



Patience is a Virtue

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Poison of Influence

I once read the 2016 US presidential election was a tumultuous time. In the weeks and months leading up to that Tuesday, November 8, social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook, were flooded with “fake news.” Investigations following the election of Donald Trump as the forty-fifth President of the United States revealed that extensive foreign influence had played a role during the campaign, its efforts aimed largely at affecting the course of the election. Most fingers pointed directly to the Russian Federation and the regime of President Vladimir Putin as the most likely culprits.

This was not the first use of social media in influence operations. A few years earlier, for example, the Islamic State terrorist organization (ISIS) used extensive Twitter campaigns to spread propaganda, encourage radicalization and recruit foreign soldiers for its war in Iraq and Syria.

Influence operations, whether launched by governments or non-state actors, existed long before social media, but what is new about contemporary influence operations is their scale, severity and impact, all of which are likely to grow more pronounced as digital platforms extend their reach via the internet and become ever more central to our social, economic and political lives.

I’ve observed influential acts of deception via social media that seeped into the minds of our union members which poses a threat to our solidarity. During recent station visits, I was asked by members if the NALC’s contract proposal/ possible agreement with USPS posted on Facebook was true. Historically, the union hasn’t provided such information, unless a tentative agreement is reached and sent to the membership for ratification. Some members didn’t agree with my response. Unfortunately, some members are susceptible to the poison of influence even when informed that all information posted on Facebook may not be true.

Carrier Robbed at Gun-point

On February 7, another robbery occurred at the North Hollywood installation at approximately 7:00 pm while the Carrier was delivering mail at 4832 Tujunga Avenue. The suspect only took the arrow key and the Carrier was not physically harmed. The Carrier called the police and his supervisor. They arrived at the scene at approximately 7:15-7:20 pm. The Carrier was only able to describe the suspect as wearing a mask and hoodie. The Carrier has not missed any work, but may file a CA-1 if necessary. The Postal Inspectors were notified the same day, but arrived at the Postal installation the next day. There is no report that EAP was contacted. We should do all that we can to protect ourselves and be on alert. We also need assistance from our political leaders in Washington DC in the fight to protect the safety of Letter Carriers.

Protect Our Letter Carriers Act Introduced in House

On March 13, the Protect Our Letter Carriers Act (POLCA) (H.R. 7629) was introduced in the House by Representatives Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA) and Greg Landsman (D-OH). The bill was announced at a press event outside the Capitol in Washington, DC, where NALC President Brian L. Renfroe, Representative Brian Fitzpatrick, Representative Greg Landsman, Leader Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY), Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD), and Representative Donald Norcross (D-NJ) spoke in support of the legislation.

AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Fred Redmond, TTD President Greg Regan, and two Letter Carrier attack victims also spoke at the event.

This bipartisan legislation would provide \$7 billion in funding for the Postal Service to secure its infrastructure, including the installation of high-security collection boxes and the replacement of items carried by Letter Carriers with more secure electronic versions. The funding would be appropriated over five years, \$1.4 billion annually in fiscal years 2025-2029. When key infrastructure is devalued and more secure, Letter Carriers will be safer on their routes.

Additionally, the legislation would increase prosecution rates for these crimes by requiring the Attorney General to appoint an assistant U.S. attorney in each judicial district to prioritize any case involving an assault or crime against a Letter Carrier. Their principal responsibility in the district would be to coordinate and supervise the investigation and prosecution of these crimes.

The bill would also strengthen sentencing guidelines for these crimes, ensuring that they are treated in the same manner as assaults on federal law enforcement officers.

Since 2020 there have been more than 2,000 crimes committed against Letter Carriers on the job. Many of these attacks involved a gun or another weapon. Letter Carrier robberies climbed to 643 last year, an increase of nearly 30 percent, and the number of robberies resulting in injuries doubled, according to the United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS).

