of information act. I don't know who requested or posted the information, but it was an eye opener. Our District Manager makes about three times the amount of a top step letter carrier, which is not out of line for his level of responsibility. A Postmaster makes about twice the amount of a top step letter carrier, and this too does not seem out of line (depending on the Postmaster of course). However, the positions between the craft and Postmaster, and Postmaster and District Manager, are where I see the fat at the District level. The district could save about \$750,000.00 a year each and every year, if it wiped out the four MPOO positions. With the current technology, the positions are

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WELCOME ABOARD!

By: Joe Gutierrez, Health Benefits Representative



Congratulations! This past open season we welcome over 25,000 new members to our plan. Sorry to your previous health plan. What happened to the rest of you union members? You had the opportunity to join the best plan available and you just sat on your hands and did nothing, shame on you. The great thing is you have another chance coming in November to join the best plan, don't let it past you by.

To those of you who joined our plan, I hope you read the brochure that was mailed to you. Besides all the great medical coverage's that are available to you there are some other benefits to be had.

Healthy rewards gives you a discount of 20 to 35 percent on non-prescription and prescription sunglasses. You also save on eye exams, eyeglasses and contact lens.

At all CVS pharmacies you receive a 20 percent discount on CVS Caremark brand health-related products. Ibuprofen, contact lens solution and cough syrup as well

as certain blood pressure and heart rate monitors.

If you have a minor injury or illness CVS has a wellness clinic where for the price of your co-pay you will be seen by a nurse.

Other benefits to belonging to the NALC health plan are, The Quit Power program, a program to help you stop smoking, Enhanced eldercare services and many others.

Identifying, finding and providing the best care for a family member can be a hard and frustrating task. You have access to a Care Advocate for 6 free hours per calendar year. You have the option to purchase more if needed. The healthy rewards program gives you discounts on weight programs, exercise activities, fitness clubs, books magazines, and oral hygiene products.

I know this may sound confusing as to all the benefits that you have by belonging to the health plan but remember you also have the benefit of having someone to ask if you have a problem or question. Lisa and I are available to help you with your questions.

Our phone numbers are on the back of the Mail Bag News.



SHOP STEWARD OF THE YEAR!

A well deserved Congratulations to Ventura Chief Shop Steward, Laura Walters for her Receiving the Shop Steward of the Year Award from Branch 2902. Laura does a fantastic job representing not only Ventura but the entire branch as the Union Representative for the Interim Route Adjustment Process.

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FOR THE GOOD LIFE

By: Beverly Sucich



Hi to all members. I am writing an article for the first time in many years. Don Minster has asked me to conduct the retiree's luncheon in the months of February, April, and May.

Here is an update for the February luncheon. We had 23 members and 20 guests that attended. We have a monthly drawing for 3 door prizes which is usually a \$10.00 gift certificate to Hometown Buffet.

Jean Graham likes to surprise you with pictures that she has taken at the previous luncheons. Watch out for Jean around the holidays.

We would like to congratulate our February winners.

Al Covarrubias-San Fernando

Jesse Cordell-Simi

Lucille Meehan-Northridge

They all received a \$10.00 gift card from Hometown Buffet.

Also at this time I would like to notify all the retirees that there will be no luncheon for the month of June. June is a busy month for graduation parties and the restaurant is simply too busy.

Thank you for understanding the cancellation of the June luncheon.

Until the next article, I hope everyone had a great Easter and Passover.

Membership Pins

The following members are invited to the July 21st meeting to be presented with their membership pins. Please call the Union Hall and let us know you will be present to accept.

45 Years

Eldwyn Allen

Boyd Blevins

Fred Shaw

40 Years

Rudolfo Garcia

Hal Grunland

Bill Speer

35 Years

Rodney Hill

30 Years

Greg Gaddis

Beverly Sucich

Kurt Whitesell

25 Years

Agoura

Judy Williams

Chatsworth

Yolanda Moselina

North Hollywood

Antonio Delacruz

Juan Del Rosario

Donna Ferrell

Antoinette Fiola

Brent Foster

Edmond Kwong

Johnson Lao

Edmond Loualhati

John Rigel

Marla Rossi

Johnny Trujillo

Mary Vara

Northridge

Michael Characky

Mary Cortez

Richard Macias

Ojai

Dennis Prairie

Bruce Lockhart

Oxnard

Roger Alverson

Robert Daily

Danilo Ramirez

Mamerto Reyes

Pacoima

Anthony Garcia

Reseda

Alex Presto

San Fernando

Jose Arambula

Anthony Beltran

Manny Castillo

Steve Garfinkel

Beverly Pegram

Deborah Sosner

Mary Ann Traba

Santa Paula

Marian Walters

Simi Valley

Jesse Cordell

Dan Perego

Daniel Ramirez

Linda Ramirez

Thousand Oaks

Denise Davis

Linda Hines

Robin Sible

Ventura

Michael Blanco

Katherine Grahek

Dan Grajeda

Meredith Pierce

Woodland Hills

Jeff Jenkins



Active letter carriers: Contribute to **COLCPE** using PostalEASE

online.....

