

The Official Newsletter of NALC Branch 1439

The 1439'er



Protecting Our Jobs!

Job Security Now! was the theme of the day when NALC National President Bill Young addressed an overflow crowd in Los Angeles for the off-year National Rap Session. This rap session, held during the year when there is no national convention, is often a chance for training and discussion between NALC's leaders and the local officers. This year, however, had a different agenda, the fact that NALC must fight the growing trend by management of the Postal Service to contract out delivery work to low wage, no benefit receiving private

individuals.

President Young explained that job security must be our first priority. He told of reactionary forces on the USPS Board of Governors that want to try to privatize Postal Service. The recent consolidation of human resources to a "shared service" in North Carolina is a first step toward that end.

The Board of Governors, headed by an anti-labor, pro-privatization governor named James Miller and made up of many like-minded individuals appointed by Presi-

dent Bush, knows that it cannot directly privatize our work due to our union contract. Instead, they are using back door methods and making inroads into using non-union delivery workers. Indeed, the number of contract delivery points has doubled in recent years with many new developments in the Southwest and Southeast being targeted for delivery by Contract Delivery Services.

Contracting out is not a new issue, President Young explained. For years, the rural carriers took pay cuts and other concessions to make themselves cheaper in a sort of in-house contracting out. Now, even rural carriers are being undercut by cheaper, non-union contractors. President Young stated that this rap session was being called early in the year to develop a strategy to combat this move to contract out letter carrier work.

Our strategy will be to monitor Article 32 in the National Agreement (this article covers subcontracting city letter work) and grieve any issues arise from violation of this article. We will also attempt to bargain stronger

Continues on Page 3



NALC President Bill Young addresses the National Rap Session held January 28, 2007 in Los Angeles, California

The 1439'er

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

Executive Officers

President Robert Ortiz
Vice President Tom Anderson
Secretary Mark Lesch
Treasurer Dale Jordan

Stewards

Alta Loma Harold Kelso
Rancho Cucamonga Richard Spears
Ontario Main Office Bob McLaughlin
Ontario Main Office Jose Aguilar
Ontario Downtown Station Alex Case
Ontario Plaza Station Rene Rodriguez

Trustees

Ontario DT Station Hector Meneses III
Rancho Cucamonga Carlos Jauregui
Ontario Main Office Long Nguyen

Branch Meetings

Branch meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month. The meeting location is the Rancho Cucamonga Senior Center, 11200 Baseline Road in Rancho Cucamonga, just west of Milliken Avenue on the grounds of Central Park. 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 branch1439@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. For more information, visit 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>

Protecting Our Work ...continues

Continued from Page 1
job protections in the upcoming National Arbitration and also use legislative and political means to keep the Postal Service from destroying the city carrier craft.

Bold, Revolutionary Ideas

President Young then mapped out that proposals that NALC had put forth during the recent negotiating sessions. NALC hoped to build on the success of the 2001-2006 National Agreement and other programs such as the Dispute Resolution Process, Customer Connect and Postal Reform to take the high road in negotiations. NALC wanted to retain Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs) and obtain general wage increases

in the new contract. Two major provisions of the NALC proposals dealt with Health Benefits and Workforce Structure.

The NALC proposal for Health Benefits had the following major points:

- Reject the USPS proposal for 1% per year cut in employer health benefit contribution that other union have agreed to.
- NALC hired a consultant to look at a letter carrier only health plan. The study concluded that such a plan could result in a savings of \$475 million a year to the USPS, while reaching benefit levels comparable to Blue Cross/Blue Shield.
- Permit parties to promote

good health and tailor benefits to carriers needs.

- Voluntary option: NALC Health Plan USPS would pay 85% of premium — other plans USPS would pay 72% of premium. USPS would share some of the savings with letter carriers by increasing pay levels up to \$2700 per year.

The NALC proposals for workforce structure had the following major points:

An All Regular Workforce by 2011

- All carriers would be converted Monday-Friday full-time regulars, eliminate casuals, keep City Carrier Grade 2 (T-6) positions with new duties, such as responsible for ten routes and fill in for annual leave, etc.
- Create Saturday bargaining unit workforce
- Retired carriers (with preference for routes) paid at Step O level.
- New hires, probationary carriers paid Step A.
- Saturday carriers would not receive benefits such as leave or retirement. Great savings for USPS.
- USPS would request an early



Long time Ontario Plaza Station letter carrier Nancy Files retired in December, 2006. Nancy is shown above with Branch 1439 President Robert Ortiz

Continued on Page 4

Continues from Page 3

out for city carriers.

- A task force for implementation would be created by the USPS.

Linchpins: sub-contracting protection and a share of the savings (increased pay).

These proposals would save USPS over \$20 billion over the next 30 years. NALC would take 40% of these savings in the form of pay raises for protection from contracting out. NALC sought a 4-5% wage increase over the life of the contract.