“The rise in robberies and violent assaults being committed against Letter Carriers in recent years is deeply concerning and Congress must act to ensure their safety,” Representative Fitzpatrick said. “I am proud to be leading this bipartisan effort, which provides necessary resources to protect our dedicated Letter Carriers while making sure we are punishing criminals to the fullest extent of the law. The men and women of the Postal Service are often the backbone of a community, and they work hard around the clock, rain or shine, to deliver essential goods, and I will always have their back.” “Our Letter Carriers are such a big part of our lives, and we have to keep them safe. This bipartisan effort will do just that,” Representative Landsman said. “I urge the House to pass this bill that would protect the nation’s Letter Carriers who dutifully deliver medications, checks, ballots,

packages, and other essential mail that all Americans depend on," President Renfro said.

So, let's all do our part to get involved and take political action through the (Take Action Portal) on the NALC's website at nalc.org.

Orientation For New Career Employees

The branch has received an increase in reports for CCAs being converted to career status. However, many converted Letter Carriers are not being informed about their benefits. Orientation for new career city Letter Carriers is extremely important, as it is the first opportunity to explain to them their benefits, such as annual leave and sick leave, the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), the various Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) program insurance plans, Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FEGLI), and flexible spending accounts (FSAs). Making sure that orientation is provided promptly is critical, as some benefits such as FEHB, FEGLI and FSAs have a 60-day enrollment period that begins on their first day as a career employee. If these employees do not receive orientation on their first day of official duty as a career employee, they might be unaware of these time limits. Ultimately, some new career Letter Carriers may not be given the full time span to make a proper determination about, or even given the opportunity to enroll in, their preferred benefits plan. If this happens, it can cause the new career city Letter Carrier and their family members significant harm by depriving them of their benefits until the next open season. Therefore, if you are a new career city Letter Carrier and have not receive the above-mentioned career orientation, please notify your Shop Steward or contact the branch immediately, and if necessary, file a grievance.

NALC Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive

Preparations are underway for the annual NALC Stamp Out Hunger food drive scheduled for May 11. Mary Stanley will once again coordinate the efforts for our branch. Please contact Mary and/or newly appointed Branch Assistant Coordinator-Walter Williams, if you are interested in volunteering, we can surely use your help. Many hands make for light work. Also, there will be a shortage of food drive cards due to the high cost per the NALC. Therefore, the union suggest delivering cards to residual addresses only and using other forms to advertise the food drive at apartment buildings, NBCBU, etc. Thank you all in advance for your hard work.



CSUN Scholarship

The Guravitz-Shaw Scholarship is available for kids of NALC members. Fred Shaw, a CSUN graduate, retired from the Woodland Hills Post Office after 36 years, and his wife Lisa Guravitz feel very fortunate to be able to offer this annual \$1,000 Scholarship. Additional information is posted in the March/April 2024 MBN.

Fallen NALC Brother Report

Lastly, I'm sad to report the loss of Branch Member Carl R. Eads, retired Letter Carrier who worked at the Pacoima Post Office. Brother Eads retired in 1992 and was a branch member of the NALC for 33 years. Branch 2902 mourns the loss of Brother Eads. We appreciate his service and we send our deepest sympathy to his family, friends and colleagues.

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

Treasurer's Report

3/1/2024 - 3/31/2024

General Account

Previous Balance	\$35,409.40
Receipts	\$44,334.52
Sub-Total	\$79,743.92
Disbursements	\$51,728.95
Total-on-Hand	<u>\$28,014.97</u>

Payroll Account

Previous Balance	\$16,230.02
Receipts	\$35,000.00
Sub-Total	\$51,230.02
Disbursements	\$37,663.74
Total-on-Hand	<u>\$13,566.28</u>

General Account (New)

Previous Balance	\$89,853.31
Receipts	\$237.30
Sub-Total	\$90,090.61
Disbursements	\$870.14
Total-on-Hand	<u>\$89,220.47</u>

Payroll Account (New)

Previous Balance	\$59,970.26
Receipts	\$0.00
Total-on-Hand	<u>\$59,970.26</u>

Convention Fund

Previous Balance	\$230,113.97
Checking Acct #7 .15% rate-USPS-CU Dividend/Int.	\$27.25
(Active & Retirees 1650 x \$2 per By-Laws)	\$3,300.00
Total of Convention Fund	<u>\$233,441.22</u>