Carriers can also go online to use PostalEASE. With PostalEASE, carriers can contribute directly from their paychecks every pay period. Through PostalEASE you can designate COLCPE as one of your three payroll "allotments."

- 1 **Be sure you know your 8-digit Employee ID Number (on your paystub) and your 4-digit USPS Personal Identification Number (PIN).** If you cannot remember your PIN, call PostalEASE at 1-877-4PS-EASE (1-877-477-3273), select "1", enter your Employee ID Number, and select "2" to have your PIN mailed to you.
- 2 **Create your own Account Number by inserting in the spaces at right the first seven digits of the ID number that appears above your name on the back cover of your Postal Record.**

YOUR 17-DIGIT ACCOUNT NUMBER:

0 0 3 4 9 5 2 5 3 5

(First 7 digits of ID number on Postal Record label)

*****AUTO** 5-DIGIT 54321
XXXXXXXXXX 89 LC 9876 W13 08
JOHN CARRIER
1234 MAIN STREET
ANYWHERE, US 54321-9999

3 **Now you are ready to go online to liteblue.usps.gov**

- Enter Employee ID and PIN and click "log on"
- Click on "Postal Ease"
- Click on "I agree"
- Enter Employee ID and PIN again and log in
- Click on "Allotments/Payroll NTB"
- Click on "Continue"
- Click on "Allotments"
- Enter the 9-digit Financial Institution Routing Number: **0 6 4 0 0 0 1 7**
- Enter your 17-digit Account Number from above
- Enter Account type as "checking"
- Enter amount of your contribution
- Click on "validate"
- Click on "submit"
- Click "print page" to see and print your confirmation number for your records

Contribute on the web at
liteblue.usps.gov

By making a COLCPE allotment through PostalEASE, you are doing so voluntarily with the understanding that your monthly contribution is not a condition of membership in the National Association of Letter Carriers or of employment by the Postal Service, nor is it a part of union dues. You may refuse to contribute without any reprisal. COLCPE will use the money it receives to contribute to candidates for federal office and undertake other political spending as permitted by law. Your selection shall remain in full force and effect until cancelled through the PostalEASE system. Only NALC members, NALC executive and administrative staff, and their immediate household family members may contribute to COLCPE. Contributions to COLCPE are not deductible for federal income tax purposes.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT...

Continued from page 7

not really needed. Moreover, there are many positions under the level of Postmaster that are repetitive, overpaid, and could probably be done better by the craft. Many of these positions pay in excess of \$70,000.00 a year plus benefits and bonuses. A huge savings here! If the Personnel department could be consolidated, why not Operations Programs Support and Labor Relations?

Reversions/Withholdings/Excessing

The recent round of early outs has triggered a rush of reversions and withholdings by Management. It seems like Management is considering every route recently vacated as an auxiliary route based on their DOIS data. The Union disagrees with Management's assessment of these vacant routes and is filing the appropriate grievances. I'm sure that many regulars out there would have loved to bid on some of these choice assignments. The positions that are not being reverted are being withheld under Article 12 for displaced carriers and clerks. Yes, we have been noti-

fied that clerks are being decimated by the drop in mail volume and are being forced into the carrier craft. It's not their fault. Please welcome them into our craft and give them all the help you can. It's traumatic for them and we should extend every courtesy to them. Hold on PTFs . . . I know you want to be regulars, but these are trying times and we have to wait until the dust settles. In the meantime, you should be scheduled to work 40 hours per week before TEs are scheduled to work. In addition, opt on everything you see. You never know, but that opt could turn into a long-term indefinite assignment.

Food Drive

By the time you read this article, the Food Drive will have come and gone. I hope we all did our best to get the word out and to ensure that all the food was picked up. Thanks in advance for making a good effort. More details, and hopefully photos in the next edition of the Mail Bag News.

All for now back in two.

LIMITED DUTY CARRIERS...

Continued from page 3

find out about the violations, we file grievances and are successful getting letter carriers paid for craft work that was performed by Management.

Unfortunately, we do not have a steward that works at either the Chandler or Studio City Stations that can observe what actually goes on there every day.

Now that 4 Chandler carriers have been given the boot (offered zero hours of work per day) and another has been offered 2 hours of work per day, there will be a lot of uncovered work that **someone** has to do. The same holds true for the Studio City Office and the Laurel Canyon Carrier Annex (LCCA) where injured carriers have also been shown the door.

If I were a betting man (and I am), I'd bet the farm (if I had one) that there will be a "goodly amount" of craft work being done in North Hollywood by Management.

