



THE Mail Bag NEWS

- ★ SOLIDARITY
- ★ EDUCATION
- ★ ORGANIZATION



OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF TRI-VALLEY BRANCH 2902
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS AFL-CIO

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Revolution in Boston? More like Revelation NALC Comes Together at National Convention to Grow. Rise. Together.

Once again Tri-Valley Branch 2902 Recognized with Organization and Publication Awards.

By James Perryman, President

In today's world, people have more access to information than ever before. There is certainly some good that comes from this, but with more access to information there is also more access to misinformation than ever as well. How can we find valuable information and people to listen to with the bombardment of noise and false-truths that we encounter in our lives?

It's not easy to always know which way to go when receiving information and the right path to follow. Sometimes we may feel as though we are lost; sometimes we might be blazing our own trail based on false information; sometimes we might need a little push in the right direction.

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National Convention

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Correction may be hard to receive, especially from union activist, but it is worthwhile. Most union activists will always desire to educate members to be the best that they can be, while protecting the rights of all Letter Carriers. In order for that to happen,

they have to correct members when they see Letter Carriers headed in the wrong direction.

However, there are people who are trying to use members and will not care about what is best for Letter Carriers. They will only be concerned with how you can serve their hidden agendas. They will take advantage of your shortcomings in order to fulfill their personal gains.

Discernment is required when it comes to who you listen to when you're in need of counsel. If you surround yourself with people who will tell you what you want to hear, you may not get the accurate information to go far in life. But if you choose to have honest people around you, who are committed to help you succeed, and not for their own selfish interests, you will be able to grow.

Boston, Where it All Began

Although there were some major delays landing at the Boston Logan International Airport due to the bad storms, the delegates of the Branch made it to Boston safely and returned home safely. Some of the delegates may have flight anxieties now when scheduling for trips from this experience,

but we all returned with a little knowledge and experience from our recent National Convention. The following is a brief summation of the convention. A total report of 5,446 delegates representing 619 branches were registered at NALC Convention. The attending delegates were from all 50 states in addition to the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

The 73rd Biennial Convention of the National Association of Letter Carriers began on Monday, August 5, with a powerful clarion call for solidarity by NALC President Brian L. Renfroe issued to the thousands of delegates gathered at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center. "Our solidarity is what makes our union strong. It's what grounds us in our rich history and it's what will propel us to the future," he said. Looking back, Renfroe noted that Boston was the birthplace of the American Revolution, the home of the first Post Office in America, and the host of NALC's first convention. "They convened here in 1890, just one year after our union was founded in Milwaukee, Wisconsin," he said. "While this convention looks a little bit different than our union's first... I do know that our mission is the same as it was in 1890: to come together to fight for the rights and working lives of city Letter Carriers."

Empowered Solidarity

After a look at what the city of Boston has meant to the union and the nation, President Renfroe explained that NALC has been hard at work since the Chicago convention in 2022.



Pictured above are the delegates that Tri-Valley sent to represent you at the National Convention.

In that time, the union has been negotiating a new national agreement, protecting Carriers as USPS oversees its 10-year Delivering for America plan, dealing with Postal staff shortages with memorandums of understanding implementing all-career models in hundreds of installations, growing the Letter Carrier Political Fund while also advocating for Letter Carriers in the halls of Congress, hosting the Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive, and raising millions of dollars for the Muscular Dystrophy Association. “All this progress has only been possible through our collective effort—our empowered solidarity,” he said. But NALC isn’t going to rest on its laurels. “Our theme here this week is Grow. Rise. Together,” he said. “As we look ahead to the next two years of our union, I encourage you all to embrace this convention theme.”

Collective Bargaining

NALC entered into negotiations on a new national agreement in February 2023 after having faced severe challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. “Letter Carriers have long known the power of our network, our workforce and our craft, and the pandemic reminded the rest of the country,” he said. “We are the heartbeat of the Postal Service. We keep it running and we always will.” Despite historically low unemployment rates and labor victories in the private sector, the Postal Service faces unique challenges. “Even though the Postal Service had record-breaking increases in parcel revenue during the pandemic, and the crushing pre-funding mandate was repealed through the Postal Service Reform Act, higher-than-expected costs due to surging inflation, significant investments in new infrastructure and the high employee-turnover costs all contributed to the Postal Service reporting a loss of \$6.5 billion in Fiscal Year 2023,” he said. Still, NALC has seen an opportunity to negotiate a fair contract that strengthens the Letter Carrier workforce while helping USPS achieve the goals of its 10-year plan. NALC’s primary goals have been to:

- Obtain wage increases and maintain cost-of-living protections for Letter Carriers that reward Carriers for their contributions to the Postal Service and that recognize the increasingly challenging nature of the work.
- Eliminate the two-table wage structure and replace it with a single pay table that not only increases starting pay, but also raises top pay while reducing the time it takes to get there.
- Maintain health care, leave and retirement benefits.
- Maintain protections against job threats such as subcontracting.
- Negotiate changes to work rules that would benefit NALC members.

Even as NALC continues to negotiate, it also has prepared for interest arbitration, including selecting Arbitrator Dennis R. Nolan to serve as the neutral chair of the three-person interest arbitration panel. President Renfroe remains hopeful that negotiations will succeed in getting the best agreement for Letter Carriers.

“Today, we are near agreement on the major economic pieces of a tentative agreement. It is very possible, even likely, that a tentative agreement to send out to NALC members to consider for ratification will be reached,” he said. “Such an agreement will address the goals that I’ve outlined from the start of this process last year.” Renfroe said that as much as he would like, he cannot make the process go faster, but he’s “committed to staying in this fight to get what our members have earned and deserve. We are almost there, and we are going to finish that job.” Still, he added, NALC is prepared to go to interest arbitration if negotiations fall apart. “I can assure you of this: Any negotiated agreement that is sent to our members for ratification will be one that fairly rewards and compensates Letter Carriers for our vital contributions to the Postal Service, and one that will uphold our union’s 50-plus-year tradition of achieving the best results we can in collective bargaining,” he said.

Delivering for America

President Renfroe updated delegates on the union’s role in the Postal Service’s 10-year plan. One part of the plan is the modernization of USPS’s vehicle fleet, especially through the design and manufacturing of the Next Generation Delivery Vehicle (NGDV). “As a result, all new vehicles will include air conditioning, advanced safety technology, and they will meet the needs of our work, not just today, but into the future,” he said. “Our goal has always been to ensure that the Postal Service acquires a delivery vehicle fleet that provides a safe and ergonomic working environment for Letter Carriers and we’re finally well on our way to achieving that.” Some gas-powered NGDVs already have been deployed to the Sorting and Delivery Center (S&DC) in Athens, Georgia. More, including many of the electric drive version will be rolling into other offices soon. NALC also has worked to modify USPS’s plans for establishing S&DCs. “We have been involved every single time the Postal Service has proposed and subsequently established a new Sorting and Delivery Center,” President Renfroe said. NALC Headquarters representatives work with regional and branch leaders to identify issues that might arise. NALC then meets with the Postal Service to address those issues as the S&DC is implemented. “We know the network must be modernized, which will not happen without some bumps in the road,” he said. “But it’s essential that NALC continue to have a voice as the plan moves forward—and we will make our voice heard.”

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Enough is Enough

Next, President Renfroe addressed the increase in crimes against Letter Carriers, noting that since 2020, more than 2,000 such incidents have been committed nationwide including the murder of four Carriers since the 2022 Chicago convention. “It’s heartbreaking, it is appalling, and it is completely unacceptable,” he said. When NALC realized how few of these crimes were being prosecuted, branches mobilized to raise awareness by holding “Enough is Enough” rallies with the help of headquarters. And while that has led to increased prosecutions in some areas, NALC also turned to Capitol Hill, where bipartisan legislation has been introduced. The Protect Our Letter Carriers Act (H.R. 7629/S. 4356) seeks to deter the crimes by federally prosecuting anyone who attacks a Carrier and by holding those found guilty accountable. “We won’t stop until every single crime against a Letter Carrier has been prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law,” Renfroe said. “The legislation now has more than 100 co-sponsors in the House. There’s a companion bill in the Senate, and we’re going to keep fighting every day until these provisions are signed into law.”

Heat Safety

NALC has been working for more than a decade to push for a national rule to protect workers from extreme heat, which is starting to come to fruition. “Just last month, the Department of Labor released a proposed heat standard work rule. This proposed rule includes all of the measures recommended by experts to mitigate the hazards of excessive heat,” President Renfroe said. “We look forward to doing our part to make it a reality. We are optimistic about the difference it will make for Letter Carriers and all workers who, year after year, are increasingly affected by working in excessive heat.”