C.D. (6 mos) .350% rate Premier CU #1.	\$92,474.52
C.D. (6 mos) .250% rate Premier CU #2.	\$12,560.93
C.D. (1 yr) .598% rate Premier CU #3	\$118,482.99
MM Cert #21 (26 wks) .200% rate USPS CU	\$26,675.84
MM Cert #18 (26 wks) .250% rate USPS CU.	\$24,869.63
MM Cert #19 (26 wks) .250% rate USPS CU .	\$73,448.16
MM Ckg #8 (26 wks.) .250% rate USPS C	\$47,401.04
C.D. (6 mos) .380% Priority One CU	\$34,187.39
Shares acct USPS CU	\$7.11
Total of Contingency Fund	<u>\$430,107.61</u>

Retiree Fund

Retiree Luncheon	<u>\$6,788.33</u>
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Mary Stanley
Financial Secretary-Treasurer



May is Mental Health Awareness Month

By Albert Reyes, Executive Vice President

As Letter Carriers, mental health is an essential part of overall health. Getting involved in Mental Health Awareness Month can help break mental health stigma. There is no shame in seeking mental health services. Encourage others to seek help if they are struggling.

EAP programs are essential resources that can help improve mental health and well-being in your workplace. EAP is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. To connect with a counselor in person or virtually to discuss concerns, contact (800) EAP-4YOU (800) 327-4968 or usps.ndbh.com.

EAP is confidential and provides employer-paid mental health and other well-being resources for Postal Service employees and their household family members. Some of the many free services that Letter Carriers may struggle with can be discussed and addressed through EAP, including:

- Anxiety
- Family problems
- Grief and loss
- Stress
- Work-life balance
- Depression
- Financial problems
- Legal problems
- Substance abuse

Don't be afraid to talk to your friends, family, and coworkers about mental health, for those social media enthusiasts, share mental health awareness on your social media outlets. Shareable resources can be used online to spread the word by using hashtag #shareNIMH in your social media posts to connect with people and organizations with similar goals.

NIMH, the National Institute of Mental Health, has many great resources for Mental Health Awareness Month. Learn more about NIMH newsletters, public participation, and connecting with NIMH on social media at nimh.nih.gov. You may never know if your post encourages someone struggling to reach out and get the necessary help.

Volunteer your time at a mental health organization. Look for and participate in events in your community to help raise awareness about mental health. NAMI, National Alliance on Mental Illness, is an organization "dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness." Check them out at nami.org.

It might be time to take a self-inventory to see if you or a family member could benefit from mental health services. Many of us may think we can handle the issues ourselves. We are quick to seek medical attention when we are not feeling well, but when it comes to mental health, we may reason with ourselves and become passive.

In many cases, we may be the last to know we have an issue, even though it is apparent to loved ones and everyone else around us that we need intervention to get help. Many will read over these words and say this isn't for me, and others may make the call and follow up on the research. What's the harm in reaching out?

Mental health problems are more common than we may think, often because we don't talk about our issues or hide them away. According to MentalHealth.gov, as of 2020:

- One in five American adults experienced a mental health issue
- One in six young people experienced a major depressive episode
- One in 20 Americans lived with a severe mental illness, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or major depression
- Suicide was the second leading cause of death for people ages 10 to 24.

If you or someone you know has a mental illness, is struggling emotionally, or has concerns about their mental health, there are ways to get help. Where can I get immediate help?

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Membership Pins

The following members are invited to the next General Meeting* or the next Retiree's Luncheon* to be presented with their membership pins. Please call the Union Hall at (818) 700-9615 and let us know if you will be present to accept yours.