I spoke to North Hollywood Postmaster Mary Jane Smith on April 7, 2009 and I told her that we were getting reports of Management personnel performing craft work in North Hollywood and that we would vigorously attack any such violations in the grievance procedure. **That goes for every office in our Branch, by the way.** Postmaster Smith told me that she was unaware of any such violations and she sent an e-mail to her supervisors and Managers telling them that they were not to perform craft work under any circumstances.

That's just great, but Postmaster Smith can't see everything that goes on in North Hollywood and the work our injured carriers have been doing for years still has to get done. I'm betting that Management will, **without a doubt,**

be doing some of the work our injured carriers used to do. Not just in North Hollywood but in every office where injured carriers are being kicked out the door.

This is where we need the help of all the carriers that are still working and can see what is going on in their offices on a daily basis.

If you know that Management in your office is performing any type of craft work (i.e. spreading mail, delivering Express mail, casing routes, pulling down routes, taking swings out to carriers, working in the accountable cage, working at the hot case, delivering mail, helping the customers in the lobby, passports etc.) please notify your shop steward or call the Branch Office.

You can remain anonymous if you are so inclined but we would prefer that you stand up and write us a statement about what you have observed. However, as I just wrote, you can remain anonymous if you so chose. Just let us know when you see any possible violations so that we can have our stewards investigate and grieve those violations.

I find it **criminal** that Management has the gall to kick injured carriers out the door because they **allegedly** have no work for them and then **sneak around** doing the work that the injured carrier used to do. Help us with this, Brothers and Sisters! Let us know if and when you observe any violations of Management doing the craft work that our injured carriers used to do and should still be doing! Remember, "There but for the grace of God walketh I".

Management is supposed to be providing assistance to the carriers filling out the appropriate Forms in order to be paid by OWCP. These are Forms CA-7 (for those who are not working at all) and Form CA-7a (for those who are

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LIMITED DUTY CARRIERS...

Continued from page 11

working less than 8 hours per day). The Branch office can assist you if you have questions regarding the completion of the Forms.

Having said that, I think that we should make this "Pilot Program" as unpleasant for Management as they have made it for their injured carriers.

If you have a question about the completion of Forms CA-7 and CA-7a, **force** Management to assist you in filling them out. They are **supposed to** assist you in completing the Forms. If your local office says they don't know how to fill out the Forms then ask them to let you call the **Health And Resource Management** (HARM...as Frank Salazar likes to ask, isn't that an appropriate acronym?) **Department** at the Sierra-Coastal District Offices in Santa Clarita. **HARM's** phone numbers are (661) 775-7061, (661) 775-7062 and (661) 775-7063.

Feel free to call them with any and all questions you might have regarding the completion of Forms CA-7 and CA-7a.

Also, feel free to call us at the Branch Office with any questions if you are not in the mood for suffering further HARM.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to Maria Pacheco and her family. Maria, who is a carrier at LCCA in North Hollywood, suffered an aneurysm on April 9th and is currently in extremely critical condition. God bless you, Maria. We miss you!

Talk to you all in two months, hopefully with some more "cheery" news to report.



Oxnard Carrier Malik Reyes Parties like there is no tomorrow...on his last day!!! Good luck in your newfound retirement life Malik.

CAN WE AFFORD THAT?...

Continued from page 4

on their part.

The idea of giving up the all important Diversity Development Specialist in Santa Clarita who makes more than \$77,000 a year to send out e-mails with reminders of Breast Cancer Awareness month or Black Heritage month or National EAP month or coupons for TGI Fridays is what really helps move the mail along, right! (If you think that I am making this stuff up, take the time to look it up). Or how about the Safety Specialist who makes more than \$70,000 a year and whose job it is to go out to the field and point out all the unsafe conditions that exist at each Postal Facility, then write these infractions up with mere "recommendation" for abating the safety infraction. Of course this position has no real authority to actually force the local management to make whatever repairs are needed to abate the safety problem. How about the Customer Service Analyst that Santa Clarita spends more than \$70,000 a year on? What the hell is a customer service analyst anyway and how does that position directly help to move the mail along? Or how about the Resource Manager position that is costing the Postal Service a mere \$55,000 that is simply a tool for labor relations in their never ending quest to fire as many people as they can by now using the NRP as a shield.

No, all THIS dead weight can not be spared. Their jobs are far too important for management to give up. After all if management gave up a position such as the resource manager then the Postmasters would actually have to do their job. That can't happen. Postmasters are far too busy acting as lobby directors and passport clerks. You think I jest. When I recently noticed that the OIC in my office was acting as a lobby director and retrieving parcels for customers waiting in line, I was told by her that it is part of her job description. I could have sworn that was a clerk's job. Can we afford that?

You want to save money Mr. District manager? How about you get your stubborn, ill informed Supervisors and Postmasters to simply comply with the contract and stop attempting to make their own interpretation of the national agreement. I am not talking about really complicated issues.

