

The Official Newsletter of NALC Branch 1439

The 1439'er

President's Report

Case This!

A few months ago, I attended the Committee of President's (COP) meeting in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Many of you want to know why I go to these meetings. I go because if you want to have your questions answered, sometimes you have to go to the horse's mouth and ask the questions. Sometimes I feel like I get the wrong end of the horse, but that is the risk I take.

I went to the COP meeting wanting answers to these two questions:

Who gave the okay for these new case configurations?

Do our National Officers really believe that a letter carrier, a local supervisor and the local shop steward have the power to adjust the carrier's route with a territorial transfer?

With these questions in mind, I participated in the meetings, along with approximately 250 other NALC branch presidents from all over the country. The first day, NALC National President Bill Young took the stage. I had met him the previous evening, and he seems more relaxed and confident than ever.

Brother Young spoke on a wide range of topics, ranging from postal reform, DOIS, and mail volumes to some guy in Texas named George Lopez (Not THAT George Lopez!) who is a lock for USPS A--Hole manager of the year.

After a couple of hours Bill opened the floor

to questions. I was Number 11 in line for questions. Within a minute of approaching the mike I asked these questions:

Who thinks it is easier to case into a 2-shelf case configuration rather than a 3-shelf configuration?

Who thinks it is easier to case two numbers per slot rather than one number per slot?

Why is the main case in front of the carrier, and the second case on the right? For right-handed casing, which is a USPS requirement, the second case should be on your left side, to match the way your elbow bends, not behind you to the right!

USPS says that these changes will reduce the number of twisting and turning injuries. If this is true, why doesn't USPS care about the rural routes? They have as many as 5 cases, and nobody is changing their cases!

Eventually I had to stop asking questions and get some answers. I shut my big mouth, stood up to my maximum 5'5" and waited. Brother Young looked down

at me from the podium, took off his glasses and quietly began to tell me:

In 1992, NALC and USPS negotiated a process where we all went to a one bundle system. During this time carriers were allowed to select either a four, five or six shelf system, which we all did.

In 2001, we successfully negotiated for Level 6 pay. One of the things we gave up for Level 6 pay was case configurations!

My jaw nearly dropped to the floor. I had never heard this! I looked back at the other 250 branch presidents. None of them were laughing at me, so I guess this was news to them, also. I then tried to insert my other foot in my mouth by asking, "I don't understand. Even if management has the right, why are they making it harder to us to case mail? Why are they fixing something that was not broken?"

Brother Young again spoke to me in a calm manner. He explained that one of the biggest expenses to USPS is new offices. The USPS network expands by millions of deliveries per year. An office

Continues on Page 3

The 1439'er

The 1439'er
NALC Branch 1439
P.O. Box 3011
Ontario CA 91761-0902
www.nalcbranch1439.org

Executive Officers

President Tom Anderson
Vice President Dennis Kersee
Secretary Mark Lesch
Treasurer Dale Jordan

Stewards

Alta Loma Harold Kelso
Rancho Cucamonga Richard Spears
Ontario Main Office Bob McLaughlin
Ontario Main Office Robert Ortiz
Ontario Downtown Station Hector Meneses III
Ontario Plaza Station Jack Gonzalez

Trustees

Alta Loma Denise Jordan
Rancho Cucamonga Corinne Giron
Ontario Main Office Joseph Vasquez

Branch Meetings

Branch meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month. The meeting location is the Rancho Cucamonga Senior Center, 9791 Arrow Route in Rancho Cucamonga, one block east of Archibald Avenue (just east of the Jack-in-the-Box shopping center). Meetings begin at 7:00 p.m. To submit items to the Branch meeting agenda prior to the meeting, please contact Secretary Mark Lesch at (760) 951-8201 or at the Ontario Downtown Station (909) 984-2937, or via email at mlesch@linkline.com

1439'er Information

The 1439'er is the official publication of the National Association of Letter Carriers Branch 1439, Ontario—Rancho Cucamonga, California. All members are invited to submit articles for publication. All articles must be typewritten and signed by the author, and must be submitted by the twentieth day of the month preceding publication. The editor reserves the right to edit, delete or reject an article for the good of the branch. To submit an article send it to the Branch post office box listed above, in care of Mark Lesch, Editor, or submit via email to mlesch@linkline.com

The 1439'er is produced by the Howard Quinn Company, San Francisco, CA. Visit them on the Web at www.howardquinn.com

Branch 1439 Affiliations

NALC Branch 1439 is affiliated with the Central Labor Council of San Bernardino—Riverside Counties, and the International Labor Communications Association (ILCA).