65
YEARS

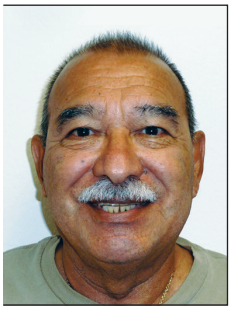
Charles W. Barnes
Frederic Carlson Jr.
Richard W. Cinnater
Maxwell J. Feinberg

60
YEARS

John J. Broderick Jr.
Alfonso V. Covarrubias
Eugene M. Lopez
Richard S. Thatcher Jr.
Marvin Waller



*Dates of these events can be found on page 12



Postal Service Health Plan

Time to Consider Your Choices Before a Decision is Made For You

By Joe Gutierrez, Branch 2092 Health Benefits Representative

Hello everyone. Hope your year has been injury free and that you are staying healthy. I want to talk about some free benefits that are available to members in the NALC health plan. The first is Hinge Health. It is the plan's musculoskeletal program which offers a convenient way to help members overcome back and joint pain, avoid surgeries and reduce medication usage — all from the comfort of your home. It is offered at no cost to you and your dependents. Once enrolled in the program, you have access to a personal care team, including a physical therapist and health coach. A tablet and wearable sensors that guide you through the exercises are also included free of charge. Video visits are offered with your care team and delivered through the Hinge Health app.

Another benefit that I have mentioned before is the hearing aid program. I just spoke to a member who used the plan and was very happy with the result. He went to Costco and had a hearing test and was told he would need hearing aids in both ears as one was bad and the other was going bad. He purchased them and sent the receipt to the health plan and three months later he was reimbursed for the purchase price. For those of us who may be losing our hearing or need some help with hearing, this is a great program that is available to our members. The plan offers \$2,500 towards the purchase of hearing aids and hearing exams for members and their dependents.

Soon we will have the Postal Service Health Plan (PSHB) open season. This year you must pick your health plan. If not, the government will pick one for you. From what I have been told, as of now, there are six plans in the program. I would advise you to call your plan to see if they have joined the (PSHB).

You can now join Medicare if you are 65 or older and did not join previously. The USPS will pay the late enrollment fee, however you must sign up for Medicare Part A & B between April 1, 2024 and September 30, 2024. If you were previously eligible for Medicare Part B and chose not to enroll but now regret that decision, this is a one-time special penalty-free enrollment period.

Lastly, I want to speak about SilverScript. SilverScript and Health Equity Wage Works Medicare Part B Reimbursement Account. Through this program the NALC Health Benefit Plan has put tax-free money into your MRA to reimburse you up to \$600 for your Medicare Part B premiums when Medicare Parts A & B are your primary carrier and you remain enrolled in Medicare Parts A & B and the SilverScript employer prescription drug plan (PDP), sponsored by NALC Health Benefit plan. You must submit proof of premium payments through the online portal, HealthEquity's EZ Receipts app, or by FAX or mail. If you have any questions feel free to call me and I will do my best to help you navigate this process.

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

June 2, 2024

9 - 11 am

Harley's Bowling Alley

480 E. Los Angeles Ave.

Simi Valley

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





When Unions Fight, We Win!

By David Hyman, Branch 2902 Trustee & Political Liaison

Greetings Sisters & Brothers! There is a new piece of legislation the NALC is supporting. The “Protect Our Letter Carriers Act (POLCA)” The bill, H.R. 7629 is sponsored by Representatives Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA) and Greg Landsman (D-Ohio). There has been an uptick in crimes against Letter Carriers on the job in the last four years. More than 2,000 assaults. Arrest and prosecution of these criminals has not kept pace with the increase in crimes against Letter Carriers. This bill would allocate \$7 billion spread over the next five years to address the Postal Service securing its infrastructure, including the installation of high-security collection boxes. POLCA would provide funding to update technology and have the U.S. Attorney General appoint an Assistant U.S. Attorney in each judicial district to prioritize cases against Letter Carriers. This bill would increase sentencing guidelines making them similar to assaults on other federal law enforcement officers. Presently there are 17 co-sponsors.

There have been a few additional co-sponsors on other legislation the NALC has been following. The Social Security Fairness Act, H.R. 82, now has 311 co-sponsors. The Senate version, S. 597, has 52 co-sponsors and needs 60 to override a potential filibuster. All our local Representatives and both Senators are on these two bills as co-sponsors.

The Comprehensive Paid Leave for Federal Employees Act, H.R. 856, has 43 co-sponsors. The Senate version, S.274, has 11 co-sponsors, including our Senator Padilla. None of our local Congressional representatives are on the House bill yet.