For instance, in the quarter that just ended for January, February and March, the OIC in Woodland Hills just wrote a big fat check for \$6,000 for OTDL equability. Can we afford that? It's pretty simple, just stop being lazy and leaning on your favorite carrier over and over again and do the right thing. The problem is that it takes work to follow all that complicated OTDL tracking stuff. It would mean that the Supervisors would actually have to figure it out. Can we afford not to do that?

How about the \$8849 check that the OIC in my office just had to write because once again management decid-

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CAN WE AFFORD THAT?...

Continued from page 12

ed to “interpret” the contract. Someone who ACCEPTED a light duty job offer under protest was kept out of work for 2 months until the Dispute Resolution Team determined that ACCEPTING a job offer under protest is NOT the same as refusing a job offer. Can we afford that? There is almost \$15,000 in just two simple instances. I know for a fact that this kind of stuff happens all over the district. Can we afford that?

The answer is no. We can not afford that. Yet we can afford to have managers whose job it is to simply determine that Carriers who have been provided productive work for years are now just dead weight and are the Department of Labor’s problem. Can we afford that?

The Postal Service is experiencing a financial crisis just as the rest of the country and the world is experiencing. Will we recover? I am sure that the Postal Service will recover, although I expect that it is going to look very different than the one that we have known from the past.

For management to redeem themselves from this financial mess they are going to have to take a long hard look at themselves in the mirror. In it they will see where the savings will come from. It will not come from the small minority of injured workers that management sees as nothing but dead weight.

At what cost of human sacrifice will management stop before they feel that they have relieved the Service of enough financial obligation to be satisfied? When they have cleared the books of those that the service hopes that the NRP will swallow up and they see that the service is still bleeding red, who will be next?

Can we afford that?



BOBBLE HEADED WINNER!!!!
San Fernando Chief Shop Steward, James Perryman shows off the Bobble Head he won at the March union meeting for his participation as a regular contributor to COLCPE.

CONVERSATION WITH A SUPERVISOR...

Continued from page 5

facts in the case. Second, if we don’t stop management from abusing one person’s rights, they have full power to abuse everyone’s rights. There are an awful lot of carriers who find themselves the victims of managerial misconduct who never believed they were “one of those people” who get in trouble. An injustice to one is an injustice to all. But they may not want it broadcast throughout the unit.

I also never mentioned to Marina that the disparity between carriers’ and supervisors’ pay also wasn’t necessarily an efficient use of USPS funds.

FIRST THING IN THE MORNING— INSULTS

One of the things that have always disturbed me is what management quaintly refers to as “the overtime negotiation” process. You know, you ask for the time you will need to get your job done, and you start getting hassled by the Supervisor. 204b’s who are filling-in for absent supervisors are especially prone to this. There is no reason for us to have to put up with this, but they insist. When this happens to you, try to remember not to get angry. Showing hostility will not get you anywhere. But remember your rights. You really aren’t *asking* for overtime. You are *informing* the supervisor that current conditions will cause you to exceed an 8-hour tour. First, you must request a 3996. They must comply. The 3996 must be approved or disapproved in writing before you leave. If requested, a completed copy of the 3996 must be furnished to you. If it’s a problem getting you that copy before you leave for the street, make sure you get one by the end of the day. If you are authorized to cut-back mail, get a 1571 “cut” slip to document it. You’re entitled to a copy of that, too. If the supervisor fails to provide any of these things, don’t get mad, grieve it.

The thing that disturbs me the most is that any supervisor could feel justified in challenging the estimate from an experienced carrier. As a carrier, you know the route better, you know your duties better, including a number of variable factors you must deal with, and you know your own performance abilities better than that supervisor. To challenge your estimate is to say that you are either incompetent or dishonest about your estimate. I have asked supervisors in the past, “Which is it? Are you calling me stupid or a liar?” It has to be one or the other. If they have an honest question about whether you are fully aware of all of the factors concerning that day’s estimate, let them ask in a respectful manner. But the final estimate is yours. If it is not approved, it is most important that you get a completed copy of the 3996. But it is always management’s decision about how to deal with overtime, not yours. Let them make the decision and if you are told to complete your work within an unreasonable time-limit, make sure you call in by the appointed hour (3:00 in

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BROADEN YOUR VISION...

Continued from page 6

ation. **(Guess what? Most branches don't have any boundaries set) therefore:**

2. Absent such agreement, the city letter carrier craft will be assigned **all new growth** (i.e., new deliveries that are not in-growth on an existing route assigned to another form of delivery). In addition to that victory, the moratorium on subcontracting of deliveries was extended for the remainder of 2006-2011 National Agreement.