Other Priority Legislation

NALC continues to push for the repeal of the Windfall Elimination Provision and the Government Pension Offset, as well as for a bill that would allow employees to buy back their non-career time to make it creditable toward retirement. In addition, NALC is calling for legislation that would allow USPS to diversify its investment portfolio of retirement funds, as well as preparing for a possible bill to fix the miscalculated Civil Service Retirement System pension calculations.

Grow Rise Together

Renfroe then highlighted parts of an extensive plan for new NALC initiatives and expansions of existing ones:

- Standardize training and deliver it in a modular format to make it more widely accessible. Also, develop an eLearning virtual training platform.

- Increase pressure on management to comply with the contract.
- Grow the Letter Carrier Political Fund beyond the 12 percent of members who contribute.
- Work to organize other delivery workers, including Amazon and FedEx employees, especially by guaranteeing workers’ rights to organize and collectively bargain. Supporting the PRO Act is a first step.
- Expand the new NALC Emergency Response Team, which assists members who face challenges related to traumatic incidents.
- Embrace diversity, equity and inclusion in the union.
- Create a women’s mentoring program to identify, support and develop current and future women leaders.

“I’ve laid out a lot for you here this morning. We’ve talked about what we’ve been working on, what we’re working toward, and what we’re going to implement to get there,” President Renfroe said. “The common thread to accomplish any meaningful results is to do it together.” To enthusiastic applause, the NALC President concluded, “We won’t turn our backs on each other or just look out for ourselves. That goes against everything that being a NALC member is about. “We’ll look out for one another. Always. “We will grow. We’ll rise. And we’ll do it the way we always have done it — together.”

Back to Business

President Renfroe then introduced AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler, who was escorted to the stage by NALC’s AFL-CIO delegates. Shuler spoke of the energy and excitement surrounding the current political climate, but said that it’s about more than just winning the next election. “If you look around, something absolutely amazing is happening all over this country. Workers are reclaiming our power. Workers are realizing, ‘Hey, there is a way to fight back,’” she said. The AFL-CIO president praised NALC for being at the forefront throughout the pandemic, reform battles and political attacks. “It hasn’t been easy for one second,” Shuler said. “This country does not work without you. And it’s about damn time that our leaders recognized that.” The convention gave Shuler a hearty Letter Carrier Cheer following her remarks.

The delegates then heard from Representative Stephen Lynch (D-MA). A former ironworker, Lynch praised the courage and dedication of letter carriers who risk their health to deliver the mail, recalling the anthrax attacks through the mail that occurred only days after his first election in 2001. “You understood the duty you owed to your country at a very difficult time,” Lynch said. When the COVID-19 pandemic arrived, he said, “the true patriots of the NALC continued to report to duty in the face of a global pandemic.”

Lynch, a longtime friend of letter carriers, vowed, “I will be introducing legislation to require the Postal Service to modernize and diversify its strategy for investing postal retiree assets in order to generate much better rates of return for you.” The convention delegates thanked Lynch with a Letter Carrier Cheer.

The convention voted to approve the rules as printed in the convention guide. The convention discussed a motion to overturn President Renfro’s ruling that three members do not have standing to appeal decisions by the Executive Council that found the NALC president not guilty of three charges. The President had previously ruled that the NALC Constitution recognizes only the party found guilty as being aggrieved. In a teller vote, the motion carried 2,221 to 1,596.

Secretary-Treasurer Rhine explained the resolutions process. Delegates then approved a resolution by acclamation introduced by President Renfro to bestow the honorary title of President Emeritus on former NALC President Fredric V. Rolando. Renfro then called Rolando to the stage. Rolando urged the delegates to remain focused on the job of representing and advocating for their members back home. “With all these issues facing Letter Carriers,” he said, “we have got to be at full strength and capacity as a union to deal with all these issues, don’t we?” Rolando urged unity as the union moves forward: “We all need to put aside our politics, our egos, any anger, and together focus on the best way to serve our members—that’s what we’re elected to do.” The delegates responded with a hearty Letter Carrier Cheer.

On the second day of the 73rd Biennial Convention, delegates and speakers alike stressed the strength of solidarity as the union faces many challenges—from protecting our brothers and sisters from crime to protecting our democracy itself. The delegates stood for the importance of togetherness. They embraced President Brian L. Renfro’s call to include all voices in the union, passed a constitutional

amendment making it easier for retired Carriers to return to the fold as union members, and applauded the call by United Steelworkers International Vice President at Large Roxanne Brown to know their power and tell their own stories as they advocate for their rights and interests. “Workers in this country are really powerful and they are leaning into their power,” Brown told the delegates. “Letter Carriers, know your power!” The delegates drew inspiration from speakers from other unions—the Fire Fighters, the Mail Handlers and the APWU—all of whom pledged to join Letter Carriers in passing vital pro-worker legislation and electing pro-worker representatives.

At the top of the election agenda, the convention voted to endorse Vice President Kamala Harris for President. “The NALC proudly endorses the Harris-Walz ticket, and we will do all in our power to ensure that Kamala Harris is the next President of the United States,” Renfro said to a standing ovation from delegates following the endorsement vote. And, mindful of their role as not only voters and campaigners, but also as keepers of the sanctity of mail ballots, the delegates resolved to stand together to fight for the republic that was born more than two centuries ago here in Boston.

Renfro then introduced American Postal Workers Union President Mark Dimondstein. “I salute all of you front-line fighters,” he addressed the Letter Carrier crowd, praising members for enforcing the contract, fighting for a safe environment, and standing in solidarity with all workers. “I see a rainbow of delegates from all walks of life, united in our common struggle for justice.” Dimondstein addressed the fall elections, saying that union members will require resiliency and determination in the face of growing political extremism, deepening attacks on civil rights, and coordinated voter suppression, including the undermining of vote-by-mail. Delegates gave Dimondstein a lively Letter Carrier Cheer in response.

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45-Year 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.

Robert P. Alvarez
Karen L. Anderson
Arthur Barajas
Irene H. Barnard
Jan Boswell
Young M. Chang
Simon Choi
Jerry H. Cleek
Michael J. Cortez
Steven Y. Davy
Felipe De Avila

Edward A. Deltoro
Christine M. DeMartini
Dennis A. Dobbie
Don L. Draper
Ralph Esparza
Jeanne E. Fell
Arthur Flores
Greg Gaddis
Angela K. Hale
David A. Hyman
David M. Inman

John Q. Jenkins
Craig Johnson
Craig A. Launer
Rebel K. Mayer
Paul A. McPherson
Renee Nelson
Stephen L. Peltz
Scott J. Petrick
Jack E. Rice
Jeff Ross
Richard L. Ross

Jose S. Salazar
Edward H. Seher
Beverly Sucich
Theodore J. Taylor
Kandathil C. Varughese
Ruth A. Washington
Alan J. Weinstein
Kurt F. Whitesell
Terrol J. Wiebers



Be Strong in the Political Game

Renfroe then welcomed Ed Kelly, President of the International Association of Fire Fighters, to address the convention. Kelly noted the similarities between his union's members and NALC members from their first days on the job. "We knew being part of a union was a path to a better life," he said. Letter Carriers and Firefighters also share a struggle as public-sector workers. "If you notice, whenever you get a check," he said, "there's a politician's signature on it. Whether we like it or not, we're in the political game. We have to be strong in the political game." Like Letter Carriers, Firefighters are harmed by the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and are working as allies with NALC to pass legislation to repeal it. "The government chose to rob us," Kelly said. "When they passed the Windfall Elimination Provision in 1980, they robbed us right before our eyes." Kelly also pledged to work to enact the Protect Our Letter Carriers Act: "We will fight in every congressional district to get that passed." The delegates responded with an enthusiastic Letter Carrier Cheer.

Next, President Renfroe invited Paul Hogrogian, president of the National Postal Mail Handlers Union (NPMHU), to the podium. "Postal workers have spent much blood, sweat and tears building the Postal Service into the greatest Postal Service in the world," he continued. "We have to make sure we stay united on our issues and make clear to the powers that be that we will not be divided," he said. "The Mail Handlers remain committed and stand shoulder to shoulder with Letter Carriers and all Postal workers to fight any battles that need to be fought!" The convention hall gave Hogrogian a passionate Letter Carrier cheer.