H.R. 3721, the USPS Shipping Equity Act still has 17 co-sponsors, none from our area. The Federal Retirement Fairness Act, H.R. 5995, has 88 co-sponsors including Julia Brownley from our area. H.R. 376, the Door-to-Door Delivery resolution, has 37 co-sponsors including soon to be retiring Tony Cardenas.

The L.A. Federation of Labor has a subgroup known as the Federation of Retired Union Members (FORUM). Bob Golden and I regularly attend their meetings. A group that works closely with the L.A. Fed and Forum, The California Alliance for Retired Americans (CARA), brought to our attention some legislation that would increase the utility taxes many of us pay living in an apartment or small home. Last year the state legislature passed AB 205, a bill mandating a new monthly fixed charge, aka a utility tax on all investor-owned utility residential customers. The bill that passed last year has no ceiling on how high the California Public Utility Commission (CPUC) can raise utility taxes. Assembly member

continues on page 8

SECURE AND EASY SLIDE DOG SPRAY HOLSTER!

VIDEO



[HTTPS://YOUTUBE/2BEN69t6CnQ](https://youtube/2BEN69t6CnQ)



BUY



<https://a.co/d/3DvZAuM>

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ATTENTION

NALC Branch 2902 Members



Tickets on Sale Now

Los Angeles Dodgers vs Cleveland Guardians

Join us for a fun and exciting time at the ballgame.

Date: Saturday, September 7, 2024

Time: 6:10 pm

Cost: \$50.00 per person



Each attendee will get a
Union Night Dodger t-shirt.



Check or cash to David Hyman at (747) 236-8831 (cell) or davidahyman@aol.com

Hurry, tickets are limited, first come basis.



MBA Whole Life Paid Up In 20 Years

By Chris Alessi, MBA/NSBA Representative

The Mutual Benefits Association (MBA) offers an insurance plan that is a Whole Life policy that is paid up in 20 years. This plan has perfect timing because you pay premiums for 20 years during the part of your life when your earnings are the greatest. Then your policy is fully paid up at a time when you might want to use the cash value to help your kids, grand kids, great grand kids, step kids, step grand kids, step great grand kids and now even your parents or legal guardians.

As Whole Life insurance, this plan from your MBA does two important things; it pays the survivors the full amount of the policy in the event of the insured's death. It also sets aside part of your premiums for the future. This money the "cash value" has built up and has grown with generous earnings that can be used for many different things in life such as: money for college, marriage, buying a home, starting a business, paying off debt, taking care of loved ones, etc.

Your premiums will stay the same for the whole 20 years, so the sooner you start your coverage the lower the premiums will be based on your age at sign up. You can choose any amount of coverage from \$10,000 to \$100,000. Although you are insuring the lives of others, the plan belongs to you. You may choose to give the cash value to your children when you surrender your plan. Or at any time you may assign ownership of the policy to your children, once they reach legal age of 18 years old.

Every year the MBA determines whether your policy will share in the divisible surplus that builds up from all participating policies. If you choose, after the third year dividends are earned by your plan that can be paid to you in cash or be used to buy additional insurance coverage, which also has cash value. Or you can choose to leave your dividends on deposit earning interest at a very generous rate, much better than most financial institutions. Either way, it's a great inflation fighter.

Premiums are very reasonable. For an example, a 25 year old can be insured for \$25,000 at just \$20 a pay period. You can pay your premiums monthly, annually, or bi-weekly under the MBA's automatic payroll deduction plan. The NALC stands behind every policy written by the MBA, which was created in 1891 to give Letter Carrier families reliable savings and insurance plans like this, the MBA Whole Life plan paid up in 20 years.

Just fill out an application and you'll receive your policy to examine for 30 days. If you're not fully satisfied for any reason, return it for a full refund of any premium you've paid. There is no risk. Come on Carriers – sign up today at: nalc.org/mba or you can call (800) 424-5184 Tuesdays and Thursdays or (202) 638-4318 weekdays. Or, I would be happy to help you; my number is in the *Mail Bag News*.

In closing, I want to thank all the Carriers who voted for me as your MBA Representative for another three years. I will continue to give you all the latest info on all our current plans and will update any new changes or new products as soon as I receive them. God bless you, in Solidarity.