Useful World Wide Web Information

NALC National Web Site

<http://www.nalc.org/>

NALC Contract Administration Unit

<http://www.nalc.org/depart/cau/index.html>

NALC Health Benefit Plan

<http://www.nalc.org/depart/hbp/index.html>

Office Of Personnel Management

<http://www.opm.gov/>

OWCP San Francisco Region Office

<http://www.dol.gov/dol/esa/public/contacts/owcp/9sf.htm>

Notes from the Downtown Station

Greetings from the fabulous Ontario Downtown Station. This old building is getting a face lift, with new central air/heating and a new roof soon to be completed. Hopefully the roof will cure all the leaks that spring up this time of the year, and the soon to be 65 year old station will be almost as good as new.

The publication of this newsletter will commence on a bi-monthly starting with this issue. I apologize for the sporadic issuance of The 1439'er. We will work diligently to keep it coming on a regular basis.

Still, this branch has 198 active members and it is not a good thing when only two of them write for the paper. Surely some of our members and officers have the ability to contribute. I encourage all members to participate in this paper. As editor, I will accept any contributions from the membership, providing your ideas, articles, criticisms, photos, etc are send to me electronically (preferred) or typewritten and do not cause the branch to be sued! If in doubt, call or email me and we can discuss it.

This past year marked the 24th holiday season I have delivered mail for the Postal Service. I have never seen the pressure to make the numbers so great as it was this year. At the Downtown Station we were and are constantly told that our office time is bad, our street time is bad, our percent to standard is bad, that Ontario is the worst of office in the Santa Ana District and we are the worst unit in Ontario. Hey, everybody should be Number 1 at something!

I expect this pressure to remain constant. Management will stop at nothing to get their

bonuses, and these bonuses are harder to achieve this year.

Remember, you get paid by the hour! You are entitled to two 10 minute breaks and a 30 minute lunch each day, make sure you take them. DOIS is just a management tool, it is driven by garbage data that is never in the carrier's favor. I believe the mail count at the Downtown Station is higher than what is reported in DOIS. Last year when we did the mail counts the mail on my route was under counted by 25%. Always carry your route in a professional and safe manner.

Finally, long time Downtown Station manager Conrad (Nick) Silva retired last month. I am sure some will miss him, but not this writer. By the next issue of this paper we should know who will be the new station manager. Perhaps in an effort to save some money USPS should abolish this job. A 204b ran this office by herself for years.

Until next time, please be careful out there! ♦

President's Report

Continued from Page 1

the size of Rancho Cucamonga costs USPS about \$10 million to build. If USPS can squeeze more routes into similar spaces, it could save millions in building costs.

I turned to walk back to my seat. I looked at Bill Young and he gave me a small smile and a nod. I decided that after being angry with Bill for a couple of years, I was actually beginning to like him again!

Brother and sisters, that is it. If you want your third case back, all you have to do a take a pay cut. Maybe they will take away one of the other cases, and give me another pay raise.

Hell, I'll case mail into a bucket. It may take me longer, but if they don't care, why should I? I will work as efficiently as the equipment allows me.

Enough about case configurations, I am running out of space. I'll tell you the answer to my second question at the next branch meeting.

18 and 8

Tom ♦

Branch Meeting

Minutes

December 12, 2004

The meeting of Branch 1439 of the NALC began at 7:19 p.m. The roll call of officers indicated that all were present except for Robert Ortiz. Rancho steward Richard Spears read the minutes from the November 2004 meeting. The minutes were accepted as read. No treasurer's report was available.

Reports

Branch President Tom Anderson reported on proposed route counts that would be based on a carrier's performance throughout the year with real mail counts. Sadly, management has called an end to local negotiations for changing route count methods and is going back to the old, adversarial method.

Tom also reported that 22 special route count requests in Ontario were denied due to the carrier cases being changed. Tom stated that he cannot find how these requests can be denied for case changes in any contract or manual.