On December 4, 2006, the USPS made its final offer, which included these major points:

- A three-year deal: first year lump sum, 1% increase the next two years.
- Reduce USPS contribution to health benefits from 85% average to 72% average (\$1,300 increase for average family plan.
- Deduct 1% annually from carrier pay to pre-fund retiree health benefits — costs already covered by Postal Reform!
- Cash out, eliminate COLA'S.
- Cuts in annual leave, sick leave and night/Sunday premiums.

- Eliminate no lay-off protection.
- No protection from sub-contracting city carrier work.

“Contracting out is not just a unionbusting strategy that would threaten the NALC,” It would also threaten the Postal Service itself. The trust and accountability of career letter carriers is central to the USPS brand. Using low-wage, low-skilled contractors would undermine the confidence customers now have in the Postal Service.”

At the Crossroads

President Young stated that all the progress that has been made over the past five years is in jeopardy. He also said that USPS needs our help in implementing future programs such as DPS Flats but if they intend to sub-contract our work then we will fight them every step of the way. The next steps would be mediation with parties discussing grounds for arbitration, and if the mediation fails a three-party interest arbitration panel would be chosen with one neutral arbitrator. NALC is not afraid to arbitrate, we have developed evidence and testimony, in fact many of the major mailers that worked with us in Postal Reform have agreed to testify at arbitration against contracting out, and some of the leaders of both parties in Congress are ready to ask tough questions of the Board of Governors as to the need to contract out city carrier work.

After taking many questions from those attending, President Young closed the session by stating that he knows USPS management cannot beat the NALC as long as we stay united and committed to combat the contracting out of our work. ♦

The Devil is in the Details

By Mark Lesch

Editor, Branch 1439

This writer, along with many other members of Branch 1439, was privileged to attend the National Rap Session held recently in Los Angeles. At this meeting NALC President Bill Young laid out his vision for the future for letter carriers by unveiling bold, innovative and controversial measures that NALC put forth in the latest round of bargaining for our new contract. In this article I will comment on two of the measures, health benefits and restructuring of the carrier workforce.

Let's start with Health Benefits. For this last 24 years this writer was a member of the Kaiser Permanente Health Plan. When I started with Kaiser my children were young and Kaiser is a pretty good deal when you have young children, especially children who seem to get injured or ill at regular intervals. During much of this time I also served as a officer of this union and was regularly made to feel that I was not truly loyal to the union because I was not a member of the NALC Health Plan. I still remained with Kaiser until this year, when, due to some issues I and my wife had with Kaiser, we decided that we would each carry different health insurance. I chose the NALC Health Plan.

Let's go back to the Rap Session. President Young announced that the NALC proposal for Health Benefits included a provision that USPS would pay 85% of the premium for the NALC Health Plan and that USPS would pay only 72% for other health plans. Supposedly NALC would share in the savings enjoyed by the Postal Service and these savings would be passed on to city letter carriers in the form of pay raises.

However, there was not a lot of detail in the handout given to the Rap Session attendees, and I wonder what will be in the final contract. Basing pay levels on projected savings can be a dangerous idea, especially when the projections are being made in part by Postal Service management. It will take a hefty pay increase to offset the average \$1300 hit that city letter carriers will take if they choose not to join the NALC Health Plan.

And speaking of the NALC Health Plan, will the plan be up to the challenge of processing claims if the Plan gets the expected massive influx of subscribers?

Let's move on to the proposed workforce restructuring. The NALC proposal would have an all regular workforce working Monday-Friday, with retirees being offered the chance to come back and carry mail on Saturday, along with new hires specifically working on Saturdays only. This

seems to be good on the surface, but once again there was not a lot of detail discussed at the Rap Session. Talking to several retired carriers and soon-to-be retired carriers there is not a great clamoring to come back and work on Saturday, at least among the small survey that I took. How many people are going to want to work one day a week with the hope of someday making it to full-time status? How fun will Mondays be when your route is carried by a once-a-week carrier? I anticipate that many carriers that are on the overtime desired list will be working on Saturdays. There will be a National Task Force set up for this transformation and the work is supposed to be done by 2011, and I believe this task force will need all of the time allotted to get this process in working order.

The great Winston Churchill once said, "There is nothing wrong with change, if it is in the right direction." I trust that with the leadership of the National Association of Letter Carriers these changes will be in the right direction. ♦

Tom's Tale

A Time to Jump Over The Fence

I sat down on the couch and opened two beers. The dog pushed his bowl over to the couch. I poured him a beer. He lapped it up for a while, and then said, "Well, is it over?"

I took a drink and said, "Yes, that's it. We are officially retired." We sat there for a bit, and then the stupid dog began to giggle.

"What the hell are you giggling about?" I asked. Sam the Golden Retriever said, "You mean after a six-month secret investigation by the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) with hidden video cameras in your vehicle, multiple secret informants and every A-Hole tattletale around, YOU still managed to retire?"

"Well, Sam, I did have some help," I replied. Sam replied, "Okay, what did they have on you?" "They had a picture of me and you, watering the lawn, with beers in our hands/paws and a Long Life Vehicle parked in the driveway," I said.