Mental Health Awareness Month

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In life-threatening situations, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room. If you are suicidal or in emotional distress, consider using the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

Call or text 988, or chat online with a trained crisis counselor. The Lifeline provides 24-hour, confidential support to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress. You can reach a specialized LGBTQI+ affirming counselor by texting "Q" to 988 or by calling 988 and pressing "3."

So, again, May is dedicated to raising awareness about mental health. Let's learn how to protect each other at work or home. In the meantime, the first session is on the clock if you request to contact EAP while at work. Do not expect management to do what's expected of you.

If you have any questions, contact your Shop Steward. Help each other out. Continue to look out for one another. And if you haven't done so already, download the NALC app. As always, be safe out there!

When Unions Fight, We Win!

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Jacqui Irwin who represents many of our members in Ventura County, has proposed AB 1999 to put a cap on rate increases of 10 percent, plus inflation, potentially saving residents hundreds of dollars a year. Contact your local Assembly Member or State Senator by June 30th to encourage them to support this bill to protect our seniors, people with disabilities and working families.

Progress was made for some of the hotel workers. They started their struggle for a living wage against the hotels in July 1st of last year and since then, 34 local hotels have settled, offering the hospitality workers a \$10 raise over the next four years. There are still 25 or 30 other hotels that are still negotiating and many of these are near settling. When unions fight, we win.

Time for Dodgers baseball! (See the ad on page 7 for Union Night at Dodgers Stadium).



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THE TRUTH ABOUT ESTATE PLANNING, WILLS, TRUSTS & PROBATE



Daughter of a Letter Carrier

- A Will alone does **NOT** avoid probate court. A Trust **DOES** avoid probate court.
- Probate is **VERY** expensive and the fees are set by statute. Example, an estate of \$500,000 (FMV Home \$490,000 and \$10,000 in bank accounts) has **statutory fees of \$26,000**. This can be avoided with proper planning including a Trust.
- If you don't have a legal plan, everything **does not** automatically go to your spouse or kids. It passes via intestate law which may not be what you would want.
- If you don't have a legal plan and you can't make decisions for yourself, a judge will decide who gets to make decisions for you and it is expensive to go through.

WILLS | TRUSTS | PROBATE (SOMEONE PASSES AWAY) | TRUST ADMINISTRATION

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Oxnard Chief S.S.	Johnny Boyd
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Reseda Chief S.S.	Robert Tracey
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M.C.A. Alternate S.S.	Diane Dozal
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Sylmar Alternate S.S.	Abel Vazquez
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THE MAIL BAG NEWS

NALC BRANCH 2902

21540 PRAIRIE STREET, #C
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Address Service Requested

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PAID

PERMIT NO. 41

Canoga Park, CA

RETIREES LUNCH RAFFLE AT 12:30

MAY

Where: Golden Panda
1825 Madera Rd.
Simi Valley

When: Tuesday, May 21, 2024

Time: 11:00 am to 1:00 pm

JUNE

Where: Golden Panda
1825 Madera Rd.
Simi Valley

When: Tuesday, June 18, 2024

Time: 11:00 am to 1:00 pm

Calendar of Events

MAY 11	NALC Food Drive
MAY 12	Mothers Day
MAY 16	Regular Branch Meeting* 7:00 pm Union Hall-Chatsworth
MAY 21	Retiree Luncheon* 11:00 am Golden Panda-Simi Valley
MAY 27	Memorial Day-Holiday
JUN 6	Executive Board Meeting* 6:00 pm Executive Council Meeting* 7:00 pm
JUN 16	Fathers Day
JUN 18	Retiree Luncheon* 11:00 am Golden Panda-Simi Valley CANCELLED
JUN 19	Juneteenth Freedom Day-Holiday
JUN 20	Regular Branch Meeting* 7:00 pm Union Hall-Chatsworth
JUL 4	Independence Day-Holiday
JUL 11	Executive Board Meeting* 6:00 pm Executive Council Meeting* 7:00 pm

**NOTE DATE CHANGE DUE TO
4TH OF JULY HOLIDAY**

* Subject to Covid-19 restrictions