PAY RAISES

Pay and COLA raises included in the 2001-2006 contract that the NALC has achieved for you raised the annual pay for the top rate CC1, Step O carrier from \$42,635 to \$49,218 annually, an increase of **\$6,583 per year**. And for the past year or so while the economy has been slipping, executives weren't the only ones getting pay increases. Check this out; currently, as of November 22, 2008, under the new 2006-2011 contract, which once again the NALC has prevailed for you, that same carrier is now making \$53,683. That's another increase of **\$4,465 per year**. That's a combined increase of **11,048 per year** acquired in 7-1/2 years. And there's a minimum of another 3.75% wage increases for 2009 & 2010, assuming that the economy does not rebound and we do not receive any of the remaining 6 COLA adjustments. Do the math yourself:

- Nov. 17, 2001 General wage increase 1.8%
- Sept. 7, 2002 Cash payment \$312
- Nov. 16, 2002 General wage increase 1.5%
- March 8, 2003 COLA \$229
- Sept. 6, 2003 COLA \$312
- Nov. 15, 2003 General wage increase 1.2%
- March 6, 2004 COLA \$187
- Sept. 4, 2004 COLA \$624
- Nov. 27, 2004 General wage increase 1.3%
- March 19, 2005 COLA \$229
- Sept. 3, 2005 COLA \$707
- Nov. 26, 2005 General wage increase 1.3%
- March 18, 2006 COLA \$478
- Sept. 2, 2006 COLA \$790
- Nov. 25, 2006 General wage increase 1.4%
- Sept. 21, 2007 COLA** \$0
- Oct. 19, 2007 Lump-sum COLA*** \$686
- Nov. 24, 2007 General wage increase 1.8%
- March 2008 COLA \$458
- Sept. 2008 COLA \$1,497
- Nov. 22, 2008 General wage increase 1.9%

- March 2009 COLA **\$0
- Sept. 2009 COLA tba (to be announced)
- Nov. 21, 2009 General wage increase 1.9%
- March 2010 COLA tba
- Sept. 2010 COLA tba
- Nov. 20, 2010 General wage increase 1.85%
- March 2011 COLA tba
- Sept. 2011 COLA tba

So let's recap the few NALC benefits I've mentioned above. For your union dues investment of \$23 bucks a pay period, as a top level carrier, you are currently making \$11,048 per year more than you did 7? years ago, which is an average increase of \$1473 per year, and you still have at least another 3.75% increase by November of 2010, your future FEHBP has been secured for now at a 10% less expense for your families' health cost, the USPS still must contribute 100% for your FEGLI, (not the proposed 33%), your city carrier position is more secured because when the economy finally rebounds, deliveries will grow again and mostly be assigned to your craft, and lastly, the NALC has continued to protect you against layoffs.

But wait... I'm confused; I am being told that my Union isn't doing anything for me. So what should I do? Should I find out for myself by attending union meetings and getting educated? Or by becoming an alternate steward and helping out? No way, that takes too much work, time, and hassle. I'll just believe whatever I hear on the workroom floor and jeopardize my future by weakening the NALC and dropping out.

So, in addition to dropping out, here's what I think the appropriate action should be for you take. You should also request to reduce your yearly income by the \$11,048 just for spite, and refuse to accept the upcoming minimum 3.75% pay increases, you should also start paying 10% more for your families' health expenses immediately and accept only 33% of your FEGLI coverage, you should give your deliveries to the rural craft or contract it out, and by the way, If you have 18 years of service and the USPS decides to lay you off, we will miss you, but go with a smile.

One last note, not everyone is fit to be a shop steward. It takes extreme commitment, self-discipline, integrity, character, and a history to back it up. Stewards can't make everyone happy; they just enforce the contract at hand. It doesn't help matters much when carriers are not willing to bind together and write supporting statements backing each other up. I know you fear retaliation from management, but as long as you are working professionally and safe, you have nothing to worry about.

Start getting educated on your National Agreement now; it will bring you a powerful sense of self-confidence. By expanding and combining our knowledge about the contract, we can control the floor. Our top Union officers

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Union Meeting

February 17, 2009
Newbury Park



The meeting was called to order at 7:10PM by President Salazar. Sergeant at Arms, Bob Golden led the pledge of allegiance. Roll call was taken. Onofre Varela, Jim Maroney, Joe Gutierrez, Chris Alessi, C.C. Flatts, Paulette Dyer, James Perryman, Steve Leyton, Steve Dickerson, Art Hernandez and Jim Mette asked to be excused from tonight's meeting. Fred Shaw makes a motion to excuse these

brothers and sisters, S/C. Members are reminded to sign the attendance book, and to purchase tickets for the 50/50 raffle. President Salazar introduces Desiree Holder, President Branch 4114, Camarillo, Miriam Ponce, and Ron Fenney also from Br. 4114.

Members review the minutes from the January 20th meeting in Chatsworth. Fred Shaw makes a motion to accept the minutes as printed, S/C.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Texas Hold'em Poker Tournament- Sunday, May 3, 12:00PM-4:30PM. Fundraiser for MDA and Saxsenmeier scholarship. Held in partnership with Branch 4006, Canoga Park. \$35.00 buy in for \$500 in chips with unlimited re-buys during the first hour. Free food, sodas and water. Beer and wine are available for purchase.