On the third day of the 73rd Biennial Convention, NALC embraced the power of people from all walks of life working together. They heard from speakers with messages of unity who called for an end to political and economic division in the country, and for union solidarity and activism worldwide. They celebrated Letter Carrier heroes and volunteers who bring their communities closer together by responding to emergencies, feeding the hungry and supporting people with muscular dystrophy.

What Service Looks Like

President Renfroe introduced Representative Katherine Clark, the minority whip in the U.S. House of Representatives. Clark noted that the nation's first Post Office was in Boston, and she praised Letter Carriers for their hard work. "You keep this country moving," she said. "You have shown America what service looks like." Warning of the political challenges confronting working people, Clark said the nation faces stark choices. "We find ourselves at a crossroads in this country," she said. "There are forces of division that are



Pictured above are Branch 2902 Financial Secretary/Treasurer Mary Stanley and MDA coordinator/branch Trustee Rochelle Harvey on the convention floor as they present a check in the amount of \$2,902 for MDA.

intent on tearing us apart, on turning neighbor against neighbor." Clark continued: "Plans have been laid out for the economy by those who see a winner's circle that is very small. It doesn't include you. It includes only the very wealthy and the very well connected." When workers are united, she added, they are up to the task of facing such challenges. "They underestimate the strength in this room and the solidarity that you have," Clark said, "and of workers across this country." Clark outlined the Democrats' agenda in Congress for supporting Letter Carriers and all workers, including legislation to protect Carriers from rising crime, strengthening the rights of workers to choose a union, defending retirement benefits, and ensuring that mail-in ballots are counted and respected. She reaffirmed the commitment of her political party to the labor cause: "The cornerstone of our party is the freedom of working people to stand together, to grow together, to rise together, to win together," she said, echoing the theme of the convention. "We are in your corner." "Letter Carriers, thank you for being in this fight, for walking that street into history," she said. "I am so grateful to walk alongside each and every one of you to see the better world that we can build together for every single working family in this country, and for the future that all of our children deserve." The convention responded by giving Clark a Letter Carrier cheer.

Resolutions

The delegates then discussed and debated proposed resolutions and amendments. The convention voted to adopt the resolutions previously approved by the Executive Council. More information about the approved resolutions is in the *Proposed Resolutions and Amendments* book.

Article 10 Appeals

In compliance with the resolution adopted earlier that day regarding Article 10 Appeals, President Renfroe handed the gavel to President Emeritus Fredric V. Rolando, who presided over the discussion. “Appeals to the convention that are pursuant to Article 10 of the Constitution, for us, is pretty much virgin territory,” Rolando said. The parties had agreed to a process for presenting their cases:

- Rolando read Article 10 of the NALC Constitution.
- He laid out the process by which the charges had been made, investigated and decided upon by the Executive Council.
- The President Emeritus explained the three appeals to those decisions that were proffered to the convention.
- Rolando said that each charge would be handled in turn.
- Director of City Delivery Chris Jackson was allowed 20 minutes to present his case to overturn the ruling of the Executive Council on Charge 1, Neglect of Duty.
- President Renfroe also received 20 minutes to present his case to uphold the Executive Council’s ruling of not guilty.
- Both parties then had five minutes each for rebuttal.
- Next, the delegates voted on whether to uphold or overturn the ruling.

After hearing the appeal, the delegates voted to uphold the Executive Council’s decision of not guilty on Charge 1 with a teller vote of 2,997 to 1,576. President Emeritus Rolando asked the convention to continue the process as soon as convenient on Thursday. After some announcements by Secretary-Treasurer Nicole Rhine, the session adjourned for the day at 3:17 p.m.

On the fourth day of the 73rd NALC Biennial Convention, the session began with the continuation of the hearing of Article 10 appeals, which were handled in an orderly manner. As the session continued, the delegates found common ground in dealing with the issues they face together: stopping the wave of crime against Carriers and extending to all Americans the right to vote by mail for any reason. They rallied behind NALC’s priority legislation in Congress to declare “Enough is Enough” by pushing for enactment of the Protect Our Letter Carriers Act, and they heard from its two initial sponsors, Representatives Greg Landsman (D-OH) and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA). “My goal is, the next time we gather here, we’re going to be celebrating that piece of legislation that is designed to keep you safe,” Fitzpatrick told the crowd. Thursday’s session concluded with delegates considering national agreement resolutions.

Call to Order

President Brian L. Renfroe turned the chair over to President Emeritus Fredric V. Rolando to continue the consideration of appeals. The appeal for Charge 2, Circulating

False or Misleading Statements about a NALC Officer, was then heard. Director of City Delivery Christopher Jackson was allowed 20 minutes to present his case to overturn the Executive Council’s ruling of not guilty on Charge 2. President Renfroe also received 20 minutes to present his case to uphold the Executive Council’s ruling. Each party then had five minutes for rebuttal. Ultimately, a teller vote of 2,949 to 1,478 upheld the Executive Council’s ruling of not guilty. Jackson had his appeal heard for Charge 4, Abandonment of Position. The teller vote for Charge 4 was 2,674 to 1,712 to uphold the Executive Council’s ruling of not guilty. Garden Grove, CA, Branch 1100 member Charlie Miller had his appeal heard for the penalty the Executive Council imposed for Charge 3, impaired driving in a NALC-owned vehicle. The teller vote for Charge 3 was 2,783 to 1,438 to uphold the Executive Council’s penalty

President Renfroe resumed presiding over the convention and introduced Representative Greg Landsman (D-OH), who came to the podium alongside the Ohio delegation. Landsman was an original sponsor of the Protect Our Letter Carriers Act, Renfroe told the delegates. “We knew Congressman Landsman was who we wanted to have on our side,” he said. “He didn’t hesitate.” Representative Landsman told the delegates about the key points of the legislation, including designating an assistant federal prosecutor in every district to handle crimes against Carriers and adding security boxes and e-keys to replace Arrow Keys. “The sooner we get them to you, the better,” he said. “Beyond making sure that you are safe and getting this bill passed,” Landsman added, “we need to build an economy that focuses on you who are on the front lines.” He called for tax reform that would both provide fairness for working folks and allow for more investment in public-sector employees. “The fact is, you all work your [butts] off, and you deserve what you deserve,” Landsman said. “You deserve to be safe, whether you are home or at work. Together, we are going to get this done,” he said. President Renfroe led delegates in a Letter Carrier cheer for Landsman.

Renfroe then introduced Representative Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA) as the author of the Protect Our Letter Carriers legislation. “It was his ideas and vision that helped shape the bill,” the NALC President said. “Working together with him and his staff, we landed on a comprehensive common-sense package that deters these crimes from happening. Ultimately, that will help keep Letter Carriers safe.” After being escorted to the podium by members of the Pennsylvania delegation, Fitzpatrick explained how the NALC leadership reached out to him. “They educated me about this emerging unfortunate trend of violence,” he said. “Over the past four years, it’s over 2,000 [assaults], and those are the documented cases—the ones we know about.” Fitzpatrick said that he was proud

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National Convention

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to help enact the Postal Reform Act. “While the Postal reform bill deals with financial security, the Protect Our Letter Carriers Act deals with your physical concern and safety,” he said. “You’re entitled to both.” He called on delegates to return to their home districts to ask their members of Congress to become co-sponsors of the bill. “My goal is, the next time we gather here, we’re going to be celebrating that piece of legislation that is designed to keep you safe,” he said. “Because it’s not just your financial security, it’s your physical security that matters as well.” President Renfroe led delegates in a Letter Carrier cheer for Fitzpatrick.

On the fifth day of the 73rd NALC Biennial Convention, President Renfroe read a letter from President Emeritus William H. Young, who called on Letter Carriers to get involved in the Presidential election and help elect Kamala Harris. “Call your state officer or local legislative representative and ask what you can do to help,” he wrote.

Renfroe called Secretary-Treasurer Nicole Rhine to the podium to resume consideration of resolutions, followed by Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Mack I. Julion, Director of City Delivery Christopher Jackson and Director of Safety and Health Manuel L. Peralta Jr.

The delegates voted to adopt resolutions:

- to bargain with management over back pay,
- to negotiate over debt-collection procedures, and
- to call for improved vehicle training. A number of resolutions relating to the Technology Integrated Alternate Route Evaluation and Adjustment Process (TI-AREAP) were discussed. One of them, Resolution 36, was amended by the maker and then approved by the Executive Council and adopted.

The NALC President called Vice President James D. Henry to the microphone to lead consideration of appeals. The delegates considered three appeals and voted to deny all three. The delegates then voted to approve a motion made from the floor for the NALC to create a standing committee on diversity, equity and inclusion.