Alta Loma steward Harold Kelso reported that the off-year training for officers and stewards would be held at the Pasadena Hilton in May, 2005.

Old Business

A discussion was held over publication of the newsletter. Editor Mark Lesch will restart bi-monthly publication starting in January,

2005, and also will mail out a reminder post card to all members in the off months.

A discussion was held over the moving of the Senior Center, our present branch meeting site. The present location has been bought out by a private firm. The Senior Center is moving to Milliken and Baseline. More information will be given next month.

Alternate representatives are need for the Washington DC lobby trip that will be held in February/March 2005. A motion was made-seconded-carried to name as alternates Denise Jordan, Dennis Kersee and Richard Spears.

New Business

Due to no Holiday Dinner

Dance being held this year, a motion was made and seconded to allot money to each office for a Christmas potluck. A discussion was held. Objections were raised to scabs, supervisors and others dining on branch funds. A vote was taken and the motion was defeated. Another motion was made and seconded to send to each member and retiree a \$10 gift card to a local union food market. This motion passed without objection.

Adjournment

A motion was made-seconded-carried to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 8:21 p.m. The winners of the two \$50 door prizes were Mark Lesch and Joe Montelongo. ♦

Upcoming Events

- Branch Meeting..... January 11, 2005
- Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday January 17, 2005
- Branch Meeting..... February 8, 2005
- President's Day Holiday February 21, 2005
- Washington DC Lobby Trip..... Feb 26 - Mar. 3, 2005

2005 Proposed Budget — NALC Branch 1439

Traditionally at the January branch meeting, the executive board of the branch proposes a budget for the upcoming year. This proposal is then discussed, modified as directed by the membership, and voted upon. Remember, the funds of this branch belong to the whole membership. It is **YOUR** money, so plan now to attend the next branch meeting on January 11th to make your ideas and voice heard.

2005 Proposed Budget	Mileage	\$1,200.00
Budget Item	Amount	
Association Dues	\$725.00	Newsletter Printing.....\$4,200.00
Bond	\$150.00	Office Expense.....\$1,000.00
New Member Sign Up	\$500.00	Per Capita Tax
Computer Expense	\$750.00	Per Diem.....\$3,500.00
Flowers	\$1,000.00	PO Box Rental
NALC Food Drive	\$750.00	Postage
Holiday Dinner Dance	\$4,000.00	Salary
Hotel.....	\$8,475.00	Storage.....\$650.00
Lost Time.....	\$14,000.00	Taxes
MDA.....	\$1,000.00	Telephone
Meeting Expense		Travel (Airline Tickets)
(Refreshments, door prize, hall rental).....	\$3,200.00	Total Expenses.....\$58,490.00
		Projected Income
		Income/Expenses

This budget proposal assumes the following:

Publishing *The 1439'er* newsletter bi-monthly.

Five travel events, including sending five representatives to lobby Congress in Washington DC, February 2005, sending the officers and stewards to the State Training in Pasadena, May 2004, sending Tom Anderson to two Committee of President's meetings, sending a representative(s) to the off-year rap session in Miami, FL, August 2005

Tom's Tale The New Postal Math

I looked at his beady black eyes, and opened a beer. We sat 10 feet apart, in a room that was totally thrashed. The remains of my kitchen trash can, serrated by the teeth of a golden retriever, lay strewn about. My birthday gift, a 25 foot phone cord, now reached 50 feet in five different sections. I decided enough was enough!

I told the offending beast, "Listen, Pal, I have 3 twelve gauge shotguns in my closet, and I am going to let you pick your own weapon of choice. HONK — HONK — HONK!!!"

I nearly fell off of the couch. Now I was mad! "Listen, you are not a Canadian Goose, stop making that sound," I demanded. "HONK — HONK — HONK!!!" I am a trained Army medic, so I knew that a golden retriever cannot sound like a goose without having some sort of problem. I looked at the floor. There I saw the remains of electrical wires, ink pens, plastic wrappers, old Postal Records and my yellow toothbrush. DAMN!

The only reason I had left that dog in the house was to protect him from the record cold weather we had been having. "HONK — HONK!!!" Okay, Okay, let's have a look. I wrestled the idiot to the floor, pried his jaws apart and looked inside.