Food Drive- Saturday, May 9. Everyone must make sure the cards announcing the food drive are delivered. The need is greater than ever before for donated food. The new artwork has been released.

Ernestine Hernandez -Named as the new legislative liaison for Congressional District 24 (Rep.Elton Gallegly).

Letter carriers were voted as the most trusted public servants for the 5th year in a row by the American public in a survey by the Ponemon Institute.

COMMUNICATIONS

PMG Potter brought up the possibility of 5 day delivery in front of Congress. President Young made an immediate statement to the members saying there are no plans to eliminate 6 day delivery.

The Postal Service has the burden of having to pre-fund retiree health premiums far in excess of any other federal agency. HR 22 is a bill that will correct this problem and help the Postal Service during this economic crisis.

HR173- Sense of the House Resolution- This will main-

tain 6 day delivery by the Postal Service.

Mail volume continues to decline at record amounts. Coverages are being delivered by private carriers. Possible clerk excessing.

Interim Alternate Route Adjustment Program- Several offices have gone through the process without much trouble. The problem offices have used the COR program to adjust the territory.

EFCA- Employee Free Choice Act- Allows employees who want to unionize to do so. Big business is spending millions to fight this legislation. We need to support this to rebuild the middle class.

COMMITTEES

COLCPE- Ernestine Hernandez informs the members that their contributions to the fund allow the liaisons the freedom to get the word out about issues that affect letter carriers and the Postal Service.

Retirees- Don Minster informs the retirees that the luncheon is planned for Feb. 19 from 11:30-12:30 at the West Hills Hometown Buffet.

Legislative- David Hyman reports that there will be a phone bank opportunity for Proposition B at AFL-CIO Headquarters in Los Angeles.

Health Benefits- Lisa Leal reports that over 24,000 members joined the healthplan during open season. She tells the members the benefits of preventative care. Mental health problems and good eating habits are reviewed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None NEW BUSINESS-

Proposed By-law amendments are read to the members. These by-law amendments will be voted on at the March meeting.

E-Board recommendation to send the President and EVP to the National Rap Session in Las Vegas on 4/25 and 4/26. Branch to pay 2 nights lodging, 2 days per diem, round trip airfare , or mileage (NTE cost of airfare), and travel expenses (NTE \$75.00). Fred Shaw makes a motion to adopt the recommendation, S/C.

E-Board recommendation to send all stewards who want to attend steward training by CSALC and the NBA's office on 5/15 and 5/16 at the LAX Sheraton. Branch to pay 2 nights lodging (double occupancy), 2 days lost time, 2 days per diem, parking (no valet) and mileage (lesser of home or branch office) and one extra night lodging for the

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Union Meeting

March 17, 2009
Chatsworth

Meeting was called to order by President Salazar at 7:10PM. Pledge of allegiance was led by Bob Golden, Sergeant-at-Arms. Roll call was taken. Asking to be excused were Steve Leyton, Kurt Whitesell, Laura Walters, and Kathi Albritten. Fred Shaw made a motion to excuse these members, S/C. Members are reminded to sign the attendance book, purchase 50/50 raffle tickets and to see Ernestine Hernandez to sign up for COLCPE. Guests are John Garcia and Bobby Reyes from Branch 24 along with their wives, Bob Schultz from Brookfield Uniforms, and Mireya Mejia from U. S. Postal Service FCU. Members review the minutes from the February 17th meeting. Chris Alessi makes a motion to amend the minutes to add Sandy Gaunce to the list of excused members for the February meeting; S/C. Fred Shaw makes a motion to accept the minutes, S/C.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Texas Hold'em Tournament- Sunday, May 3, 12:00PM-4:30PM. Co-hosted by Branches 4006 and 2902. Fundraiser for MDA and Saxsenmeier scholarship.

Food Drive- Saturday May 9. Cards have been ordered and must be delivered prior to the food drive.

Food drive coordinator meeting March 19, 10AM-12PM in Santa Clarita. Food drive t-shirts are for sale for \$15.00. Orders must be received by 3/23. Send orders to Ernestine Hernandez in Oxnard.

A book titled "Tainted Eagle" by Charlie Withers from Royal Oak, MI, includes Jon Gaunce in the book's forward page.

Mireya Mejia from the US Postal Service FCU informs the members of the various programs and account offers available through this credit union. Located in the Mission Hills postal annex, they have been in business since the 1930's.

COMMUNICATIONS

Emergency President's meeting-President Salazar informs the members on the Presidents meeting in Santa Clarita with district manager, Kerry Wolny. Declining mail volume, lost revenue, budget concerns, NRP, clerk excessing into withheld positions, 354 code violations, route adjustments, and the use of annual and LWOP are discussed and reviewed.