Executive Vice President Paul Barner, a military veteran, took the stage to announce that the NALC Veterans Group has reached 19,738 members. President Renfroe then called on the veterans in the delegation to stand to be honored and led a Letter Carrier cheer for them.

President Renfroe called to the podium Trustees Chairman Brown, who is President of Los Angeles, California Branch 24, host branch for the 2026 convention. He invited the delegates to his city in two years, and then the delegates viewed a short welcome video. President Renfroe thanked Keith Lineman of Pasadena, California Branch 2200, chairman of the Distribution Committee, and his committee members for their work. President Renfroe expressed

thanks to Boston Branch 34 and everyone who worked to make the convention possible. The 73rd Biennial Convention adjourned on August 9, 2024.



Pictured above are (L-R) Branch 2902 Mail Bag News editor Paul Drapkin and President Perryman as they accept the award presented to the Mail Bag News for 2nd place for overall excellence for a large branch publication. Once again the MBN proves to be considered one of the best branch publications in the NALC nation.

Publication Awards

During the convention, President Renfroe recognized winners of NALC’s publications contest for 2022-2024:

- **Tri-Valley, California Branch 2902, the Mail Bag News won Second Place for Overall Excellence among Large Branch Publications.**

Organizing Awards

President Renfroe also recognized branches with the highest percentages of organization.

The best-organized branches in Category 2 with between 1,500 and 2,499 active Carriers:

- **Tri-Valley, California Branch 2902 won First Place with a 97.75 percent organization rate.**

Thanks goes out to all of those who wrote articles for our newsletter. Congratulations to the dedicated members of our branch; great work staying organized in solidarity which makes our membership stronger. And, a special thanks to our branch editor Paul Drapkin for his outstanding work. Great job everyone!

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Boston, Standing Firm

By Albert Reyes, Executive Vice President

It was a privilege once again to attend the NALC 73rd Biennial Convention! It was great to see everyone engaged and interacting with each other. Within the branch, a handful of new delegates attended their first convention. It was a great time coming together—a special thanks to Recording Secretary Diane Dozal for her first year taking attendance during the week.

Boston is a beautiful city rich in labor history. Many buildings, museums, statues, murals, and parks connect generations to those who fought the same fight a hundred years ago. It was significant to experience and cherish these memories with my fellow delegates. Let's remember all the fun sitting in the classrooms!

There were several main topics at the convention. Front and center were the charges of our National President, Brian Renfroe. Second was the status of our contract. Many delegates were upset with the lack of transparency regarding our contract negotiations. Many resolutions were heard and argued regarding the status and openness of our contract. "Close, we are close," calmly voiced President Renfroe.

Whether you agree or disagree with this approach, he stood firm and did not share any information. This convention was much different from years past. Although ultimately the

body voted for Brian Renfroe to maintain his position as the National President, a loud booning was echoed throughout the convention. There is a widespread division within our union. The delegates who opposed the overwhelmingly yes votes to keep Brian Renfroe in position stood firm with their disapproval throughout the convention. This was the opposite of National President Fredric Rolando, who kept the convention flowing with charisma and funny one-liners. Those days are long gone. So, what does NALC look like moving forward?

Many delegates want our negotiations to be made public through social media and news outlets. Before we go public, remember that the Postal Service has a low approval rating regarding customer satisfaction. Does anyone believe we would gain the public's support? An article in 2022 on the Federal News Network website cites, "USPS fell short on targets to improve or maintain customer satisfaction, and that customers, overall, were less satisfied with service in FY 2021, compared to the previous year." Is it wise to air our contract negotiations with the public who are less satisfied with their service? "USPS saw a more than 10% decrease in customer satisfaction with delivery, and more than a 6% decrease with the level of service on USPS.com." Could President Brian Renfroe share contract updates on the NALC website? ABSOLUTELY! This would eliminate those standing firm on airing our business during negotiations. How can we unify all sides so everyone gets what they are interested in? Will we find ourselves back here in two years? Yes, just like every contract negotiation. What is different this year than the previous years, a podcast, YouTube channels, or a social media group?

Has anyone started a podcast about rebuilding customer satisfaction? Is there a memo regarding public support that we can cite? During the pandemic, the public was definitely on our side. Let's build on that positive support. In the upcoming weeks leading up to November 5th, 2024, we get to showcase how important we are as Letter Carriers.

Any registered voter may vote using a vote-by-mail ballot instead of going to the polls on election day. Regardless of your political beliefs, the Postal Service will have another opportunity to be an essential part of a Presidential outcome. Let's do our part as Letter Carriers to ensure each political thin piece of campaign literature and ballots are delivered.



Pictured above is San Fernando retiree Bradly Walker as he is presented with his Retiree Watch and his 35-year Union Membership pin at the July branch meeting in Chatsworth. Congratulations Brad and enjoy that newfound freedom as a retiree. You deserve it.

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A Very Different Convention

By Alex Lopez, Senior Vice President, Branch 2902 LCPF Representative

Greetings to all our union Brothers & Sisters. I Hope everyone is staying safe and keeping hydrated out there. I just returned from the National Convention in Boston Massachusetts, and as I'm sure most of you have heard, this one was a little different as our National President had been found not guilty of three out of four Article 10 charges.

There was a motion made for the convention delegates to hear an appeal to the executive council's decisions. And as many of you may have already heard, the opposition who tried to overturn the Executive Council's decision did not prevail and the Executive Council's decision's were upheld. While that was not the outcome I was hoping for, I don't think it was a total loss. Mr. Renfroe now knows there is a significant number of Carriers who are not happy with his leadership and the way things are going.

The biggest complaint I heard is about the amount of time it has taken to get Carriers not just a contract, but a good contract. I also heard a lot of the older Carriers say, "well this is how long it has always taken." Well just because something was ok before, doesn't necessarily mean its ok now. And this wasn't the time to do the usual again. The big difference is that in the past we didn't have growing inflation quickly eating up Carrier's paychecks. Carriers at the top of the pay scale have probably been able to weather it a little better than our brothers and sisters at the lower end of the pay scale, so for them it may be easier to say that. Except for step increases for those not yet at the top level of the pay scale, we have not seen any COLA increases, or general wage increases in almost a year and a half now. That should not be acceptable.

Additionally it is also unacceptable that, as far as I know,

even though there is an arbitration panel that has been selected to hear both sides in the event an agreement is not reached, there is still no set date for hearings to begin the proceedings. The arbitration panel was formally agreed to by both parties back in March. What's the incentive for the Postal Service to make an agreement if they can just keep dragging this on indefinitely?

Hopefully by the time this is published in the *Mail Bag News*, a tentative agreement has already been announced and will be sent out to the membership to vote on. President Renfroe should be taking advantage of the second chance he has been given and deliver for Letter Carriers. I hope he has read the writing on the wall. If not, there will be another chance to oust him in 2026, and this time there will be credible candidates to vote him out, and not just David Noble and his band of misfits. I don't think the rank-and-file Carriers will be as forgiving in 2026 as the executive council

recently was if he does not deliver an acceptable National Agreement.

LCPF

I want to urge Letter Carriers to give to the Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF). I know a lot of people hate politics, but unfortunately, we are a federal agency, and Congress and the President have a say in how we are run. A hostile Congress and a President ready to sign bad legislation can take away many of our benefits and rights we have fought for and earned over decades. A friendly Congress and President can pass legislation that benefits and protects Carriers. The LCPF gives to candidates of both parties, as long as they support issues important to

continues on page 12



Pictured above is Branch 2902 Senior Vice President and Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF) coordinator Alex Lopez as he encourages all of us to contribute to the LCPF. As little as \$5 a pay period can go a long way to help in our struggle to keep our jobs safe and secure in a political environment that has so much uncertainty.



SIGN ME UP!

How to contribute to the Letter Carrier Political Fund using PostalEASE — ONLINE Enrollment

Through PostalEASE, active letter carriers can contribute directly from their USPS paychecks to the Letter Carrier Political Fund (NALC’s PAC) by designating the Political Fund as one of the three payroll “allotments.”