The dog sat up straight and said, "Let me get this right. After having every postmaster for the last thirty years handing you breath mints, somebody decided that you may have been drinking beer on the clock." "Yes," I replied.

The dog went back to the refrigerator and got two more beers. I decided to write down all the names of everyone who ever helped me, starting way back from 1978. By the time I got to 2006, I felt like "My Name is Earl." I

had a list with hundreds of names of people who helped me. Every time I stopped for a minute, new names popped up in my head. "Damn, this isn't going to work," I thought. "I will be just like one of those idiot Oscar winners at the Academy Awards who tries to thank everybody, but forgets the important ones."

"Stop whining, and keep writing," the dog ordered. "My hand won't work anymore," I cried. The Golden Retriever looked up from the floor, raised his tail, and Holy!"

"This isn't a methane gas competition. Good thing we are outside, otherwise the pilot light might blow up the entire house. Why did you do that?" I asked.

"Don't you understand," Sam said. "There are too many people to thank, and no enough /*&§# to cover the bad ones. Just be happy for what you have," he said.

So, with that in mind, Thanks and *Vaya Con Dios!*

18 and 8

Tom and Sam

Thank You, Tom

By Mark Lesch
Editor, Branch 1439

Let's go back in time to 1988. The freshly minted branch secretary, coming off a rather desultory term as a shop steward, approaches the branch president with an idea. "Hey Tom," he says, "Why don't we start a branch newsletter? I will produce it and mail it to all the members. You will like it!" Tom Anderson, the branch president, looking at me with a wary eye and a keen distrust of all modern technology, says "Ok, go ahead and the branch will support you." He probably figured I would go away after a while.

The newsletter started in the Fall of 1988 and was going along Ok, but something was missing. I approached Tom again and told him that he needed to write for the paper. He begrudgingly accepted my challenge and started what would eventually become Tom's Tale.

Someone once said "Be careful what you ask for, you just might get it!" Tom's Tale takes off, not withstanding the constant battle over editing the content or lack of same. People actually take the time to write letters or emails about the column, wanting to know where does Tom get his wacky ideas from or what is he going to write about next?

During this time I also do a lot of traveling with Tom and get to know him pretty well. Tom is one of the smartest albeit wackiest people you will ever meet. Tom also gets upset when your travel plans do not work out as planned, which covers all the traveling we have ever done. Tom, I am sorry about the hockey puck in Chicago, the meltdown in Philly, the hurricane in Florida, etc. I promise that some day we will make it back to the Safe House in Milwaukee.



Returning to 2007, Tom is going to retire very soon, and the branch should be thankful for all that Tom did for letter carriers. Many of you have received back pay and benefits due to Tom's relentless policing of the contract, especially Article 8. Thanks, Tom, for doing this most important aspect of being a branch president. Thank you Tom, for allowing us to branch out into the political arena, by letting us participate in precinct walks, phone banks, pickets, lobby trips, etc. Thanks for participating in many of these events, even though most of the candidates we worked for run far left of your right-of-Rush Limbaugh views.

Finally, on a personal note, thank you Tom for allowing me to take this newsletter and run with it, and for being there for me no matter what the situation. I will miss the little piles of pencil shavings, the innovative ways of transporting Coors Light, and mostly your offbeat sensibilities about people and life in general. Good luck to you, my union brother and good friend.

Big Butted Editor

P.S. In your next life, could you please learn to **TYPE??!!**

2007 Branch 1439 Budget

Budget Item	Amount	Budget Item	Amount
Association Dues.....	\$870.00	Office Expense.....	\$1,600.00
Bond	\$200.00	Per Capita Tax.....	\$45.00
New Member Sign Up	\$500.00	Per Diem	\$3,000.00
Computer Expense	\$750.00	PO Box Rental	\$125.00
Flowers	\$1,000.00	Postage	\$2,000.00
NALC Food Drive	\$1,500.00	Salary.....	\$5,520.00
Holiday Fund.....	\$4,000.00	Storage	\$750.00
Hotel.....	\$6,000.00	Taxes.....	\$2,000.00
Lost Time	\$14,000.00	Telephone.....	\$200.00
MDA and other charities	\$1,500.00	Travel (Airline Tickets)	\$2,200.00
Meeting Expense		Total Expenses.....	\$56,260.00
(Refreshments, door prize, hall rental)	\$4,000.00	Projected Income.....	\$70,000.00
Mileage	\$1,500.00	Income/Expenses.....	\$13,740.00
Newsletter Printing	\$3,000.00		

This budget, which was approved at the January 2007 branch meeting, assumes the following:

Publishing *The 1439'er* newsletter quarterly.

Three travel events, including sending 4 members to the Lobby Trip in April, 2007, sending 9 officers and stewards to the CSALC off-year training in November, 2007, sending Robert Ortiz to the Spring 2006 Committee of President's meeting.