HR 22- This resolution will provide relief for the Postal Service by reducing the burden of pre-funding retiree health benefits. The NALC supports this resolution and urges the members to contact their elected officials to support this legislation. NALC fact sheet is reviewed.

Employee Free Choice Act- (EFCA) will give workers the right to unionize without interference from the employer. Big business is going to fight against this legislation. NALC fact sheet is reviewed.

Members are given information about Brookfield Uniform support for EFCA. Brookfield is 100% union and supports the proposed legislation. NALC fact sheet is reviewed.

COMMITTEES

Recreation- Paulette Dyer gives the members information on travel, Obama buttons for sale, and donates boxes of See's candy for the raffle.

COLCPE- Ernestine Hernandez reminds the members that the decisions for the Postal Service are made in DC, and we need the clout that COLCPE gives us to send our people in to talk to the lawmakers in DC. Only 3% of our branch members contribute. James Perryman wins a prize drawing held for COLCPE contributors.

Retirees- Luncheon on March 19 11:30-12:30, Simi Valley Hometown Buffet

Legislative- David Hyman announces upcoming Labor Day events.

Health Benefits- Joe Gutierrez announces that over 26,000 members signed up for the NALC plan. CVS pharmacy is working with Cigna providing "minute clinics" within the pharmacy.

MBA/NSBA- Chris Alessi informs members about Universal Life plan benefits. Gift pocket calendars from MBA plan are available.

NEW BUSINESS- None UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Proposed by-law changes to Articles VIII and IX are read. Fred Shaw makes a motion to adopt the proposed changes S/C.

Mike Longres announces that he is looking into getting a union jacket order soon. Cost will be about \$30.

GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION

Know your rights

Discussion on HR 1256- FERS bill

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

Sandy Gaunce makes a motion to adjourn, S/C.

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BROADEN YOUR VISION...

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didn't get there by mistake, or by not having an authentic concerned quality and always looking out for what's best for the letter carriers. They are the only ones experienced enough to make the determination of who is suited for the shop stewards position, and we have to trust them in their decisions. Union representatives should not be seeking power, recognition, and self-serving rewards, but to uphold the NALC/Postal Contract for the lifelong good of all carriers.

Thank you to all the carriers who do step up when needed, or speak out when they see something that doesn't seem right. And thank you to all the officers and stewards for your unrelenting dedication to enforcing our rights.

NEWBURY PARK...

Continued from page 15

President, and liaison Ernestine Hernandez to attend the Congressional breakfast on 5/17 and purchase 3 tickets for the breakfast (Salazar, Hernandez and Hyman). Paul Drapkin makes a motion to adopt the E-Board recommendation, S/C.

GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION –

Know your rights

President Salazar presents Steward Laura Walters with Shop Steward of the Year Award.

She has represented the carriers in Ventura and Santa Paula and is currently representing the NALC in the Interim Route Adjustment Process.

Rules, rights and responsibilities regarding jury duty are reviewed and discussed by the members.

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

Fred Shaw makes a motion to adjourn, S/C.

Membership drawing was worth \$69.00. Retiree Anthony Cicero from San Fernando was not present to win.

Respectfully submitted by Susan Degenhardt, Recording Secretary

CHATSWORTH...

Continued from page 16

50/50 drawing for \$34.00 was won by Jim Maroney. Raffle prizes were won by Marian Walters, Walter Williams, Lauren Brewster, Rocio Fraire, Sue Degenhardt, Mike Steele, Frankie Mercado and Don Esterman. Membership drawing was worth \$113.00. Charles Killen Jr., retired member from San Fernando was not present to win.

Respectfully submitted by Susan Degenhardt, Recording Secretary

CONVERSATION WITH A SUPERVISOR...

Continued from page 13

NoHo) to let them know you are still right and, by the way, add the time it takes to make the phone call. And work safely. Being given an unreasonable time-limit is no justification for cutting corners on safety or skipping breaks.

THE INTERIM ROUTE ADJUSTMENT PROCESS

We have just completed the first part of this process, and the adjustments have been implemented right away in 91601, 91604, and 91607. I was very pleased and a little surprised by a large number of carriers who were shown that the figures for their routes during the sampled period indicated their routes were too long and could be adjusted down. They voluntarily agreed to perform their duties faster to bring the route into adjustment. Management wasn't asking them to, and no one was threatened in any way. These carriers simply expressed their acknowledgment that volume was trending downward and that meant that they would probably be able to get their routes done in 8 hours more easily than before. Besides, they knew that they always had the back-up of requesting overtime when needed. These people were comfortable with their current routes and prefer that no one messes with them. Conversely, I was also pleased to see that the office managers did not push carriers with routes that were shown to be less than 8 hours to take on an over-abundance of new territory or duties. All forms of adjustment were discussed and agreed to fully by both the carriers and management before being finalized. Management also did not threaten us with office routers, which can often be a difficult solution to an over-burdened route, but instead offered street-routers. These street routers (delivering the same specific portion of deliveries each day) would, like office routers in the past, formally become a part of the route. This assistance cannot be taken off the route unless, on a given day, it is verified that the route is under-time by that amount, or the regular carrier delivers that portion as overtime on the street. Even though the person carrying the specified deliveries might change each day, the assistance is permanent until the next adjustment. I am hopeful that the process will work as smoothly when implemented as it has so far.