Online Enrollment

1. Login to USPS’s Postal Ease website at <https://ewss.usps.gov>
You may also get to the Postal Ease website through the USPS LiteBlue website See the instructions below
2. Click “I agree”
3. Enter your Employee ID number and Password and click “Submit”
If you have not yet set up a password click the link provided on the page or go to:
<https://ssp.usps.gov/ssp-web/welcome.xhtml>
If you forgot your password click the link provided on the page or go to:
<https://ssp.usps.gov/ssp-web/einVerification.xhtml>
4. Under Payroll click “Allotments / Payroll Net To Bank”
5. Click “Continue”
6. Click “Allotments”
7. Enter the 9-digit Financial Institution Routing Number: 0 6 4 0 0 0 1 7
8. Enter your 17-digit Account Number _____ 0 0 3 4 9 5 2 5 3 5
See instructions in step D at right
9. Enter Account type as “checking”
10. Enter amount of your Allotment: \$ _____
The maximum yearly amount is \$5,000
11. Click VALIDATE
12. Click SUBMIT
13. Print or write down your confirmation number for your records

To get to Postal Ease through Lite Blue:

- Got to www.liteblue.usps.gov
- Enter you employee ID and Password and click “Log On”
- Click “My HR”
- Click “Employee Apps”
- Click “PoastalEASE”
- Begin at step 1 above

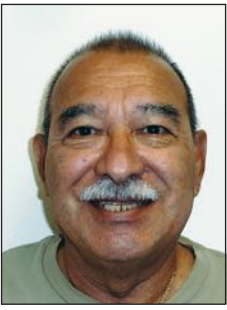
By making a contribution to the Letter Carrier Political Fund, you are doing so voluntarily with the understanding that your contribution is not a condition of membership in the National Association of Letter Carriers or of employment by the Postal Service, nor is it part of union dues. You have a right to refuse to contribute without any reprisal. Any guideline amounts are merely suggestions, and you may contribute more or less than the guidelines suggest and the union will not favor or disadvantage you by reason of the amount of your contribution or your decision not to contribute. The Letter Carrier Political Fund 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. Contributions to the Letter Carrier Political Fund are not deductible for federal income tax purposes. Federal law prohibits the Letter Carrier Political Fund from soliciting contributions from individuals who are not NALC members, executive and administrative staff or their families. Any contribution received from such an individual will be refunded to that contributor. Federal law requires us to use our best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, name of employer and occupation of individuals whose contributions exceed \$200 in a calendar year.

BEFORE YOU START, YOU’LL NEED:

- A. Your 8-digit Employee ID Number (on your paystub)
- B. Your USPS password
- C. Your Postal Record Number (Located on the back cover of your Postal Record magazine, above your name. Or call 202.393.4695 to get your Postal Record Number). See the example below.



- D. To create your personal account number, insert the seven digits of your Postal Record Number to the spaces below:
_____ 0 0 3 4 9 5 2 5 3 5



Make a Decision or It Will be Made for You

Do you want the government making such an important decision for you?

By Joe Gutierrez, Branch 2902 Health Benefits Representative

Hello everyone. Hope your year has been injury free and you are staying healthy. I wanted to talk about some of the free benefits that are available to members in the health plan. The first is Hinge Health. It is the plans 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 the program offers access to a personnel care team, including a physical therapist and health coaches. A tablet and wearable sensors that guide you through the exercises are also offered at no cost as part of the program. Video visits with your care team delivered through the Hinge Health app is another great benefit of the program.

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 his purchased price. For those of us who may be losing hearing or need some help hearing this is a great program that is available to our members. \$2,500 is offered by the plan for members and their dependents as a reimbursement.

Decision Time

I want to discuss the Postal Service Health Plan (PSHB) open season. This open season (November 11, 2024 to December 9, 2024) you must pick your a health plan. If not, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) will pick one for you. From what I have been told there are six plans in the program. I would advise you to call your plan to see if they have joined the (PSHB).

Starting April 1, 2024 through September 30, 2024 you can join Medicare if you are 65 or older and did not join in the past. This is known as the PSHP Special Enrollment Period (SEP) and the USPS will pay the late enrolled fee. 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 Enrollment Period. This is an extremely rare opportunity for those who had not signed up for Medicare in the past and an opportunity not to be dismissed lightly.

If you should choose the NALC Health Plan (Aetna Medicare Advantage) you will be reimbursed up to \$600 for your Medicare Part B premiums when Medicare Parts A and B are your primary carrier. With the SilverScript Employer Prescription Drug Plan you submit proof and you will be reimbursed up to \$600. You must register online, check the brochure or give me a call and I will help you. The plan has a website where you can register and see all that the plan offers check your brochure to see how to enroll. It's a great app and can answer a lot of your questions.

Keep in mind that this open season will be like no other we have experienced before. Because of the Postal Service Reform Act, this year you MUST choose a health plan. If not, OPM is going to automatically enroll you into a plan option offered by the same carrier that has equivalent benefits and cost-sharing to the FEHB plan option in which the Postal employee or annuitant was enrolled in for the 2024 plan year. Do you really want OPM to be making such an important decision for you? This is a fantastic opportunity for you to consider the NALC Health Plan (HBP). This is a plan run by your union built solely for the benefit of Carriers. Take the time to go to the OPM website and compare the different plans that will be available. I think that you will find that the NALC HBP cannot be beat.

A Very Different Convention

Letter Carriers. I know a lot of you are thinking “we already pay union dues, and now you want more of our money?” The short answer is yes. Because of federal law, the NALC is prohibited from using dues money for political campaigns. The only way we can influence politicians is with money we collect through the LCPF. Think of it as insurance. You have auto insurance in case of an accident. You have health

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insurance in case you get severely sick. Think of this as insurance so you can keep having a good job. The standard ask is that of \$5, but the LCPF will take any amount of at least \$1. A little bit from everyone adds up. You can find links to sign up on the NALC webpage, or I am the branch's LCPF coordinator, and will be happy to assist you. Stay safe out there.

Voting by Mail

The National Vote at Home Institute is a 501c3 organization that aims to increase voters' access to, use of, and confidence in voting at home. Voters receive mailed-out paper ballots. They can return their ballots by postage-free mail or in person at a secure location. Their ballots can now be tracked online, in real-time, to ensure their vote is counted. The Postal Service Election Improvement Act would require the Postal Service to issue best-practice guidance for election officials and designate advisors to ensure the proper handling of election mail. The National Vote at Home Institution plays a massive part in this success. This can be a big part of getting the public on the Letter Carrier's side.

Let's stand firm together and build satisfaction one customer at a time so that the public will support our cause. Starting full-time hourly wages of \$22.13 to max out full-time hourly wages of \$36.20 is far below our worth. Some customers will say that this is too high. I disagree; we are not paid enough. Sixteen-step grades to max out is far too long to wait.

I hope to share many more joyous moments at upcoming conventions. I want to thank each Carrier for their hard work and those delegates who had the patience to endure

the long hours of the convention. Contrary to any false rumors or gossip, this was not a free vacation. Delegates work hard to insure that your voice is represented and that much needed information is brought home to share with you, those that we represent.

If you haven't done so, please download the NALC app, and always be safe out there! See everyone at the general membership meeting every third Thursday of the month.



Pictured above are retirees (L-R) Steve Packer, Mike Zeiper and Dan Gorman along with Director of Retirees Bev Sucich as she presents this crew with their 55-year Union Membership pins. Thank you gentlemen for your many valued years of union membership.

Treasurer's Report

7/1/2024 - 7/31/2024

General Account

Previous Balance	\$51,978.77
Receipts	\$64,792.75
Sub-Total	\$116,771.52
Disbursements	\$77,015.54
Total-on-Hand	\$39,755.98

Payroll Account

Previous Balance	\$9,836.51
Receipts	\$26,000.00
Sub-Total	\$35,836.51
Disbursements	\$11,061.59
Total-on-Hand	\$24,774.92

General Account (New)

Previous Balance	\$88,081.40
Receipts	0.00
Sub-Total	\$88,081.40
Disbursements	\$32,165.12
Total-on-Hand	\$55,916.28

Payroll Account (New)

Previous Balance	\$23,140.90
Receipts	\$40,000.00
Sub-Total	\$63,140.90
Disbursements	\$22,330.67
Total-on-Hand	\$40,810.23

Convention Fund

Previous Balance	\$243,430.02
Checking Acct #7 .15% rate-USPS-CU Dividend/Int.	\$29.70
(Active & Retirees 1650 x \$2 per By-Laws)	\$3,300.00
Total of Convention Fund	\$246,759.72

Contingency Fund

C.D. (6 mos) .350% rate Premier CU #1	\$93,694.87
C.D. (6 mos) .250% rate Premier CU #2	\$12,726.69
C.D. (1 yr) .598% rate Premier CU #3	\$120,046.26
MM Cert #21 (26 wks) .200% rate USPS CU	\$27,049.61
MM Cert #18 (26 wks) .250% rate USPS CU	\$25,296.10
MM Cert #19 (26 wks) .250% rate USPS CU	\$74,688.88
MM Ckg #8 (26 wks) .250% rate USPS CU	\$47,598.04
C.D. (6 mos) .380% Priority One CU	\$34,219.79
Shares acct USPS CU	\$7.11
Total of Contingency Fund	\$435,327.35

Retiree Fund

Retiree Luncheon	\$5,218.41
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Mary Stanley
Financial Secretary-Treasurer





Looking Ahead for Family Protection

By Chris Alessi, MBA/NSBA Representative

As Fall arrives, it would be a good time to evaluate your life insurance needs for your family's future protection. Mutual Benefits Association (MBA) insurance products can offer policies that can suit your individual needs based on your families particular lifestyle.