I expected to find a feather duster. Instead, I found a sea foam blue/green tongue and teeth. I didn't know what he could have eaten to cause this, but I hoped it would pass in a day or two. I went to bed and left for work early the next morning.

I came home that afternoon and heard, "HONK — HONK — HONK!!!" It was getting worse. Should I take the dog to the vet or not? I drank a beer and decided to look for my shovel. It had been chewed in half. "That's not going to save you," I said. I left the dog outside that night, and went to work early the next day.

I went to Ontario that day to see how the special route inspection requests had gone. Not too well, it turned out. Only four out of the 21 routes requesting recounts were approved by Craig Saxon, Delivery and Retail Analyst in Santa Ana. When I asked why, I was told that letter carriers cannot qualify for route counts for 30 days when management changes their case configuration. I asked what contract or manual this was stated in. Management said, "It's only common sense." I looked at them like I looked at my dog.

In March of 2004, the Ontario Main Office underwent a full route inspection. The

Continues on Page 7

The 1439'er

Continued from Page 6

end result was the Ontario Main Office lost 5 routes out of 51. Did this help to save the Postal Service?

Let's see. Five routes at 2080 hours per year equals 10,400 hours saved. Hurray! We're Saved! That's not enough. The Santa Ana District improved on this by cutting 12,000 hours out of the Ontario budget. Wow! That's even better. Great job by management.

However, let's see what really happened. The remaining Ontario Main Office routes did not appreciate having an extra 50 minutes added to them. That time had to go somewhere! The Ontario hitched up their shorts and acted like the professionals they are. Here are the real numbers.

The Ontario Main Office was running about 5.1% overtime the week before the route counts. The week after inspections it went up to 7.9%. After the routes were "adjusted" overtime went up to and is presently over 21.8%. Did eliminating those routes really save the USPS?

Before the inspections we had 51 routes at 2080 hours/year at \$20 per hour (we'll use that pay amount for argument's sake) That equals \$2,212,600 per year.

After the inspections we had 46 routes at 2080 hours/year at \$20 per hour. That totals up to \$1,913,600. That is a savings of \$208,000 per year. Or is it? Let's throw in the overtime.

Before inspections we had 51 routes at 5.1% OT. That works out to \$162,300 per year in overtime. After inspections, 46 routes at 21.8% OT. That equals \$625,740 in overtime. The real figures are:

Before — \$2,212,600 plus \$162,300 OT

equals \$2,283,900.

After — \$1,913,600 plus \$625,740 OT equals \$2,539,340.

As you can see, the Postal Service is now paying \$255,440 more per year after eliminating five routes. Thank you, Ken Snavelly!

Why am I bothering to write about this? There are going to be at least seven Ontario letter carriers who will make over \$70,000 in 2004. I hope you were thoughtful enough to send Ken Snavelly a Christmas card, thanking him for all the extra money. Hell, if they eliminate five more routes in 2005, some carriers will be pulling down six figure incomes. Now, back to that dog!

I came home and let the dog in. He only honked two times. That's an improvement. I needed to use the restroom, so I decided to use the back bathroom. As I prepared to go, I noticed that there was no water in the bowl. Only sea foam green/blue slime. I remembered that two weeks previously, I had dumped about half a can of Comet in the bowl to clean it. I forgot to tell the dog that his drinking bowl was a little contaminated.

I grabbed the dog, took him

outside, found the garden hose and set the nozzle to full blast. I forced the dog's jaws open and let fly!

Later, as we walked down the flood channel on our daily walk, we passed two people. The dog no longer honked, but he did smile at the passersby. As they passed, I heard the husband say to his wife, "My god, Martha, did you see how white that dogs teeth were?"

Till the next union meeting,

Tom

P.S. If any management people want a teeth whitening treatment, I have the perfect bowl for them! ♦

The 1439'er

NALC Branch 1439

PO Box 3011

Ontario, CA 91761-0902

Address Service Requested

First Class Mail

Next Branch Meeting = January 11, 2005



**Campaigning
Carriers**

(ABOVE) Branch 1439 members Alex Case (L), Alex Amezcua (Center) and Las Vegas NV Branch 2502 member Cortland Allen participated in a precinct walk for John Kerry in October 2004. Despite the efforts of these and other dedicated union member, anti-labor forces prevailed. The future of postal reform may be uncertain, but NALC members will never back away from the fight!