Be who you are and say what you feel 'cause
people who mind don't matter and people
who matter don't mind.

—Theodor Seuss Geisel (aka "Dr. Seuss")
Author, 1904-1991

The Mail Bag News is the official publication of Tri-Valley Branch 2902 (Chatsworth, California) of the National Association of Letter Carriers. All opinions expressed are those of the individual author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the NALC or its officers. The Mail Bag News welcomes articles and letters to the editor; however the editorial staff of the Mail Bag News assumes complete authority to decide which letters are presented for publication. Anonymous articles are not accepted. Permission is hereby granted to re-print articles. We just ask that you give the author and the publication appropriate credit.



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RETIREES LUNCH

Where: Hometown Buffet
Vons Center
1855 Cochran Street
Simi Valley

When: Thursday,
May 21, 2009

Time: 11:30am to 12:30pm



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

When: Thursday,
June 18, 2009

Time: 11:30am to 12:30pm

CANCELLED



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“Many people’s tombstones should read, ‘Died at 30. Buried at 60.’ “

—Nicholas Murray Butler,
American Educator (1862-1947)

SHOP STEWARD LIST

Agoura Hills Chief S.S.	Greg Gaddis
Chatsworth Chief S.S.	Angel Hale
Shop Steward	Jim Maroney
Fillmore Chief S.S.	Call Office
Moorpark Chief S.S.	Lori Stewart
Alternate	Robbie Elsaleh
North Hollywood Chief S.S.	Steve Leyton
Chandler	Greg Gadis
Laurel Canyon	Steve Leyton
Studio City	Greg Gadis
Valley Village	Steve Leyton
Northridge Chief S.S.	Onofre Varela
Shop Steward/ Webmaster	Larry Orcutt
Porter Ranch Alternate	Kurt Whitesell
Ojai Chief S.S.	Philip Navarro
Oxnard Chief S.S.	Ernestine Hernandez
Alternate	Veronica Macht
Pacoima Chief S.S.	Steve Dickerson
	Art Hernandez
Port Hueneme Chief S.S.	Kathi Albritten
Reseda Chief S.S.	Mike Longres
Alternate	Robbie Elsaleh
San Fernando Chief S.S.	James Perryman
M.C.A.	James Perryman
North Hills	C.C. Flatts
Sylmar / Main Office	James Perryman
Santa Paula Chief S.S.	Laura Walters
Simi Valley Chief S.S.	Sandra Gaunce
	Robbie Elsaleh
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	Florence Brewster
	Walter Williams
Alternate	Mary Stanley
Alternate	Alex Lopez
Newbury Park	Sue Degenhardt
Ventura Chief S.S.	Laura Walters
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Woodland Hills Chief S.S.	Joe Vedder
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RECREATION NEWS

SEA WORLD:

Adults: \$51.00 (Reg. \$65.00)

Child: \$47.00 (Reg. \$55.00) ages 3-9

SEE'S GIFT CERTIFICATE:

\$12.00 (Retail Value \$15.60)

My famous homemade oatmeal chocolate chip cookies are still 4 for \$1.00 at monthly meetings (every third Tuesday)

For coupons or flyers for various venues contact number below.

PAULETTE DYER

THE MAIL BAG NEWS

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Will be serving

DINNER

At the May
Union Meeting

DINNER starts at 6pm

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- MAY 19** Regular Branch Meeting 7pm
Union Hall-Chatsworth
Dinner served 6 pm
- MAY 21** Retiree Lunch 11:30am
Hometown Buffet-Simi Valley
- MAY 25** Memorial Day-Holiday 
- JUN 2** Executive Board Meeting 6pm
Executive Council Meeting 7pm
- JUN 16** Regular Branch Meeting 7pm
Garden Palm Hotel-Newbury Park
- JUN 18** Retiree Lunch-CANCELLED
- JUN 21** Fathers Day-First Day of Summer 
- JUL 4** Fourth of July-Holiday 
- JUL 7** Executive Board Meeting 6pm
Executive Council Meeting 7pm
- JUL 16** Retiree Lunch 11:30am
Hometown Buffet-Simi Valley
- JUL 21** Regular Branch Meeting 7pm
Union Hall-Chatsworth
Dinner served 6 pm

Tri-Valley Branch 2902 wants to thank *Fox Printing* for their very generous contribution of thank you cards for this years NALC Food Drive.



Fox Printing Company
9330 San Fernando Rd.
Sun Valley CA 91352

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It is through generous donations from our friends in the community that help to make this very worthy cause such a great success.