According to the Life Insurance Marketing Research Association, it is reported that 45% of widows and 37% of widowers say their spouse was inadequately insured. One or two years after a spouse's death half of the widows and one the of the widowers are just barely getting by financially. Approximately 12% of U.S. households would have immediate trouble meeting everyday living expenses if a primary wage earner died, and another 15% would have difficulty keeping up with expenses after several months. Lastly, 25% of household heads don't feel they have a plan in place to provide decent standard of living for their families if they died tomorrow. Research shows that 24% of Americans over the age of 65 experience death of a spouse. Widowhood often has a negative effect on the finances of the surviving spouse. The Social Security Administration reports the rate of poverty among elderly widows is three to four times higher than their married counter partners of the same age. Even widows that aren't impoverished often face major financial adjustments such as decreased income, loss of health Insurance, or the need to relocate.

The previous examples are reason enough that you should at least once a year review your income and debt ratio based on life's changes to see if you would have enough income to live a good quality of life for your family if your loved one passed away and there is loss of their income.

Some important expenses to consider are:

- (1) **Final Expenses** - one time expenses incurred by your death, including funeral costs, legal fees, and estate taxes.
- (2) **Outstanding Debt** - to be paid off at your death.
- (3) **Readjustment Expense** - to cover a transition period, including child care, additional homemaking help and training for a surviving spouse.
- (4) **Dependency Expense** - until all children are self-supporting

(5) **Educational Expense** - Annual college cost in current dollars multiplied by the number of years and children to attend.

(6) **Life Income for the surviving spouse** - After all the children are self-supporting, estimated annual amount desired minus annual income from employment.

(7) **Retirement Income for the surviving spouse** - Annual Income desired in current dollars minus Social Security and any pension Income.

Now is the time to plan your purchase of life insurance coverage. The financial soundness of the insurer is a very critical concern, you have to have assurance that the company will be around in case you aren't.

The MBA was established in 1891 and is a non-profit fraternal benefit arm of the NALC to provide low cost life insurance to members of the NALC. The MBA is financially sound with 259 million in assets and 35 million in reserves.

Always review your coverage every few years or when changes occur, such as buying a home or having children. You can call me anytime to make sure your coverage is always aligned with your needs.

In closing, Jim Yates and his staff gave a great workshop at the Boston convention. They discussed the Individual Disability Plan that has a six- or twelve-monthly period with a benefit amount of \$650, \$1,300 or \$2,000. They also went over The MBA Hospital Plus Plan that gives up to \$100 per day that is tax free. We also discussed the Retirement Savings Plan that is paying 3¼% interest. Lastly they talked about having branches to purchase additional group accidental and term insurance for active Carriers.

The guest speaker was Ryan Nevin from Regions Bank and he presented us with great detail on estates and trust planning. This gave us a better understanding of legal options to aid Letter Carriers and their families in planning for their future.

Take care. You can call me any time to make sure your coverage is always aligned with your needs or you can call the MBA at 1(800) 424-5184 Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8:30 a.m. -3:30 p.m. EST. Or call (202) 638-4318 from 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. EST.

God Bless you.



Legislative Updates

Let's help these bills cross the finish line

By David Hyman, Branch 2902 Trustee & Political Liaison

Greetings Sisters and Brothers! In the last issue of the *Mail Bag News* I mentioned the House version of the "Protect Our Letter Carriers Act" (POLCA), H.R. 7629. There is now a companion measure in the Senate, S. 4356 by Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Josh Hawley (R-MO). The House version has 106 co-sponsors including local member Julia Brownley. The senate version of POLCA was introduced in May and has two co-sponsors. Crimes against Letter Carriers have been rising and hopefully these bills will increase the odds these thugs will be caught and locked up longer. Arrow keys, Carriers' personal property, and the mail are being stolen at gunpoint. The keys have been sold on the black market and are being used to steal mail from collection boxes as well as multifamily mailboxes.

Updating the other bills we have been following shows a slow increase in the number of co-sponsors. The Social Security Fairness Act, H.R. 82 increased to 323 co-sponsors. The Senate version, S. 597 increased to 61, just enough to avoid a potential filibuster. All our local Representatives and both Senators are on these bills as co-sponsors. Interesting to note, JD Vance (R-OH) signed up to co-sponsor the bill last year. Hopefully, Trump, who is not very supportive of union workers will stay quiet on this legislation.

The Comprehensive Paid Leave for Federal Employees Act, H.R. 856 increased to 53 co-sponsors with only Brownley of our local representatives on as a co-sponsor. The Senate version, S. 274 stayed at 11 co-sponsors including Senator Alex Padilla (D-CA).

H.R. 3721, the USPS Shipping Equity Act increased to 22 co-sponsors, no co-sponsors from our area yet. Hearing from you will definitely help. The Federal Retirement Fairness Act, H.R. 5995, increased to 120 co-sponsors including Brownley. H.R. 376, the Door-to-Door Delivery resolution increased to 56 co-sponsors including Tony Cardenas. Cardenas also introduced H.R. 8884, Peggy Frank Memorial Act to expedite the requirement that all Postal vehicles have A/C in them. This bill is off to a slow start with one co-sponsor. Our elected officials will be in DC the last three weeks of September to hopefully pass some of these bills. Contacting your representatives is how we let them know how we want them to vote on these issues. Let them hear from you.

The August 2024 NALC National convention held in Boston was a lot different than previous conventions due to

the additional discussions on the actions of current NALC President Brian Renfroe and the lack of a contract for well over a year. Renfroe has a substance abuse issue and his actions during this part of his life caused a lot of problems for many of those in attendance who felt his actions deserved more punishment than the decision handed down which was the suspension of his driving a NALC vehicle for one year. His due diligence in serving our members was also challenged.

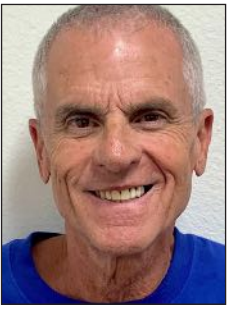
There were numerous workshops before and after the general session, and I attended a couple of them dealing with legislative and political updates.

The branch won a couple of awards at the convention. Branch 2902 won an award for our union membership organization being at 97.75% and the *Mail Bag News* won a second place award for Outstanding General Excellence.

A contingent of us from the branch were in attendance on September 7th at Dodger Stadium to watch the Dodgers vs the Cleveland Guardians.

Speaking of the Dodgers, former first baseman Steve Garvey is the GOP Senate nominee running against Adam Schiff. Needless to say, the L.A. Federation of Labor strongly supports Schiff for his consistent support of working families. It does not look like Garvey is ready for the major leagues in the political arena.





Thank You, Manny!

By Ray Hill, President Emeritus

Printed on page 5 of the July/August issue of the *Mail Bag News* is a list of Branch 2902 members eligible to receive their 55-year NALC Membership Pins. I worked with some of the members listed in North Hollywood and know several of the others I met during my years as a branch officer. I have known one of the members listed, Manuel Feliciano, since I began my Letter Carrier career 40 years ago.

My official hire date with USPS is July 30, 1984. After two weeks of training at the old Van Nuys plant, I reported to the Studio City Office in North Hollywood where I began carrying mail that August. It was extremely hot in Studio City when I began my career. Before I applied to take the USPS exam, I saw Carriers working and recall thinking that it looked like a job I would enjoy and have no trouble performing. In fact, it looked easy to me. In those days I did a lot of hiking and backpacking and was in the best shape of my life. There was no way I would have any trouble carrying mail, or so I thought.

After the relatively easy time spent with my on-the-job instructor (OJI) ended, I ventured out on my own and found out how wrong I was when I thought the job of a Letter Carrier was an easy one. On the contrary, I struggled in the office and on the street during the first month of my probationary period. I remember how well I was treated by the veteran Carriers in the Studio City Office when I first started. Although they joked around constantly and tried to get me to go to Station Manager Al Martinez's office to fetch a "case stretcher," almost all of them went out of their way to offer words of encouragement and to let me know that the job would get easier and easier with each passing day. When I carried parts of their routes, they made sure the mail they

handed off to me was well organized and took the time to explain the line of travel, always with a map included. If I made a mistake, like leaving an outgoing letter or two at their cases with the mail I brought back, they would let me know about it after they had placed that letter or two in the outgoing mail. If I brought back deliverable mail, they would bring it to my attention and tell me to be careful. But they never ran to management to rat me out for my mistakes. No, they brought my mistakes to my attention so I would learn from those mistakes without bringing my mistakes to management's attention. They truly had my back. That is how it was in the Studio City office then and probably in every other office as well. I really shouldn't name those helpful Studio City Carriers because I am sure to leave some names out, but those who come to mind immediately (in no particular order) are Jim Stevens, the Wiebers brothers (Wayne and Terry), Bob Morris, Bob St. Clair, Dennis Dobbie, Tony Delacruz, George Eggleston (our Shop Steward), Ward Lively, Ron Mason, Jose Salazar, Brent

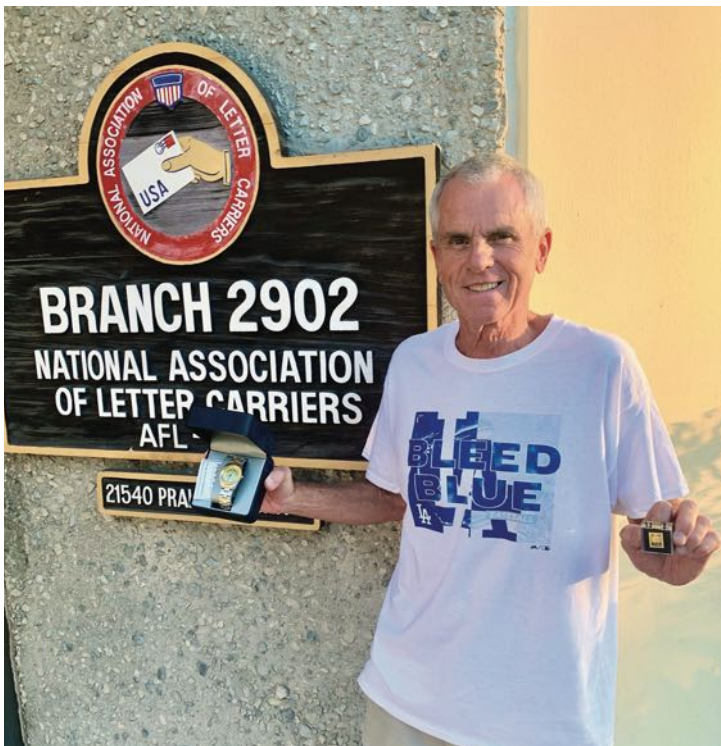
Foster, Dickie Liu, Bob Mitchell, Carl Wesanen and the aforementioned Manuel (Manny) Feliciano.

The first route I carried entirely on my own during my probationary period was Manny Feliciano's route 409. I reported for duty that day at 10:00 a.m. Manny was dressed in street clothes with the mail pulled down and ready for me in a hamper. He provided me with a route map and explained the line of travel before wishing me well and sending me on my way to load my jeep. Yes, we drove jeeps then. In 1984, route 409 was a park and loop route in a nice residential area of Studio City, which was a high-volume office. Most of the routes had four hours of office time and four hours of street



Pictured above is North Hollywood retiree Manny Feliciano as he is presented with his 55-year Union Membership pin at the July Membership Meeting. Thanks for all your years of union membership Manny.

time. I am sure new Carriers cannot even imagine routes receiving volumes of mail that took four hours to case and pull down. Being new to carrying mail, I struggled that hot August day on Manny's route and did a lot of backtracking during the first few hours. Sometime around 1:00 p.m. I noticed a car driven by an attractive woman that circled the block a few times. After the second or third time circling the block, I realized this attractive woman was looking at me each time she passed by. I asked myself, hopefully, "is she checking me out?" When I finally finished the loop and returned to my jeep, the woman was parked and waiting for me. Waving her index finger, she motioned for me to come to her car and rolled down her window as I approached. I quickly learned how deluded I was when I had wondered if she was checking me out. She leaned out her window and asked, with a smile, "Where's Manny?" I explained that he had an appointment that day and I was carrying the route for him. She seemed truly disappointed and said she had lunch for him, pointing to two Tupperware containers sitting on the front passenger seat of her car. Whatever was in those containers smelled delicious, however she did not offer them to me as she rolled up her window and quickly drove away. That food was for Manny only. Throughout the day, I must have been asked that same question by patrons 20 different times, "where's Manny"? Carrying Manny's Route 409 that day is one of those early Letter Carrier memories I will never forget.



Pictured above is President Emeritus Ray Hill as he is presented with his Retirement Watch and his 35-year Union Membership pin at the July Union Meeting. Congratulations Ray and thanks for all your years of very honorable service to the branch.

I bid out of the Studio City Office shortly after passing probation and became a NALC steward in 1990 at the Laurel Canyon office. For a long period of time, commencing approximately 1997, the Studio City office did not have an in-office Steward. Our North Hollywood Chief Steward and Branch 2902 Senior Vice President, Mike Steele, handled Steward work there and later Greg Gaddis also handled Steward duties there. When neither Mike nor Greg were available, I too was assigned Steward work in the Studio City office. In 1998 all of the North Hollywood Installation offices, including Studio City, had some really punitive managers and supervisors working under the tutelage of our evil Postmaster, Dale Herbert. Dale Herbert has long since passed away, however I feel no guilt whatsoever calling him evil in this article because I called him evil to his face, many, many times in one contentious Step 2 grievance meeting. Herbert and his crew of misfit managers took a twisted delight in screwing with veteran Carriers, including Manny and many of his co-workers. In 1998 Manny was issued a bogus 14-day suspension and I was assigned the task of defending him in the grievance procedure. In 1998, suspensions were not "paper ones" as they are today; Carriers actually served their suspensions without pay. I say I was assigned the "task" of defending Manny, but it was really a labor of love because I took great pride in defending the Studio City Carriers and I absolutely loved kicking the Dale Herbert regime's collective asses in the grievance procedure. During my investigation of Manny's background for his suspension grievance, I discovered he was a decorated Korean War Veteran who had been wounded in action and had received a Purple Heart Medal. After discovering this fact my blood was boiling and I asked myself, "where do these punitive, asshole supervisors get off, f_ _ _ing with a decorated war veteran?" I am proud to say we were successful in getting the bogus discipline rescinded and removed from his file.

Manny, who is 94 years old now, was at our branch meeting in July to accept his 55-year NALC Membership Pin. I swear to you, Manny doesn't look much different now than he did that day in 1984 when I carried his route. In fact, he challenged me to a push up contest that night. I declined, of course, because I had little doubt he would win and embarrass me at the meeting. I urge all the members eligible for 55-year pins (listed on page 5 of July *Mail Bag News*) to come to a branch meeting, if able to do so, and allow President James Perryman to present your pins to you. Be sure to call the union office first so they know you will be attending. Let us all give thanks to Manny and the many other veteran Carriers who came before us and made our lives easier when we were new on the job. You are all greatly appreciated. Thank you, Manny!



My First Convention, But Not My Last

By Sam Sabedra, Sylmar Shop Steward

It was the night before my first convention and back at my office, a grievance was waiting and somewhere out there a CCA was still working delivering Amazon parcels in hopes of going home sometime that night. I found myself in Boston, a city where America's democracy began with the first reading of the Declaration of Independence. I did not know what to expect — about five thousand brothers and sisters representing over 290,000 active and retired city Letter Carriers were all under one roof to continue the tradition of literally using their voice to shape the future of our National Association Letter Carriers Union.

Any member can be a delegate. Every branch has different rules to qualify to represent them and not all delegates were lucky enough to be compensated for their time, but nonetheless they still came because together we are stronger.

The first day was historic as the first of the major debates up for discussion was whether the President we elected could keep any issue they interpreted as not appropriate for the body of the delegates to vote on away from the convention floor which is the last step in any appeal and remains the final answer, the people answered "we are the supreme body who decides, not the supreme being" referring to President Brian Renfroe. All charges against Renfroe were heard, and voted on to whether they agreed with the executive boards decisions and its remedies. A vote of almost two-thirds agreed to keep it the same. The voices of 5,000 Letter Carriers screaming at the top of their lungs either "YES" or "NO" to the question each time was indecisive and a request of a tally vote by standing and being counted one-by-one was the

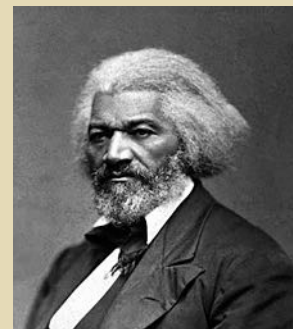
way in which a final outcome was decided. The request for a tally vote is every members right to do so.

Whether or not you agree or disagree with the results, one thing remains, the voices of the membership should be and will always be heard. Only they can ultimately decide the fate of the union it represents. I heard many times how the younger generations no longer want to fight for their rights or work hard, but one of the votes was to demand the elected leadership who negotiates our contracts actively inform its membership of the actual details of its negotiations, and although it did not pass, almost 700 members of all ages lost against 1400, voting to disapprove it and three other resolutions all at the same time. Although it did not pass this shows that members of the "younger" generation are willing to stand up to have their voices heard just as the generations before them did the same. A rising tide of people willing to bring their ideas forward, even against the majority, is how our union remains stronger than ever instead of becoming complacent.

The rest of the week was spent hearing almost 100 resolutions, amendments and appeals to the body, almost each time being heard, debated and voted on. I was proud and honored to represent my branch brothers and sisters to make our voices heard, to help decide the future of our rights, of the NALC, and what I want my job as a professional City Letter Carrier to look like by voting on what we want bargained for by the leadership we elected to represent us. A louder union whose goal of wanting the best for all members will always be stronger than a union whose members are too afraid to fight!

"If there is no struggle there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom and yet deprecate agitation are men who want crops without plowing up the ground; they want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters. This struggle may be a moral one, or it may be a physical one, and it may be both moral and physical, but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will."

— Frederick Douglass



Category 2: 1,500-2,499 members

1. Branch 2902, Tri-Valley, CA
97.75%
2. Branch 86, Hartford, CT
97.49%
3. Branch 2502, Las Vegas, NV
97.27%

As presented to the convention, the results of the Category 2 Branch Union Organization Awards.



Pictured above is Region 1 National Business Agent, Keisha Lewis and NALC President Brian Renfroe as they present to Branch 2902 President Perryman the award for being the most organized branch in Category 2 (1,500-2,499 members) in the country with a 97.75% organization rate, a truly admirable feat.

Charity

During convention, MDA Coordinator Mary Stanley and Assistant Coordinator Rochelle Harvey donated a check for \$2,902 to MDA in behalf of branch 2902. Thank you, Mary and Rochelle, for your outstanding fundraising work. And, thanks to all who donated to the NALC's official charity which led to the return of our branch's historic announcement during this national convention.

Convention Classes

The classes put on during the convention were highly informative and well attended by our delegation.

Other Resolutions of Interest

MBA Booklet - PASSED: The MBA will update this booklet with new existing products. (Thanks to the Author of the Resolutions-Chris Alessi)

Automatic 50% Extra - PASSED: Extra 50% automatic pay for working over 12/60 hours applied by the Postal Service.

Transparent Contract Negotiations - DEFEATED: Provide all information discussed during the negotiation process to all members.

'48 States COLA - DEFEATED: Institute Cost of Living Allowance for all qualified high-cost areas - ('48's-COLA)

Annual Leave Exchange - PASSED: Carriers should be allowed to sell back a max of 80 hours of annual leave.

Technology/Scanning - PASSED: No discipline cannot be issued based solely on scanner data

Summing up Contentious Views

I believe that there were some strong views at the convention about the votes on the Article 10 charges against President Renfroe and some of the resolutions and amendments and this might not sit well with some of our members. However, while sometimes democracy may be messy, as is the process of protecting Letter Carrier rights of due process. President Renfroe, as well as the charging officers, and convention delegates were afforded the opportunity to due process. This is similar to the process rights and the grievance procedure that the NALC ensures to its members.

It's easy to think that the jury may be wrong when we don't like the decision(s), and some may say that President Renfroe was attacked by a pack of dogs that barked but didn't bite (figuratively speaking). However, I commend NALC Director of City Delivery, Christopher Jackson and others for having the courage to stand up for democracy while attempting to correct an unjust and I applaud the convention delegates for exercising their rights to have their voices heard.

Although the conversations during the convention appeared to be more like a traffic jam with everyone honking their horns, the supreme body had the final say. I hope that we've learned from this experience and continue to stand together in solidarity as a union going forward.

I want to offer a special thanks to our branch delegates who served on the different committees and to Jessel Barrios for covering the branch during convention week. I also want to thank you, the members of Branch 2902 for making it an honor and privilege to represent our branch at the 73rd Biennial NALC Convention. That's all for now, I'll be back with more. God bless everyone.



Pictured above are (L-R) retirees Sonny Castellano, Lee Leighton, Scott Campbell, Bob Golden, Jon McClaren and Director of Retirees Bev Sutch as she presents these distinguished retirees with their Union Membership pins at the July Retirees luncheon. Thank you, gentlemen for your valued years of membership.



SECURE AND EASY SLIDE DOG SPRAY HOLSTER!

VIDEO



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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.

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- James Perryman

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

- Albert Reyes

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT

- Alex Lopez

VICE PRESIDENT

- Walter Williams

FINANCIAL SECRETARY/TREASURER

- Mary Stanley

RECORDING SECRETARY

- Diane Dozal

DIRECTOR OF RETIREES

- Bev Sucich

MBA/NSBA REPRESENTATIVE

- Chris Alessi

HEALTH BENEFIT OFFICER

- Joe Gutierrez

SGT.-AT-ARMS

- Bob Golden

TRUSTEES:

- Marcos Aldrete
- Rochelle Harvey
- Dan Gorman
- David Hyman
- Louie Rodriguez

WEBMASTER

- Larry Orcutt

Know Your Rights

M-39 115.4 Maintain Mutual Respect Atmosphere

The National Agreement sets out the basic rules and rights governing management and employees in their dealings with each other, **but it is the front-line manager** who controls management's attempt to maintain an atmosphere between employer and employee which assures mutual respect for each other's rights and responsibilities. (Emphasis added)

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No. Hollywood Chief S.S.	Louie Rodriguez
Chandler	Louie Rodriguez
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Studio City	Louie Rodriguez
Valley Village	Louie Rodriguez
Northridge Chief S.S.	Robert Tracey
Porter Ranch	Robert Tracey
Ojai Chief S.S.	Call Union Hall
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Pacoima Chief S.S.	Steve Dickerson
Reseda Chief S.S.	Robert Tracey
San Fernando Chief S.S.	Martin Diaz
M.C.A. S.S.	Javier Torres
M.C.A. Alternate S.S.	Diane Dozal
North Hills S.S.	Fernando Aguilar
North Hills Alternate S.S.	Diane Dozal
Sylmar / Main Office	Martin Diaz
Sylmar S.S.	Samuel Sabedra
Sylmar Alternate S.S.	Abel Vazquez
Santa Paula Chief S.S.	Marcos Aldrete
Simi Valley Chief S.S.	Sal Lopez
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Mt. McCoy Station S.S.	Sal Lopez
Thousand Oaks Chief S.S.	Alex Lopez
	Walter Williams
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Alternate S.S.	Mary Stanley
Newbury Park S.S.	Alex Lopez
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THE MAIL BAG NEWS

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When: Tuesday, September 17, 2024

Time: 11:00 am to 1:00 pm

OCTOBER

Where: Golden Panda
1825 Madera Rd.
Simi Valley

When: Tuesday, October 15, 2024

Time: 11:00 am to 1:00 pm

Calendar of Events

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| SEP 17 | Retiree Luncheon* 11:00 am
Golden Panda-Simi Valley |
| SEP 19 | Regular Branch Meeting* 7:00 pm
Union Hall-Chatsworth |
| OCT 3 | Executive Board Meeting* 6:00 pm
Executive Council Meeting* 7:00 pm |
| OCT 14 | Columbus Day-Holiday |
| OCT 15 | Retiree Luncheon* 11:00
Golden Panda-Simi Valley |
| OCT 17 | Regular Branch Meeting* 7:00 pm
Union Hall-Chatsworth |
| OCT 31 | Halloween  |
| NOV 3 | Daylight Savings Time Ends |
| NOV 7 | Executive Board Meeting* 6:00 pm
Executive Council Meeting* 7:00 pm |
| NOV 11 | Veterans Day-Holiday  |

* Subject to Covid-19 restrictions